

## INPLASY

## Effects Of Using Emotional Regulation Strategies Over Athlete's Emotional Well-Being: A Scoping Review Protocol

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Cardoner, M; Parrado, E; Blasco, T.

**Corresponding author:**

Miriam Cardoner

miriam.cardoner@autonoma.cat

**Author Affiliation:**

Department of Basic Psychology  
and Sport Research Institute,  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION****Support** - No financial support.**Review Stage at time of this submission** - Piloting of the study selection process.**Conflicts of interest** - None declared.**INPLASY registration number:** INPLASY202580017**Amendments** - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 6 August 2025 and was last updated on 6 August 2025.**INTRODUCTION**

**Review question / Objective** The purpose of this scoping review is to establish how emotion regulation strategies contribute to balancing the athlete's emotions as a means to improve athletes' well-being. This general objective will be concretized by the following specific goals: 1. Analyze well-being and emotion regulation in sports settings - 2. Establish how well-being and emotion regulation are linked to each other in sport - 3. Determine which emotion regulation strategies are more effective at increasing well-being in sport settings.

To this end, the proposed scoping review will address the following question: Which emotion regulation strategies balance athletes' emotions to improve athletes' well-being?

**Background** Beyond being sports performers, athletes are essentially human beings whose mental, physical, and social health is reflected in both their well-being and ill-being. While it is well

established that sports experiences provide numerous benefits for athletes, these can also negatively influence an athlete's well-being (Thompson & Schary, 2020). There are multiple interpretations of what is categorized as well-being, although most sources agree on defining it as a comfortable, healthy, and happy state (Eaude, 2009). This state is divided into four different components: mental, social, physical, and emotional (Giles et al., 2020). For research purposes, this review focuses on emotional well-being, which relates to the individuals' ability to accept and manage their emotions when facing challenges (Lundqvist, 2011). We understand well-being as a combination of the eudaimonic and hedonic perspectives. As Deci & Ryan (2008) argue, combining both well-being perspectives leads to an optimal functional state. In short, well-being is defined by the overall happiness and life satisfaction that athletes experience, which can be determined by athletes' emotional regulation, socioeconomic situation, and physical health. Both perspectives, eudaimonic and hedonic, highlight

the crucial role that emotions have in well-being (Ryff, 1989) and the impact they have on happiness and satisfaction. (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Effectively managing and regulating one's emotions enhances positive affect, reduces negative affect, and increases life satisfaction, which contributes to overall well-being. Experience pleasant emotions such as happiness or joy, and regulating correctly unpleasant emotions like anger or stress (Diener & BiswasDiener, 2008), aligns with the hedonic well-being perspective, emphasizing the avoidance of pain and the search for pleasure (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Furthermore, balancing emotions correctly increases life satisfaction, emphasizing personal growth, self-realization, and purpose, concepts that are associated with the eudaimonic well-being perspective (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Thus, understanding and managing emotions effectively contribute to achieving emotional balance, which in turn increases happiness and satisfaction –integral components of an athlete's overall well-being. Previous research has mostly focused on the association between emotion regulation and performance (Lin et al., 2022). Applying different types of emotion regulation strategies modulates emotions in different ways, promoting different consequences on individuals' feelings, thoughts, and actions (Beatty & Janelle, 2020). Depending on personal preferences and situation demands, athletes choose a strategy to regulate both antecedents and responses focused emotions (Martinent et al., 2015). The use of these strategies can be either adaptive or maladaptive for athletes. Adaptive emotion regulation strategies help athletes face challenges by balancing emotions effectively, while maladaptive strategies interfere with performance, not letting them correctly adapt to situation demands (McCarthy et al., 2012). As previously stated, emotion regulation plays an important role in how athletes face adversity and experience sports. As a result, athletes must learn to identify those strategies that help them better regulate their emotions to achieve their goals (Kim & Tamminen, 2022). Balancing emotions and adapting to adversity has become essential for athletes who want to perform at their best levels (Kim & Tamminen, 2022). In turn, the focus of emotion regulation must be directed toward balancing emotions to enhance athletes' emotional well-being.

**Rationale** Previous research has mostly focused on how emotion regulation strategies affect performance; however, there is little literature addressing the effects those strategies have on athletes' emotional well-being. The relationship between the usage of emotion regulation

strategies and the improvement of performance has been well established. However, the strategies needed to increase well-being in athletes are still to be determined.

## METHODS

**Strategy of data synthesis** The review will be undertaken under the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement (Liberati et al., 2009). The search is limited to articles written in both English and Spanish publication Language. The search will be carried out through five different databases: PsycInfo, Web of Science, PubMed, ProQuest Central, and Scopus. This review only includes articles that were published after the publication of the Process Model of Emotion Regulation by Gross in 1998. For this, the search is limited to the years 1998 and July 2024.

When possible, keywords and terms are obtained from Thesaurus. The following boolean search will be used: ("sport\*" OR "athlete\*" OR "athletic training" OR "sport performance" OR "motor performance" OR "athletic performance" OR "football" OR "basketball" OR "tennis" OR "athletics" OR "swimming" OR "gymnastics" OR "volleyball" OR "soccer" OR "rugby" OR "handball" OR "skating" OR "hockey" OR "lacrosse" OR "cycling" OR "baseball" OR "cricket" OR "golf" OR "taekwondo" OR "martial arts" OR "badminton" OR "water polo" OR "softball" OR "shooting") AND ("emotion\* regulation" OR "emotional control" OR "emotional states" OR "emotional self-regulation" OR "self regulation") AND ("strateg\*" OR "appraisal" OR "distraction" OR "cognitive reappraisal" OR "suppression" OR "rumination" OR "avoidance" OR "acceptance" OR "adjustment" OR "adaptation" OR "response modulation" OR "situation modification") AND ("emotional health" OR "emotions" OR "stressor\*" OR "disappointment" OR "enjoyment" OR "stress" OR "anxiety" OR "serenity" OR "fear" OR "anger" OR "frustration" OR "satisfaction" OR "happiness" OR "calmness" OR "excitement" OR "dejection" OR "joy" OR "pride" OR "well-being").

**Eligibility criteria** Studies published as original articles in peer-reviewed journals will be selected. Reviews, editorials, protocols, theses, letters to the editor, and abstracts of proceedings will not be included. Athletes with mental disorders will be excluded, as well as theoretical articles. No sports disciplines will be excluded, and no age discrepancy will be used. Considering the methodological heterogeneity of the studies, there

will not be specifications made concerning study designs (e.g., transversal, case study, qualitative studies, factorial or pre-post studies, etc.). This review will include those articles that presented athletes as participants and focused on emotion regulation strategies during sports practice or competition. The study will be centered only on sport-related emotions and how athletes regulate them.

Inclusion criteria: 1. Individual or collective sports. 2. Professional, amateur, or university athletes. 3. Empirical articles or case studies. Exclusion criteria: 1. Athletes with mental disorders - 2. Participants are part of a clinical trial - 3. Participants practice sports occasionally - 4. Participants are former athletes or injured athletes- 5. Emotions are not sport-related - 6. Participants are coaches or referees - 7. Study focuses on preventing emotions instead of regulating them - 8. Theoretical articles, reviews, editorials, protocols, theses, letters to the editor, and abstracts of proceedings. 9. Study does not include specific strategies for regulating emotions.

### Source of evidence screening and selection

The initial search will identify all the articles in the five databases. All duplicate articles will be removed before starting the screening process. Titles and abstracts will be screened independently by two reviewers. In case of discrepancies during the process, a discussion between the reviewers will take place, and if necessary, a third reviewer will take part of the screening process. The agreement between reviewers will be analyzed. When the screening it's finished, the selection process following the eligibility criteria will be done. Full-text eligibility criteria will also be assessed independently by two reviewers. Also, when needed, discrepancies will be addressed by a third reviewer. All the articles selected will be included in the review.

**Data management** The articles resulting from the Boolean search will be imported into Mendeley, where, in a first step, duplicate articles from all five databases will be removed. After that, an initial screening, based on title and abstract, will take place to exclude those articles that do not target the purpose of this scoping review. A final screening, based on full-text, will select the studies included in this review. Following, the data will be introduced into an Excel sheet to label all the results.

First, articles information will be addressed: study methodology, (i.e., type of studies and method), participants' information (i.e., athletes level,

gender, number of participants, age, sport), emotions studied, emotion regulation strategies studied and the phase where those strategies are found in the Process Model of Emotion Regulation (Gross, 1998). Then, the results will be classified on how emotion regulation strategies affect athletes' emotional well-being.

As in the screening and selection process, two review authors will extract the data and select studies. Any discrepancies will be resolved through discussion, and a third reviewer will join if necessary. The final data extracted will be analyzed.

**Language restriction** Papers included in this review must be in either English or Spanish.

**Country(ies) involved** Spain.

**Keywords** sport, athletes, emotions, emotion regulation strategies, emotional well-being, sports performance.

### Contributions of each author

Author 1 - Miriam Cardoner.  
Email: miriam.cardoner@autonoma.cat  
Author 2 - Eva Parrado Romero.  
Email: eva.parrado@uab.cat  
Author 3 - Tomás Blasco Blasco.  
Email: tomas.blasco@uab.cat