

Sport Participation in Canada

2011 – 2012 SPORT MONITOR



Positive and negative beliefs about participation in sport

Social cognitive theory posits that behaviour, cognition, and environment interact as determinants of each other.¹ One aspect of this is based on the beliefs and expectations that certain behaviours will lead to particular outcomes. In the 2011-2012 Sport Monitor, Canadians were asked about their perceptions of short- and long-term outcomes as they relate to participation in sport. In particular, the survey asks about their views on the possible beneficial and harmful aspects of participation in sport.

Generally speaking, positive outcomes related to sport participation were reported more frequently than negative outcomes. These are further described in the following sections of this bulletin. For the purposes of this bulletin, those who “strongly” agree represent those who answered that they “moderately” or “strongly” agree with a series of statements related to beliefs.

Positive beliefs

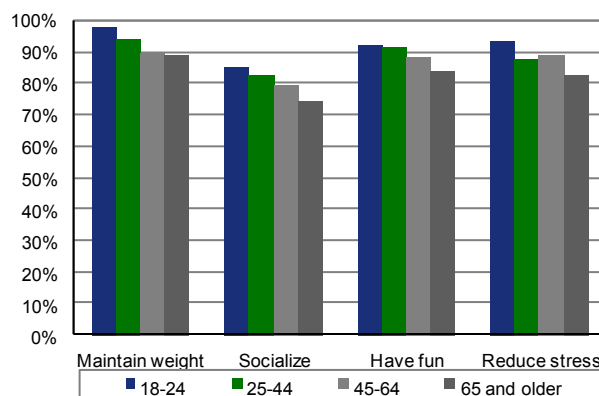
At least half of Canadians moderately or strongly agree that regular sport participation contributes to:

- maintaining a healthy weight (92%)
- feeling good about oneself (90%)
- having fun (89%)
- reducing stress (88%)
- feeling energetic (86%)
- spending time with family (84%)
- relaxing (83%)
- socializing (80%)
- meeting others who have the same values in life (66%)
- contributing to a sense of belonging (66%)
- encouraging volunteerism (52%).

Generally speaking, there are few regional differences with respect to positive beliefs. Compared to the national average, a greater proportion of residents living in Quebec strongly agree that sport helps people relax, yet this same population is less likely to strongly agree that sport encourages people to volunteer in their communities. Residents of New Brunswick and the Northwest Territories are more likely to strongly agree with the latter belief when compared to the average. Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador are more likely than average to strongly agree that sport helps people feel energized.

More women than men strongly agree that sport helps people feel relaxed, energized, good about themselves, and provides a good opportunity for families to spend time together. Positive beliefs are also associated with age. The proportion of Canadians that cite the maintenance of a healthy weight as a key benefit decreases slightly with increasing age. A greater proportion of adults aged 25 to 44 years strongly agree that sport helps people socialize, have fun, and feel energized compared to older adults (65 years and older).

FIGURE 1
Select positive beliefs of sport by age



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On the contrary, relatively more adults 65 years and older strongly agree that sport encourages people to volunteer in their community and assists in meeting others with the same values compared to 45 to 64 year olds, whereas this younger group is more likely to say that sport helps people feel relaxed and good about themselves. The relationship with age varies slightly when considering stress reduction as a benefit of sport; in this case, both 18 to 24 year olds and 45 to 64 year olds are more likely than older adults (65 years and older) to strongly agree that participation in sport helps to reduce stress.

When considering age in conjunction with gender, younger women (18 to 24 year olds) are more likely than older women to say that participation in sport helps people socialize and reduce stress (compared to women 65 years and older) and helps maintain a healthy weight (compared to women 25 years and older). A greater proportion of women, aged 25 to 44 years, strongly agree that participation in sports helps people feel energized and good about themselves compared to the youngest (15 to 17 year olds) and oldest women (65 years and older). In addition, 25 to 44 year old women are more likely than women 65 years and older to indicate that sport helps people have fun.

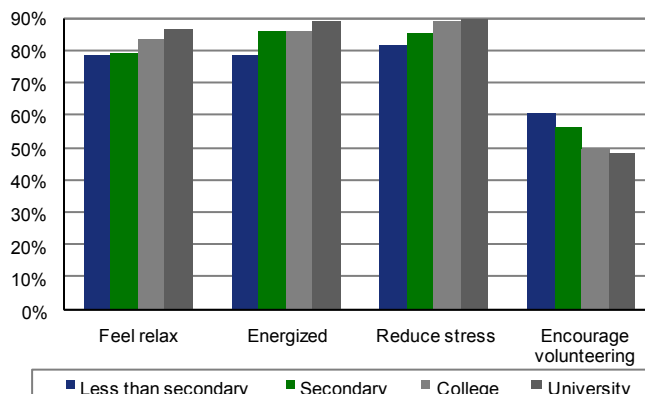
When comparing women to men:

- 25 to 44 year old women are more likely than men in the same age bracket to strongly agree that sport helps individuals feel good about themselves;
- more women aged 18 to 24 strongly agree that participation in sport helps people relax compared to men of the same age;
- a greater proportion of women aged 45 to 64 report that sport helps people feel energized compared to men of the same age.

Relatively more adults with a university education strongly agree that participation in sport helps people feel relaxed compared to those with a high school education or less, as well as energized and less stressed compared to those with less than a high school education. On the contrary, those with less than a high school education are more likely to indicate that participation in sport encourages people to volunteer in their community compared to those with a university education. Similarly, a greater proportion of Canadians with a post-secondary education strongly agree that sport helps people socialize compared to those with less than a high school education. Moreover, the latter group is also generally less likely to say that sport helps people feel good about themselves compared to the national average.

With respect to positive beliefs, there are very few significant differences related to household income, employment status, and marital status, with a few notable exceptions. Adults from higher income households (\$80,000 to \$99,999 per year) are more likely than those from the lowest income households to strongly agree that sport helps individuals maintain a healthy weight.

FIGURE 2
Select positive beliefs of sport by education

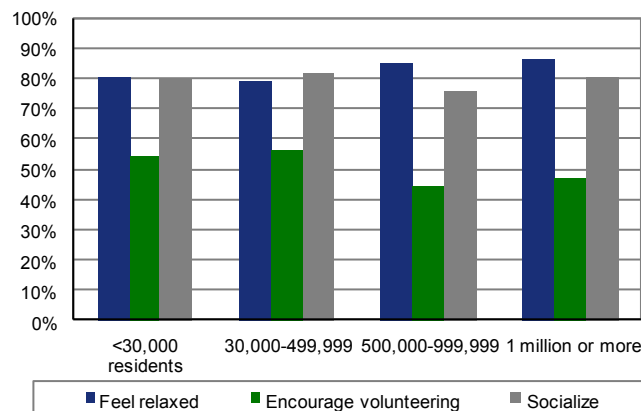


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Compared to the national average, relatively fewer retirees strongly agree that sport helps people have fun, whereas relatively more students say sport helps to reduce stress. A greater proportion of individuals who are widowed, divorced or separated say that sport is a good way for a family to spend time together compared to those who are single or never married.

Residents of the largest communities (1 million or more residents) are more likely than those from communities with between 30,000 and 499,999 residents, to strongly agree that sport helps people relax, whereas the opposite relationship occurs with respect to sport providing a way to encourage people to volunteer in their communities. Relatively more residents living in small communities (less than 30,000 residents) strongly agree that sport provides opportunities to meet others with the same values compared to those from the largest communities.

FIGURE 3
Select positive beliefs of sport by community size

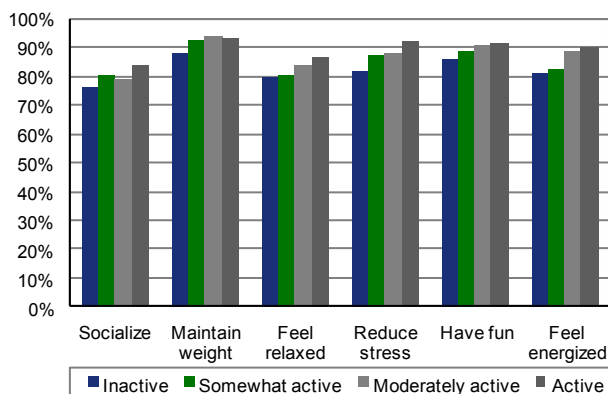


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A greater proportion of individuals who are active strongly agree that sport provides a host of benefits including helping people socialize, meeting others with same values, maintaining a healthy weight, relaxing, reducing stress, having fun, feeling full of energy, feeling good about themselves, providing a sense of belonging and encouraging people to volunteer in their community. Sport participants are more likely than non-participants to indicate that sport provides individuals with a sense of belonging.

FIGURE 4

Select positive beliefs of sport by activity level



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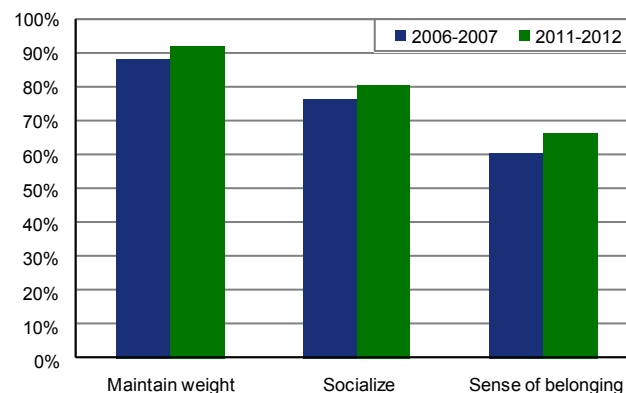
Trends over time

The proportion of Canadians indicating that they strongly agree that regular sport participation contributes to the maintenance of a healthy weight, social interaction, and a sense of belonging has increased since 2006-2007.² Regional differences have changed slightly over time, whereby there are fewer significant relationships in 2011-2012, compared to 2006-2007.² In general terms, many of the age- and education-related differences that appeared in 2006-2007, persist in 2011-2012.² There are now fewer significant associations with marital status compared to previous years, whereas there are now more significant relationships with activity level than previously reported.

Interestingly, the relationships between positive beliefs and sport participation that appeared in 2006-2007 (i.e., that sport participants are more likely to say that sport helps people socialize, have fun, reduce stress, feel good about themselves, and relax) are no longer significant in 2011-2012.² Similarly, there are now less significant relationships between positive beliefs and household income in 2011-2012, compared to 2006-2007.²

FIGURE 5

Select positive beliefs of sport, trends over time



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Negative beliefs

In general, Canadians report higher ratings of agreement that sport participation is related to positive outcomes than to negative outcomes. For example, Canadians report that they moderately or strongly agree that regular sport participation:

- excludes specific groups (20%)
- is too competitive (19%)
- leads to continuing pain and stiffness in joints (16%)
- is too structured (15%)
- causes injury (14%)
- makes people too muscular (8%).

Although there are no significant gender differences with respect to the proportion who strongly agree with negative beliefs about sport participation, there are differences pertaining to age. A greater proportion of older adults (65 years and older) strongly agree that participation in sport contributes to continuing pain and stiffness (compared to 18 to 64 year olds), is too competitive (compared to 25 to 44 year olds), and excludes specific groups (compared to 25 to 64 year olds). Adults aged 45 years and older are more likely than those aged 25 to 44 years to strongly agree that sport is too structured.

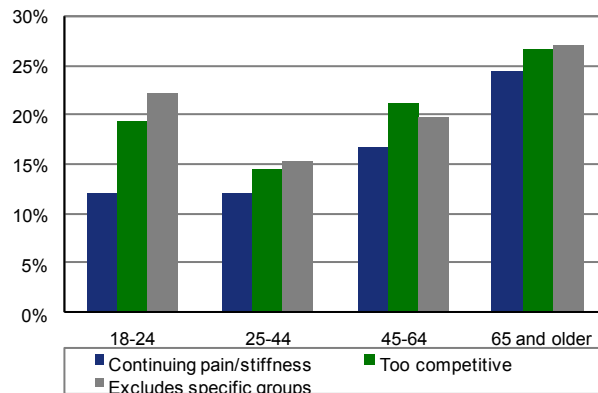
Considering age in conjunction with gender, older women (65 years and older) are more likely than younger women to say that sport:

- leads to continuing pain and stiffness (vs. women aged 25 to 64)
- makes people too muscular (compared to women aged 45 to 64)
- excludes specific groups (compared to women aged 25 to 44)
- causes injury (compared to women aged 25 to 44).

Similarly, a greater proportion of women aged 45 years and older say that sport is too competitive and too structured compared to women aged 25 to 44 years. Among men, those aged 45 to 64 years of age are more likely to say that sport is too structured compared to men aged 25 to 44 years.

FIGURE 6

Select negative beliefs of sport by age

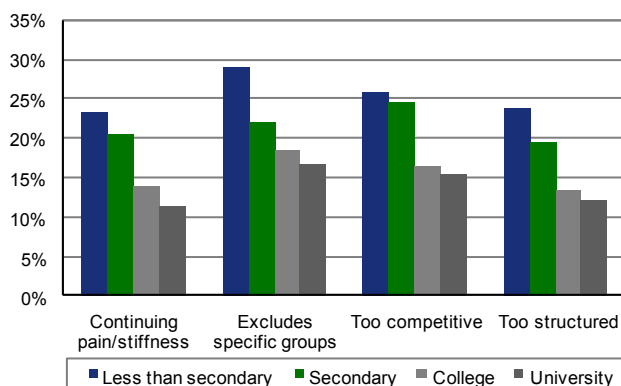


2011-2012 Sport Monitor, CFLRI

Adults with less than a high school education are more likely than those with a post-secondary education to strongly agree that participation in sport contributes to continued pain and stiffness in joints, excludes specific groups, is too competitive, and is too structured. In a similar manner, a greater proportion of those with less than a high school education strongly agree that sport makes people muscular, compared to those with a university education. Individuals with a high school education or less are more likely to strongly agree that sport participation leads to injuries compared to those with a university education.

FIGURE 7

Select negative beliefs of sport by education



2011-2012 Sport Monitor, CFLRI

Relatively more individuals from lower income households strongly agree that participation in sport contributes to continuing pain and stiffness, leads to injuries, makes individuals too muscular, excludes specific groups, is too competitive, and is too structured, compared to those from higher household incomes. Compared to the average, retirees are also more likely to strongly agree that sport contributes to continued pain and stiffness, is too competitive, and too structured.

Individuals who are widowed, divorced, or separated are more likely to say that sport excludes specific groups, is too competitive, or too structured compared to those who are married or living with a partner. In fact, those who are widowed, divorced, or separated are most likely to say that sport is too structured. Relatively more residents of small communities (less than 30,000 residents) strongly agree that sport is too competitive compared to those from large communities (500,000 to 999,999 residents).

Although there are no significant differences with respect to activity level, differences do exist when considering participation in sport. A greater proportion of individuals who do not participate in sport strongly agree that sport excludes specific groups, is too competitive, and is too structured, compared to those who participate.

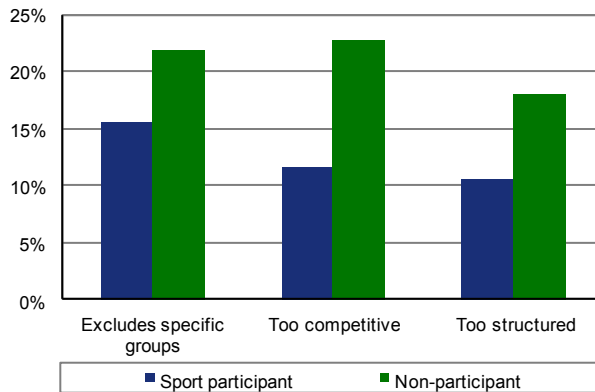
Trends over time

There have been no overall differences over time in the proportions of individuals who indicate negative beliefs about sport. Regional differences vary over time, however, there were very few differences in both time periods with respect to region.

The few gender-related differences that appeared in 2006-2007 are no longer significant in more recent years.² The significant age-related differences in 2011-2012 have generally followed a similar pattern to those found in 2006-2007, with the exception of age-related differences concerning views that sport makes people too muscular are no longer significant.²

FIGURE 8

Select negative beliefs of sport by participation in sport



2011-2012 Sport Monitor, CFLRI

Relationships between education, participation in sport, and negative beliefs about sport have generally persisted over time. Although some relationships remained the same over time, there are slightly fewer significant relationships with marital status in 2011-2012, compared to 2006-2007.²

Although the relationship between negative beliefs and participation in sport have generally persisted over time, the relationships that were evident with activity level in 2006-2007² are no longer significant in 2011-2012.

References

- 1 Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.
- 2 Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. Bulletin 04: Beliefs Associated with the Benefits of Regular Sport Participation. *2006-07 Sport Monitor*. Available at http://cflri.ca/media/node/357/files/sport2007_b4.pdf.

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