



SECTION 1 — Research Articles

1. From arbitrary metrics to meaningful change: Empirical smallest effect sizes of interest for the Feeling Scale during exercise

Authors: Constantin Späth and Ralf Brand

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Publication Date: 1 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2026.103177>

Summary:

This study addressed the difficulty of interpreting changes recorded with the Feeling Scale, a widely used measure of affective valence during exercise whose numerical units do not have an inherently meaningful interpretation. Data were collected from 225 participants, who rated changes in their affective experiences and completed global ratings of change that served as external anchors. The authors used anchor-based analyses to estimate the minimal perceived change and minimal important change in Feeling Scale scores. The results showed that empirically defensible thresholds for perceptible and meaningful affective change can be derived rather than relying on arbitrary conventions or standardized effect-size rules. The findings provide a stronger basis for interpreting whether changes in exercise-related pleasure and displeasure are large enough to matter to participants.

2. All you need is sleep: Can basic psychological need satisfaction improve athletes' sleep quality?

Authors: Patricia Frytz and Anne-Marie Elbe

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Publication Date: 2 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2026.103181>

Summary:

This study examined whether satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness was associated with sleep quality among competitive athletes. Sixty-six athletes completed baseline questionnaires, while 48 participated in a 14-night monitoring period involving actigraphy, morning sleep logs, evening need-satisfaction reports, and assessments of subjective and objective sleep outcomes. Higher general and sleep-specific need satisfaction was associated with better subjective sleep quality and a smaller individual sleep deficit. Multilevel analyses indicated that greater competence satisfaction was related to longer perceived sleep duration and shorter perceived sleep-onset latency, while autonomy and relatedness satisfaction were associated with lower perceived sleep need. Associations with objective actigraphy outcomes were less prominent, indicating that psychological need satisfaction was most consistently related to athletes' subjective experience of restorative sleep.

3. The holistic development of elite male hockey players in Canada

Authors: Marc Glaude, Gordon A. Bloom, and Joseph Baker

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Publication Date: 3 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2026.103183>

Summary:

This qualitative study investigated how experienced coaches and administrators understood the holistic development of elite Canadian male hockey players between 15 and 17 years of age. Six participants with extensive experience in elite hockey completed semistructured interviews, which were examined through reflexive thematic analysis. Participants described holistic development as encompassing athletic performance alongside psychological, interpersonal, educational, and wider life development. They also identified persistent structural barriers, including performance-first priorities, fragmented responsibility across organizations, and a culture in which winning can overshadow longer-term athlete welfare. The analysis indicated that holistic development depends on coordinated systems, shared developmental expectations, and recognition that psychosocial growth is integral to—not separate from—high-performance preparation.

4. Holding the line between challenge and harm: A reflexive thematic analysis of pressure training in sport

Authors: Elif Bouthiller and Franziska Lautenbach

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Publication Date: 9 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2026.103184>

Summary:

This study explored how elite athletes and coaches distinguish productive pressure training from practices that become psychologically or physically harmful. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 14 coaches and 14 athletes from Türkiye, Germany, the United States, and

Brazil, representing 13 able-bodied sports and one Paralympic sport. Reflexive thematic analysis showed that pressure training was considered valuable when challenges were individualized, purposeful, supported by trust, and accompanied by open communication and continuing coach reflection. Poorly calibrated pressure was associated with withdrawal, diminished confidence, disrupted team relationships, reduced creativity and flow, emotional distress, aggression, and heightened injury risk. The findings position pressure training as a relational and ethically sensitive process whose effects depend on how demands are designed, interpreted, monitored, and adjusted.

5. A narrative scoping review exploring parents' emotion knowledge and abilities in youth sport

Authors: Shannon R. Pynn, Helene Jørgensen, Caitlyn Vanstone, Amber D. Mosewich, and Nicholas L. Holt

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Publication Date: 9 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2026.103187>

Summary:

This narrative scoping review mapped research concerning parents' emotion knowledge and emotion-related abilities within organized youth sport. The authors synthesized 87 articles addressing how parents recognize, understand, express, regulate, and respond to emotions in sport settings. The literature commonly examined parental reactions to competition, communication with children, emotion regulation, and the emotional climate created around performance. However, definitions and measurement approaches were fragmented, and many studies considered isolated parental behaviours without locating them within a broader model of emotional competence. The review showed that parental emotion abilities are closely connected to children's emotional experiences but remain inconsistently conceptualized and seldom studied through longitudinal or intervention-based designs.

6. Physical activity is only part of the story: Prototyping supports for women's transition to retirement

Authors: Laura Calder, Angela Beggan, Rebecca O'Hanlon, and David Carless

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Publication Date: 11 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2026.103188>

Summary:

This study examined how women imagined engaging with three co-designed forms of support during the transition to retirement: a retirement café, a buddy scheme, and a women's exercise class. Fifteen women aged 54–72 generated 29 stories through a story-completion method, and the accounts were examined using dialogical narrative analysis. Six orientations toward the prototypes were identified: embracing, tentative, ambivalent, resistant, redirecting, and disconnected. Engagement was shaped by personal histories, changing identities, social expectations, material environments, and culturally available narratives about ageing and physical activity rather than by intervention type alone. The findings demonstrate that physical activity may contribute to a positive retirement transition, but its meaning and acceptability are inseparable from women's social relationships, identities, and resistance to normative expectations of "successful" ageing.

7. Effects of acute physical activity on executive functions: The role of cognitive engagement and social interaction

Authors: Marcelo Cabral, Matthew B. Pontifex, and Spyridoula Vazou

Journal: Psychology of Sport and Exercise

Publication Date: 14 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2026.103192>

Summary:

This experiment investigated whether the executive-function effects of acute physical activity depended on cognitive engagement and social interaction. A total of 119 college students were assigned by undergraduate course section to one of four 30-minute activity conditions combining high or low cognitive engagement with high or low social interaction. Inhibitory control was assessed immediately before and after the activity using the Eriksen Flanker Task, with activity intensity and perceived cognitive and social characteristics assessed as manipulation checks. The largest improvement in reaction time occurred in the high-social-interaction, low-cognitive-engagement condition. The findings indicate that the social structure of physical activity can contribute to immediate cognitive benefits and that adding greater cognitive complexity does not necessarily produce superior executive-function outcomes.

8. Sport and exercise psychologists' perspectives of supporting adolescent mental health in diversionary sport: A story completion study

Authors: Jude O'Donnell and Bryan McCann

Journal: Journal of Applied Sport Psychology

Publication Date: 1 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2026.2678588>

Summary:

This study examined how sport and exercise psychology practitioners imagined supporting adolescent mental health in diversionary sport programmes operating through clubs, schools, charities, and public agencies. Twenty-two qualified and trainee practitioners completed an online story-completion task based on fictional scenarios involving adolescents in diversionary sport. The analysis emphasized psychological safety, empathy, emotional-regulation skills, adolescent choice, and support that extended beyond athletic performance. Practitioners also portrayed effective work as collaborative, requiring sensitivity to the young person's wider family, educational, social, and community circumstances. The findings conceptualize mental-health support in diversionary sport as a person-centred and context-dependent process rather than a standardized application of performance psychology techniques.

9. Features of successful high-performance sport environments: Stakeholder insights

Authors: Anusofia Schlawe, Ask Vest Christiansen, and Kristoffer Henriksen

Journal: Journal of Applied Sport Psychology

Publication Date: 9 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2026.2683956>

Summary:

This qualitative study explored how stakeholders define the features of high-performance sport environments capable of supporting current performance, future athletic development, and athlete well-being. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 18 stakeholders from the

United Kingdom's high-performance sport system and analyzed using semantic thematic analysis. Participants described successful environments as dependent on coordinated organizational structures, high-quality interpersonal relationships, specialist support, financial and lifestyle assistance, and an explicit commitment to longer-term athlete development. They also noted that extensive services do not automatically produce positive outcomes when athletes do not engage with them or when dominant performance narratives discourage help-seeking and holistic development. The analysis therefore portrayed environmental success as emerging from alignment between organizational priorities, everyday relationships, available resources, and athletes' willingness and ability to access support.

10. Sleep quality in Olympic and non-Olympic combat sports: Associations with sex, rapid weight loss, and sport age (a PSQI-based analysis)

Authors: Şeref Eroğlu, Tülay Ceylan, Mehmet Türkmen, Taner Yılmaz, Osman Imamoğlu, Irfan Kara, Gülşah Sekban, and Fatma Nur Sahin

Journal: Frontiers in Psychology

Publication Date: 3 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1847782>

Summary:

This cross-sectional study examined sleep quality in 498 competitive athletes from Olympic and non-Olympic combat sports, with a mean age of approximately 21 years. Participants completed the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index and reported sex, competitive discipline, sport age, and whether they had recently lost more than 4% of body mass. Sixty-five percent met the criterion for poor sleep, while male sex, Olympic-sport participation, rapid weight loss, and longer sport involvement were associated with greater odds of being classified as a poor sleeper. Rapid weight loss produced the strongest association, with athletes reporting losses above 4% having approximately 2.7 times the odds of poor sleep. Continuous sleep scores also revealed sex- and sport-related differences, showing that categorical prevalence and the severity of specific sleep difficulties did not always produce identical patterns.

11. Active success drives momentum, but late-stage errors destroy it: A real-time analysis of volleyball

Authors: Yusuke Asai, Tomoyasu Okuda, Noriyuki Shide, and Noriyuki Kida

Journal: Frontiers in Psychology

Publication Date: 2 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1839311>

Summary:

This study investigated the moment-to-moment development of psychological momentum during actual volleyball play. Twenty-five male high-school players aged 15–18 used voice recorders during natural breaks between rallies to report momentum, producing 2,103 observations that were analyzed with a linear mixed model. Points won through an athlete's or team's active success generated larger increases in momentum than points resulting from an opponent's error. Conversely, self-induced errors late in a game produced particularly large momentum losses, exceeding the negative effect of an opponent's active success. More advanced players also showed larger momentum decreases after losing points, indicating that expertise may intensify rather than eliminate immediate psychological reactions to adverse events.

12. Self-compassion and psychological well-being in collegiate athletes: The mediating role of resilience and the moderating role of self-efficacy

Authors: Kyoo-Ho Lee and Kyung-Rok Oh

Journal: Frontiers in Sports and Active Living

Publication Date: 17 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2026.1814251>

Summary:

This study examined how self-compassion was associated with multiple dimensions of psychological well-being among Korean collegiate athletes. A sample of 342 athletes completed validated measures of self-compassion, resilience, self-efficacy, and five domains of eudaimonic well-being, and the proposed conditional process model was tested using PROCESS Model 14. Resilience mediated several associations between self-compassion dimensions and well-being, indicating that compassionate responses to difficulty were connected to better functioning partly through athletes' capacity to recover from adversity. Self-efficacy moderated a number of these indirect relationships for autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and positive relations, but not for personal growth. The results show that self-compassion, resilience, and self-efficacy operate through domain-specific and culturally situated pathways rather than contributing uniformly to every aspect of athlete well-being.

13. Psychological safety in sport: Validation of the French Sport Psychological Safety Inventory (SPSI-FR)

Authors: Véronique Boudreault, Juliette Maurin, Lara Pomerleau-Fontaine, Charles-Anthony Dubeau, Francelyne Jean-Baptiste, Sophie Brassard, Jacinthe Dion, and Sylvie Parent

Journal: Frontiers in Psychology

Publication Date: 22 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1855024>

Summary:

This study translated and validated the Sport Psychological Safety Inventory for use with French-speaking athletes. The final sample comprised 210 francophone Canadian elite and development-level athletes aged 14–25, of whom 68.6% were female. Confirmatory factor analysis supported the instrument's three-factor structure: a mentally healthy environment, mental-health literacy, and low self-stigma, with strong model fit and internal consistency. Psychological-safety scores correlated positively with psychological well-being and coach–athlete relationship quality and negatively with reported interpersonal violence in sport. Measurement invariance across gender supported the interpretation that the SPSI-FR assesses the same underlying constructs among male and female athletes.

14. From challenge-skills balance to wellbeing in sports: The role of team identification and flow

Authors: Manuel Teresi, Alessandra Fermani, Ilaria Giovannelli, Mara Marini, Stefano Livi, Attilio Di Crescenzo, and Stefano Pagliaro

Journal: Frontiers in Psychology

Publication Date: 22 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1863570>

Summary:

This study examined whether team identification and flow sequentially explained the association between challenge–skill balance and psychological well-being in team-sport athletes. A sample of 281 athletes completed an online survey measuring perceived challenge–skill congruence, identification with their team, flow, and well-being. Serial mediation analysis showed that stronger challenge–skill balance was associated with greater team identification, which was related to stronger flow experiences and subsequently higher well-being. The serial indirect effect was statistically significant, while a direct association between challenge–skill balance and well-being remained. The findings indicate that optimal challenge contributes to well-being partly through a social and experiential sequence linking belonging to the team with deep absorption in sporting activity.

15. The association between autonomy-supportive coaching and athletes' personal best performance: Indirect associations involving basic psychological needs and autonomous motivation

Authors: Mingrun Gao and Daliang Zhao

Journal: Frontiers in Sports and Active Living

Publication Date: 25 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2026.1803833>

Summary:

This study examined relationships among autonomy-supportive coaching, basic psychological need satisfaction, autonomous motivation, and personal-best performance in Chinese athletes. The sample included 411 provincial-level athletes from multiple sports, who completed validated questionnaires while performance was operationalized using official national competitive grading standards. Structural equation modelling with 5,000 bootstrap resamples showed that autonomy support, need satisfaction, and autonomous motivation were each positively associated with personal-best performance. The direct path from coach autonomy support to performance was not statistically significant, but indirect paths through autonomous motivation and through the sequence of need satisfaction and autonomous motivation were significant. The results are consistent with the proposition that autonomy-supportive coaching is connected to performance primarily through athletes' psychological need experiences and self-determined reasons for participation.

16. The relationship between athletic identity and kinesiophobia in young athletes with prior sport-related injury

Authors: Antonia L. Dinulescu, Ava N. Davis, Emily B. Gale, Emily J. Stapleton, Joseph Janosky, Henry B. Ellis, and Sophia Ulman

Journal: Frontiers in Sports and Active Living

Publication Date: 24 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2026.1836002>

Summary:

This study evaluated the relationship between athletic identity and fear of reinjury in 220 young athletes with a recent sport-related injury. Participants had a mean age of 14.6 years and completed the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale and the 11-item Tampa Scale for Kinesiophobia. The sample generally demonstrated a strong athletic identity but only slight overall kinesiophobia. Greater fear was modestly associated with older age and with the

exclusivity and negative-affect dimensions of athletic identity, particularly when sport dominated the athlete's sense of self or absence from sport produced strong emotional reactions. The cross-sectional findings indicate that the social and emotional components of athletic identity may have different implications for injury recovery than simply identifying strongly as an athlete.

17. Identity profiles and wellbeing of Italian student-athletes

Authors: Giampaolo Santi, Roberto Roklicer, Ross Wadey, and Attilio Carraro

Journal: Frontiers in Sports and Active Living

Publication Date: 29 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2026.1817619>

Summary:

This study examined how combinations of academic and athletic identity were associated with performance satisfaction and well-being among 223 Italian student-athletes. Participants completed measures of academic and athletic identity, satisfaction with academic and sporting performance, athlete psychological well-being, and general mental health. Four profiles were identified: fully engaged student-athletes, committed athletes, academics-focused student-athletes, and academically unengaged athletes. The profiles differed significantly across academic satisfaction, sport satisfaction, athletic well-being, and mental health, with disengagement generally associated with poorer outcomes in one or more domains. Fully engaged student-athletes reported the highest overall well-being, although differences were most consistent when they were compared with the academically unengaged group.

18. Effects of body language training on mental health and performance in adolescent Ju Jutsu athletes

Authors: Marc Niering, Jakob Bachmann, Rainer Beurskens, Finn Hansen, Jeremia Rudzki, and Johanna Seifert

Journal: Frontiers in Sports and Active Living

Publication Date: 30 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2026.1868022>

Summary:

This exploratory randomized study investigated a 12-week body-language programme involving 14 Ju Jutsu athletes aged 14–18. Athletes were assigned to an intervention or control condition, with the intervention combining daily posture exercises, sparring-based practice, and coach feedback. Pre- and post-intervention assessments covered cognitive and somatic competitive anxiety, self-confidence, depression, general anxiety, stress, observed nonverbal behaviour, and competition performance. The intervention group showed lower cognitive and somatic anxiety, depression, stress, and total psychological distress, alongside a favourable interaction for self-confidence; general anxiety did not differ significantly between groups. Confident body language increased numerically, but the absence of clear group-specific differences and the very small sample mean that the findings constitute preliminary evidence.

19. Stress and passion predict burnout in regular exercisers

Authors: Lili Anna Hujber, Angéla Somogyi, Norbert Tabi, and Attila Szabó

Journal: Frontiers in Sports and Active Living

Publication Date: 24 June 2026

DOI/URL: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2026.1781029>

Summary:

This cross-sectional study examined whether perceived stress, harmonious passion, and obsessive passion predicted burnout among 345 Hungarian adults who exercised at least three times per week. Participants completed validated measures of general stress, passion orientation, and the exhaustion, reduced-accomplishment, and sport-devaluation components of burnout. Multiple-regression analyses showed that perceived stress positively predicted overall burnout and all three subdimensions. Harmonious passion was a consistent negative predictor, whereas obsessive passion positively predicted overall burnout, exhaustion, and sport devaluation but was unrelated to reduced accomplishment. The results distinguish flexible, autonomously internalized exercise engagement from rigid engagement driven by internal pressure, with the two forms of passion showing contrasting associations with burnout.

SECTION 2 — APA Reference List

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