

CHANGES IN PARTICIPATION AND THE PARTICIPATION LANDSCAPE – ACTIVE NZ 2021 DATA RELEASE



UNIVERSITY & TERTIARY SPORT
NEW ZEALAND

Sport NZ has released two new Active NZ 2021 reports: **Changes in Participation** and **Updating the Participation Landscape**.

Changes in Participation - updates the main participation statistics for 2021. It highlights changes in participation and barriers, when 2021 results are compared with 2019 results, which preceded the COVID-19 pandemic.

Updating the Participation Landscape - explores the participation landscape in the play, active recreation and sport sector for New Zealanders aged 5-plus and updates the main participation statistics for 2021.

WEEKLY PARTICIPATION

73% of all 18–24-year-olds had been physically active at least once in the past 7 days.

18-24-year-olds spend an average of 5.6 hours per week being active across an average of 2.6 sports/activities.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

63% of all 18–24-year-olds were meeting physical activity guidelines (2.5 hours per week recommendation for adults) in 2021.

DOING MORE

84% of all 18–24-year-olds want to be doing more, and a higher proportion of females (87%) than males (79%) are wanting to increase their participation.

PARTICIPATION IN COMPETITIVE SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

For adults, participation in competitive sports and activities is highest between ages 18 and 24, at 19%, before dropping to 12% between ages 25 and 34 and 10% between ages 35 and 49.

Males 18-24-years-old are nearly twice as likely to participate in competitive sports (25%) and activities than females (15%).

PARTICIPATION IN NON-COMPETITIVE SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

For adults, participation in non-competitive sports and activities only is highest between ages 35 and 64, at 66% and 67%, and lower among young adults between ages 18 and 24 (54%) and older adults aged 75-plus (51%).

54% of 18-24-year-olds participate in non-competitive sports and activities only (no competitive activity).

Participation by females in non-competitive sports and activities only is higher (59%) than that of males (49%).

BARRIERS

For 61% of 18–24-year-olds other commitments taking priority or being too busy is a barrier to increasing participation.

A higher proportion of adults between ages 18 and 24 also prefer to spend time on other things (26%).

Too tired and lacking motivation are most prevalent between ages 18 and 24 and then decrease with age.

Between ages 18 and 24:

- 49 percent of females feel too tired, compared with 29 percent of males
- 51 percent of females struggle for motivation, compared with 31 percent of males.

CHANGES IN PARTICIPATION BETWEEN 2019 (PRE-PANDEMIC) AND 2021

Overall, the proportion of adults meeting the physical activity guidelines increased by 3.6% between 2019 and 2021.

The proportion of adults participating in competitive sports and activities decreased and the proportion of adults participating only in non-competitive sports and activities increased. The activities with increased participation in 2021 were predominantly non-competitive activities such as walking, individual workouts, Pilates, and yoga.

Between 2017 and 2019, a downward trend occurred in participation among those between ages 18 and 24, particularly females. This did not continue in 2021, with participation rates for this age group back in line with the levels for all adults and the number of activities increasing among females between ages 18 and 24.

Patterns of participation among young people 5-18-years-old in 2021 were however affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Weekly participation of young people 5-18-years decreased between 2019 and 2021 after a period of stability and the average number of sports and activities participated in was lower in 2021 than in previous years.

Organised participation in particular decreased among young people aged 5-18-years between 2019 and 2021 and has negatively affected male participation more than female, while the increase in time spent in informal participation has positively affected female participation more than male.

Barriers to participation also increased in 2021 for young people aged 5-18-years with the most notable changes being more young people struggling for motivation and expressing a lack of confidence which may impact on the participation behaviours of first year students arriving at tertiary institutions post secondary school.

WATCHING BRIEFS: ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

A number of changes occurred in other indicators when comparing 2019 pre-pandemic with 2021.

- Move to more individualised and flexible activities
- Increase in use of technology
- Growing awareness of value of physical activity for wellbeing
- Changing barriers to participation

