



Press Release

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Exercise inequalities leave millions of women inactive

- This Girl Can returns with new inspirational Fit Got Real message to reach women of all backgrounds and ethnicities who feel left behind by traditional exercise
- Women in lower paid and routine jobs are twice as likely to be inactive as those in senior managerial roles
- South Asian and black women are also more likely to be inactive than white women
- Sport England's campaign, which is funded by The National Lottery, launches a new film showing real women using practical, inventive and unconventional ways to fit exercise into their lives.

Sport England has today launched the latest phase of its This Girl Can campaign, Fit Got Real, which aims to tackle the inequalities in levels of exercise between different social groups of women.

The latest Active Lives Adult Survey¹ from Sport England highlights these imbalances, with women in lower paid, routine jobs almost twice as likely to be inactive (doing less than 30 minutes of exercise a week) compared to women in senior and managerial roles (33.5% compared to 17.7%). The survey also showed significant differences in activity levels amongst women of different ethnicities, with women of a South Asian background (36%) and black women (29.4%) more likely to be inactive than white British women (25.3%).

Sport England research shows that a mix of practical and emotional pressures, such as lack of time, fear of judgement and lack of confidence, prevent many women from being as active as they would like. The insights also highlight that many of these pressures come from the way marketing, the media and TV often portray exercise as being for women who have the money to afford gym memberships, expensive sports clothes or plenty of free time.

The campaign is looking to inspire and motivate women with its new Fit Got Real film by showing real women of different ages and ethnicities doing exercise their own way - whether that is running around a park pushing their child in a pram, hula hooping at home or teaching themselves how to swim using YouTube - and sharing the message that no matter how unconventional, it all counts as exercise.

Jennie Price, Chief Executive of Sport England comments: “There are some stark inequalities when it comes to different levels of exercise amongst women in England. Many of the pressures of modern life do not make it easy for women to have the confidence and motivation to be active. The health and wellbeing benefits of being active should be available to all women, and that is why we have a new message - Fit Got Real – to celebrate the creative and often unconventional ways many women are fitting exercise into their busy lives.”

Caroline, 36, who stars in the new film, comments: “As a full-time carer I rarely have time to myself and am often under a lot of pressure both emotionally and physically. At the end of the day, I always felt I was either too tired, didn’t have enough time or wasn’t motivated enough to exercise. But, one day I realised how important it was (for my mental and physical health) to spend some time on myself and, with the help of my friends and support groups in the community, I could see a way out! Rather than spending half an hour watching TV, I now get out to a dance class or over to the trampoline classes at the local community centre. With added daily pressures of work and family commitments, I completely understand how easy it is to get into a routine of not doing much exercise, but I feel so much happier and healthier from being more active. Even it’s a quick run up and down the garden it’s better than nothing!”

Having already inspired almost 3 million women³ to be more active since launching in 2015, This Girl Can’s new campaign is designed to appeal to an even wider range of women by showing images and telling stories of the realities of getting active for many women.

Along with the new adverts and online film, This Girl Can’s website and social channels will showcase women talking about how they fit exercise into their lives, why they like it and the negative perceptions and barriers they overcame to be more active.

For more information about This Girl Can’s Fit Got Real campaign, please visit: www.thisgirlcan.co.uk

The new Fit Got Real film is available to view and download here.

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Notes to editors

For further information about the This Girl Can campaign or to request any interviews, please contact: Thisgirlcan@freuds.com / 0203 003 6527 / 07912 515997

The new This Girl Can video content and imagery for Fit Got Real can be viewed and downloaded from following link (30 and 60 second edit available):

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9qfkhdjou5g7y1w/AABgwaRFhHOSzN-xGg0lw2Xba?dl=0> Interviews

Interview available upon request with women who feature in the new film and Sport England spokespeople.

Other key statistics from the Active Lives Adult Survey

- 2,258,400 women in lower paid, routine and manual professions (33.5%) are inactive
- More women in lower paid, routine and manual professions (33.5%) are inactive than men in the same social groups (31.8%)
- South Asian women (36.0%) are more likely to be inactive than South Asian men (27.5%)
- Overall, women are more likely to be inactive than men (26.4% vs 23.8%)

About the 'Active Lives Adult Survey'

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. Results are published twice a year. 185,000 people aged 16+ completed the survey between May 2017 and May 2018. Active Lives is a national survey but also 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.

About Sport England

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.

About This Girl Can

Since 2015, Sport England has been working to address the significant gender gap found in sports and exercise, to build women's confidence around being active, and help them meet the Chief Medical Officers' guidance. The campaign was based on the insight that 75% of women say they want to do more sporting activities or exercise, but one of the unifying barriers found to be holding them back is a fear of judgement. This Girl Can's objective is to encourage women to engage in physical activity regardless of shape, size, age or ability. This Girl Can 'Fit Got Real' campaign has launched in response to women feeling that conventional exercise doesn't represent them or their lives.

About physical activity guidelines

International evidence and the UK Chief Medical Officers' guidelines, Start Active Stay Active, report, highlights the frequency and type of physical activity required to achieve general health benefits, including 150 minutes physical activity of at least moderate intensity each week, and people are classed as 'inactive' if they achieve less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a week.