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The story behind the picture



You may have noticed the new photo behind the search bar on Taylor & Francis Online. Our refreshed look shows Editor-in-Chief of the [European Journal of Sport Science](#), Andy Jones, undertaking research at the University of Exeter's St Luke's Campus.

But what exactly is going on in the photos? What has led Andy to the position of Editor-in-Chief? And what advice does he have for anyone looking to move into Sport Science? Read on for the full story behind the picture.

Could you tell us about the study we've been photographing today? What are its aims? What do you hope to achieve?

Today's study looked at how nutritional interventions, specifically in the form of dietary nitrate, interact with training to influence performance and the development of fatigue during exercise. Our subject, Steve ([who is pictured on the exercise bike](#)), completed a four-week training program, where he did some sprint interval training while simultaneously ingesting dietary nitrate in the form of beetroot juice. We had other groups taking other supplements, and one group taking a placebo as a control.

Some of our earlier research has demonstrated that dietary nitrate can impact positively on exercise performance if you just take it for a few days. But given that it can have an acute effect, that tends to be true for each training session as well. So if you add up small benefits from each training session, the idea is that taking beetroot juice alongside training may actually boost the benefits of exercise.

Can you outline your route to becoming Editor-in-Chief of *European Journal of Sport Science*?

An opportunity arose when the previous Editor-in-Chief moved on. As I've been quite prominent in the European College of Sport Sciences for a number of years, the ECSS executive board were kind enough to ask me whether I'd be prepared to take the Editorship on, which I was delighted to do. Since then, we've improved quite a lot; we've got a Medline listing now and our impact factor is going up, so we've got quite a lot more interest than we've ever had. The journal does appear to be in quite a good place now.

What are some of your main responsibilities as Editor-in-Chief?

Although each day is different, it will generally involve logging in to the submissions system to see which new papers have been submitted. I'd look for something relevant, sufficiently novel, and interesting for our journal. It will then have extra checks done by our editorial office to check it conforms to our journal style. Once we have found papers which will generate enough interest for our readership, I will log back in and allocate them to the section editor, who is then responsible for taking it through the review process. But I will often look in on the progress of reviewing manuscripts; if an editor is finding it difficult to secure reviewers, for example, or if a reviewer is taking longer than they might think is reasonable, then I'll perhaps intervene there. But I'll generally leave it to the section editors. Then, of course, it's crucial to think about populating the issues, so I'll collect the papers that have been accepted and in the waiting list, creating an issue from the articles that we have in the backlog.

As Editor-in-Chief, how do you maintain the prominence and relevance of your journal?

Firstly, we have a quick turnaround time for manuscripts and make sure we process them as quickly as possible. I log into the journal website every two to three days and see what's new. I do a pre-review of the papers and see which editor or section editor will handle it. And then we just try and keep on top of it so the authors get a rapid review of the manuscript – assuming it even gets to review, as we do reject quite a few even before they begin. So it's about delivering a good service really. Secondly, we put plenty of effort into promoting the journal, particularly on social media. We use this to flag articles and generate some discussion, so I think that helps. Obviously it is a positive story about the journal, so we do try to promote that – the more successful it appears to be, the more successful it becomes as people become interested in submitting to the journal.

If a researcher was interested in contributing to *European Journal of Sport Science*, what advice would you give them? What makes a good submission?

I would say there are three main parts to a successful submission:

- Does this research make a difference; does it make a step change in understanding and/or is this going to be something that's practical and meaningful to our readers? Ideally we'd want all papers to be original and novel, but of course nothing's truly original, it's just the extent to which it makes an important advance on what we know already.
- Is it important? Is it an area that's really vital in sports science, or is it more peripheral? More broadly, how important is this area and what sort of impact is it likely to make on the scientists in the field and on the people they serve?
- Is it methodologically rigorous? Are the methods state-of-the-art and has it been designed properly? Is there a sufficient number of subjects? Has the data been analysed and interpreted effectively?

Do you have any tips for anyone looking to move into the field of Sport Science or Physiology?

First and foremost, it often helps to have an interest in sport, or in exercise. You don't have to be a competitive athlete, although if you do want to work with competitive athletes, that can be an advantage. But you have to have a passion for exercise, fitness and health; something that piques or stimulates your interest in the work. This will help you to communicate with athletes and the general public, to convey your enthusiasm and show your expertise in the field.

Make the most of networking opportunities in the academic community too. Science is very much a team game, so it's essential to have good people around you, starting from university. Choose a strong university and find a good supervisor whose expertise you can draw upon. Further down the line, more senior scientists will benefit from having good PhD students who are really vibrant and energetic. Together, these form great building blocks for a career in Sport Science.