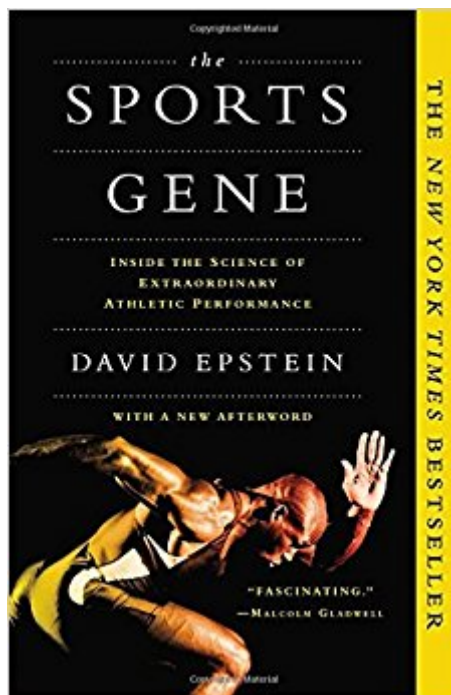




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# The Sports Gene: Inside The Science Of Extraordinary Athletic Performance



## Synopsis

The New York Times bestseller *Outliers* with a new afterword about early specialization in youth sports. The debate is as old as physical competition. Are stars like Usain Bolt, Michael Phelps, and Serena Williams genetic freaks put on Earth to dominate their respective sports? Or are they simply normal people who overcame their biological limits through sheer force of will and obsessive training? In this controversial and engaging exploration of athletic success and the so-called 10,000-hour rule, David Epstein tackles the great nature vs. nurture debate and traces how far science has come in solving it. Through on-the-ground reporting from below the equator and above the Arctic Circle, revealing conversations with leading scientists and Olympic champions, and interviews with athletes who have rare genetic mutations or physical traits, Epstein forces us to rethink the very nature of athleticism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I can't remember a book that has fascinated, educated and provoked me as much as *The Sports Gene*. Epstein has changed forever the way we measure elite athletes and their achievements. Malcom Gladwell "Clear, vivid, and thought-provoking writing that cuts through science anxiety for rank-and-file sports fans." Bonnie Ford, Senior Writer, ESPN "Many researchers and writers are reluctant to tackle genetic issues because they fear the quicksand of racial and ethnic stereotyping. To his credit, Epstein does not flinch." *The Washington Post* "Epstein's rigour in seeking answers and insights is as impressive as the

air miles he must have accumulated . . . his book is dazzling and illuminating. *The Guardian* “Few will put down this deliciously contrarian exploration of great athletic feats. *Kirkus Reviews* (Starred Review) “The narrative follows Mr. Epstein’s search for the roots of elite sport performance as he encounters characters and stories so engrossing that readers may not realize they’re receiving an advanced course in genetics, physiology, and sports medicine. *Christie Aschwanden, The New York Times* “An important book . . . The Sports Gene is bound to put the cat among the pigeons in the blank-slate crowd who think that we can all be equal as long as we equalize environmental inputs such as practice. *Michael Shermer, The Wall Street Journal* “This is the book I’ve been waiting for since the early 1960s. I can’t imagine that anyone interested in sports—particularly the fascinating question, ‘How do the best athletes become the best?’—will be any less enthralled than I. *Amby Burfoot, (1968 Boston Marathon Champion), Runner’s World* “A must-read for athletes, parents, coaches, and anyone who wants to know what it takes to be great. *George Dohrmann, author of Play Their Hearts Out*

David Epstein is an award-winning investigative reporter at ProPublica, and was previously a senior writer at Sports Illustrated. He earned All-East honors on Columbia University’s varsity track squad, and has a master’s degree in environmental science.

David Epstein is an exceptional sports journalist with impeccable credentials. I hope, for SI’s sake, that he’s well paid and happy with his current accommodations at the Time & Life building, Roc Center. No doubt ESPN, and a myriad of other sports publication giants, would love to have him on their staff. This book was incredible, so excellently researched, and written in such a way as to make the mysteries of “over-the-top” athleticism available to the scores of sports fans, like myself, who are sports medicine novices. If you haven’t done it yet, it would behoove you to log on to SI.com and check out the archived articles of David Epstein. Once you do, no doubt you’ll understand how he was able to produce such an excellent read as ‘The Sports Gene’ certainly is. I pre-ordered this book via my Prime account and received it on the official August 1st release date. So, Max Kudo’s to . Luckily for me, I did pre-order, and didn’t have to wait it out as this book climbed into the NYT’s Top 10 Non-Fiction Book List immediately, totally catching the publisher, Penguin, by surprise.

Penguin had to crank up the printing presses to meet 's customer demand. BTW, 'The Sports Gene' is currently sitting at #209 on 's Best Selling Book list. Sorry, but I can't force myself to make a decision on which chapter of the book I deemed the best. Chapter after chapter, I encountered such unexpected insight via Mr. Epstein's research process, that when I turned the page to engage the next chapter, I was positive he couldn't top the reading enjoyment I had just moments ago experienced. But, he did, time and time again. I own, and continually expand, a home library of over 10,000 hardback and soft-bound volumes, so, very, very humbly, I'm convinced I know the difference between a bad book, a mediocre book, a good book, and a GREAT book. The Sports Gene is a GREAT book. Buy it, read it, and I can guarantee you will enjoy it. Thanks, Kerry... Opelousas LA.

To summarize the book says to be the best you have to have the genes. The book seems to layout that 1) you need good genes like being able to transport oxygen to your body better than normal 2) be raised in the right environment like being raised in a high altitude to develop bigger lungs and 3) practice which is the least important of the three. Depending on how much of the first 2 you have will determine how much of 3 (practice) you need before you become great. Interesting examples that seem to go on a bit by the end of the book. Not a book to get if you are looking for ideas on how to improve as an athlete. The book is a good supplement to other books like The Talent Code and Outliers which kind of imply that 10,000 hours of practice is needed. The Sports Gene says you could be a master in 3,000 hours or flat out never depending on what genes you have.

I first learned of this book from Paul Harvey's syndicated radio spot. I was so intrigued by the topic because of my own athletic background (as paltry as it may be) and my avid interest in sports. I wanted to know what this book had to offer to the argument of nurture vs. nature. David Epstein does a fantastic job digging into the argument and unearthing qualified evidence to support both sides. He remains objective and professional throughout the entire treatise. In the 280 or so pages he spans the globe, spans the sports landscape and spans the genetic map to find out what makes superior athletes superior athletes. He interviews scientists, authors, professors, trainers and athletes. He references research from many different scientists and researchers to support their claim of genetics or environment or history or other. I've never had such a thorough lesson in genes and gene mutations. But don't let the content intimidate you or scare you into believing that this book is drab and reads like a text book. It is very interesting and uses a somewhat storytelling style to convey the facts, opinions and anecdotal evidences. It was very interesting to read how certain

genes were found in certain athletes or how poverty or lack thereof can contribute to athletics. Poverty and the absence of facilities and training has hindered some nations and wealth has hindered others! Yes, when you have cars, plenty of food and video games with no need to walk to school and no interest in running because there is no need to--then your nation will lose runners. It was great to read the different hypotheses, their evidence and their conclusions. I think David did a very objective and fair job in presenting everything there was to present. Even the conclusions he presented in a very non-biased way and leaving them open for the reader. Ultimately there are so many factors that go into being a superior athlete that no one thing can be pointed to but it won't stop us from trying to find out.

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