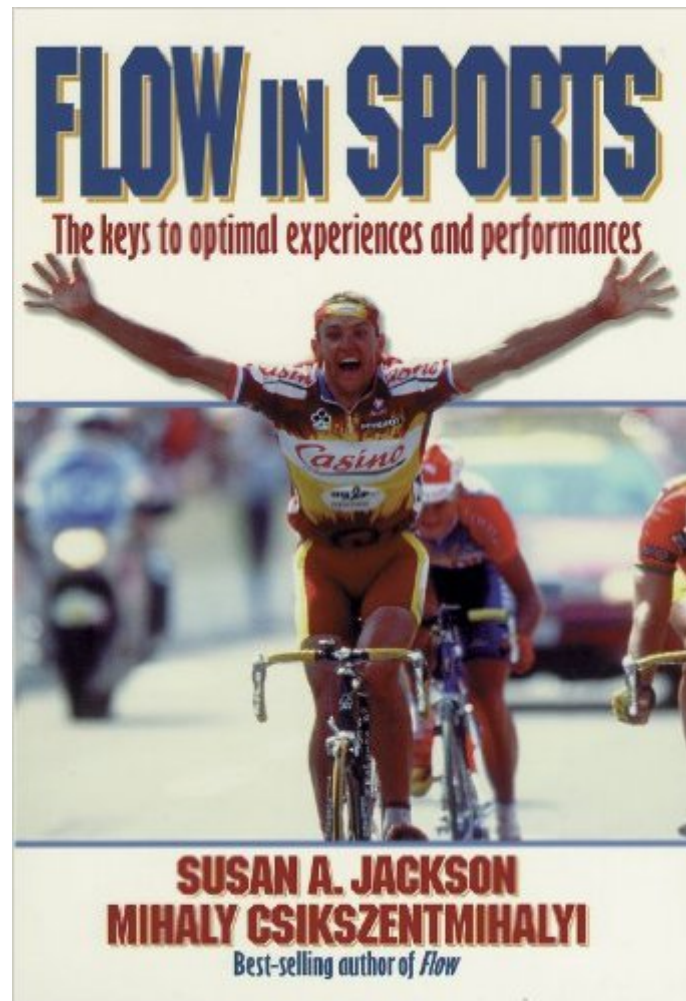


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# Flow In Sports: The Keys To Optimal Experiences And Performances



## Synopsis

" The experience of flow is still one of the least understood phenomena in sport. And yet it is one of the richest, most memorable experiences an athlete will ever know. Some call it a natural "high." Others refer to it as being "in a zone." Whatever it's called, flow is an elusive and very sought-after psychological state that athletes, coaches, and sport psychologists have tried to understand, harness, and employ to their benefit since Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi first coined the term back in the early 1970s. Now, in the first book devoted exclusively to flow in sports, the pioneering legend Csikszentmihalyi and sport psychology researcher Susan Jackson attempt not only to explain the phenomenon but also to identify the key conditions associated with its occurrence. The book begins with a description of what flow is and is not. Flow is defined as a person's total absorption into an activity. While it is always a peak, satisfying experience, it is not necessarily associated with peak performance on every occasion. Most of the book delves deeply into the key factors leading up to and accompanying the flow experience. The authors also recommend certain actions on the part of the athlete or coach to optimize the conditions in training and performance that allow flow to occur. The book is full of vivid examples, captivating quotes, and revealing research findings that enhance the authors' clear and insightful text. The sport setting is rife with opportunities to experience flow-be it in pick-up games or the Olympics. But until now, flow has been an infrequent, accidental, and even mysterious phenomenon to most athletes. With Flow in Sports, this optimal experience becomes both more familiar and more achievable. Get to know flow, and get into it. Find out what you've been missing. v "

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Flow in Sports: The keys to optimal experiences and performances by Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi. This book is a great introduction to a key aspect of performance: Flow. In this very readable book the authors define the key dimensions of Flow as: 1. Challenge-skills balance 2. Action-awareness merging 3. Clear goals 4. Unambiguous feedback 5. Concentration on the task in hand 6. Sense of control 7. Loss of self-consciousness 8. Transformation of time 9. Autotelic experience. (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p. 16) These dimensions are built on almost 40 years of Csikszentmihalyi's work on this topic and it was interesting that in their recent research Beard and Hoy (2010) confirmed what they called the Jackson-Marsh model. This is a rich area of interest for the athlete and the researchers alike, and the payoff, Flow, is an addictive motivator. For the readers who are interested in this topic Jackson, S.A., & Eklund, R.C. (2004). The flow scales manual (Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, Inc.) is worth reading. The rewarding aspects of Flow in a variety of situations demonstrate the nature of the positive psychology of human endeavor. This book is a must read.

Flow in Sports by Susan A. Jackson is a well written, clear, practical manual that offers well grounded advice to any level athlete. This is the best book I have seen on the topic since the original classic by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi because it delivers the concepts without fanfare. Flow is just another practical tool for the modern day athlete, the same as good nutrition and dedicated practice schedules. This tone and the plentiful, flow-accurate blurbs from athletes in several different sports, make for a fun and exciting read. Every athlete will identify with the concepts and find inspiration to expand on the methods in their own specific sports training.

A classic in sports psychology, and overlooked gem in practical explanation of Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory. An excellent basic primer on "flow" psychology for all - athlete or not - and a must for any athlete who loves his or her game

The book is at odds with itself in some ways. The work of Csikszentmihalyi was to determine the quality of experiences that make life worth living. Sport activities are perfect for the challenge/skill balance in flow. However the book tends to keep slipping away from that concept to "winning" and beating the competition and reaching the top, which is not the same idea. I decided not to use this as a textbook for undergraduate course in exercise motivation throughout life. I decided rather that the book Finding Flow captured the ideas better. Flow in sports does have a useful chart showing

how challenge/skill balance can be planned in sport activities and that is a strong point in this book.

The full title of the book is "Flow in Sports: The Key to Optimal Experiences and Performances". The book truly lives up to its title. It provides practical advice for developing the training regimen and mental mindset that lead to the state of "flow" that is key to doing well (and having fun) in sports. I also found the advice in this book to be applicable to other aspects of my life, such as work and studies. The book was co-authored by Dr. Csikszentmihalyi, a world renowned expert in this field, so you know that the advice in this book is based on solid academic research. The only problem I had with the book is the dry writing style, which reminds me of a college term paper.

I recently went on a binge of "mental training" books. This one came highly recommended, and I have to be honest, I am not very impressed. The main problem is the style of writing is, well, boring. I found myself constantly reading, then re-reading pages. ZZZzzzzzzz.... I am going to re-read the book - it does have some good info in it - maybe a second read through will be easier.

Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi tackle the topic of how athletes -- from would-be champs to afterwork gym rats -- achieve that wonderful altered state of flow where the muscles work smoothly and you feel great about your workout. This book offers an unusually clear exposition of exactly HOW you can get enter flow in sports. It describes what's necessary, such as challenge, feedback, and focus on the present, and suggests ways to incorporate these elements into your sport. Lots of quotes from athletes involved in various sports help bring the text alive. There are notes, too, so you know they've done their research. Quite inspiring.

The only "sports psychology" book I've ever found helpful or whose advice I could easily put into practice. No cheesy personal stories here, just concrete ways to facilitate increased enjoyment and performance. As a mystic-turned-ultrarunner, I loved this book.

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