

STAY!

Decreasing teenage dropout in sport

DESK RESEARCH REPORT

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND GOOD PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF SPORT DROPOUT PREVENTION

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Introduction

The phenomenon of teenage dropout in sports poses a significant challenge to individuals and communities alike. Recognising the need for effective solutions, the STAY! project is proudly presented as a scientifically-driven initiative to mitigate teenage dropout rates in sport through strategic interventions and knowledge dissemination.

The underlying objectives of the STAY! project revolve around addressing three primary priorities. Firstly, the project aims to strengthen coaching capacity by enhancing the skills and knowledge base of coaches and sport associations. This is to be achieved by developing an advanced E-learning platform that consolidates a comprehensive array of materials tailored to tackle the dropout problem. The platform will serve as a central hub, offering coaches access to in-depth training resources and cutting-edge strategies.

Secondly, the project adopts a collaborative approach to policy development by engaging with local governments, authorities, and various organisations spanning diverse sectors such as education and psychology. By fostering partnerships and leveraging collective expertise, the project aims to develop robust policies and interventions that comprehensively address the root causes of dropout.

Thirdly, the project emphasises the role of volunteering as a means to engage teenagers and reinforce their commitment to sports. It seeks to establish tailored volunteering opportunities within sport clubs alongside competitive and recreational activities. To ensure the efficacy of these opportunities, evidence-based recommendations and guidelines on structuring and integrating volunteering programs will be provided. These valuable insights will be readily accessible through the E-learning platform.

Central to the STAY! project is the imperative of conveying the multifaceted benefits of sports to teenagers. It aims to highlight the exceptional developmental opportunities inherent in sports, which are often elusive in the realm of day-to-day life. By participating in sports, individuals can acquire a diverse range of skills, unique experiences, and invaluable connections. For instance, young athletes with a proclivity for journalism can leverage their sports-related networks to flourish as sport journalists, capitalising on the networking potential facilitated by their athletic pursuits.

Furthermore, sports serve as a catalyst for cultivating essential values such as teamwork, solidarity, tolerance, and fair play. Participation in sports contributes to personal growth and fulfillment, fostering character development. The structured sports environment promotes mutual respect as individuals navigate defined rules and roles, thereby encouraging inclusivity and integration. Within this context, teenagers are exposed to an environment conducive to embracing diversity and learning to function effectively within a group dynamic.

Additionally, engaging in volunteering within sports organizations affords teenagers opportunities for active citizenship and non-formal education. Sport clubs, in particular, are inclined to utilize volunteers from within their own ranks, leveraging their inherent knowledge of the sport. By partaking in volunteering activities, teenagers can enhance their sense of responsibility while simultaneously making meaningful contributions to their local communities.

To ensure the efficacy of the STAY! project, an Expert Group has been formed, comprising distinguished experts with diverse skill sets and research areas. This interdisciplinary group, in collaboration with representatives from esteemed project partners, assumes a central role in managing the intellectual output of the project. Leveraging their collective expertise, the Expert Group is poised to deliver high-impact outcomes that pave the way for sustained reductions in teenage sport dropout rates.

The STAY! project represents a comprehensive and empirically-grounded endeavor driven by a fusion of scientific knowledge and practical experiences. It invites stakeholders to embark on a transformative journey, empowering teenagers to remain actively engaged, fostering their holistic development, and harnessing the profound potential of sports in shaping their lives.

Examining the Sport Dropout Phenomenon in Europe

A Specific Emphasis on Female Dropout Patterns

Sport plays a crucial role in many people's lives in Europe, offering physical, social and psychological benefits [Fraser-Thomas, J.; Côté, J., 2006] [J.Crane, 2014].

Millions of children and adolescents engage in organised sport activities yearly (Ewing & Seefeldt, 2002). The benefit of physical activity is frequently linked to psychological and physical health (Fox, Boutcher, Faulkner, & Biddle, 2000; Landers & Arent, 2001).

However, each year about one-third of the young athletes decide not to continue sport activity (Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989; Weiss & Ferrer-Caja, 2002). Understanding the intricacies of sport dropout is imperative for fostering enduring engagement and maximizing the potential benefits of sports participation. By delving into the underlying factors contributing to dropout, particularly with a specific emphasis on female athletes, we can develop targeted interventions and strategies to alleviate the dropout rates and promote sustained sport participation.

There is no single reason for the decision to discontinue participation in sport or physical activity. Different studies have provided a combination of social, environmental, motivational, and psychological factors influencing sport continuation.

Broadly, it can be maintained that sports dropout occurs when individuals stop playing sports prematurely, abandoning sports activities they were previously engaged in; dropping out from a sport means the premature termination of a sport career before the athlete reaches his or her peak performance level in the respective sport. As the age for peak performance in most sports is in early adulthood, career termination in childhood and adolescence is regarded as premature, and the athlete is thus categorised as a dropout (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007). It is crucial to recognize that sport dropout encompasses more than a mere disengagement from sports; it signifies a broader disconnection from physical activity and the associated health benefits. The implications of dropout extend beyond the individual level, potentially contributing to the alarming rise of sedentary lifestyles among young people.

In Europe, the sport dropout phenomenon involves a wide range of individuals, including children, adolescents, and adults. However, one of the most relevant and urgent dimensions concerns the female dropout in sport. Despite significant progress in promoting gender equality over the past decades, women continue to face unique barriers and challenges that affect their participation and sustained involvement in sport.

Sport dropout is a prevalent phenomenon observed predominantly during childhood and adolescence, with notable implications, particularly in smaller countries characterized by a relatively low number of competitive athletes (Zarrett et al., 2020). Consequently, both research studies and applied sport psychology are actively engaged in examining the underlying causes of dropout, devising preventive measures, and addressing this concern. Notably, in developed countries, a significant proportion of youth, ranging from 50% to 70%, engage in at least one sport activity annually (Holt & Knight, 2014).

The recognition of dropout as a widespread occurrence during the formative years highlights the critical importance of understanding the factors that contribute to early sport discontinuation. By unraveling the complex web of influences and motivations behind dropout decisions, researchers and practitioners can develop targeted interventions to mitigate dropout rates and foster sustained sport participation. This pursuit is especially crucial in countries with limited resources and a smaller talent pool, where every young athlete's involvement is valuable for the growth and success of sports programs.

The high participation rates in sports among youth in developed countries underscore the potential impact of dropout on a substantial portion of the population. As such, it is essential to address this issue comprehensively to ensure that young individuals continue to reap the numerous benefits associated with sports engagement. By identifying the reasons for dropout and implementing effective preventive strategies, we can strive to create a supportive and inclusive environment that nurtures long-term participation and maximises the positive outcomes derived from youth sports involvement.

Research indicates a notable disparity in dropout rates between males and females, with the occurrence of dropout appearing to be more pronounced among female athletes (e.g., Bayyat, 2020). The gap between the genders increases with age. Up to age 12 the dropout rate from sport is greater for females than for males (Sabo, 2013). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the rate of youth participating in organized sport is low: 17.5% for males and 4.1% for females ages 13 - 18 years old (Zach et al., 2012). Cause of female sports dropout: Several academic studies have highlighted that cultural and social barriers are among the main causes of women's sports dropout [C.Consoni, C.Pesce, D.Cherubini, 2021] [M.Plaza, J. Boiche, 2017]. Research published in the European Sport Management Quarterly magazine in 2020 found that gender stereotypes and social expectations negatively affect women's participation in sport. Furthermore, a report by the World Health Organization indicated that cultural norms that associate sporting activities with masculine characteristics may discourage women from becoming involved in sport.



According to a study conducted by the European Commission's Expert Group on Health-enhancing Physical Activity, female sports dropout can have a negative impact on women's health and well-being. Women who stop playing sports may experience an increased risk of sedentary-related chronic diseases, such as obesity and heart disease. Furthermore, the report highlights that women's sports dropout can contribute to gender inequalities in sport and limit women's access to leadership roles and career development opportunities.

Studies on youth participation motivation in competitive sport are usually based on three theoretical models: Competence motivation theory (Harter, 1981), achievement goal orientation theory (Nicholls, 1984) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In line with these theories, the dropout phenomenon among young athletes is explained in the literature by various factors.

According to Harter, individuals are motivated to be competent in achievement areas such as academics, sports, or peer relationships. In order to satisfy the urge toward competence, a person attempts mastery. When these attempts result in competent or successful performance, the person experiences positive affect. This in turn maintains or enhances competence motivation. According to Harter, the perceptions of competence associated with successful performance are critical determinants of subsequent motivation to participate. In other words, individuals who perceive themselves as competent in sports are more likely to continue their participation, while those low in perceived physical competence will likely discontinue participation in the particular sport. Thus, Harter's theory may provide an accurate and useful model for differentiating current from former participants (Klint, Kimberley A.; Weiss, Maureen R. 1987). Adolescent athletes who dropped out of sports showed lower perceptions of abilities than adolescents with higher perceptions of abilities (Crane & Temple, 2015). Lack of enjoyment may also result from an overly competitive environment which may deter some teens and undermine their motivation to participate in sports (Zarrett et al., 2020). Indeed, a study by Choi and colleagues (2014) showed that competition in sports can be perceived as an obstacle as it produces anxiety and a sense of fear of failure and therefore reduces self-confidence and enjoyment of sports.

According to self-determination theory, individuals' perceptions of behaviours are associated with different types of motives, influenced by social and environmental factors. These motives constitute a continuum of self-determined behaviour that includes intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation and amotivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). Self-determination theory focuses on the extent to which the motivations within the continuum are self-determined (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Intrinsically motivated behaviour has the highest self-determination, which refers to engaging in an activity for the pleasure of the process (Deci, 1971). However, in the context of self-determination theory, an athlete can sustain self-determined motivation only if psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 1991). In addition, perceptions of not meeting these three needs will facilitate non-self-determined forms of motivation and amotivation (Vallerand, 1997) which, in turn, may lead to dropping out of sport (Sarrazin, Vallerand, et al., 2002). Research based on self-determination theory has shown that perceived autonomy support from coaches or parents positively affects self-determined motivation, which in turn enhances participants' persistence in sport (Gagne, Ryan, & Bargmann, 2003). In addition, several studies have shown that athletes who drop out perceived themselves as having less autonomy support from their coaches than persistent players (Pelletier, et al., 2001; Guillet, et al., 2002).

According to achievement goal theory (Nicholls, 1989), individuals in achievement settings of sport may construe their success with respect to two orientations, task and ego orientations. Task orientation, or the sense of success when displaying task mastery, has been related to a host of adaptive outcomes like greater positive affect, perceived effort, intrinsic motivation, and task persistence (Sarrazin, Roberts, Cury, Biddle, & Famose, 2002). Individuals adopting an ego orientation tend to define success as performing well in comparison with others (Ames, 1992). Coaches' emphases on learning process, improvement, effort, and promotion of cooperation among team members constitute a task-involving climate. In contrast, emphasis on competition, winning, social comparison, and public evaluation establishes an ego-involving climate (Nicholls, 1989; Ames, 1992; Duda & Hall, 2000; Duda, 2001). Generally, studies that have addressed the relationships of motivational climate with dropping out or persistence show that athletes who gave up their participation perceived the training climate to be ego-involved, whereas athletes who perceived a task-involving climate continued their participation in sport (Le Bars & Gernigon, 1998; Ntoumanis & Biddle, 1999; Sarrazin, Vallerand, et al., 2002).

Another factor affecting the dropout phenomenon is linked to the influences of significant others on the athletes' experience. For example, dissatisfaction with the coach, family pressure, and responses from society are to some extent significant factors in the decision to cease participating in sports ([Abadi & Gill, 2020](#)). Injuries, especially serious ones (e.g., that require surgery) have also been found to lead to dropout from sports. The injury itself is emotional for athletes because it involves a physical challenge, rehabilitation, and the possibility of impaired performance afterwards. Lastly, another factor may be the perception of the great difficulty of combining school and education with the high demands of sport training and competition ([Wylleman et al., 2004](#)).

These dropout factors were found among adolescent boys and girls. However, a number of factors found in the literature related specifically to girls. One of them is the girls' encounter with gender stereotypes, according to which participation in sports is culturally considered masculine. According to [Staurowsky \(2016\)](#), this gender stereotype creates an internal conflict in female athletes: that one can be an athlete or a woman but not both together. This discord affects girls' continued participation in competitive sports, and the social message that sport is a masculine activity causes girls to refrain from participating in sports in general ([Green, 2010](#)). However, in some situations, girls challenge these stereotypes and satisfy their desire to engage in sports.

Subsequently, girls experience stronger feelings of self-awareness about their appearance and self-image than do boys ([Slater & Tiggemann, 2010](#)). Reactions from their social environment and their parents increase self-awareness of appearance while performing and may lead to negative feelings toward their body, appearance, and add further concern about performance which may later lead to dropout ([Zarrett et al., 2020](#)). Finally, academic requirements were found to be a barrier to girls' participation in sports. This aspect becomes increasingly important as girls get older and manifests in academic pressures, lack of time and energy that detracts from the ability to invest in sports activities ([Zarrett et al., 2020](#)).

Understanding the mechanisms and factors that lead young people to drop out of sports is of fundamental importance for implementing intervention strategies to reduce the sport dropout rate. This contribution aims to analyse the phenomenon of sport dropout in Europe, focusing specifically on female dropouts. The analysis of relevant studies, data and statistics aims to understand better the causes, consequences, and possible intervention strategies to counter the phenomenon of sports dropout in women. We will focus on how cultural, social and economic barriers influence women's sport participation and on the negative consequences that sports dropout can have on their health and on gender inequalities in sport.

Guidelines for Enhancing Sport Organisations

Fostering Engagement, Inclusion, and Long-Term Participation

The research has identified various intervention strategies to address the phenomenon of sports dropout. It must be emphasized the importance of gender-sensitive policies that create an inclusive and accessible environment in physical activity and sport. Additionally, specific programs such as mentorship initiatives, awareness campaigns, and support networks have shown effectiveness in maintaining women's participation in sport.

For what concern the womes, regional differences insport participation and dropout rates across Europe have been observed. Nordic countries like Sweden, Norway, and Finland exhibit higher female participation rates compared to other European countries. For instance, Sweden boasts one of the highest proportions of women engaging in regular sporting activities, with 56% participating at least once a week, according to Eurostat data. Conversely, some southern European countries, such as Italy, have relatively low rates of female participation, with only 33% of women engaging in sports.

These regional differences can be attributed to various factors, including cultural disparities, national sports policies, and the accessibility of sports infrastructure. Nordic countries' promotion of gender equality in sport through inclusive policies and programs has contributed to higher female participation. In contrast, certain southern European countries' cultural traditions may hinder women's sports involvement.

The research findings on sports participation and dropout in Europe provide valuable insights into this issue's underlying trends, causes, and consequences. Understanding these findings makes it evident that concerted efforts are required to promote sustained and equal participation in sport.

Statistical data highlight a gender disparity in sport participation across Europe, with a lower proportion of women than men. This discrepancy is influenced by cultural and social barriers that restrict women's access to and engagement in sports. Gender stereotypes and societal expectations further hinder women's participation. Cultural norms associating sports with masculine characteristics pose additional challenges for women in joining and continuing sports activities.

Female sports dropout has consequences at both the individual and social levels. On an individual level, women who drop out of sport may experience negative effects on their physical and mental well-being. Inactivity increases the risk of sedentary-related chronic diseases, such as obesity and heart disease. Moreover, dropout can adversely impact women's self-esteem, self-confidence, and overall empowerment.



At a social level, female sports dropout perpetuates gender inequalities within the sports industry. Women face underrepresentation in leadership positions and limited career development opportunities, limiting their progress and success in sports. Furthermore, these inequalities in sport can manifest in wider society, reinforcing gender-based stereotypes and discrimination.

Concerns about body image also play a role in women's sports participation. The emphasis on certain body types or appearances in certain sports can lead to body dissatisfaction, self-awareness, and decreased motivation to continue participating, thus contributing to dropout rates (Howard, 2023).

To address the issue of sports dropout and foster sustained engagement, inclusion, and long-term participation, the following guidelines are recommended:

- **Gender-sensitive policies:** Develop and implement policies that consider gender issues and promote gender equality in sports. These policies should strive to create an inclusive and accessible environment that encourages and supports women's participation.
- **Inclusive programs:** Design and offer specific programs tailored to the needs and preferences of women. This may include women-only training sessions, competitions, and targeted skill development programs. These initiatives can provide a supportive and empowering environment for women in sport.
- **Mentorship and support networks:** Establish mentorship programs that pair experienced female athletes or coaches with younger athletes. This provides guidance, role modeling, and a support system that helps women navigate challenges and stay engaged in sport.
- **Awareness campaigns:** Launch campaigns that raise awareness about the benefits of sport for women, challenge gender stereotypes, and promote positive representations of female athletes. These campaigns can help overcome societal barriers and encourage women's participation.
- **Accessible sports infrastructure:** Ensure that sports facilities and equipment are readily accessible to women. Address any barriers or limitations that may hinder their participation. This includes providing appropriate changing rooms, facilities for diverse sporting activities, and accommodating schedules to cater to women's needs.
- **Positive role models:** Celebrate and highlight the achievements of female athletes. Promote positive role models to inspire and motivate young women to continue their participation in sport. This can be done through media coverage, public recognition, and storytelling.

- Education and empowerment: Provide educational programs that emphasize the importance of physical activity, the benefits of sport, and strategies for overcoming obstacles. Empower women through knowledge, skills, and resources that enable them to make informed decisions and actively participate in sports.
- Collaborative partnerships: Foster collaboration between sport organizations, educational institutions, community groups, and government agencies to create a comprehensive network of support for women in sport. Pooling resources, expertise, and influence can lead to more effective interventions and sustainable change.



Strategies for Supporting and Encouraging Participation

Encouragement, inclusion, and a sense of belonging within the sporting community can enhance women's motivation and engagement in sport. [M.J.Craike, C.Symmons, M.Zimmerman, 2009] [E.Abadi, D.L.Gill, 2019] [Fraser-Thomas, J.Cotè, J.Deakin, 2008]

The regional differences highlighted in the research require a personalized and targeted approach in intervention strategies. Countries such as the Nordic countries, which have adopted specific policies to promote gender equality in sport, can be considered examples to follow.

Governments and sports organizations must work together to develop policies and programs that address the specific challenges of each regional context.

Furthermore, research has highlighted the importance of actively involving women in designing and implementing such strategies. Women need to be heard and involved in decisions affecting sport, enabling them to influence the decision-making process and help create an inclusive and respectful sporting environment.

Finally, further research on the topic of female sports dropout needs to continue to deepen the understanding of the specific causes and consequences in the different European regions. This would allow for the development of targeted and evidence-based interventions to promote sustained participation of women in sport and to effectively address the dropout phenomenon.

Intrinsic motivation and enjoyment of sport are key factors in reducing dropout rates among women. Fostering a positive and enjoyable sports experience that focuses on personal growth, skill development and enjoyment can boost motivation and reduce the likelihood of dropping out. [Fraser-Thomas, 2007].

In conclusion, the research results highlight the existence of significant differences in female sports participation and dropout in Europe. Cultural, social, and structural barriers affect women's participation in sport, and female sports dropout can have negative consequences on women's health and well-being. However, intervention strategies are available that can help counteract the phenomenon, such as the promotion of an inclusive and fair sports environment and the implementation of specific programs for women. It is essential to continue promoting women's participation in sport and to take concrete measures to ensure gender equality in sport across Europe.



The research highlights the importance of an integrated strategy that includes government policies, infrastructure investments, promoting gender equality and building support networks. It is essential to promote education and awareness of the benefits of physical activity and sport for women, emphasizing the importance of an active life and providing information on available opportunities.

Additionally, it is crucial to foster female participation in sport through mentorship programs and leadership roles for women athletes. This can help break gender stereotypes and inspire other women to embark on a sporting journey.

It is equally important to support scientific research on the causes and consequences of female sports dropout, to develop intervention strategies based on solid evidence. Implementing inclusive policies and programs requires constant monitoring and evaluation to adapt and improve existing initiatives.

Finally, it is essential to promote a cultural change that values and celebrates the success of women in sport. Through media visibility, fair coverage of women's sporting events and the promotion of positive role models, it will be possible to change the collective imagination regarding the role of women in sport and encourage sustained and lasting participation.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of female sports dropout represents a significant challenge in Europe, but it can be addressed through targeted strategies and collective commitment. Promoting an inclusive sports environment, creating specific opportunities for women, overcoming gender stereotypes, and adopting policies that promote equity are key to combating female sports dropout and promoting sustained and lasting participation of women in sport. Only through an integrated and collaborative approach will it be possible to ensure that women have equal opportunities to actively participate in sport and enjoy its many benefits for health and well-being.



Insights and Commentary on Sports Participation

The field of sports research heavily relies on statistical data to gain profound insights into various aspects of sports participation, performance, and trends. Reflecting upon and commenting on statistics plays a crucial role in comprehending the dynamics of sports and extracting meaningful conclusions from the available data. Statistical analysis enables researchers, policymakers, and sports enthusiasts to explore patterns, discern disparities, and evaluate the efficacy of interventions in the realm of sports.

This section aims to delve into the domain of reflecting upon and commenting on statistical data about sports participation offered by Eurobarometer. By examining pertinent statistics, we can unveil valuable information about the prevailing state of sports engagement, discern recurring patterns, and identify areas warranting attention and improvement. Through a discerning analysis and astute commentary on these statistics, we can attain a profound understanding of the factors influencing sports participation, assess the effectiveness of interventions, and evaluate the impact on individuals and society at large.

The exploration of statistical data in the context of sports transcends the realm of mere numerical figures. It entails critically examining the trends, interpreting the implications, and offering insights that can guide decision-making, inform policy formulation, and shape strategies to enhance sports participation and its associated benefits. By reflecting upon the statistical landscape, we can identify growth opportunities, address challenges, and promote inclusivity and equality within the sports domain.

In the subsequent sections, we embark upon a journey to analyse and interpret statistical data, shedding light on the discernible patterns, notable discrepancies, and noteworthy findings. Through this comprehensive exploration, our objective is to contribute to the broader discourse on sports participation and provide valuable insights to inform future endeavours in cultivating a vibrant and inclusive sports culture.



Despite the European Union member states' increased focus on promoting physical activity, the rates of inactivity within the EU remain alarmingly high. Although there was a slight decrease in the proportion of Europeans who never played sport or engaged in no sport between 2017 and 2022, the numbers have been rising since 2009. In fact, the percentage increased from 39% in 2009 to 42% in 2013, 46% in 2017, and 45% in 2022. These statistics highlight persistent socio-demographic disparities, with women being significantly less active than men. Additionally, participation in sports and physical activities tends to decrease as individuals age, while respondents with lower levels of education and greater financial hardship are the least likely to participate.

Furthermore, country differences identified in previous surveys continue to persist. Respondents from the northern part of the EU, particularly the Nordic countries, demonstrate higher levels of physical activity, whereas those from the southern and eastern parts of the EU exhibit the lowest activity levels. Similar disparities are observed when considering the availability of opportunities for physical activity.

The most popular environments for exercising or engaging in physical activity are parks and outdoor spaces, as well as at home, with both witnessing a 7% and 5% increase, respectively, since 2017. This finding highlights the potential of promoting physical activity in free settings such as parks, which could be instrumental in mobilizing financially disadvantaged individuals who may struggle to afford memberships in formal sports facilities. This approach provides an opportunity to increase participation among this segment of the EU population.

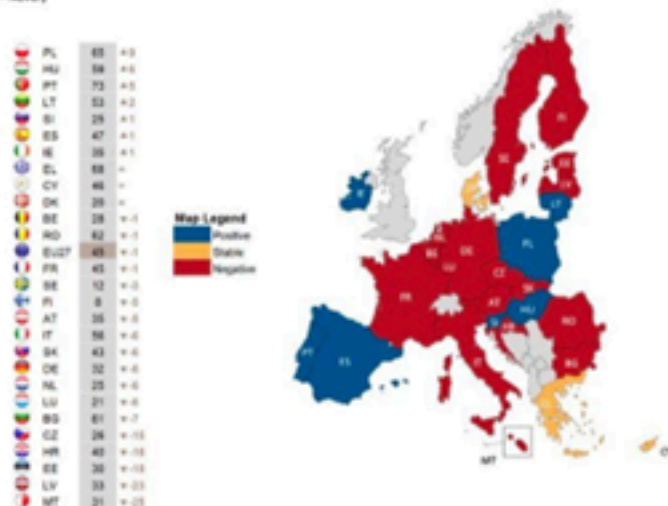
Health improvement, fitness enhancement, and relaxation are the primary motivations for Europeans to participate in sports or engage in physical activity. Lack of time, motivation or interest, disability, and illness remain the primary barriers preventing individuals from exercising more frequently.

Volunteerism in support of physical activity is relatively low, with only one in ten Europeans currently volunteering or planning to do so in the next two months. Furthermore, Europeans who participate in sports or physical activity display varying levels of awareness regarding the environmental impact of these activities. While more than half of the respondents are not concerned about the environmental impact, an equal proportion expresses concern. Additionally, almost half of the surveyed individuals feel that their sports organizations are not taking any measures to promote sustainability.

Regarding gender equality, over half of European club members report that their clubs are actively taking steps to support gender equality. Moreover, there is an increasing awareness of who to contact internally in case of encountering sexism at the club. Approximately three-quarters of Europeans agree that female role models in sports inspire more women and girls to pursue sports, and there is a growing recognition of the need to address gender-based violence in sports. Additionally, nearly six in ten respondents find media coverage of women's sports as interesting as men's. Notably, the sociodemographic differences between men and women in these questions were not significant.

Some of the most interesting statics and graphs are reported below.

Q818 How often do you exercise or play sport? By "exercise" we mean any form of physical activity which you do in a sport context or sport-related setting, such as swimming, training in a fitness centre or a sport club, running in the park. (% - Never)



Base: All Respondents (N=26,576)

Q818 How often do you exercise or play sport? By "exercise" we mean any form of physical activity which you do in a sport context or sport-related setting, such as swimming, training in a fitness centre or a sport club, running in the park. (%)

		EU27	DE	FR	IT	ES	PT	GR	CZ	PL	NL	BE	AT	SE	DK	FI	IE	LU	SV	NO	SK	SI	LT	LV	EE	PT	EL	ES	PL	SE	MT	HR	BA	SI	RO	EU27
Regularly	Apr/May 2022	6	8	9	7	4	7	4	8	3	8	6	13	7	6	28	13	11	11	4	9	11	2	4	7	2	11	4	9							
	Jul-Sep 2022	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
With some regularity	Apr/May 2022	32	35	33	35	17	37	29	33	31	34	24	30	33	29	53	41	29	38	23	31	21	39	25	38	41	22	30								
	Jul-Sep 2022	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Seldom	Apr/May 2022	17	15	16	15	38	30	9	14	33	38	33	36	33	33	13	23	21	11	19	21	5	13	11	12	29	37	34	23	15	29					
	Jul-Sep 2022	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Never	Apr/May 2022	45	32	35	35	41	26	68	45	36	30	40	21	25	43	6	35	46	20	75	53	47	65	28	31	62	25	59	12							
	Jul-Sep 2022	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
Don't know	Apr/May 2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Jul-Sep 2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Base: All Respondents (N=26,576)

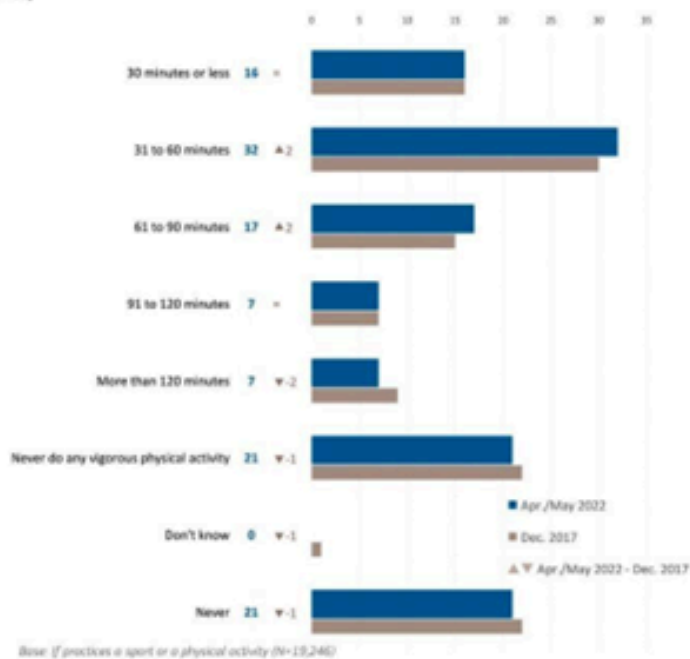


QB1R How often do you exercise or play sport? By "exercise" we mean any form of physical activity which you do in a sport context or sport-related setting, such as swimming, training in a fitness centre or a sport club, running in the park.
(% - EU)

	Regularly	With some regularity	Seldom	Never	Don't know
EU27	6	32	17	45	0
Gender					
Man	8	35	17	40	0
Woman	5	30	16	49	0
Age					
15-24	12	54	15	19	0
25-39	6	42	20	32	0
40-54	6	32	21	41	0
55 +	5	21	13	61	0
Education (End of)					
15-	4	13	9	74	0
16-19	5	25	18	52	0
20+	8	42	19	31	0
Still studying	12	58	15	15	0
Socio-professional category					
Self-employed	6	36	20	38	0
Managers	7	45	21	26	1
Other white collars	4	39	21	36	0
Manual workers	6	29	19	46	0
House persons	4	16	12	68	0
Unemployed	10	22	19	49	0
Retired	6	20	12	62	0
Students	12	58	15	15	0
Difficulties paying bills					
Most of the time	7	20	12	61	0
From time to time	4	26	18	52	0
Almost never/ Never	7	36	17	40	0

Base: All respondents (N=26,578)

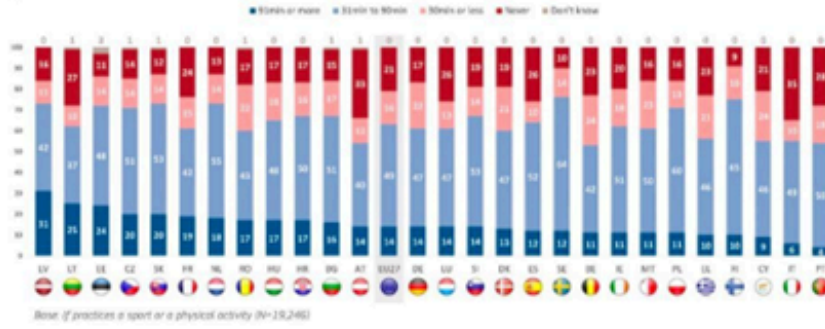
QB4 In general, on days when you do a vigorous physical activity, how much time do you spend at it?
(% - EU)



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QB4 In general, on days when you do a vigorous physical activity, how much time do you spend at it? (%)



QB4 In general, on days when you do a vigorous physical activity, how much time do you spend at it? (%)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	GR	IE	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	
91 min or more	14	26	17	14	21	22	14	18	21	18	16	10	24	11	19	17	18	21	14	12	15	18	22	14	14	14
31 to 90 minutes	53	29	59	53	51	51	27	55	54	51	27	29	51	54	25	35	51	58	55	25	40	50	24	54	29	45
30 to 60 minutes	17	13	21	38	38	21	18	13	21	15	21	34	12	17	14	22	15	12	22	17	20	20	29	20	20	20
30 to 120 minutes	7	5	7	5	5	5	7	8	7	5	4	5	0	5	0	0	7	7	5	8	7	5	11	8	5	5
More than 120 minutes	7	6	9	11	7	8	15	4	10	5	2	4	28	17	8	10	4	5	4	7	5	11	5	11	5	5
Never do any vigorous physical activity	25	25	25	14	29	17	31	29	26	24	17	35	25	28	27	28	17	18	13	33	26	28	17	29	12	9
Don't know	8	8	3	3	8	9	9	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

Base: If practices a sport or a physical activity (N=19,246)

QB4 In general, on days when you do a vigorous physical activity, how much time do you spend at it? (% - EU)

	Never	30min or less	31min to 90min	91min or more
EU27	21	16	49	14
Gender				
Man	18	15	49	18
Woman	25	17	48	10
Age				
15-24	10	12	62	16
25-39	15	16	56	13
40-54	21	17	48	14
55 +	30	17	39	14
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	18	15	49	18
Managers	14	16	57	13
Other white collars	20	15	56	9
Manual workers	17	15	49	19
House persons	33	18	40	9
Unemployed	28	17	43	12
Retired	33	17	35	14
Students	11	14	63	12

Base: If practices a sport or a physical activity (N=19,246)



Q86 In general, on days when you do a moderate physical activity, how much time do you spend at it? (%)



30 minutes or less	22	28	21	18	27	20	13	24	22	17	27	20	22	27	16	13	15	18	25	21	20	22	17	25	18	18	20	25
31 to 60 minutes	37	24	35	34	40	30	31	39	42	41	30	33	43	36	36	29	38	40	47	43	34	43	43	29	37	36	38	42
61 to 90 minutes	17	13	14	16	12	21	18	16	12	19	15	21	13	14	19	19	19	9	17	18	17	16	17	21	20	20	16	14
91 to 120 minutes	7	6	7	7	5	8	5	5	6	8	4	4	7	12	8	7	4	7	8	6	7	8	9	9	11	4	6	
More than 120 minutes	7	7	8	12	8	9	11	4	4	4	7	5	18	17	7	8	4	8	3	7	7	7	6	5	9	4	6	
Never do any moderate physical activity	10	9	14	12	8	5	5	12	10	12	11	10	17	15	12	12	6	11	4	12	8	10	18	8	6	4	7	
Don't know	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	

Highest percentage per country

Lowest percentage per country

Highest percentage per item

Lowest percentage per item

Base: if practices a sport or a physical activity (N=19,246)

Q86 In general, on days when you do a moderate physical activity, how much time do you spend at it? (% - EU)

	30 minutes or less	31 to 60 minutes	61 to 90 minutes	91 to 120 minutes	More than 120 minutes	Never do any moderate physical activity	Don't know
EU27	22	37	17	7	7	10	0
Gender							
Man	20	36	19	8	8	9	0
Woman	23	39	16	6	5	11	0
Age							
15-24	21	39	22	7	5	6	0
25-39	21	41	19	6	5	8	0
40-54	23	37	17	6	7	10	0
55 +	22	35	15	8	7	12	1
Education (End of)							
15-	25	35	10	5	7	18	0
16-19	21	36	17	7	8	11	0
20+	22	39	18	7	6	8	0
Still studying	22	41	21	6	4	5	1
Socio-professional category							
Self-employed	18	35	20	7	11	9	0
Managers	21	42	18	8	5	6	0
Other white collars	23	44	17	3	3	10	0
Manual workers	20	35	18	7	10	10	0
House persons	22	37	18	4	6	13	0
Unemployed	27	30	18	8	5	12	0
Retired	23	33	14	9	6	14	1
Students	22	41	21	6	4	5	1
Difficulties paying bills							
Most of the time	23	30	17	8	9	13	0
From time to time	22	38	16	6	6	12	0
Almost never/ Never	21	38	18	7	7	9	0
Subjective urbanisation							
Rural/village	19	36	18	8	9	10	0
Small/ mid-size town	23	38	18	6	6	9	0
Large town	24	39	16	6	5	10	0

Base: if practices a sport or a physical activity (N=19,246)

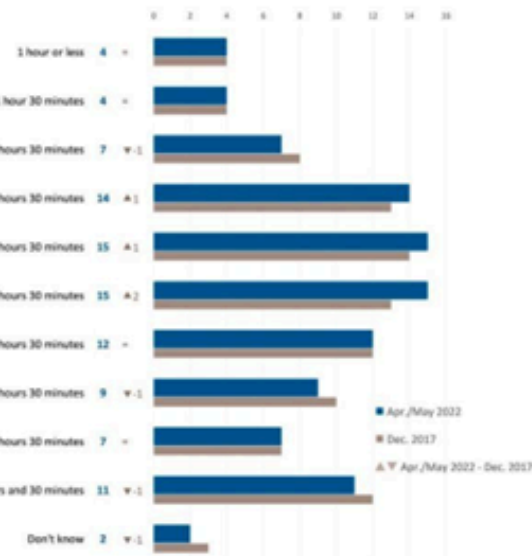


Q88 In general, on days when you walk for at least 10 minutes at a time, how much time do you spend walking? (% - EU)

	30 minutes or less	31 to 60 minutes	61 to 90 minutes	91 to 120 minutes	More than 120 minutes	Never walk for 10 minutes at a time	Don't know
EU27	35	34	11	5	4	10	1
1 Gender							
Man	35	34	11	5	4	10	1
Woman	35	35	12	5	3	10	0
2 Age							
15-24	35	38	13	5	4	5	0
25-39	34	36	12	5	4	8	1
40-54	35	34	12	5	5	9	0
55 +	35	32	11	5	3	13	1
3 Education (End of)							
15-	36	30	8	4	3	18	1
16-19	35	33	11	5	4	11	1
20+	34	37	13	5	4	6	1
Still studying	38	37	13	4	3	4	1
4 Difficulties paying bills							
Most of the time	38	27	11	5	5	14	0
From time to time	38	31	11	5	3	12	0
Almost never/ Never	33	36	12	5	4	9	1
5 Consider belonging to							
The working class	35	32	11	4	4	14	0
The lower middle class	35	32	11	5	5	12	0
The middle class	35	36	12	5	4	8	0
The upper middle class	35	36	12	6	4	6	1
The upper class	24	46	17	7	1	5	0
6 Subjective urbanisation							
Rural village	33	32	13	6	4	12	0
Small/ mid size town	34	35	11	5	4	10	1
Large town	38	35	11	4	3	8	1

Note: All Respondents (N=26,576)

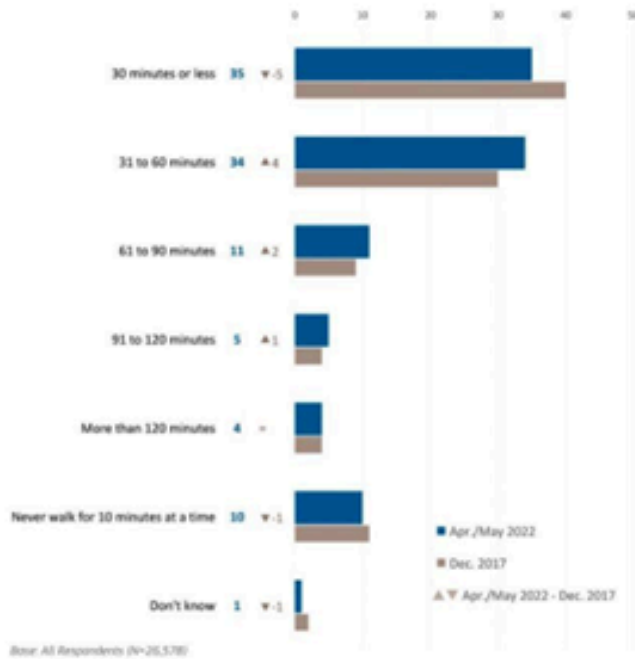
Q89 How much time do you spend sitting on a usual day? This may include time spent at a desk, visiting friends, studying or watching television. (% - EU)



Note: All Respondents (N=26,576)

¹² Q89. How much time do you spend sitting on a usual day? This may include time spent at a desk, visiting friends, studying or watching television.

Q88 In general, on days when you walk for at least 10 minutes at a time, how much time do you spend walking? (% - EU)



Q88 In general, on days when you walk for at least 10 minutes at a time, how much time do you spend walking? (%)

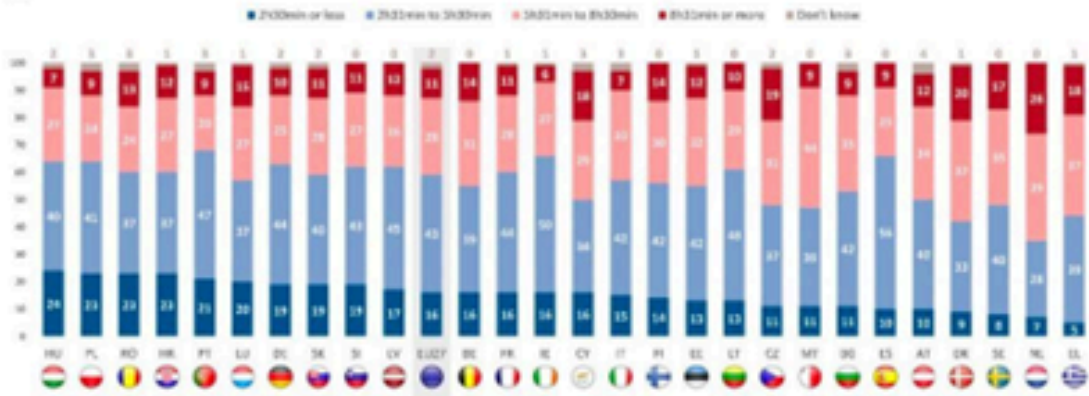
	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
30 minutes or less	35	38	45	36	35	28	24	52	45	29	38	37	39	44	22	38	52	40	38	31	37	36	47	37	34	34	27	33
31 to 60 minutes	34	30	29	35	34	38	39	40	32	38	32	30	32	26	34	29	38	26	42	38	31	34	25	26	33	28	49	44
61 to 90 minutes	11	12	7	15	15	15	15	6	18	8	14	7	6	16	12	18	9	7	13	12	10	5	11	17	16	14	14	
91 to 120 minutes	5	5	3	5	5	7	7	3	2	6	5	5	3	1	15	5	3	3	4	4	4	3	2	7	5	5	4	3
More than 120 minutes	4	3	2	4	3	6	12	3	2	5	5	2	2	2	11	8	7	3	2	5	2	2	2	5	5	6	3	3
Never walk for 10 minutes at a time	10	10	15	5	5	5	9	13	4	10	12	17	20	9	7	4	18	7	7	15	14	19	14	6	9	3	3	
Don't know	1	1	1	8	3	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0

Highest percentage per country: 52% (IE) for 30 minutes or less
 Lowest percentage per country: 1% (IE) for Don't know
 Highest percentage per item: 49% (FI) for 31 to 60 minutes
 Lowest percentage per item: 1% (IE) for Don't know

Source: All Respondents (N=26,578)



Q89R How much time do you spend sitting on a usual day? This may include time spent at a desk, visiting friends, studying or watching television.
(%)



Base: All Respondents (N=26,578)

Q89R How much time do you spend sitting on a usual day? This may include time spent at a desk, visiting friends, studying or watching television.
(% - EU)

	2h30min or less	2h31min to 3h30min	3h31min to 4h30min	4h31min or more
EU27	16	43	28	11
Gender				
Man	16	42	28	12
Woman	15	44	29	10
Age				
15-24	12	37	37	13
25-39	19	40	28	12
40-54	18	44	26	11
55+	14	46	28	10
Education (end of)				
15-	15	45	27	11
16-19	18	47	25	8
20+	14	41	30	14
Still studying	9	34	43	13
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	20	44	26	9
Managers	12	35	35	16
Other white collars	13	33	35	17
Manual workers	24	51	18	5
House persons	17	44	28	9
Unemployed	18	48	20	14
Retired	13	47	26	10
Students	9	34	43	13
Consider belonging to				
The working class	17	45	25	11
The lower middle class	18	44	26	11
The middle class	15	44	29	10
The upper middle class	11	36	34	18
The upper class	12	32	38	18
Subjective urbanisation				
Rural village	18	45	25	11
Small/ mid size town	15	44	28	11
Large town	14	40	32	12

Base: All Respondents (N=26,578)

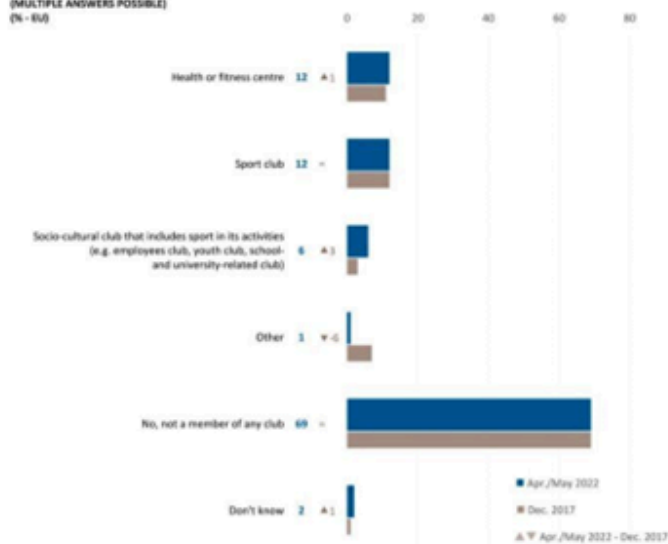


QB10 Earlier you said you engage in sport or another physical activity, vigorous or not. Where do you do this? A sport club is an organized setting (for example karate club, football club). A sport centre is more generally a place where people can do different sports (e.g. playing tennis, running). (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (% - EU)

	At a health or fitness centre	At a sport club	At a sport centre	At school or university	At work	At home	On the way between home and school/work or shops	In a park, outdoors, etc.	Elsewhere	Don't know
EU27	13	12	8	4	11	37	24	47	1	2
Gender										
Men	12	14	8	3	12	35	23	48	1	4
Women	14	9	8	4	9	40	27	45	2	0
Age										
15-24	20	19	15	14	9	28	25	47	1	1
25-39	18	12	11	2	13	35	26	43	1	1
40-54	12	9	7	1	15	36	27	42	1	2
55+	8	9	5	0	7	43	21	50	2	3
Education (end of)										
15	5	2	3	0	5	43	23	52	1	2
16-19	9	3	6	1	13	41	20	46	2	2
20+	17	14	10	1	12	36	23	48	1	1
Still studying	20	19	15	26	6	25	26	42	1	1
Difficulty playing sports										
Most of the time	10	7	7	4	14	35	31	46	2	2
From time to time	12	9	8	4	14	36	28	42	1	2
Almost never/ Never	13	13	8	3	9	38	23	48	1	2
Subjective urbanisation										
Rural village	10	13	6	4	13	64	23	46	1	2
Small/ mid size town	12	11	9	3	12	37	24	47	1	2
Large town	13	11	9	4	12	30	20	46	2	1

Base: If practices a sport or a physical activity (N=23,240)

QB15 Are you a member of any of the following clubs where you participate in sport or recreational physical activity? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (% - EU)

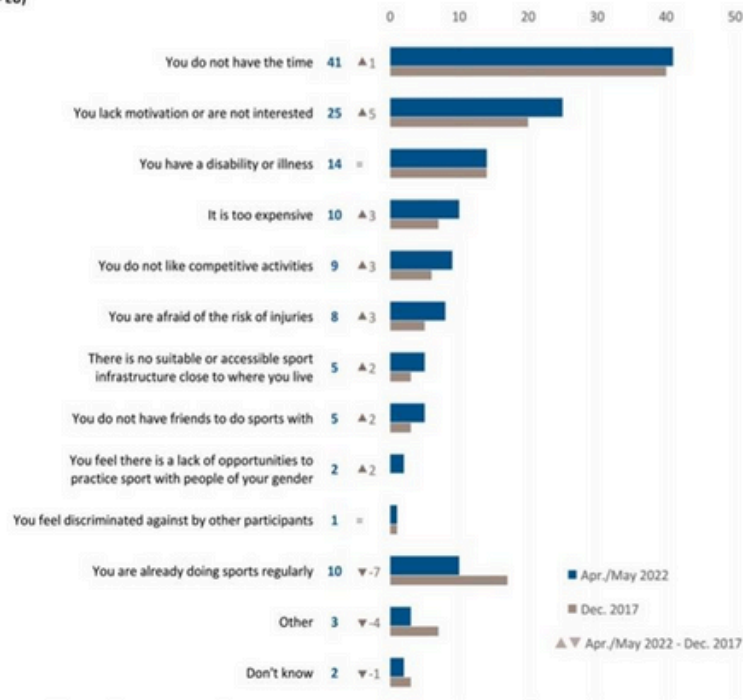


Base: All Respondents (N=26,578)

²² QB15. Are you a member of any of the following clubs where you participate in sport or recreational physical activity? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

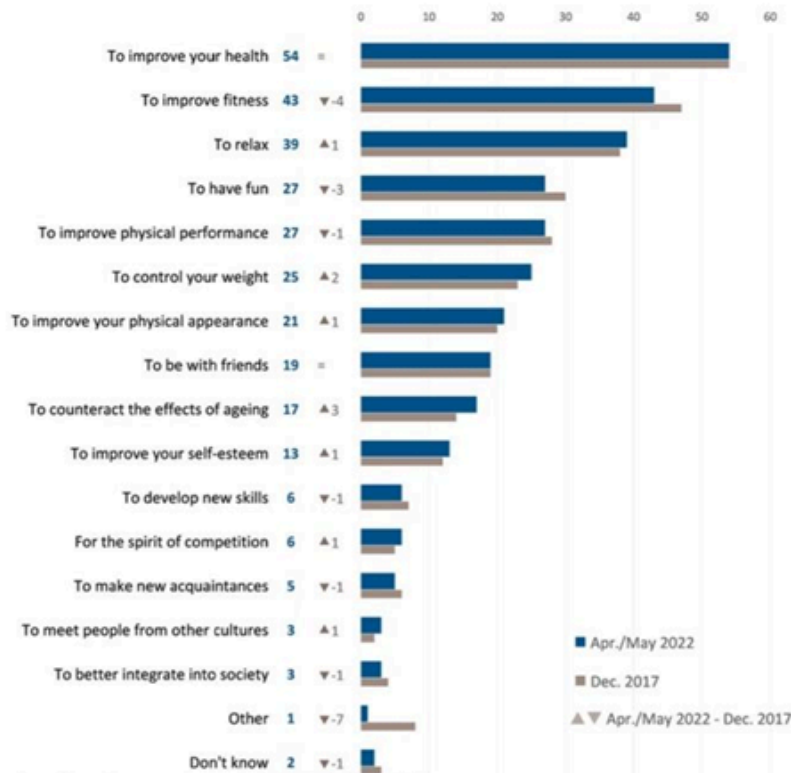


QB14 What are the main reasons currently preventing you from practising sport more regularly? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(% - EU)



Base: All Respondents (N=26,578)

QB11 Why do you engage in sport or physical activity? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(% - EU)



Base: If practices a sport or a physical activity (N=19,246)

²³ QB11. Why do you engage in sport or physical activity? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



Effective Strategies to Reduce Dropout

Reducing dropout rates in sports is crucial for fostering sustained participation and maximising the benefits that individuals and communities derive from sporting activities. To achieve this goal, it is essential to implement effective strategies and adopt good practices that address the underlying factors contributing to dropouts. This section presents a compilation of key good practices that have been proven to be successful in reducing dropouts and promoting long-term engagement in sports. Each practice is accompanied by a brief commentary highlighting its significance and potential impact. By incorporating these practices into sports programs and organizations, we can create supportive environments that empower individuals to remain actively involved in sports and reap the many physical, mental, and social benefits they offer.

These highlighted good practices showcase the effectiveness of various initiatives in reducing drop-out rates and promoting sustained sports participation among different target groups. By implementing these practices and initiatives, we can create inclusive, accessible, and engaging environments that encourage individuals of all backgrounds and abilities to remain active in sports. These efforts contribute to physical and mental well-being and foster social inclusion, personal development, and overall societal well-being. It is crucial to continue supporting and replicating these successful initiatives to ensure long-term engagement in sports and maximize the benefits they bring to individuals and communities.

Sports for Schools and Communities - Netherlands: This project implemented in the Netherlands focuses on increasing sports participation among young people in disadvantaged communities. It provides schools and community organizations with the necessary resources and support to develop sports programs that are accessible, affordable, and inclusive. By targeting areas with limited resources, this project has successfully increased sports participation and significantly reduced drop-out rates among young people.

Fit4Future - Germany: Aimed at promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles among young people in schools, Fit4Future offers resources and support to schools to develop age-appropriate, enjoyable, and sustainable physical activity programs. This project has achieved remarkable success in increasing physical activity levels and reducing sedentary behavior among young individuals.



SportWorks - United Kingdom: SportWorks is a project designed to enhance sports participation and reduce drop-out rates among secondary school students in the United Kingdom. It provides schools with resources and support to develop engaging, inclusive, and sustainable sports programs. Through this initiative, there has been a significant increase in sports participation among young people, leading to improved physical and mental well-being.

Youth in Action - European Union: The Youth in Action program, operating within the European Union, supports projects and initiatives that promote sports participation and physical activity among young people across Europe. By providing funding and resources to organizations implementing innovative projects, this program aims to combat drop-out rates among young people in sports successfully.

Let's Play - Italy: Let's Play is a project specifically targeting increased sports participation among young individuals in rural communities in Italy. It provides schools and community organizations with the necessary resources and support to develop accessible, affordable, and enjoyable sports programs. The project has been instrumental in fostering sports participation and promoting social inclusion among young people living in rural areas.

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Reference

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