

## Optimal performance – how do I become the best athlete I can be?

*By Physiotherapist Lauren Campbell*

To enhance your performance, each player should consult with a team of experts to analyse all aspects of their game. These experts may include their current/previous coaches, parents and medical/allied health staff with a sporting enhancement background. The role of this team is to reveal, discuss and plan improvement each player's strengths as well as weaknesses. These strengths and weakness should be split into both physical skills, like vertical jump, and mental skills, like decisions under pressure and nerves before a game.



Performance at high level in any sport requires a great mix of physical and mental skills – so let's focus on what they could be for basketballers.

### Physical skills

- Muscle power, especially lower limbs to assist with jumping and upper limbs for passing/rebound strength
- Muscle endurance – can you run out a game still moving strong?
- Specific movement patterns, especially change of direction and landing mechanics
- Ball handling skills and shooting accuracy
- Agility drill performance, especially with the dual tasking of dribbling and involved decision making

Then there are tests commonly used in basketballers like vertical jump, 20m shuttle test, yo-yo test (which has replaced beep test) and hop for distance.

Mental skills are also paramount for optimising performance in basketballers. These skills are harder to test overtly but include decision making under pressure, decision making under fatigue, reading plays and dealing with their own emotions. Sport psychologists are the experts in this realm and are available through the Optimal Health Lab for athletes wanting to improve this part of their overall game.

If you're interested in talking and learning more about performance optimisation, please feel free to contact our expert team at the Optimal Health Lab. Our physiotherapy team offer specific testing sessions for physical skills called 'Musculoskeletal sport screenings' or running mechanics consultations.

