

Engagement Patterns of Different Social Groups

The social groups to which an individual belongs will influence their level of engagement in sport and physical activity and also the types of sport and physical activity in which they are involved. The major social groups and the influences of a number of factors have been provided below.



	Gender	Religion/race/culture	Age	Family	Disability
Attitudes	The activities that men and women take part in can be affected by how they view those activities, e.g. women might be less likely to take part in rugby if they view it as masculine.	Racial discrimination in some sports still exists which may be an inhibiting factor to some races' involvement in that sport.	Some elderly people do not consider it appropriate to take part in physical activity.	People are influenced by others' attitudes. If a parent has a negative attitude towards sport, it is likely to be an attitude that a child holds when they grow up.	Some disabled people may not feel that they are capable of being physically active.
Role models	The lack of female role models has a negative impact on participation.	Sport has seen an increase in role models from diverse backgrounds, which increases participation in those sports. However, some sports have fewer role models, e.g. there are few black swimmers.	Most role models are young which can have a negative impact on elderly participation.	Members of your family can be seen as role models and encourage certain behaviours such as participation in sport.	Some sports have a lack of disabled role models; however, recent Paralympic Games have increased the number of disabled role models which has driven up participation rates.
Accessibility	There may be a lack of opportunity for some females to access certain sports, such as female rugby teams.	Restrictions, such as not being allowed to drive on the Jewish Sabbath, can impact on participation in sport on religious days.	It can be harder for elderly people to access facilities if they are unable to walk / take public transport.	Family members can provide transport for each other in order to increase the accessibility to training and matches.	Some facilities do not have the provisions required by disabled individuals.
Media coverage	Female sport receives less media coverage, which negatively impacts on participation.	Sports that do not receive media coverage will be disadvantaged and may impact participation rates of all groups.	Most media coverage focuses on young professional athletes which may discourage older individuals from participating.		Disabled sport receives less media coverage which negatively impacts on participation.
Stereotyping	Gender stereotyping still exists with some sports, such as boxing, considered masculine. However, with an increase in female role models and media coverage in these sports, this is continuing to improve.	The stereotypical idea that some races are suited to certain sports can prevent people from trying different sports.	Stereotypes about activities which are appropriate for elderly people may prevent them from being active.		Stereotypes about what sports are appropriate for disabled athletes may prevent them from taking part in physical activity.
Culture		Traditional views, such as women having to wear certain clothing, can restrict participation in some sports.		Families create a culture which either encourages or discourages other family members from being physically active.	
Family commitments	In modern times, the family dynamic has changed and as a result women have more opportunities to be physically active, beyond their role as mothers.	Some cultures value spending time with the family very highly. As a result, there is likely less time available to be physically active.	Older individuals may have more commitments, such as looking after children, which restricts participation.	Parents may not have enough time to be physically active due to the need to look after their children. Additionally, other family commitments may stop parents being able to take their children to training.	Some disabled individuals may require assistance from their family in order to allow them to participate in physical activities.
Leisure time	In the past, women generally had less free time due to family commitments, but this has now changed and women are able to participate as much as men.	Some individuals may have less leisure time to take part in physical activity due to religious commitments, such as attending services and prayer.	The young and old are likely to have more free time than middle-aged working adults.	Different members of the family will have different amounts of leisure time which will influence their engagement. Working parents will have less time.	A disabled athlete's leisure time may depend on their family, especially if they require full support to participate.
Familiarity			If people have participated in physical activity throughout their lives, they are more likely to take part when they're older.	If people participate regularly with their friends/family, they are more likely to keep doing so.	Individuals who acquire a disability may be unfamiliar with the opportunities available for disabled participation in sport.
Education	The compulsory inclusion of Physical Education in the National Curriculum in schools means both genders are exposed to physical activity.			Families can educate each other about the benefits of physical activity, which increases participation.	If people are educated about disabled sport, they will be more likely to take part.
Disposable income	The wage gap between men and women is no longer as prominent, providing women with greater opportunities to take part in physical activity.		Young people may not have enough money to pay membership fees for gyms or registration fees for teams.	Different members of the family will have different amounts of disposable income which will influence their engagement.	If a disabled person is unable to work, they may not have the disposable income to participate in sport.
Adaptability		Some sports make rule changes to accommodate religious practices, such as Muslim women being allowed to cover their heads when playing football.	Sports can be adapted in order to make them suitable for young and elderly athletes.		Sports can be adapted in order to make them suitable for disabled athletes.