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# Sport and exercise psychologist



Sport and exercise psychologists study the mental and emotional effects of taking part in sport and exercise.



## What you'll do

You'll usually specialise in either sport or exercise, although you may work in both.

Sports psychologists work with teams and individuals at all levels, and help with issues like:

- nerves and anxiety
- self-confidence
- concentration
- motivation
- sports injuries
- aggression

Exercise psychologists' day-to-day duties might include:

- working in cardiac rehabilitation or GP exercise referral schemes
- advising and counselling patients who are ill and might benefit from getting involved in regular exercise
- working with health promotion staff to show patients the therapeutic and health benefits of exercise
- setting up exercise programmes in workplaces, prisons and psychiatric units
- studying the reasons that some people are more active than others

Record relevant activities you've already done on the [Activities tool](#) >

## Working hours and environment

You'll often work Monday to Friday, around eight hours day. You may also need to work in the evening and at weekends to fit in with training and competitions.

Some of your work will be office based, but you may also need to travel to team premises, competition venues, and clinics.

Some sport and exercise psychologists work privately, only meeting clients face-to-face. Others may split their time between client work, teaching, and research. You'll likely have lots of in-person conversations, but if you're only working one-to-one with clients, you may work alone the rest of the time.

## Career path and progression

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You could work as a full-time sport psychologist, or you could combine consultancy work with teaching and research.

As an exercise psychologist, you could work for a local health authority, or on a GP exercise referral scheme. You could also evaluate exercise programmes in workplaces, prisons or psychiatric settings.

With experience and further study you could become a senior psychologist or head of a psychology department. You could also move into teaching or lecturing.

## Skills required

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You'll need:

- excellent knowledge of sports psychology, and the motivation to keep updating this knowledge through training and research
- critical thinking skills, so you think carefully about any research findings and take all evidence into account
- good problem-solving skills, so you can think of ways to support clients struggling with motivation or other psychological challenges
- independence, as you may work in your own office and need to plan your own time if working privately with clients
- strong communication skills, so you can listen carefully to your clients' challenges and advise them appropriately

Got evidence of these skills? Record your examples on the [Skills tool](#) >

## Entry requirements

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You'll need:

- an undergraduate degree in psychology or sport psychology
- a master's degree or PhD in sport and exercise psychology. You may need one that's accredited by a national organisation, like the British Psychological Society (BPS) in the UK or the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) in the US
- two years' supervised practice in order to certify or get a licence to work in your country. In Australia for example, you'll need to register with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)
- to pass a criminal record background check

You may also need work experience in the specialism you want to work in like coaching, teaching, or health promotion.

## Related university subject profiles

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These university subjects are related to this career; check out their profiles on the Subjects library:

- [Psychology](#) >
- [Sport science](#) >

## Related career profiles

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You may also be interested in:

- [Sports scientist](#) >
- [Health awareness specialist](#) >
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### Apprenticeships:

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### College / Sixth Form:

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## Labour Market Information (LMI)

Current and predicted figures relating to the Sport and exercise psychologist profession. Median averages are shown, each with the specific career, or group of careers, that they apply to.

UK
  USA

### Jobs

Therapy professionals

**169,927**

 **1,439** in your local area of Liverpool

#### Top 5 local areas

1	Kent	4,680
2	Surrey	4,612
3	Hertfordshire	4,105
4	Hampshire	4,061
5	Essex	3,760

### Salaries

Other psychologists

**£35,311**

Therapy professionals

# £38,184

📍 £35,572 in your region of North West

### Top 3 regions

1	Scotland	£42,181
2	West Midlands	£40,767
3	London	£39,785

### Growth

2020-2035

Health professionals

## +7.2%

↑ 118,954 jobs

📍 +9.3% in your region of North West, an increase of 15,821 jobs

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### Sports scientist

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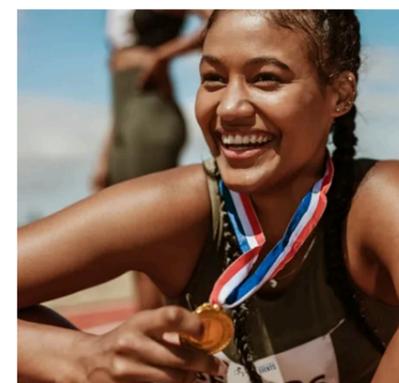
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### Sports coach

Sports coaches teach sports and help players to reach their full potential.

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### Sports professional

Sports professionals are paid to train in their chosen sport.

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