

# Men Athletes, Masculinity, and Self-Compassion: What We Know So Far

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## Introduction

**Self-compassion** entails extending compassion to one's self in instances of perceived inadequacy or failure (Neff, 2003). There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that self-compassion provides a buffer against negative evaluation, emotional pain, and failure for women in sport. **However, despite the potential benefits of self-compassion, it is surprising that there is little self-compassion research in the field of sport focused on men and masculinity.**

### Study 1 Overview: Quantitative Survey (Reis et al., 2019, *JSEP*, 41, 368-379)

To examine whether variables previously identified as important in self-compassion research with general populations of (a) men and (b) women athletes are also relevant to men athletes.

N = 172 men athletes ( $M_{age} = 22.8$  years)

### Study 1 Key Results

Correlations (after controlling for self-esteem)

	Self-compassion
Psychological Well-being	.66**(.10*)
Inclusive Masculinity	.30**(.08)
Hegemonic Masculinity	-.32**(-.19**)
Internalized Shame	-.74**(-.23**)
Fear of Failure	-.63**(-.31**)
Fear of Negative Evaluation	-.54**(-.28**)
State Rumination	-.57**(-.42**)
State Self-criticism	-.52**(-.35**)
Concern over Mistakes	-.56**(-.34**)
Fear of Compassion for Self	-.49**(-.15*)

### Study 2 Overview: Qualitative Interviews (Submitted for Publication)

To explore men athlete's lived experiences of self-compassion through the lens of masculinity.

N = 16 men athletes ( $M_{age} = 21.4$  years)  
Two semi-structured interviews and reflexive photography

### Study 2 Key Results

*Men athletes in our study generally represent a version of masculinity that is accepting of other representations of masculinity, and they were open and willing to accept and embrace self-compassion, particularly if it helps them improve their sport performance.*

### Study 3 Overview: Quantitative Experiment (Proposed)

To test the effectiveness of a 7-day self-compassion intervention for men athletes.

N = 80-100 men athletes  
Will be recruited from team and individual sports representing both body confrontational sports and non-body confrontational sports.

Participants will be randomly assigned to either a self-compassion intervention (based on Mosewich et al., 2013) group or attention control group.

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