



Sport Participation in Canada

Chapter 14

14.0 Increase in Non-Participation

It seems that both time and money are in very short supply these days. The time crunch being experienced by most of us is likely having an affect on levels of sport participation. The amount of free time available has not increased while other demands for our time are on the rise. As well, the influence of new technology – particularly computers, the Internet and the hundreds of television channels to choose from is changing the way people interact with one another. As we spend more time in front of our computer and tv screens, we have less time to spend engaging in sport or other community activities.

14.1 Reasons for Non-participation ¹

What's holding Canadians back?

Why are more Canadians not participating in sport? The major reasons given for not participating in sport have not changed since the first time this question was asked in 1992. Essentially, we still lack the time, the interest and are limited due to reasons of health/injury or age. On the positive side, the unavailability of sport facilities and programs ranked last among the reasons given for non-participation. Chart 16 is a graphic representation of the reasons Canadians gave for not participating in sport.

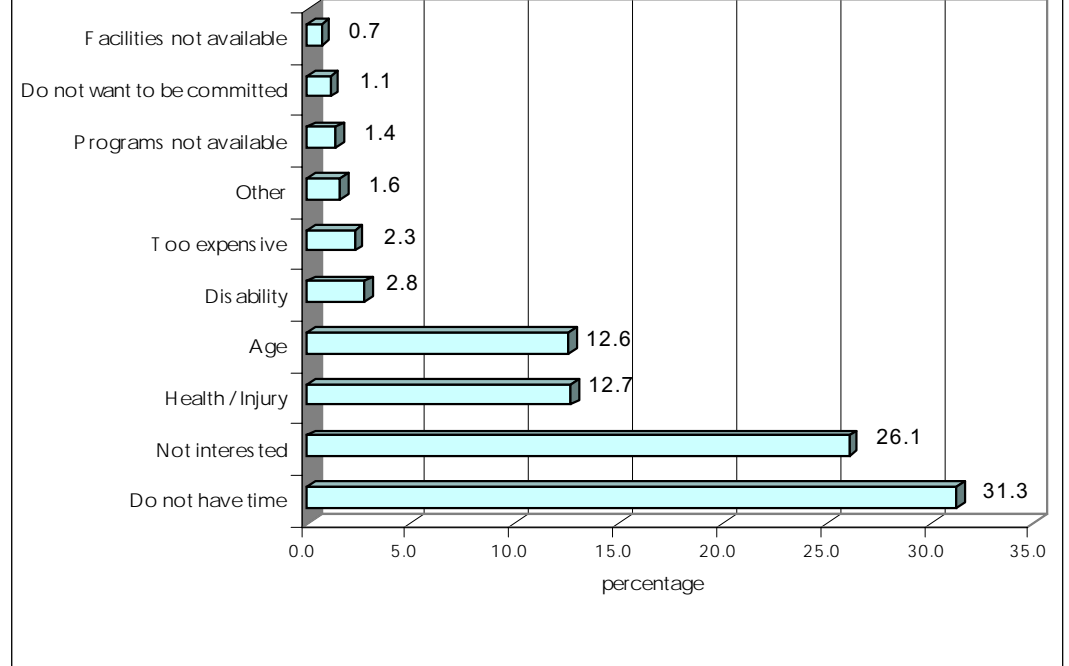
Given our overextended, busy schedules it is not surprising that 'lack of time' was the most frequently reported factor in keeping Canadians from being more active in sport in 1998. Almost one-third of inactive Canadians reported having no time for sport. 'Lack of interest' ranked as the second reason indicated by over one-quarter (26%) of non-participants and reasons of 'health/injury' (13%) and 'age' (13%) tied for third.

Men Lack Time, Women Lack Time and Interest

As for gender differences, a greater proportion of males reported lack of time for sport (35% males versus 29% females), while females lacked interest in sport (28% females versus 23% males).

¹ Note that respondents may provide more than one reason for non-participation.

Chart 16.
Reasons for Non-Participation in Sport
1998



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998

Interestingly, reasons for non-participation varied by age. ‘Lack of time’ was the reason reported by one-third of all non-active Canadians. Yet, for nearly 50% of non-active Canadians aged 20-24, and 25–34, and for 38% of 35-54 year olds, lack of time was their primary reason for not participating in sport. Understandably, these age groups have little leisure time left over as they are involved in the busiest time of their life cycle, juggling responsibilities of school, career and child rearing.

‘Lack of interest’ in sport was cited in greatest proportion by inactive youth between 15-19 years of age (40%), followed by 35-54 year olds (28%). Older Canadians indicated reasons of ‘health/injury’ and ‘age’ in greater proportion than their younger counterparts. While less than 7% of inactive young Canadians cited ‘health/injury’ reasons, the proportion jumps to 10% of 35-54 year olds, and to 24% of older Canadians aged 55 and over. Similarly, ‘age’ was the reason cited most often by older Canadians 55 years of age and up (38%).

Table 19.

Reasons* for Non-Participation in Sport, by Age, Canada, 1998

		Total		Male		Female	
		000s	%	000s	%	000s	%
Population not participating in Sport		14,034	57.8	5,878	49.2	8,156	66.2
All ages							
Do not have time		4,396	31.3	2,049	34.8	2,347	28.8
Not interested		3,667	26.1	1,368	23.3	2,300	28.2
Health/injury		1,781	12.7	682	11.6	1,099	13.5
Age		1,775	12.6	701	11.9	1,074	13.2
Disability		388	2.8	206	3.5	182	2.2
Too expensive		320	2.3	161	2.7	158	1.9
Other		227	1.6	86	1.5	141	1.7
Programs not available		190	1.4	68	1.1	122	1.5
Do not want to be committed		153	1.1	65	1.1	88	1.1
Facilities not available		92	0.7	42	0.7	50	0.6
15-19	Not interested	246	40.3	106	50.0	140	35.2
	Do not have time	157	25.7	60	28.1	97	24.4
20-24	Do not have time	446	47.9	167	48.2	279	47.7
	Not interested	237	25.4	74	21.5	162	27.7
	Health/injury	65	7.0	x	x	x	x
25-34	Do not have time	1,231	49.0	549	53.0	682	46.2
	Not interested	623	24.8	214	20.7	409	27.7
	Health/injury	131	5.2	x	x	x	x
	Too expensive	103	4.1	48	4.6	55	3.7
35-54	Do not have time	2,155	37.7	1,066	42.7	1,089	33.8
	Not interested	1,627	28.4	591	23.7	1,036	32.1
	Health/injury	543	9.5	203	8.1	341	10.6
	Disability	139	2.4	70	2.8	70	2.2
	Too expensive	137	2.4	64	2.5	73	2.3
	Age	134	2.3	68	2.7	66	2.0
	Other	128	2.2	53	2.1	75	2.3
	Do not want to be	75	1.3	x	x	x	x
	Programs not available	66	1.2	x	x	x	x
55+	Age	1,633	38.3	632	35.4	1,001	40.4
	Health/injury	1,007	23.6	414	23.1	594	24.0
	Not interested	935	21.9	382	21.4	553	22.3
	Do not have time	407	9.5	207	11.6	200	8.1
	Disability	223	5.2	124	7.0	99	4.0
	Programs not available	68	1.6	x	x	x	x
	Too expensive	52	1.2	x	x	x	x

Denominator for percentages is the number of non-participants within each category.

* Only reasons with estimates of 35,000 or more are indicated.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1998