

10 Tips for Terrific Tryouts

How to prepare mentally to be your best



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bodymindmotion

mental skills for sport and life

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About April

April Clay is a Registered Psychologist with an independent practice focused in clinical and sport psychology. She draws from a wide variety of experiences working with couples, individuals, adolescents and children in such areas as divorce/separation, blended families, family violence, depression, loss, anxiety disorders, family of origin issues, illness, anger management, self esteem and life-transition. April has also worked as an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) counsellor and thus has practical experience and knowledge in workplace related issues.



April has worked with many types of athletes and performers including: *swimming, wrestling, bmx, tennis, hockey, lacrosse, diving, equestrian athletes, fencing, pentathlon, golf, skiing, soccer, tennis, competitive dance, figure skating, track, highland country games, badminton, synchronized swimming, motocross, squash, bobsled, mixed martial arts (MMA), musicians and actors.*

As an adjunct to her practice, April writes for several local and national magazines, and offers workshops on a variety of topics. As a sports consultant, she draws on some 15 years of experience as a competitive horse show-jumper. April is a member of the **Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP)**. She also works as a service provider for the **Canadian Sport Centre Calgary**.

Dear parents, kids, teens and coaches:

I hope you enjoy the tips. If you have any questions you can contact me directly april@bodymindmotion.com or connect via my [Facebook](#) page. I would love to hear about your tryout experiences!

And please feel free to pass this along to others you think would benefit.

April

PS: Don't let your mind train unsupervised....

#1

Don't focus on "making the team"

If you walk in thinking *I have to make this team, I must make this team. My goal is to make this team*, you will send your pressure gauge through the roof. While making the team may be something you really want, using it as a goal is not going to be effective.

The truth is you are not 100% in control of making the team. What you are in control of on that day is the way you play, and your attitude so why not focus on these things? Choose a goal, and choose carefully. Goals can be extremely calming and focusing if you choose the right kind. Try goals like "no matter what happens I will stay positive today" or "today I will skate hard". In short, make sure your goals are about the process of what you need to do out there, and are things you can control. This will help keep your mind where it is most effective- and yes, up your chances significantly of making the team.



#2

Review your strengths

When you attend a tryout, obviously you are going to want to shine. Everyone does this in a different way, because everyone has different strengths. Focus on what you have to offer.

Make a list of why you are prepared to do your best this season. Maybe your level of fitness has improved, maybe you are a more positive person. Perhaps your ability to influence your team has grown. Take your top three from this list and write them on a cue card to keep in your bag. Take your strengths with you, literally.

#3

Show your team skills

Being a good team player goes a long way. This means knowing how to communicate with and work with your fellow athletes, even if you are in an individual sport.

Showing your team skills is good for everybody. When you encourage other players you are doing a number of things. You're showing your ability to be a team leader. Positive talk helps you stay positive yourself. It can really decrease those butterflies as it takes the focus off you and places it on what is happening around you. That's good for playing as well! I told you there was a lot to this tip...



#4

Start fresh every day

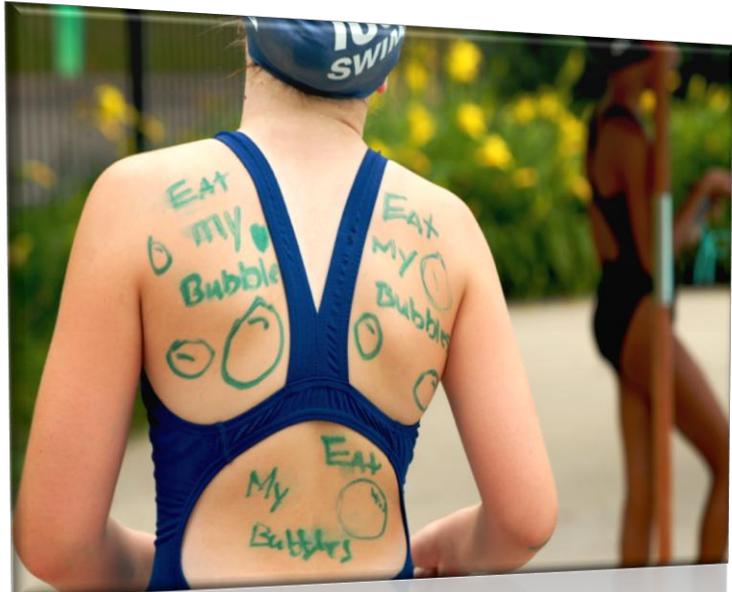
Often tryouts are not just one day, but many. That means you might just have a bad day and then have to go back out and try again. The last thing you want is to drag that bad day with you. This can leave you feeling mentally and physically tired, and focused on the negative.

So make a point of doing a quick review. I like to call this the 2/2 formula. Choose two things you were proud of, and two things that need "sharpening" for the next day. Then allow yourself to move along and relax with something non sport related. Remember the motto "every day is fresh", meaning it is full of opportunity. Lucky you!

#5

Watch your language

Make sure you have some positive self-statements at the ready. Stress naturally causes us to focus on the negative. Choose a keyword to keep coming back to for the day. Something that reminds you where you want your focus to be: “fast”, “commit” or a phrase “do your best forget the rest”, “stay here and now”. If you have your language ready, you are less likely to have headspace for that nasty gremlin of doubt.



#6

Focus on your own page

No doubt when you walk in you will want to check out who is there. *Do I know them? Have I played with them before? But this can quickly turn into are they better than me? What if they are better than me? There are only so many spots on the team. I cannot blow this.* Yes, not exactly helpful thoughts when it comes to bringing out your best. So, remember how they taught you in school to focus on your own page? Do that. Focus on what you came there to do and do it well. Do not give your attention to the next guy, you'll just be handing him an advantage. Instead, keep your energy and focus for yourself.

#7

Be prepared to accept mistakes

There is no way anyone gets through life, sport and certainly a tryout without making a mistake. It is not the end; it is only one moment in time. In fact, it could be that some mistakes are made because you are showing your ability to take risks.

Coaches tend to like that sort of thing. When you do make one, have a reboot strategy ready so you can get over and get on with it



#8

Forget perfection

Perfection is not an ideal; it's not even possible. So what happens when you start to focus on the impossible? You become frustrated, impatient and angry with yourself. As you can guess, this means you will likely not perform to your potential. Think of a new ideal for yourself to go after- excellence, mastery of skills, continuous improvement. If your mindset is positive and possible- you will get the best from yourself.

#9

Everyone is human

Yes, don't forget that the guy or girl next to you is likely as nervous as you. Check it out. Take a look around when you arrive and have fun playing the "human test". I will bet you can come up with one thing per person (that guy has probably made mistakes before, she has likely been embarrassed, I'll bet he has had a bad haircut in his life) that makes them just as human as you. You are not surrounded by super stars, only others with strengths and weaknesses just like you. Whew!



#10

And if you don't make it....

Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. Keep it in perspective, and be sure to get some help and support. Talk to people you trust. You will probably want to understand as best you can why it happened so you can go forward and set new goals. And that's the good news. There are always new goals to set.

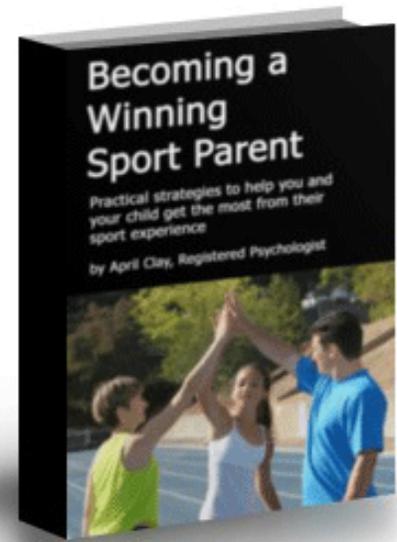
Becoming a Winning Sport Parent:

Practical strategies to help you and your child get the most from their sport experience April Clay, M.Ed., Registered Psychologist

Sport Parents, sharpen your mental game! Behind every successful young athlete are the parents that support them. Are you doing the best job possible to ensure your child enjoys their sport and reaches their potential?

Just a few of the topics covered:

- How to help your child deal with pre game jitters
- Instilling a confident mindset in your child
- How to talk to your child about a difficult performance
- Dealing with negative coaches
- Teach your athlete to set effective goals
- Featuring bonus interviews with: *Debbie Muir, Mark Tewksbury and Patti Sale!*



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<http://www.bodymindmotion.com/winningsportparent.htm>

Looking for more specialized help?

In office sessions can help your child/teen/young adult to:

- Learn how to manage their nerves in and out of their sport
- Set goals that lead to confidence
- Create pre game routines to bring out their best
- Manage sport, school and social commitments
- Get along effectively with teammates and coaches
- Develop a set of mental skills that will serve them in sport and in life

COACHES: group sessions are available, please inquire!

Services

Why would I need a sport psychologist?

There are many reasons athletes come to see a sport psychologist. You do not need to have a “problem” with your performance. One of the most common reasons athletes seek out sport psychology is performance enhancement. Every athlete needs to learn key skills to meet the psychological demands of their sport. Other reasons for attendance include: competitive anxiety, confidence issues, injury, retirement, coach concerns and stress. Basically anything that impacts your sport can be the subject of a session.

Can my coach be involved?

It is up to you. For some, it is enough their coach is aware they are seeing a sport psychologist. Others want their coach present for a session. Some have circumstances where they wish to keep their attendance confidential.

Will my sessions be covered by health care?

No, Alberta Health Care does not cover the cost of a Registered Psychologist.

Can my sessions be covered by insurance?

Yes. Depending on your plan, Blue Cross does offer coverage for Registered Psychologists. Employee Assistance Programs also usually offer coverage; please contact your human resources representative. Sport Psychology services are a psychological service if offered by a licensed Psychologist. The mental skills you will learn will serve you in your sport- and life.

What if I need to discuss my sport and other issues going on in my life- can you help me with both? Yes, we can discuss both. If for any reason I believe you need to see someone outside of my specialty area, I will make sure you have an appropriate referral.

Do I need a doctor's referral to come and see you?

Not unless your insurance company requires. You can refer yourself by simply calling or filling out the intake form.

How long will I need to come?

The number of sessions required will depend upon your goals and the presenting problem. At the end of the initial session, we will discuss your requirements.

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Booking a Sport Psychology Session

Frequently asked Questions:

What about confidentiality?

All information will be confidential with the following exceptions: 1. If a Release of Information has been signed to a specific person or persons with regard to specific information. (For example, your family physician) 2. If, in the professional opinion of the psychologist, there is a potential for harm to self or others. 3. If there is a legal or statutory obligation to report (as in cases of child abuse). 4. If the psychologist is legally required by a court of law to testify, submit a report or release records.

What happens in the first session?

The first session is an assessment of your situation. We will discuss your current concerns and collect the relevant information so I can inform you about how we might proceed. We will set a clear goal or focus for your counselling, and establish a time line for our work together.

At what age can my child benefit from sport psychology?

A minimum age of 12 is usually recommended. Sport psychology will be different depending on the developmental needs of the child.

Will I attend sessions with my child?

I usually prefer that a parent is present for part of the first session, so we can establish expectations. The younger the child, the more likely a parent is to be part of the consulting process. Depending upon the presenting concerns, a parent may also need to modify their role with their child athlete and therefore need a session of their own. We will discuss your situation at the first session, and make the appropriate decision.

If my child attends alone, do I have a right to information about their session?

The parent or guardian of anyone under 18 does have legal access to information about a child's psychological services. My preference is to discuss how we will handle this matter with the child and parent in the first session. There needs to be a balance between the child's privacy and parental involvement. This is usually easily negotiated, and gives the child a sense of empowerment in their own process.

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact me by phone 403.283.5525 or email april@bodymindmotion.com