

Times of India
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BODY TALK

A minute to go before the final whistle in the final match of the inter school hockey tournament. The crowd roared as the ball was passed to Abdul. He trapped it neatly and was off, speeding down the middle of the field. Like quicksilver Abdul flashed past the first, the second and swayed around the third defender. Suddenly it was just the goalkeeper between him and the goal. Would he score... would his team lift the trophy? Abdul's body responded in beautiful synchrony, his muscles stretched every fiber, his eyesight cleared, his mind was perfectly concentrated. In supreme control he feinted to the right, and *goal*...the ball sailed in. It was poetry in motion !

This magical run on the hockey field happened 25 years ago. Today, 40 year old Abdul works as a Computer programmer... but talk to him about sports and a wistful look comes into his eyes. "My career is okay", he says, "but I do this only because I have to." What would he really like to do ? "Ah... my gift is my body... my muscles, my quick reaction time. If I could do it all over again, I would find a career that pushes me physically."

Body Talk: What are Physical Skills?

The *Physical Mechanical* intelligence, is what Abdul is referring to. This intelligence is seen in the ability to move and

control the body to achieve a target. It is the mastery over the motions and expressions of the body. It is the fluency of movement. It involves sensitivity to the posture and movements of our own bodies. Physical Mechanical skills are seen in various forms. A fighter pilot for example requires a quick *reaction time*. The surgeon's "steady hands" reflect highly efficient *eye- hand-coordination*. This intelligence is also seen in the ability to deal with machines, tools and instruments.

Top sports persons are not only gifted in physical abilities, they are also mentally fit. *Sports Psychology* helps athletes with fitness not only of the body, but also of the mind.

Physical Careers

If Abdul had the opportunity to "do it all over again" what are the careers he could be good at? Are there careers in addition to professional sport, that are in demand today?

Protection *Services* is a family of careers that require a highly developed Physical Mechanical ability. The most sought after among the protection services are careers in the Army, the Navy and the Airforce. Careers are also open in the various Para Military Forces and the Police Services.

The *Investigative* and *Security Services* deal with corruption and crime. The Central Bureau of Investigation and the Research and Analysis Wing are examples of Government Investigative agencies. *Safety Management* is a growing field today and

these are specialists who provide security in the industrial environment.

The Performing Arts, are strongly grounded in the Physical Mechanical skills. Training in specific forms of the performing arts are available through Dance - Drama Departments in most Indian Universities and offer degrees in various forms of the Performing Arts.

Kinesiology, is a very new form of therapy that uses various physical exercises to treat the individual. Courses are available in a few Indian Universities. Wild Life Management, Forestry and Plantation Management, are examples of other careers that would suit young people who enjoy using their bodies and keeping themselves physically fit.

Technical Occupations, are high growth and high demand careers in the country today. Some of these are occupations such as auto mechanic, turner, fitter, welder, electrician, medical lab technicians, handicraft, carpentry... the list is a long one. These courses offered through the Industrial Training Institutes and the Polytechnics. Unfortunately, occupations such as these, do not occupy a position of prestige in our society and are looked down upon. The fact is that the demand for young people who are good with their hands and who are trained in the technical line, has doubled and tripled in the last five years.

Careers in the Physical Mechanical area require physical exertion. Some of us are averse to physical work. Some of us enjoy throwing our bodies into a task. If you are one of those

who enjoys using your physical skills, you would do well to take a closer look at careers in the Physical Mechanical area.