

SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY

AS ELITE ATHLETES AND SPORTS STARS LOOK TO PUSH THE LIMITS FURTHER THAN EVER BEFORE, SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE BECOME AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THEIR COACHING STAFF.

But it's not all about elite sport. Amid concerns about our sedentary lifestyles, professional psychologists work to motivate greater numbers of ordinary people to do more exercise and live healthier lives. They might take on individual clients who want to optimise their own personal training regime or set their own fitness goals.

As a Sport and Exercise Psychologist you could help professional and amateur athletes prepare psychologically for the demands of competition and training in both team and individual sports, and work with them to improve their performance.

If you become a Sport and Exercise Psychologist who works with the public you will be regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and must register with them in order to use the protected title.

YOU'LL APPLY THE SCIENCE OF SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY TO:

COACHES

ELITE ATHLETES

TEAMS

INDIVIDUALS' WELLBEING

WHERE COULD I WORK?

Sport and Exercise Psychologists are employed in the private, public or academic sectors, and in some cases all of these. Practitioners typically specialise in either the sport or exercise branches, though some work equally in both fields. These include:

ELITE ATHLETES

SPECIFIC SPORTS TEAMS

REGIONAL SPORTS INSTITUTES

A NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS

TRAINING & CONSULTATION SERVICES FOR OTHER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Sport and Exercise Psychologists also work in academia – teaching and researching in their area of expertise.

WHO COULD I WORK WITH?

Your clients could be from any level of professional and amateur competition. They could be individuals or groups of athletes, coaches, officials and/or parents of athletes.

Sport and Exercise Psychologists may work as part of teams, including doctors and other health professionals.

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY
CAREERS.BPS.ORG.UK/AREA/SPORT-EXERCISE**

TRAINING TO BECOME CHARTERED IN SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY

You can gain Graduate Basis for Chartered membership (GBC) by completing a BPS-accredited undergraduate degree or conversion course.

MSC IN SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY AND

BPS QUALIFICATION IN SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY (STAGE 2) OR

DOCTORATE IN SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY

WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience is the best possible way to learn about a career in psychology and decide whether it's what you want. You'll also need it to get a place on most accredited postgraduate courses, and to find work in the field. Some postgraduate courses are looking for specific types of work experience so contact the universities for further information.

If you are looking for work experience you could consider the following areas:

RESEARCH ASSISTANT IN A SPORT AND EXERCISE DEPARTMENT

VOLUNTEERING AT SPORTING NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

HELEN O'CONNOR **SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGIST**

I like to work with athletes in their typical training or competition environments, so I often go to where my clients are, but they visit me in my home office too. This year I spent five weeks in South Africa living with volunteer sports coaches, and last year I lived in Exeter for nine weeks while I was working as a behavioural coach at a weight loss camp. Sometimes I'm office-based when writing or research planning.

THE BEST PART OF MY JOB

There is always something new to learn. For example, this month I have been immersing myself in the world of equestrian three-day eventing. I am never bored, and I love the variety.

THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF MY JOB

The financial cost and the time it has taken to get to where I am now have been the biggest challenges.

Please, don't be put off training to be a sport and exercise psychologist, because it's a fantastic career. The time and cost reflect the reputation of the profession and the work the BPS does to ensure we are adequately prepared to work in this highly responsible role.

WHY I LOVE MY JOB

I really enjoy how different and challenging the work is each day, especially as sport

and exercise psychology covers such a broad range of work opportunities. My work is mostly applied psychology; working with adults and children who want to be more physically active and healthier or helping athletes to overcome their performance problems.

ADVICE TO OTHERS

If you want to specifically work as a psychologist, you should arm yourself with all the facts about the pathway and cost to becoming fully qualified in any field of psychology you are interested in. It is a big commitment and unless you pick the appropriately accredited BPS courses you can waste both time and money.

There are very few full-time jobs for Sport Psychologists, so if you are interested in this area of psychology you would need to be prepared to be self-employed and build your own business.