

Sport Participation in Canada

2011-2012 SPORT MONITOR



Valuing Sport in Canada

Sport can be perceived as important to individuals for a variety of reasons, such as for health and well-being, skill development, contributing to family and social life, feeling like part of the family, and so on. The 2011-2012 Sport Monitor explores Canadians' perceptions about the importance of these various reasons, whereby importance is reported here as those who rated the reason as "quite" or "very" important on a scale. The bulletin examines the importance of sport overall, in terms of an individual-level contribution (i.e., experiences from an individual perspective), and in terms of a social-level contribution (i.e., interactions with others).

Value of sport overall

In a general sense, 59% of Canadians say that sport is very important to them personally. Compared to the national average, residents of Quebec are more likely to indicate that sport is very important to them personally, whereas those in Alberta are less likely to report this.

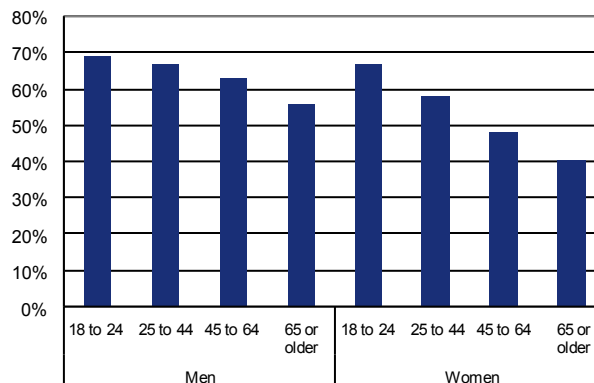
More men than women perceive sport as very important to them personally. Compared to 15 to 24 year olds, those aged 45 years and older are less likely to rate sport as very important. This decline is only significant among women, not men. Retirees are less likely than the average to say that sport is very important to them personally.

In addition, Canadians are more likely to say that sport is very important to them personally if they are:

- university educated (vs. those with less than high school education)
- from the highest income households (vs. those with incomes between \$30,000 to \$39,999)
- residents of the largest communities with 1 million or more residents (vs. those from communities with 30,000 residents or less)
- single or never married (vs. those who are widowed, divorced or separated)
- active
- sport participants.

FIGURE 1

Overall value of sport by age and sex, % citing as very important



2011-2012 Sport Monitor, CFLRI

Trends over time

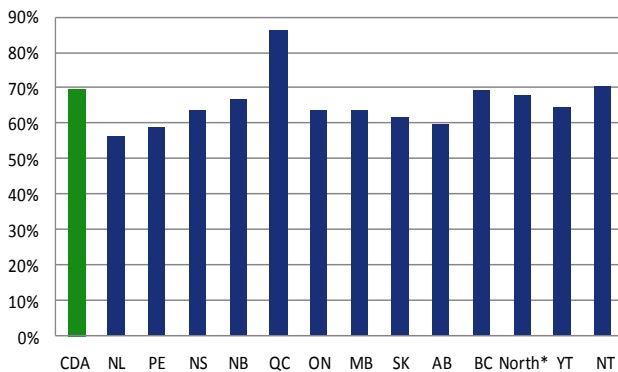
The proportion rating the personal importance of sport highly has not changed significantly since 2006/2007. Generally speaking, the relationships described here have persisted over time, with the exceptions of newly emerged associations with education, marital and employment status. Previously, residents of Newfoundland and Labrador were less likely than the national average to rate sport as important to them personally, however, this regional difference is no longer significant. In fact, those in Alberta are now less likely to report this.

Value of sport to individual-level circumstances

More than two-thirds (70%) of Canadians indicate that sport is very important for overall health and well-being. Roughly half (53%) of adults say that sport is very important for building transferable skills or characters, such as discipline or leadership. Compared to the national average, relatively more residents living in Quebec, and relatively fewer residents living in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Alberta, and Ontario say that sport is very important to their overall health and well-being.



FIGURE 2
Value of sport to overall health and well-being by province and territory, % citing as very important

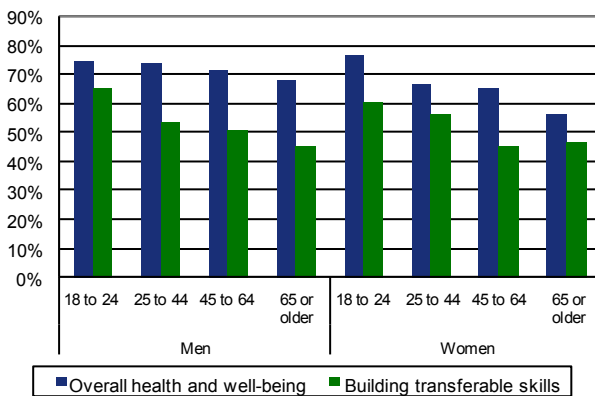


* The North includes Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon. Data for Nunavut is suppressed in the chart due to cell size.

2011-2012 Sport Monitor, CFLRI

More men than women perceive sport as important to one's overall health and well-being. The proportion that indicates sport as important to overall health and well-being generally declines with age (e.g., 86% of 15 to 17 years report this compared to 61% of adults 65 years and older); however, this age related decline is significant only among women. Similarly, younger adults (15 to 24 years old) are more likely than adults 45 years of age and older to say that sport is very important for building transferable skills; however, an age-related decline is only significant among men.

FIGURE 3
Value of sport to individual-level circumstances by age and sex, % citing as very important



2011-2012 Sport Monitor, CFLRI

There are no differences in ratings of importance of sport to overall health and well-being and for building transferable skills by marital status, household income, or education. Retired adults are less likely than the average to say that sport is very important to overall health and well-being and for building transferable skills.

A greater proportion of adults who are active or who participate in sport say that sport is very important to overall health and well-being and for building transferable skills or character compared to those who are less active or who do not participate in sport, respectively.

Trends over time

The overall proportion of adults citing sport as very important to overall health and well-being, and for building transferable skills, has remained constant since 2006/2007. Although the overall rates have not varied, several changes have appeared over time in relation to socio-demographic and socio-economic factors. Even though the regional differences that appeared in 2006/2007 persist, there are now additional regional differences that were not significant previously. In 2006/2007, the age-related decline in the proportion rating the importance of sport to overall health and well-being highly, appeared among both men and women; however, this relationship is now only significant among women. In 2006/2007, higher levels of household income were associated with placing a greater importance on sport for overall health and well-being, whereas this relationship is no longer significant. Furthermore, the previous relationship with marital status is also no longer significant.

Value of sport to social-level circumstances

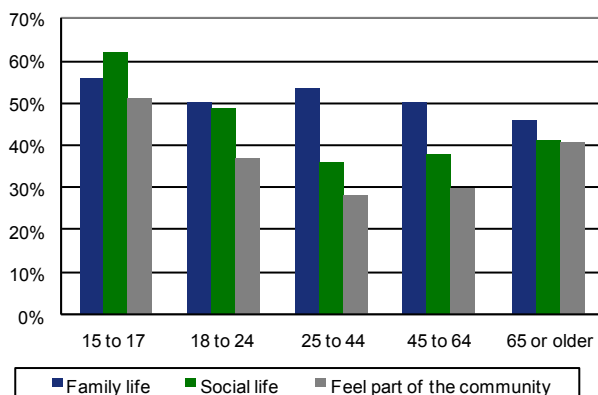
Close to half of Canadians (51%) say that sport is very important for contributing to family life, 40% report that it is very important to social life, and 33% indicate that it is very important for feeling like part of the community. When compared to the national average, several regional differences appear. In particular, residents of Quebec were more likely to indicate that sport is very important to their family life and those in Northern Canada are more likely to say that sport makes them feel like they are part of their communities compared to the national average.

Although there are no gender differences related to the perceived importance of sport to one's social life or to feeling like part of the community, more women than men cited high importance of sport to family life. There are no overall age differences regarding the importance of sport to family life, however, younger adults (aged 15 to 17) are generally most likely to state that sport is very important to one's social life. Adults aged 25 to 64 are less likely than young adults (15 to 17 year olds) and older adults (65 years and older) to say that sport is very important for feeling like part of the community. A greater percentage of older women (65 years and older) say that sport is very important for providing them with feelings as though they are part of their community and for contributing to their social life compared to younger women (compared to 25 to 44 year olds for contributing to social life, and 25 to 64 years olds for contributing to the community).

Although there are no notable differences by household income, there are significant differences related to education. A greater proportion of adults with a high school education or less say that sport is very important for their social life compared to those with a university education.

FIGURE 4

Value of sport to social-level circumstances by age, % citing as very important



2011-2012 Sport Monitor, CFLRI

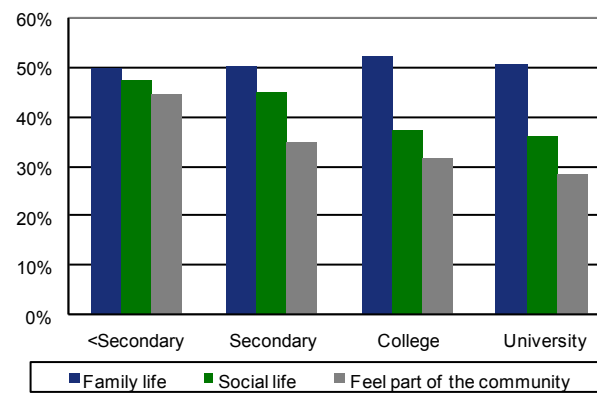
Similarly, relatively more adults with less than a high school education say that sport is very important for feeling like part of one’s community compared to those with post-secondary education. These education-related findings, however, may be partly due to age.

There are differences related to marital and employment status. Compared to adults who are single or never married, a greater proportion of adults who are either married or living with a partner say that sport is very important to family life. Those who are unemployed for any reason are less likely than the average to say that sport is very important to their social life, whereas those who are retired are more likely to say that sport is very important for feeling like part of the community. In addition, those who are unemployed are also less likely than the national average to say that sport is very important to their family life, whereas students more likely to say this.

Generally, a greater proportion of those who are active and who participate in sport rated the importance of sport to family life, social life, and feeling part of the community compared to those who are less active or that do not participate in sport, respectively.

FIGURE 5

Value of sport to social-level circumstances by education, % citing as very important



2011-2012 Sport Monitor, CFLRI

Trends over time

The overall proportion of adults citing sport as very important to family and social life has remained constant since 2006/2007. There has been a slight increase over time in the proportion that say that sport is very important for helping individuals feel like they are part of the community. There have been changes in regional differences over time, whereby previously reported regional differences are no longer significant. Although not significant in 2006/2007, women are now more likely than men to cite the importance of sport to family life.

Previous relationships between age and ratings of importance of sport for family life are no longer significant in 2011/2012. There was a relationship in 2006/2007 between gender and the contribution of sport to one’s social life, yet no relationship appeared with age. In 2011/2012, however, there is no longer a relationship with gender but there is with age. Previous relationships with education and value to social life and community life still generally persist, although the relationships with household income or marital status are no longer significant.

CANADIAN FITNESS & LIFESTYLE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

201-185 Somerset Street West • Ottawa, ON K2P 0J2 • (613) 233-5528 • info@cflri.ca
http://www.cflri.ca/



Production of this bulletin has been made possible through a financial contribution from Sport Canada and the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of these agencies.