



Press Release

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Sport England releases latest snapshot of the activity habits of the nation

- 27.7 million people (61.8% of the adult population) do the 150 minutes of activity each week recommended by the Chief Medical Officer
- Walking remains the most popular way to get active, and there's been a rise in the number of people doing interval training such as HIIT sessions
- Levels of activity are stable across the population as a whole

Sport England has today published the latest data from the Active Lives Survey, a comprehensive snapshot of the nation's sport and physical activity habits, based on a sample of almost 200,000 respondents.

The results show that activity levels in England are stable. 27.7 million (61.8%) of people (aged 16+) in England are active – meeting the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines of doing at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity each week – and are gaining the health benefits, including a reduced risk of dementia, depression, diabetes, and improved mental wellbeing. At the other end of the scale, 11.5 million people (25.7%) are inactive, meaning they do less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week.

The data also highlights how people are choosing to be active over the 12-month period covered by the survey (November 2016 - November 2017).

Walking remains the most popular activity, with 18.6m people walking for leisure and 14.5m people walking for travel, with the latter seeing an increase of 423,000 (0.7%) people on last year.

A striking feature of the data was a significant increase of 518,000 more people doing interval training sessions (e.g. HIIT sessions). 20% of people did their interval training sessions at home, and 75% took part in a leisure/fitness/sport centre or gym. A significant proportion of the people doing

interval sessions (47%) are young people aged 16-34. This coincides with an increase in the number of HIIT sessions available free on YouTube.

In contrast, swimming and cycling have both decreased in popularity, with 283,000 fewer people swimming, and 93,000 fewer people cycling. Adventure sports, meanwhile, has enjoyed a boost in popularity with 337,000 more people taking part in activities such as hill and mountain walking, rock climbing, abseiling, orienteering, Parkour, or high ropes.

Other findings include:

- The gap in activity levels between the higher and lower socio-economic groups has stabilised, although people on lower incomes and disabled people are still much less likely to be active enough to benefit their health. Helping these groups get active remains a major priority for Sport England and it is dedicating significant investment to both groups.
- Older people are getting more active, with an increase in the number of 55-74 year olds meeting the 150 minute threshold (up 1.3% to 58.3%). This is important given that we have an ageing population. Brisk walking, including hill and mountain walking appears to be driving this increase.

Commenting on the survey results, Jennie Price, CEO of Sport England said:

“While the overall activity levels of the nation are stable, what people are choosing to do is moving with the times. The popularity of HIIT shows the power of social media, and many older people are choosing to spend their leisure time in the great outdoors. Sport England has worked closely with the National Trust, the Forestry Commission and others to support more activity outdoors, and this will remain a significant area of investment for us.

“The figures also show the huge importance of investing to tackle inactivity and the inequalities between different groups in society, which was highlighted in the Government’s strategy Sporting Future. It’s why Sport England’s 2017-21 strategy has, for the first time, allocated 25% of its investment to tackling inactivity.

“This is a long- term task but it could not be more important.”

-Ends-

For further information and interview opportunities please contact:

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Notes for Editors

Results will be published twice a year. The Active Lives survey was launched in 2015 and measures activity in its broadest sense and includes activities such as walking, cycling for travel and dance, rather than just sport alone to reflect the Government's Strategy Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation.

198,911 people aged 16+ completed the second round of the survey between November 2016 and November 2017. Active Lives is a national survey but offers a vast amount of local data which can be used to develop local projects and policies. To find out more about Active Lives and see the full results in full, go to www.sportengland.org/activelives

Sport England is a public body and invests up to £300 million National Lottery and government money each year in projects and programmes that help people get active and play sport.

It wants everyone in England, regardless of age, background, or level of ability, to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. That's why a lot of its work is specifically focused on helping people who do no, or very little, physical activity and groups who are typically less active - like women, disabled people and people on lower incomes.