

Psychologist - Sport and Exercise

Sport psychologists help athletes with the psychological aspects of sport. They build up confidence and motivation and help athletes to reach their potential. They also help referees and other professionals with the stress and demand of their roles.

Exercise psychologists work with the general public by encouraging them to lead healthier and active lives through sport.

Most psychologists would work in either sport or exercise, but some psychologists work across both areas.

The Work

You could be:

- working with amateur or professional athletes individually, in groups, or through a coach
- using psychological tests and monitoring performance and behaviour to assess the needs of the athlete
- planning strategies to motivate an athlete to perform better or to help them overcome injuries
- helping coaches to develop their abilities
- running workshops for athletes, coaches and parents
- carrying out research on the effect of sport upon psychological health
- applying research to improve fitness regimes
- counselling patients with injury or illness to encourage them to take exercise
- working with health authorities to promote the benefits of exercise to the general public.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for sport and exercise psychologists range from around £20,000 to £22,000 a year. With experience this could rise to between £25,000 and £30,000 a year. Senior sport and exercise psychologists could earn much more than this.

Self-employed sport and exercise psychologists working as consultants with top athletes could charge anything up to £1,000 a day for their services.

Conditions

- You would work in an office but also in team premises, competition venues and rehabilitation centres.
- You could be in an interview room or, depending on the sport, outside on a pitch, running track, ski slope, or water sports site, in all weathers.

- Hours might be long, including early mornings, late evenings and weekends.
- Part time work is common.
- You might have to travel a lot and spend some overnights away from home.

Getting In

- You would work towards registration with the British Psychological Society (BPS).
- To be eligible for the Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC), you need either a BPS recognised degree (first or second class Honours) in psychology, **or** a degree in another subject plus a BPS recognised conversion course.
- To do an Honours degree in psychology you usually need 4-5 Highers.
- Paid or unpaid work experience is advantageous.
- After your degree you would find relevant paid or voluntary work experience (at least 12 months) ideally as a psychology assistant or research assistant, before choosing your speciality.
- In order to qualify as a sport and exercise psychologist, you must complete a BPS accredited MSc. In Scotland the University of Stirling offers the MSc Psychology of Sport and Heriot-Watt University offers the MSc Sport Psychology.
- This is followed by the BPS Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology Stage 2, involving 2 years of supervised practice.
- Alternatively you could complete the DPsych in Sport and Exercise Psychology at Glasgow Caledonian University. This is three years full time or two years after completion of MSc.
- All practising psychologists must register with the [Health and Care Professions Council \(HCPC\)](http://www.hcpc-uk.org).
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact [Disclosure Scotland](http://www.disclosure-scotland.gov.uk) for details on the type you would need.

Sport and exercise psychologists work in a range of settings and have a diverse range of clients including athletes, coaches, referees and the public. You could work as a consultant with professional bodies such as the British Olympic Association (TeamGB), national governing bodies of sport and commercial sports performance centres. You could also be working with groups of employees in workplaces, with patients referred by GPs or teaching in a college or university.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- optimistic and enthusiastic
- able to motivate others
- assertive
- able to work under pressure
- able to work as part of a team.

You need to have:

- an interest in sport
- a desire to help people
- patience and flexibility

- excellent communication skills
- a relaxed, encouraging attitude
- an analytical approach, to identify strategies which will help athletes.

Training

- Once you have achieved Chartered Membership of the BPS you will continue to learn and train during your career through a programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- You will need to keep up to date with research on a wide range of conditions and developments in the treatment of these conditions.

Getting On

- After gaining experience and accreditation, you might move on to consultancy work.
- Most private consultants also do other work such as teaching or research.

Contacts

British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES)

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British Psychological Society

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Website (2): careers.bps.org.uk

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/OfficialBPS

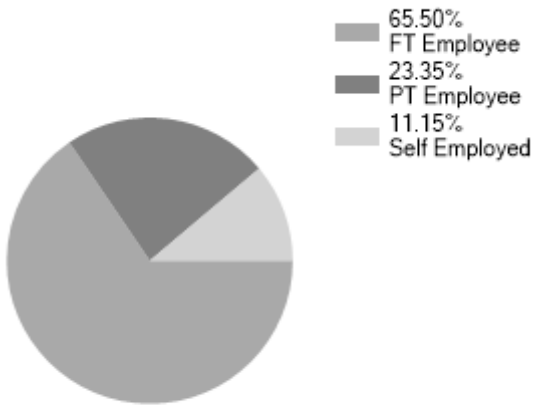
NHS Scotland Careers

Website: www.careers.nhs.scot

Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.