

How can psychology affect performance?

- Motivation
- Anxiety and arousal
- Psychological strategies to enhance motivation and manage anxiety

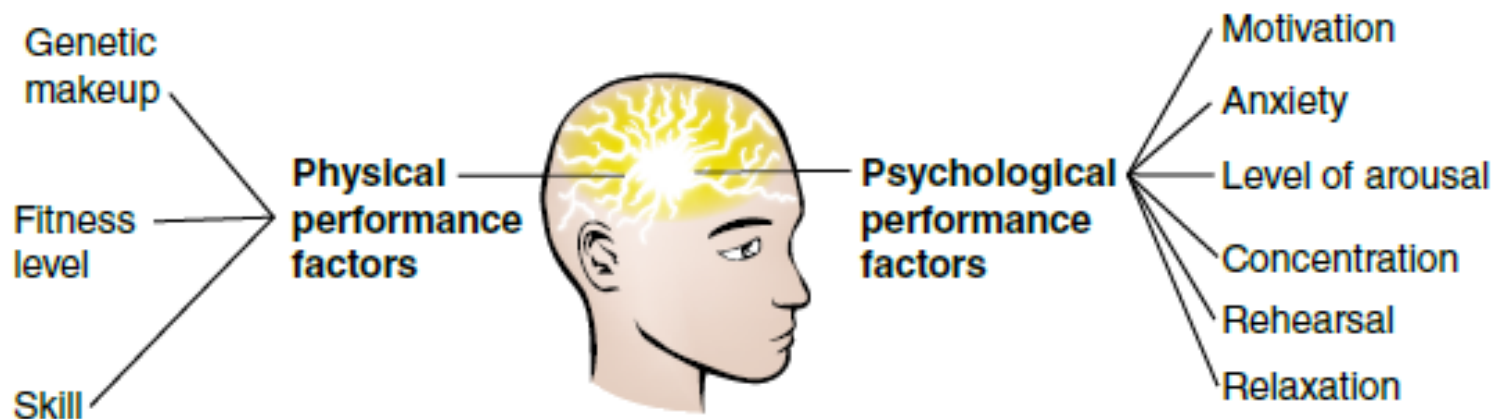


Figure 6.1: Thinking differently can create thought patterns that ultimately improve performance.

Motivation

- Motivation is a condition that drives athletes behaviours and keeps them going once they start towards a set goal.
- positive and negative
- intrinsic and extrinsic



Positive Motivation

- Positive motivation occurs when an athlete gets enjoyment or interest about completing a task and is driven from previous reinforcing behaviours.
- Relies on continual self-reinforcement and reinforcement by others such as the coach, family, friends, spectators and the media.
- For example a coach providing incentives, developing a personal progress chart, setting challenges.

Positive Motivation (cont)

- Is more sustainable and effective than negative motivation.



Figure 6.2: Crowd appreciation is a form of positive motivation for players.

Positive motivation is more effective than negative motivation. The simplest way to develop positive motivation is through the support of challenges for the athlete. Challenges

Negative Motivation

- **Negative motivation** is characterised by an improvement in performance out of fear of the consequences of not performing to expectations.
- While some players may respond to negative motivation on an irregular basis, the general long-term effect can be the destruction of confidence, initiative and belief in oneself — the reverse of what motivation is supposed to achieve.



Intrinsic Motivation

- Intrinsic motivation comes from within an athlete and is an internal desire to do well.
- It also refers to the athlete taking part in an activity for the joy and satisfaction derived from doing the activity.
- This is a stronger form of motivation than extrinsic, as it involves personal desire to do well.

Intrinsic Motivation (cont)

- Central to intrinsic motivation is the 'flow experience', which represents the highest level of internal motivation.
- It is characterised by a very high level of concentration, to the extent that an individual is completely absorbed in the task.

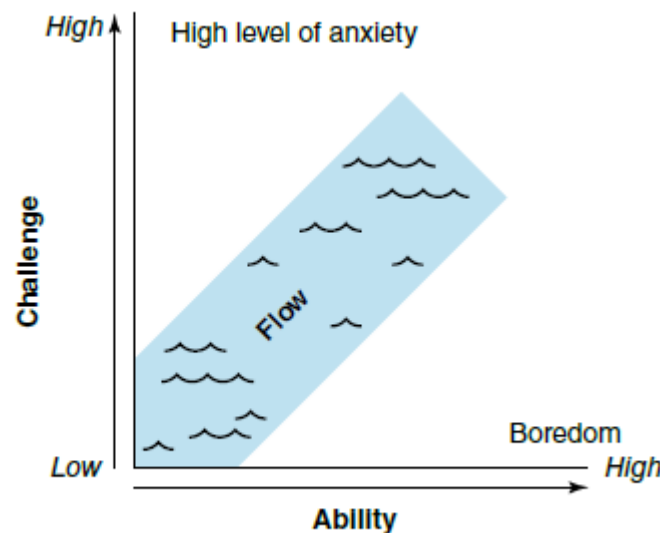


Figure 6.5: The flow experience

Extrinsic Motivation

- Extrinsic motivation comes from an external source as opposed to an internal source.
- An activity is extrinsically motivated if it is performed primarily for external reinforcement such as rewards, fame or money.



Golf & Boxing

- Different motivation types are effective for different sports.
- E.g. for golf Positive and Intrinsic could be most effective because the golfer will need to practice over and over without external recognition and will have long term drive if doing it for reward.
- Boxing on the other hand can use Negative as well as Extrinsic because fear can cause heightened emotions/arousal/adrenaline which is good for fighting. Also will fight in front of people and motivation to get recognition can be rewarded.

Anxiety

- **Anxiety** is predominantly a psychological process characterised by fear or apprehension in anticipation of confronting a situation perceived to be potentially threatening.
- The many symptoms of anxiety can include: problems breathing, sweating, restlessness, headaches, stomach problems, becoming overly introverted, chest pain, panic attacks and subsequent heart attacks.

Trait Anxiety

- Trait anxiety is a personality type that has a predisposition towards perceiving conceivably non-dangerous situations as threatening or non-threatening.
- This type of anxiety varies from person to person.

State Anxiety

- State anxiety more specific than trait anxiety and can be an unpleasant emotional arousal in the face of fear or dangers. Characterised by nervousness, sweating, shaking.
- Can be good for sports such as rugby or boxing where aggression can become a natural outlet, however, not good for sports such as archery or pistol shooting or golf.

Sources of Stress

- Stress is the non-specific response of the body to a demand placed on it.
- It is a normal part of every day life.
- A stressor is something that causes stress. Stressors that are good for a person are called **eustress** and those that are bad ones are **distress**.
- There are many sources of stress and they will be different for each person, from past experience, personal situation and the wider environment.
- Athletes use relaxation to deal with stress.

Arousal

- Arousal is a physical and mental state of being alert or aware of surrounding situations.
- Arousal can be perceived as being pleasant, which is excitable and advantageous for performance, and that of unpleasant, which can lead to anxiety and being a disadvantage for performance.

Optimum Arousal

- There is a point between performance and arousal called optimal arousal where performance is the best.
- The inverted U-theory of optimal arousal is that all athletes need a certain amount of arousal for good performance.

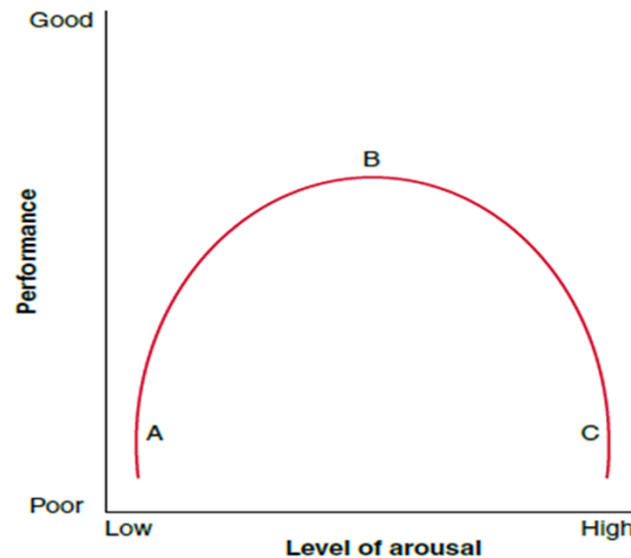


Figure 6.11: The inverted U hypothesis shows the relationship between arousal and performance.

Optimum Arousal (cont).

- If performance is above or below this point it will suffer negatively.
- For complex tasks arousal level is lower and for tasks requiring endurance and more concentration higher levels of arousal are needed.

- Generally, when difficult tasks involving few muscle groups are involved — for example, archery and putting in golf — levels of arousal need not be high to be optimal.
- However, many other activities that may be easier to execute or that involve large body movements — for example, running and weight-lifting — require an increase in the level of arousal for performance to be optimal

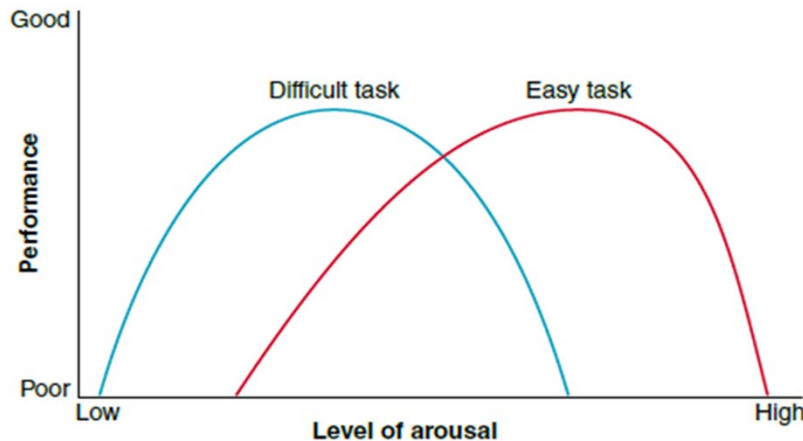


Figure 6.12: Higher levels of arousal are necessary for optimal performance in easy tasks.

Psychological strategies to enhance motivation and manage anxiety

- Uncontrolled anxiety can potentially have a negative impact on performance, but... a complete lack of anxiety can undermine effort and achievement. To assist, athletes use:
- Concentration/attention skills (focusing)
- Mental rehearsal/visualisation/imagery
- Relaxation techniques
- Goal-setting

Concentration/attention skills (focusing)

- Concentration is the ability to completely focus attention on appropriate cues to enable optimum performance.
- The athlete must take into account external factors such as environment and internal factors such as the way the body feels mentally and physically, and then respond appropriately to this data.

Mental Rehearsal

- Mental rehearsal involves images an athlete may form of skilled performance.
- Mental rehearsal is real and includes all the peripheral activity that goes with the activity, such as spectator reactions, weather conditions and any other external factors that the athlete cannot control.

Visualisation

- Visualisation involves relating specifically to pictures in the mind of a performance that will be undertaken.



Relaxation Techniques

- Meditation is used by athletes to calm themselves down, so that they can be in a positive mindset.
- Meditation should not be used prior to competition as it may leave the athlete under-aroused and so they perform poorly.

Goals

- Goals can provide both short and long term motivation depending on the goal that is set.
- Good goal setting also prevents boredom.
- When setting goals, they should be SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-frame (short/long term).

