

Sian L. Beilock

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Sian Beilock is a psychology professor at The University of Chicago and one of the world's leading experts on the brain science behind "choking under pressure" and the many brain and body factors influencing all types of performance: from test-taking to public speaking to your golf swing. Her research program sits at the intersection of cognitive science and education. She explores the cognitive and neural substrates of skill learning as well as the mechanisms by which performance breaks down in high-stress or high-pressure situations. Her research interests include attention and executive control of complex cognitive and sensorimotor skills; skill acquisition and expertise; performance under pressure and stereotype threat; individual differences in executive functioning; and embodied cognition. Dr. Beilock uses converging methodologies in her research - ranging from behavioral performance measures (e.g., reaction time and accuracy), to physiological measures of stress (e.g., salivary cortisol), to neuroimaging techniques (e.g., fMRI).

Dr. Beilock received a B.S. in Cognitive Science from the University of California, San Diego and PhDs in both Kinesiology (sport science) and Psychology from Michigan State University. Her research is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and a CAREER award from the National Science Foundation.

Sian Beilock's research is routinely covered in the media (e.g., CNN, New York Times, NPR, Wall Street Journal) and she was highlighted as one of four "Rising Stars" across all academic disciplines by the Chronicle of Higher Education in 2005, chosen as one of twenty-five "Women to Watch" by Crain's Chicago Business Magazine in 2007, and received an award for Transformative Early Career Contributions from the Association for Psychological Science in 2011.