



Sport-related Stress and Anxiety

Signs and Symptoms of Increased Stress and Anxiety

- ❖ Physical (how one's body feels)
 - Cold, clammy hands
 - Need to urinate frequently
 - Increased heart rate
 - Profuse sweating
 - Increased muscle tension
 - Butterflies in stomach
 - Nausea
 - Headache
 - Dry mouth
 - Difficulty sleeping
- ❖ Mental (one's thoughts)
 - Inability to concentrate
 - Negative self-talk
 - Racing mind
 - Worrying about how others will view your performance
 - Focusing on having to perform perfectly
 - Obsessing about poor performances in the past
- ❖ Behavioral (one's actions)
 - Talking rapidly
 - Hurrying
 - Fidgeting
 - Emotional outbursts
 - Consistently performing better in noncompetitive situations

Common Sources of Stress for Athletes

- ❖ Defeat
- ❖ Event importance
- ❖ Sport type—children/teens in individual sports tend to experience more stress
- ❖ Feeling overwhelmed by the demands of the sport
- ❖ Trying to prove yourself to coaches and teammates
- ❖ Injury

Stress/Anxiety and Performance

- ❖ All athletes, even the world's best feel some stress and anxiety
- ❖ Too much stress and anxiety can prevent you from performing at your best
- ❖ Being under too much stress increases the risk for injury



Helping Your Child Manage Stress/Anxiety in Sports

Be Prepared

- ✓ Help your child stay on top of their schedule and tasks
- ✓ Encourage your child to continue practicing his/her skills
- ✓ Encourage your child to stay in physical shape
- ✓ Offer a balanced diet
- ✓ Make sure your child is getting adequate sleep
 - 9-11 hours for school age children
 - 8-10 hours for adolescents
- ✓ Take care of injuries immediately

Getting Perspective

- ✓ Help your child understand that loss is part of the game
- ✓ Help your child remember that sports is only one part of his/her life
- ✓ If stress/anxiety is high before competition, ask your child, “What’s the worst case scenario, and can you deal with it?”

Change Self-Talk

- ✓ The first step is helping your child pay attention to what they are thinking to themselves
- ✓ Encourage them to “change the channel” off of negative self-talk
- ✓ Help them engage in productive self-talk
 - “I’m going to give it my best.”
 - “I can do this.”
- ✓ Use examples of role models

Create a Positive Environment

- ✓ Decrease social comparisons
- ✓ Have a constructive attitude toward mistakes
- ✓ Remain positive and optimistic

Relaxation Techniques

- ✓ Slow deep breathing
- ✓ Stretching
- ✓ Journaling
- ✓ Listening to music

Understanding What You Have Control Over

- ✓ Help your child focus on what they have control over

No Control

- How others will think about your performance
- How much game time you’ll get
- Winning
- Fan/parent reactions
- Making the team
- Receiving a scholarship

Control

- How much you prepare
- How much your practice
- How much you sleep
- Your diet
- How you warm up
- Your attitude
- Your mental preparation