



iPerformance
psychology

Plan. Prepare. Perform.

2012 PRESS KIT

Steve Portenga, PhD - Bio

Founder and CEO of iPerformance Psychology, Steve Portenga has been intrigued by the psychology of human performance since his first days coaching alpine skiing in Vail. Intrigue became passion as he studied and worked under some of the most prominent sports psychologists in the world while attending graduate school. Throughout his career, Portenga has had the opportunity to work with professional and collegiate organizations; Olympic and youth athletes across many sports; and with various performers in medical, business, performing arts, and high-risk occupations. Steve possesses a comprehensive and unique understanding of the psychology of human performance informed by his varied professional experiences, experience as a professor, and his professional involvement.

Steve currently serves as the chair of the Psychological Services Subcommittee and the Sports Science Representative on the Coaching Education Committee for USA Track & Field, a position he has held since 2010. Steve will be supporting the team on site in London for the 2012 Olympic Games. In addition, he is a licensed psychologist in the state of Colorado, a Certified Consultant, AASP (Association of Applied Sport Psychology) and is listed in the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) Sport Psychology Registry.

Portenga earned his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2004 and his M.S. in Exercise and Sport Science from the University of Utah in 2003. From 2005 to 2012, Portenga served as Director of Sport Psychology for the University of Denver Division of Athletics and Recreation.

The App's Story

The iPerformance Psychology app came about in response to my desire to find a more efficient and effective way to help the athletes and performers I work with develop the basic psychological and performance skills necessary for consistent performance. It started with my consulting with USA Track & Field and other professional sport franchises. I wanted a better way to communicate with the athletes I was working with. Due to their travel schedules, I also wanted a better way to help them develop as performers when we couldn't meet face-to-face. As an ex-engineer, I knew that the things I've done for years to help these athletes become the best in the world could be delivered through a smartphone. More importantly I also realized this could help any performer regardless of age, skill level, or performance domain.

Drawing on my engineering background, I set out to develop an app based on my work with performers that would incorporate technology, neuroscience, and learning theory. With the help of the gang at [Ideas By Nature](#), we've come up with something that has exceeded all my initial expectations. This app is much more than static text and video. There are no impersonalized, generic tips. It's an interactive and engaging way to accurately assess and train performance psychology skills.

The app takes the best of performance psychology and integrates smartphone technology allowing me to help performers in a way not possible before. This app has grown into a tool that isn't just a substitute for face-to-face meetings; it's something I'm incorporating even when I meet with a performer in-person. In your hand you can now hold years of mentoring from the best sport psychology consultants, years of work as a professor in one of the most highly regarded graduate programs, and years of experience working with some of the best athletes in the USA and the world!

It's been an amazing experience and a lot of fun to see how the use of technology can vastly improve the assessment and development of performance psychology skills.

And this is just the beginning! We already have plans for future versions of the app to include skill development games, psychophysiology and biofeedback, more advanced artificial intelligence to increase the personalization, and a greater sense of community. iPerformance Psychology will continue to evolve as a great personalized trainer based on up-to-date research, neuroscience, and technology.

-Steve Portenga, PhD

Steve's Story

How did I get from computer engineering to coaching? Not a straight forward answer of course. Although computers were a fun hobby, I just wasn't as passionate about the field as my classmates were. At the time it seemed Vail was the best place for me to get residency for law school. Because the University of Colorado didn't do deferred admissions, I had to decline and reapply. Twice. After my first season coaching, I had to find out how many of the athletes were coming back the following season for administrative planning. When they answered "we'll come back if you do" I was hooked. I thought I should pay attention to the number of times the past year I had heard lawyers tell me they wish they were skiing instead of practicing law.

Of all the Master's degrees I could have earned to help me become a ski academy director, why sport psychology? Developing the technical knowledge to teach athletes to turn on skis was relatively easy for me. The truth is, getting the athletes to commit, concentrate, and work together to learn this information was a constant challenge. And I wasn't alone. Most of my colleagues had similar struggles. I wasn't sure what to do about this until I was home one summer visiting family and saw a book on sport psychology on my sister's bookshelf (Psyching for Sport by Terry Orlick). The book was intriguing so I opened it and saw a chapter on goal setting – Cool! I had just done that the previous season. We wrote goals down the first day at lunch, I stuck them in my ski coat pocket, and after the season was over I reviewed them while cleaning out my ski locker. I opened the book to that chapter and was thrilled that the first example was skiing related. After reading that chapter, the book had engulfed me for the rest of the day. I was hooked again.

It wasn't until midway through my Master's program that I even began to think about doing sport psychology for a career. Slowly I realized that I could still work with skiers, but didn't need to be standing at the bottom of a ski hill in hard plastic boots freezing my pants off. I had an amazing mentor in Keith Henschen, who is often referred to by his peers as perhaps the best sport psychologist out there. Though I intended to stay at Utah for my doctoral program, a necessary switch over to their counseling psychology program was in order. I applied to the University of Missouri as a backup, without knowing much about the program. I still shake my head at what a great, and lucky, move that fleeting decision was. I got accepted to Missouri and was offered a fellowship that made me think more seriously about it. When I asked Keith about going there, he looked up and said: "That's good. I'm sick of you anyways." Being somewhat sarcastic myself, I was able to translate what he said into Queen's English: "I think you've learned what you can from me and will get experiences there that you really need to develop that you won't get here."

So, on I went to Missouri, petrified about spending three years in the flat lands without mountains or snow. The first week I was there the city canceled elementary school because it was too hot. At this point I was questioning what I was doing there. Eventually I stopped by to quickly introduce myself to who I hoped was going to become a new mentor in Rick McGuire. Three hours later of quick introductions, I knew that was the case.

In addition to being a great mentor and professor, Rick McGuire was also the head track and field coach at Missouri. I started going to the track in the afternoons (during their practice time) because that was the most reliable place to track Rick down. I spent a lot of time feeling awkward, just hanging out, and waiting to continue a conversation with Rick as we were constantly interrupted by him actually having to coach. After a couple months of showing up regularly, Rick asked me if I was going to continue. Of course, I was too clueless to say anything but yes. Right then and there, he pointed to an athlete, said he could use someone to talk to, and that I should make myself useful. That moment was what started my three years of being his first graduate student to help consult with his team. Rick was the one who really got sport psychology going within USA Track and Field back in the 80s and had served as the chair of sport psychology since.

When I graduated, it was an easy decision for the USATF sport psychology committee to ask me to join. Few other people had the training, experience with track and field, and knowledge of USATF that I had. Paying my own way to NCAA and US Nationals for three years wasn't easy as a graduate student, but it was a worthwhile investment. I didn't get a spring break while there, but I got something far greater – an amazing education. Eventually, Rick decided it was time to retire from Missouri and step down from his position as chair of sport psychology with USATF. After years of being mentored by Rick, it was me who was asked to be his replacement.

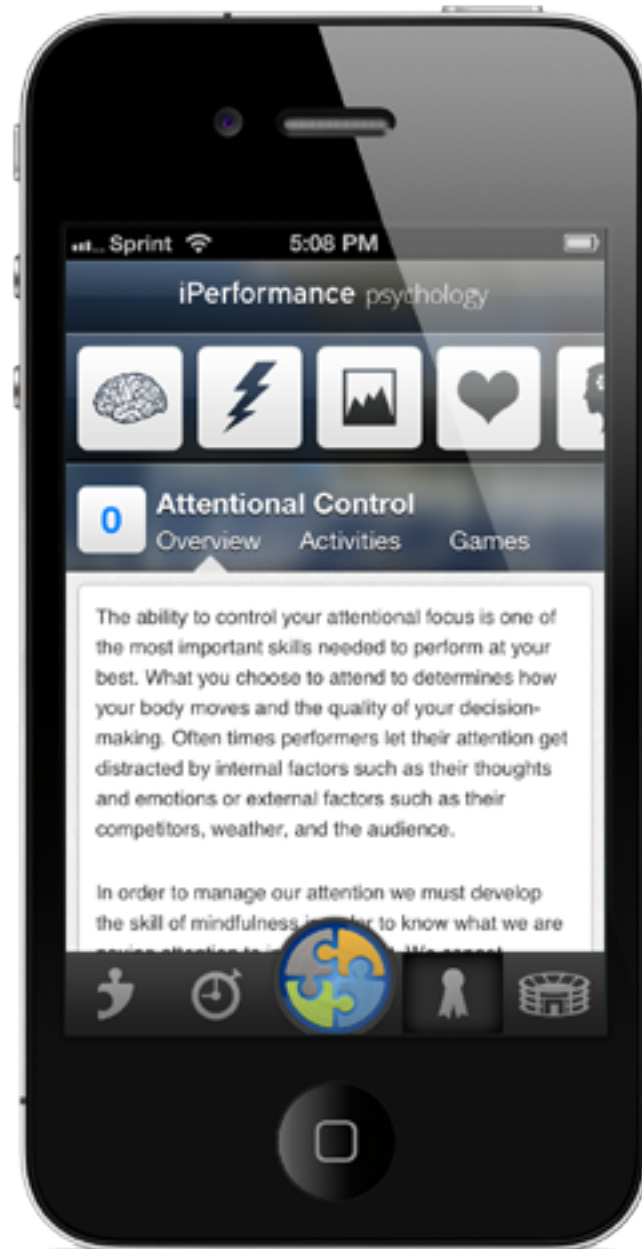
When a job opened up at the University of Denver as I was graduating, I was thrilled at the opportunity to move back to Colorado and to be close to friends from my Vail days. I returned not just a ski coach, but a professor and member of the U.S. Olympic team. After a year in their counseling center serving as the liaison to the athletic department, I moved across campus to develop a new graduate program in Sport & Performance Psychology. It was a deeply rewarding experience to create a program from the ground up. Eventually the program needed a fulltime director and, needless to say, I wanted to continue to serve athletics. Shifting again, I moved over to the athletic department full-time. After a couple years there working with some great coaches and athletes, it was time for me to go into private practice and develop the iPerformance Psychology iPhone App.

It has been an amazing experience being part of so many great athletes' and people's lives. It is also an honor to be a part of many athletes' development and progress towards the Olympic Games. On one hand what it takes to get to the Olympic level is quite outstanding; yet on the other, what is most amazing is how basic and simple that process is and how willing the athletes are to be patient in this journey. There truly are very few secrets of what it takes. The only secret is that these great athletes are willing to do the basics and ignore those who come selling secrets. This, in a nutshell, is what iPerformance Psychology represents. To be a part of this process and have such dedicated people put their trust in me is quite a special feeling. I truly look forward to helping many more athletes reach their peak performance levels.



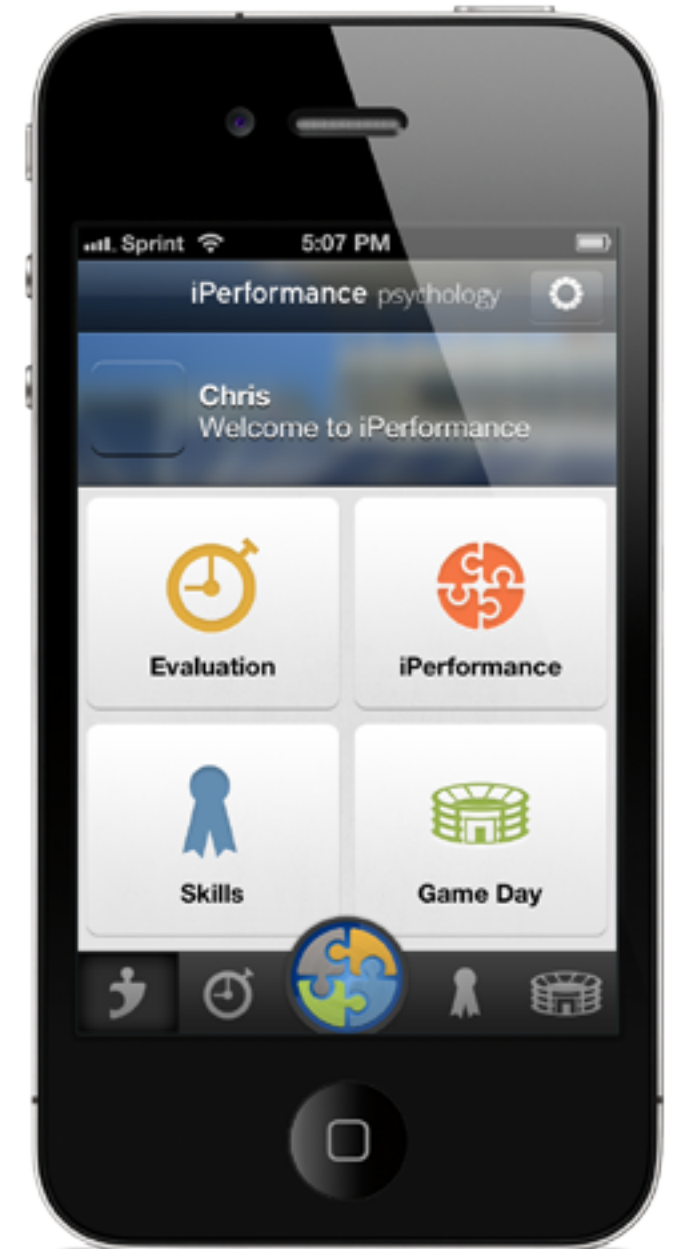
iPerformance Psychology iPhone App Highlights

- The world's most advanced sport and performance psychology app
- Developed under the direction of Dr. Steve Portenga, sport psychologist for the U.S. Track and Field Olympics team
- Helps athletes - whether professional or amateur - focus, improve, and grow to high levels of performance
- Applicable to all performance domains: All major and minor sports, performing arts, medical, high risk occupations, and business
- Proven functionality and content tested throughout the field of sport psychology brought to a digital form



iPerformance Mental/Psychological/Performance Skills Trainer

- Initial assessment identifies key areas to improve and guides the user to work on specific skills
- Activities that train the user through iPerformance exercises, worksheets, and games
- 7 iPerformance skills: Attentional Control, Energy Regulation, Imagery, Commitment, Concentration, Confidence, and Composure
- Personal iPerformance Advisor which analyzes and gives tips along the way
- GameDay functionality that helps setup focus exercises and routines for helping prepare for the day of the big game, race, or performance





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