



Interested in Sport Psychology?

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I'm interested in pursuing the field of sport psychology. What exactly does a sport psychologist do?

Professionals in the field of sport psychology focus primarily on *research, teaching, or consulting*. While these roles often overlap, most sport psychology professionals choose one of these as their primary orientation.

Research: Those interested solely in research often have positions in a research center or laboratory. Those interested in research *and* teaching typically have an academic appointment at a university. These professionals conduct studies, teach collegiate courses, and contribute to journals and books. Almost all of the professionals in research have a PhD.

Teaching: Many people interested in academia teach college level courses in sport psychology and other related areas such as exercise psychology, personality psychology, sport sociology, or motor learning.

Consulting: Those interested in applied sport psychology provide either performance enhancement or counseling/clinical services.

Performance enhancement: Those providing performance enhancement services educate athletes about psychological skills that can improve their performance. Performance enhancement specialists (also called mental training consultants) teach clients skills such as goal-setting, focusing, team building, confidence-building, and imagery. They work with a wide range of people including athletes, parents, coaches, actors, musicians, and businesses. Most people interested in performance enhancement have doctoral degrees while some only have masters degrees. They are not trained to treat emotional disorders and must refer these clients for treatment.

Counseling/Clinical: Those providing counseling or clinical services help individuals with clinical or personal problems. These professionals have degrees and certification in counseling psychology, clinical psychology, or counseling with additional sport training. They might treat athletes with eating disorders, depression, or substance abuse. These positions require a doctoral degree from an accredited program.

I'm interested in going to graduate school in sport psychology. What kind of program should I look for?

Performance Enhancement: People interested in performance enhancement should seek out a graduate program that emphasizes *sport & exercise science, physical education, and kinesiology*.

Counseling/Clinical: People interested in counseling/clinical should seek out a graduate program based in *Counseling Psychology, Clinical Psychology, or Educational Psychology*. Some schools have good relationships between the psychology and sport department which may allow you to gain additional sport training.

Exercise Science heavy programs (better for performance enhancement)

- *Miami of Ohio* (MS in Sport Studies)
- *Springfield College* (MS in Sport & Exercise Psychology)
- *Temple University* (MS/PhD in Kinesiology with specialization in Sport & Exercise Psychology)
- *University of Minnesota* (MS/PhD in Kinesiology with emphasis in Sport Psychology)
- *University of Tennessee, Knoxville* (MS/PhD in Sport Studies with specialization in Sport Psychology)
- *Michigan State* (MS/PhD in Kinesiology with concentration in Psychosocial Aspects of Sport and Physical Activity)
- *Georgia Southern* (M.S. in Kinesiology with a Sport Psychology Specialization)
- *Ithaca College* (MS in Exercise & Sport Sciences with a concentration in Sport Psychology)

Psychology heavy programs (better for counseling/clinical)

- *Florida State* (MS/PhD in Educational Psychology with specialization in Sport Psychology)
- *University of Missouri* (PhD in Counseling Psychology with specialization in Sport Psychology)
- *University of North Carolina, Greensboro* (MS/PhD in Sport & Exercise Psychology)
- *University of North Texas* (PhD in Counseling Psychology with emphasis in Sport Psychology)
- *University of Virginia* (MeD/PhD in Sport & Exercise Psychology)
- *West Virginia University* (PhD in Sport & Exercise Psychology with additional masters in Counseling)
- *University of Tennessee* (PhD in Counseling Psychology – good relationship w/sport studies program)
- *California University of Pennsylvania* (Counseling Psychology, emphasis in athletic counseling)

Where can I find more information or resources about Sport Psychology?

AAASP (the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology) is the main governing organization in the field of Sport Psychology. Most consultants receive AAASP certification, which indicates that they have met certain standards of education and training. Their website provides a wealth of knowledge regarding careers in the field.

<http://www.aaasponline.org/index.php>

Purchase the *Directory of Graduate Programs in Applied Sport Psychology* written by Kevin L. Burke, Michael L. Sachs, and Cassandra P. Smisson. This directory gives an index of graduate programs in the U.S. and around the world. It is extremely useful for contact info and for determining faculty interests at different programs. You can also subscribe online for the most current updates. <http://www.appliedsportpsych.org/publications/graduate-program-directory/>

Division 47 is the Sport & Exercise Psychology division of the APA (American Psychological Association). This site also offers a lot of information.

<http://www.psyc.unt.edu/apadiv47/>

Subscribe to a listserv. This free distribution list connects professionals, students, and other people in the field. Emails regarding sport psych issues come into your mailbox once or twice a week.

http://www.psyc.unt.edu/apadiv47/about_listservinfo.html

Article to read:

<http://appliedsportpsych.org/resource-center/professionals/articles/undergrad-tips>
http://www.public.asu.edu/~atdml/grad_training.htm