

Sport Participation in Canada

2011 – 2012 SPORT MONITOR



Barriers to sport participation

Perceived barriers to sport can influence an individual's decision to participate in sport or not. The 2011-2012 Sport Monitor explores the barriers perceived by those who do not participate in sport. For the purposes of this bulletin, these barriers are divided into three categories: time or financial barriers; personal barriers; and, barriers related to the social or physical environment. Moreover, the importance of barriers in this bulletin is characterized by those who rated a barrier as "very important."

Time or financial related barriers

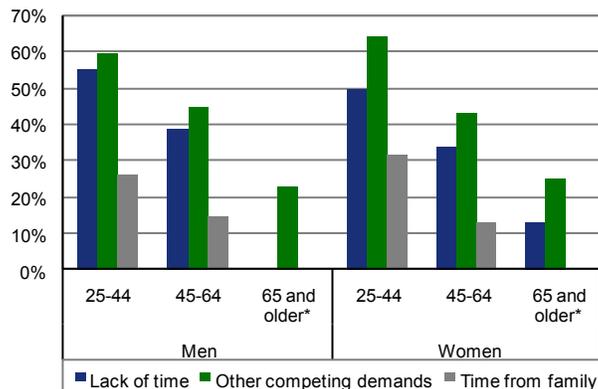
The barriers in this category include those pertaining to time, competing issues such as family or other competing obligations, or financial implications. The proportions of Canadians who do not participate in sport and who cite these barriers as very important are:

- other competing obligations (47%)
- lack of time (37%)
- excessive costs (19%)
- time away from family (18%)
- inconvenience (15%).

Relatively few regional differences exist with respect to time and financial barriers, with one exception. Adults living in Quebec are less likely than the national average to report other competing obligations as a barrier.

More women than men say that the excessive cost is a barrier. Barriers to participation, such as the effect of sport on time spent with one's family, a more general lack of time, and other competing obligations generally decrease with increasing age (for those 25 years and older). Generally speaking, the latter two relationships appear for both genders, whereas time away from family varies significantly by age for women only.

FIGURE 1
Select time or financial barriers by age and sex, % indicating 'very important'



*Data unavailable due to cell size.
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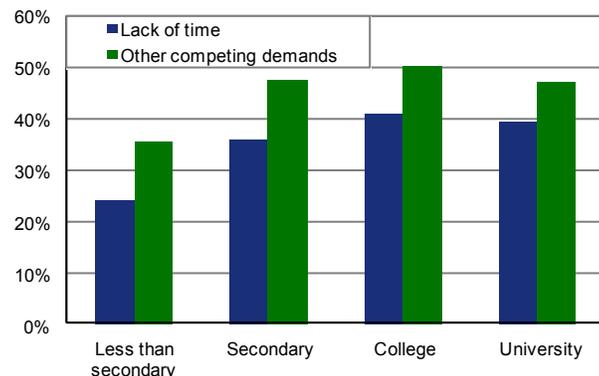
Canadians with less than a high school education are less likely to cite a lack of time (compared to those with a post-secondary education) and other competing obligations (compared to those with college education) as important barriers. A greater proportion of individuals from the highest income households (greater than \$100,000 per year) indicate the following barriers as very important:

- lack of time (compared to those from households with incomes less than \$60,000 per year)
- competing obligations (compared to those from households with incomes less than \$40,000 per year)
- time away from their families (compared to those from households with incomes between \$30,000-39,999 per year).

On the contrary, adults from households with income of less than \$60,000 were more likely to indicate excessive cost as a barrier to their participation in sports compared to adults from the highest income households.

FIGURE 2

Select time or financial barriers by education, % indicating 'very important'

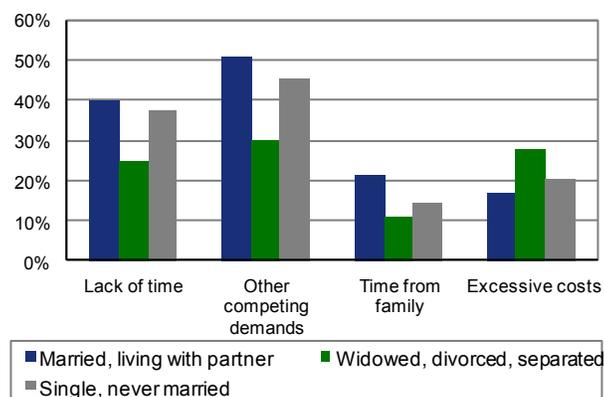


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Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated are least likely to cite a lack of time and other competing demands as important barriers, and are more likely to cite excessive cost as an important barrier compared to adults who are married or living with a partner; however, the opposite relationship (i.e., those married or living with a partner are more likely than those who are widowed, divorced, or separated) is true for the perception that sport takes away from family time. Compared to the national average, full-time employed adults are more likely to cite a lack of time and other competing obligations as important barriers, whereas those who are retired are less likely to cite these two barriers plus time away from the family. Additionally, individuals who are unemployed are also less likely to cite a lack of time as an important barrier. Less active individuals say that excessive cost is an important barrier, compared to active adults.

FIGURE 3

Select time or financial barriers by marital status, % indicating 'very important'



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Trends over time

There have been no changes over time in the proportion of adults reporting time or financial related barriers. Regional differences have changed since 2006-2007, such that previous significant relationships are no longer significant and new relationships have emerged.¹ There is also a new relationship between cost as a barrier and gender in 2011-2012. Generally speaking, the relationships that existed between time and financial barriers with age, income, and marital status have persisted since 2006-2007; however, some associations have also emerged.¹ More specifically, new associations are significant in 2011-2012 between:

- income and the barrier of time away from family
- marital status or activity level and cost as a barrier.

The relationships between barriers and education have also changed over time. In 2006-2007, excessive cost was associated with education, whereas this finding is no longer significant in 2011-2012.¹ On the contrary, there is now a relationship between a lack of time and education, whereas this relationship was not significant previously.

Personal barriers

Personal barriers in this category include those that are more intrinsic in nature, such as injuries, motivation, energy, skills, and inclusion. Among those who do not participate in sport, the proportion citing these barriers as very important are:

- long-term illness, disability or injury (20%)
- lack of energy or too tired (18%)
- lack of interest or motivation (18%)
- feeling uncomfortable or ill at ease (11%)
- fear or injury (11%)
- lack of physical skills or knowledge (10%)
- not feeling welcome (5%).

Compared to the national average, a greater proportion of residents of Quebec say that not feeling welcome is an important barrier. More women than men say that feeling uncomfortable or ill at ease and a lack of interest or motivation to participate are important barriers. Among both genders, the proportion citing long-term illness, disability or injury as a barrier to sport participation increases with age. Among 45 to 64 year olds, more women than men cite a lack of interest or motivation as a barrier.

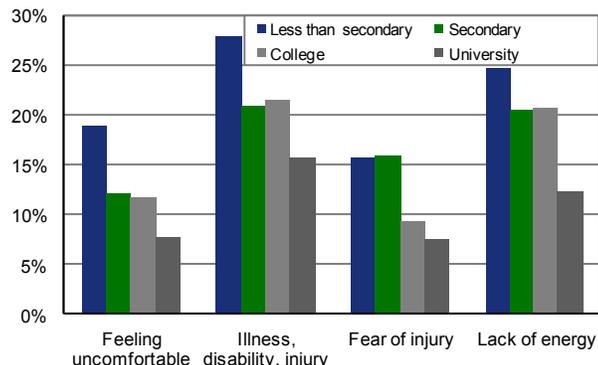
Adults with less than a high school education are more likely to identify feeling uncomfortable or ill at ease, and long-term illness, disability or injury as important barriers, compared to those who are university educated. Similarly, fear of being injured is perceived as an important barrier by a greater proportion of



individuals with a high school education compared to those with a university education. Lastly, lack of energy was least likely to be acknowledged as an important barrier by university educated adults.

FIGURE 4

Select personal barriers by education, % indicating 'very important'



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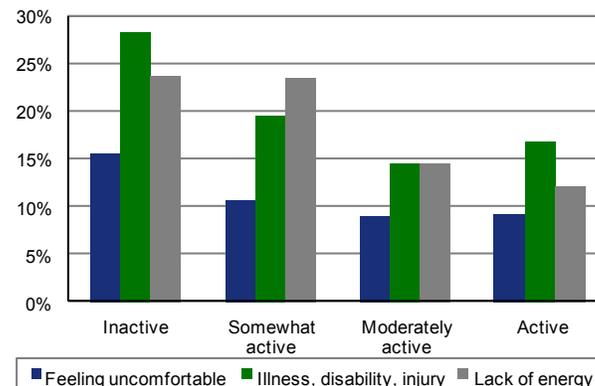
Compared to those with the highest incomes, a greater proportion of adults from:

- the lowest household incomes (less than \$20,000 per year) cite feeling uncomfortable or ill at ease as a barrier,
- lower income households (less than \$40,000 per year) identify long-term illness, disability or injury as barriers, and
- households with incomes less than \$30,000 per year say that fear of being injured is an important barrier.

A greater percentage of adults who are widowed, divorced or separated find long-term illness, disability or injury to be a very important barrier compared to adults who are married or living with a partner. Compared to the national average, adults who are unemployed or retired are more likely, whereas full-time employees are less likely, to cite long-term illness, disability, and injury as an important barrier. Furthermore, full-time employed adults are less likely than the national average to state that fear of being injured is very important in keeping them from participating in sports, whereas those who are unemployed are more likely. Compared to adults who are active, a greater proportion of those who are less active identify a lack of energy or being too tired, long-term illness, disability or injury, and feeling uncomfortable or ill at ease as important barriers.

FIGURE 5

Select personal barriers by activity level, % indicating 'very important'



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Trends over time

There have been no significant change in the proportions indicating a great deal of importance of specific personal barriers over time. In a general sense, the relationships that existed in 2006-2007 between personal barriers and age, income, education, activity level, and marital status are similar over time.¹ There are some new associations that appear in 2011-2012 that did not exist in 2006-2007, namely, relationships between a lack of energy and education and a fear of injury and household income.¹

Physical and social environmental barriers

Physical and social-environmental barriers are more focused on extrinsic factors, such as the availability and access to facilities and services, and others with whom one participates. Among those who do not participate in sport, the proportion citing these barriers as very important include:

- not having the right type of facilities nearby (13%)
- no one to participate with (12%)
- lack of information on where and how to participate (11%)
- not enough instructors or coaches (10%)
- not enough places to be active (9%)
- difficulty getting to appropriate places (8%)
- problems with transportation (7%).

A greater proportion of Canadians from the North and Newfoundland and Labrador indicate that there are not enough instructors or coaches. In addition, lack of the right type of facilities nearby is identified as an important barrier by a greater percentage of adults from Northern Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. Adults aged 45 to 64 are more likely than those 25 to 44 years of age to say that the



lack of safe or maintained places to be active is an important barrier to participation.

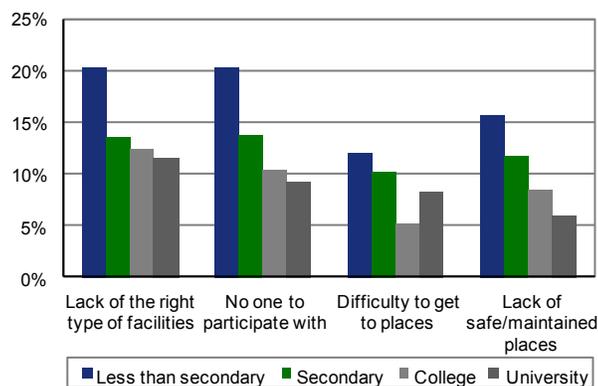
Although there are no significant income-related differences with environmental (physical and social) barriers, there are differences with respect to education levels. Adults with less than a high school education are more likely to identify:

- lack of right type of facilities (compared to those with a university education);
- not having anyone to participate with in sport (compared to those with a post-secondary education);
- difficulty getting to places to participate in sport (compared to those with college education).

Similarly, a greater proportion of adults with a high school education or less cite the lack of safe or maintained places to be active as an important barrier compared to those with a university education.

FIGURE 6

Select barriers related to the physical and social environment by education, % indicating 'very important'

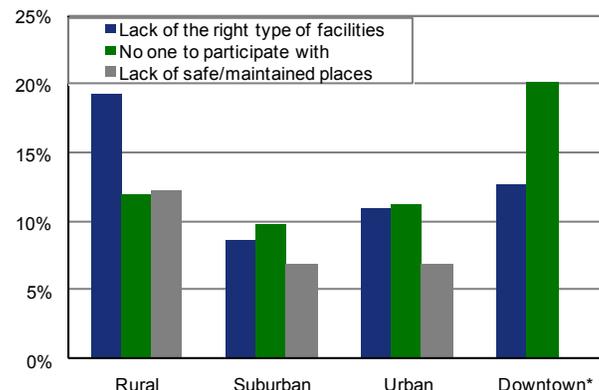


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Compared to the average, relatively more adults from small communities (less than 30,000 residents) cite a lack of safe or maintained places to be active, and a lack of availability of the right type of facilities as important barriers. When looking at neighbourhood environment, those living in rural neighbourhoods are more likely to report these same barriers compared to those living in suburban neighbourhoods, or compared to those living in urban neighbourhoods in the case of the lack of the right type of facilities. Not having anyone to participate in sport with is recognized as an important barrier by a greater proportion of adults living downtown compared to those living in suburban areas. There are few significant differences with respect to activity level, with the exception that less active individuals are more likely to identify a lack of information on where or how to participate in sports as an important barrier compared to those who are moderately active.

FIGURE 7

Select barriers related to the physical and social environment by neighbourhood environment, % indicating 'very important'



*Data unavailable due to cell size.

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Trends over time

The proportions citing barriers related to the physical and social environment have not changed significantly over time. Generally speaking, the relationships that existed in 2006-2007 between barriers relating to the physical and social environment and education are somewhat similar over time, however, additional associations have appeared in 2011-2012 (i.e., unavailability of suitable facilities, not having someone with whom to participate).¹ Otherwise, there have been some substantial changes over time. For example, the relationships between these barriers and marital status that appeared in 2006-2007 are no longer significant.¹ In addition, the relationship between age and issues with transportation that previously existed are no longer significant. On the contrary, there are associations with respect to barriers between the physical and social environment, and region and age in 2011-2012.

References

- 1 Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. Bulletin 03: Barriers to Sport Participation. *2006-07 Sport Monitor*. Available at <http://cflri.ca/media/node/355/files/Bulletin%203.pdf>

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