

Active NZ

Updating the participation landscape

The New Zealand Participation Survey 2022

August 2023

Acknowledgements

Sport New Zealand's Active NZ survey measures nationwide participation in play, active recreation, and sport. This is the sixth year of data collection, with data collected continuously from 2017 to 2019, and then from 2021 to 2022. Data collection during 2020 was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic (between April and June) creating a gap in the time series data.

This report explores the participation landscape in the play, active recreation and sport sector for New Zealanders aged 5-plus and updates the main participation statistics for 2022.

Special thanks go to all those who have provided feedback to guide the development of this report and the thousands of New Zealanders who took part in the Active NZ survey.

Authors

The main authors of this report are Sport New Zealand's Research, Evaluation and Insights team, and Kantar Public.

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Active NZ Updating the Participation Landscape: The New Zealand Participation Survey 2022

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Glossary

Adult	Respondents aged 18-plus.
Being active	Refers to being physically active in play, active recreation, and sport.
Deprivation	Low deprivation 1–3, medium deprivation 4–7, high deprivation 8–10, based on the NZDep index of socioeconomic deprivation. A value of 10 indicates the most deprived 10 percent of areas in New Zealand. Note: NZDep estimates the relative socioeconomic deprivation of an area and does not directly relate to individuals.
Disabled people	The Washington Group on Disability Statistics short set of questions has been used to identify disabled people. ¹ Disability prevalence is not a single statistic and can be calculated at various thresholds, depending on the purpose of the data collection and reporting. In the Active NZ survey, disabled people are those who self-report at least some difficulty across one or more of six impairments because even minor levels of difficulty in functioning may impact people's preferences and relationship with being active. In this survey, non-disabled people are those who self-report no difficulty in any of the six impairment domains. Note: this classification may differ from that used in other Sport NZ research, which classifies disabled as people who self-report they can do with a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all across one or more of the six domains.
Ethnicity	Results by ethnicity throughout this report – European, Māori, Pacific (including Samoan) and Asian (including Indian and Chinese) – are based on respondents' self-identification.
Informal participation	Applies to children and young people only. Informal sports and activities include being physically active through play with others, playing alone, extra training activities or practising without a coach or instructor.
Non-participants	People who have not been physically active in play, exercise, active recreation, or sport in the past seven days.
Organised participation	Applies to children and young people only. Participation in a competition or tournament is one component of organised participation. Other organised sports and activities include being physically active in physical education or class at school, sport and activities undertaken in a competition and training or practising with a coach or instructor.
Participants	People who have been physically active in play, active recreation including exercise) or sport in the past seven days, where this participation excludes any physical activity undertaken for work or chores. Participation can include physical activity undertaken to get from one place to another if the respondent considers it to be for sport or active recreation.

¹ The Washington Group on Disability Statistics is a United Nations city group with a mandate to promote and coordinate international cooperation in health statistics focusing on disability data collection tools suitable for censuses and national surveys. See www.washingtongroup-disability.com, for further information. Note: disability is only reported for 2021 and 2022 because of changes to the question used over time.

Participation in competitive and non-competitive sports or activities	Participating through an organised structure, for example, in a league or club competition, tournament or competitive event. Non-competitive participation refers to sports or activities undertaken outside of a league or club competition, tournament, or competitive event.
Play, active recreation and sport	Play, active recreation and sport are used throughout this report for simplicity. However, participation is multi-faceted. Play and active recreation are terms used by Sport New Zealand to capture participation in activities not considered to be sport, for example, playing with friends or alone, dance and tramping. Sport can be undertaken in an organised structure, for example, in a competition or tournament, or informally outside an organised structure. Sport is associated with being competitive, but individuals differ in their degree of competitiveness, irrespective of how they participate.
Rangatahi	Respondents aged 12–17. Younger rangatahi refers to ages 12–14 and older rangatahi to ages 15–17.
Respondents	People who took part in the survey.
Tamariki	Respondents aged 5–11. Younger tamariki refers to ages 5–7 and older tamariki to ages 8–11.
Weekly participation	Refers to being physically active in play, exercise, active recreation, or sport at least once in the past seven days.
Young people	Respondents aged 5–17.

Active NZ

This report provides an update on the main participation indicators in play, active recreation, and sport in 2022 for New Zealanders aged 5--plus. It sets out how these indicators vary over the lifespan of New Zealanders through the lenses of age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, and disability.

About this report

The report uses data collected through the Active NZ survey between 13 January 2022 and 4 January 2023 from 4,015 young people and 15,118 adults.²

Differences between the demographic subgroups of gender, age, ethnicity, deprivation, and disability are highlighted.

Results have been drawn from two separate surveys and datasets: one for young people aged 5 to 17 and one for adults aged 18-plus. Commentary about differences between young people and adults is based on observations rather than statistical testing between the two datasets.

Within the two datasets, reported differences between the total result and subgroups are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level, unless noted. Significance testing means we can be highly confident that any differences reported are not random variations due to carrying out a survey among a sample of the population rather than a population census.

Knowing a difference is statistically significant does not mean the difference is important. While all statistically significant differences are shown in the figures and tables in this report, the commentary focuses on the significant differences that are meaningful.

The one exception to this reporting of meaningful statistically significant differences is the inclusion of results by self-identified ethnicity. Throughout this report, non-significant changes in participation and attitudes are described for ethnic groups. This aims to highlight differences in participation and significant attitudes for ethnic groups for whom Sport NZ has distinct strategies or programmes, including those implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data tables accompanying the report contain all base sizes and highlight all statistically significant differences at the 95 percent confidence level. Please note, in some cases, a significant difference is reported between two numbers that appear to be the same and/or no significant difference is reported when it may appear there should be one. This is due to rounding and variation in sample sizes.

² This is a lower number of respondents than in previous years due to a declining response rate. In 2021, we got 23,239 completes with adults and 4,824 completes with young people aged 5 to 17. The decline in the number of respondents is due to a lower return rate (the unadjusted response rate) than previous years. The return rate has been in decline since 2018, but a particularly sharp decline occurred between 2021 and 2022. We cannot know for sure why this trend accelerated in 2022, but it is likely the COVID-19 environment drove this, with a combination of illness and general frustration, making people less inclined to respond to the survey. This is an international problem. It is not yet all that clear what is driving it, the COVID-19 environment, anti-government sentiment, or fear about use of data. Straight-out refusals are relatively unchanged but an increase in uncontactable people is evident. See Stats NZ '[Statistics from the Household Economic Survey for the year ended June 2022 will be published on 23 March 2023](#)' for the impact on Stats NZ's 2022 survey.

Executive summary

Introduction

This report focuses on participation in play, active recreation and sport among young people and adults in 2022. Drawn from the Active NZ survey, it uses data collected during 2022 from 4,015 young people and 15,118 adults.

Selected results are explored through the lenses of age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, and disability.

During 2022, disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic observed in 2021 continued. This – along with the introduction of conditional incentives for rangatahi who completed the survey³ – means the participation landscape differs from earlier years of the Active NZ survey. Results must be considered in this context. This report should be read alongside the *Active NZ Changes in Participation* report, which details significant shifts in participation, attitudes, and barriers since 2017.⁴

Key findings

Overall participation

In general, young people are more active than adults. In 2022:

1. Ninety-two percent of young people participated each week compared with 73 percent of adults
2. On average, young people spent more than twice the amount of time as adults participating each week (10.6 hours compared with 4.6 hours)
3. Young people also participated in more than twice the number of sports and activities than adults (4.7 young people, compared with 1.8 adults)
4. A similar proportion of adults and young people met the physical activity guidelines.⁵ Fifty-six percent of young people spent 7-plus hours being active each week and 58 percent of adults spent 2.5-plus hours being active.

By age

1. Tamariki are more active than rangatahi, largely driven by the drop in the four main participation statistics for rangatahi between ages 15 and 17 (weekly participation, average time spent in weekly participation, average number of sports and activities participated in each week, and the proportion meeting the physical activity guidelines).
2. Tamariki are most active between ages 8 and 11, as measured on the four main participation statistics.
3. Participation in competitive sports and activities is highest among older tamariki, with lower participation rates observed for older rangatahi. Participation in non-competitive sports and activities is consistent across young people aged 5 to 14 and again lower among older rangatahi.
4. Young tamariki spend most of their active time in informal participation, especially play. As children grow older, their informal participation declines and is counterbalanced by greater participation in organised activity between ages 8 and 11. Between ages 15 and 17 organised and informal participation drops.

³ The introduction of conditional incentives has broadened the sample to include those who may not have taken part in the past with a different relationship with being active, preferences and attitudes. See pages 8–9 in the *Active NZ Changes in Participation* report, for more detail.

⁴ Sport New Zealand. *Active NZ Changes in Participation: The New Zealand Participation Survey 2022*. Wellington: Sport New Zealand, 2023.

⁵ Meeting the physical activity guidelines is based on the recommendation of at least 7 hours per week of any intensity for young people and at least 2.5 hours for adults. Ministry of Health. *Physical Activity. How much activity is recommended?* 22 November 2021. Retrieved from www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/food-activity-and-sleep/physical-activity/how-much-activity-recommended.

5. Sixty-three percent of young people want to increase their participation. This appetite is strongest among rangatahi between ages 12 and 14 and especially females in this age group. The main barriers to increasing participation among young people are a preference for other activities, being too busy, and a lack of energy or motivation.
6. The proportion of adults participating each week is stable until 75-plus when fewer participate each week, in fewer sports and activities but continue to spend the same amount of time as all adults.
7. Time spent in weekly participation peaks between ages 18 and 24 and 65 and 74, with the number of sports and activities participated in each week also being higher between ages 18 and 24 and stable up until 75-plus.
8. Most adults would like to increase their participation. This is particularly the case between ages 18 and 49 when more than 85 percent would like to do more. The main barrier to additional participation among adults is 'other commitments taking priority', especially between ages 35 and 49.

By gender

1. A gender gap can be seen in time spent being active: males spend more time than females being active throughout their lifespan. While this gap first appears among young tamariki, it remains until late adulthood and only narrows among adults aged 75-plus.
2. Females aged 18 to 24 are more motivated to increase their participation than males of the same age, but this gap closes among older adults.
3. Females perceive additional barriers to increased participation. Specifically, females are more likely than males to view being tired, a lack of motivation and expense as barriers to their participation, especially between ages 18 and 24.

By ethnicity

1. Across all young people, Māori males spend the most time being active, while Asian females spend the least. This pattern extends into adulthood.
2. Asian young people and adults are more likely to want to increase their participation. Among adults, European and Māori females are more likely to want to increase their level of activity.
3. For Pacific and Asian adults, being unable to afford their preferred sports and activities is more of a barrier than for all adults.

By deprivation

1. Young people and adults from high deprivation areas have lower levels of participation than young people and adults from low deprivation areas. Further, young people and adults from high deprivation areas spend less time each week being active.
2. No differences can be seen in appetite to increase participation by deprivation for young people and adults.
3. For young people and adults from high deprivation areas, 'other commitments taking priority' is less of a barrier to participation than for those in low deprivation areas.
4. Barriers for young people from high deprivation areas are more likely to be a perceived lack of others to participate with and affordability. For adults from high deprivation areas, struggles with motivation and a lack of equipment are the most common prominent barriers.

By disability⁶

1. Disabled young people and adults are less likely to participate each week. Time spent being active is comparable between disabled and non-disabled tamariki, however, the gap broadens over their lifespan.
2. Disabled young people are more likely to want to increase their participation compared with non-disabled. This pattern is reversed for adults, where disabled adults are less likely to want to increase their participation.
3. Disabled young people and adults are more likely to have 'too tired', 'a lack of motivation' and 'a lack of fitness' as barriers to increasing their participation.

Conclusion

Results continue to highlight inequities in play, active recreation and sport by age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, and disability.

⁶ The Washington Group on Disability Statistics short set of questions has been used to identify disabled people. Disability prevalence is not a single statistic and can be calculated at various thresholds, depending on the purpose of the data collection and reporting. In the Active NZ survey, disabled people are those who self-report at least some difficulty across one or more of six impairments because even minor levels of difficulty in functioning may impact people's preferences and relationship with being active. In this survey, non-disabled people are those who self-report no difficulty in any of the six impairment domains. Note: this classification may differ from that used in other Sport NZ research, which classifies disabled as people who self-report they can do with a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all across one or more of the six domains.

Snapshot of the 2022 participation landscape

This section provides an overview of participation by age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, and disability.

Insights

By age

- Tamariki are the most physically active New Zealanders. The average number of hours spent being active peaks among those aged 5 to 7, but other significant indicators, such as weekly participation, peak among older tamariki (those aged 8 to 11). Participation is lower among rangatahi, particularly older rangatahi (those aged 15 to 17).
- For adults, weekly participation is consistent among New Zealanders aged 18 to 74 and lower among those aged 75-plus. However, time spent being active follows a more complex pattern: it is lowest among those aged 35 to 49 and highest among those aged 65 to 74.

By gender

- A gender gap is evident in time spent being active – with males spending more time than females – that persists over their lifespan. While this gap first appears among young tamariki aged 5 to 7, it remains until late adulthood and only narrows among adults aged 75-plus.

By ethnicity

- Across all young people (both tamariki and rangatahi), Māori males spend the most time being active, while Asian females spend the least. This pattern continues into adulthood. No notable differences can be seen among European and Pacific adults.

By deprivation

- Young people and adults from high deprivation areas have lower levels of weekly participation and spend less time participating than their counterparts from low deprivation areas.

By disability

- Disabled young people and adults are less likely to be active than non-disabled. Time spent being active is comparable between disabled and non-disabled tamariki, however, the gap broadens over their lifespan.

By age

Ninety-two percent of young people participate each week. On average, young people spend 10.6 hours being active each week, participating in an average of 4.7 sports and activities. However, the amount of time spent being active varies according to age and demographic characteristics: half (53 percent) meet the physical activity guidelines of 7-plus hours each week.

Adults are less active than young people. Seventy-three percent of adults participate each week, spending an average of 4.6 hours on an average of 1.8 sports and activities. Fifty-eight percent meet the physical activity guidelines of 2.5 or more hours each week (table 1).

Table 1: Key participation indicators

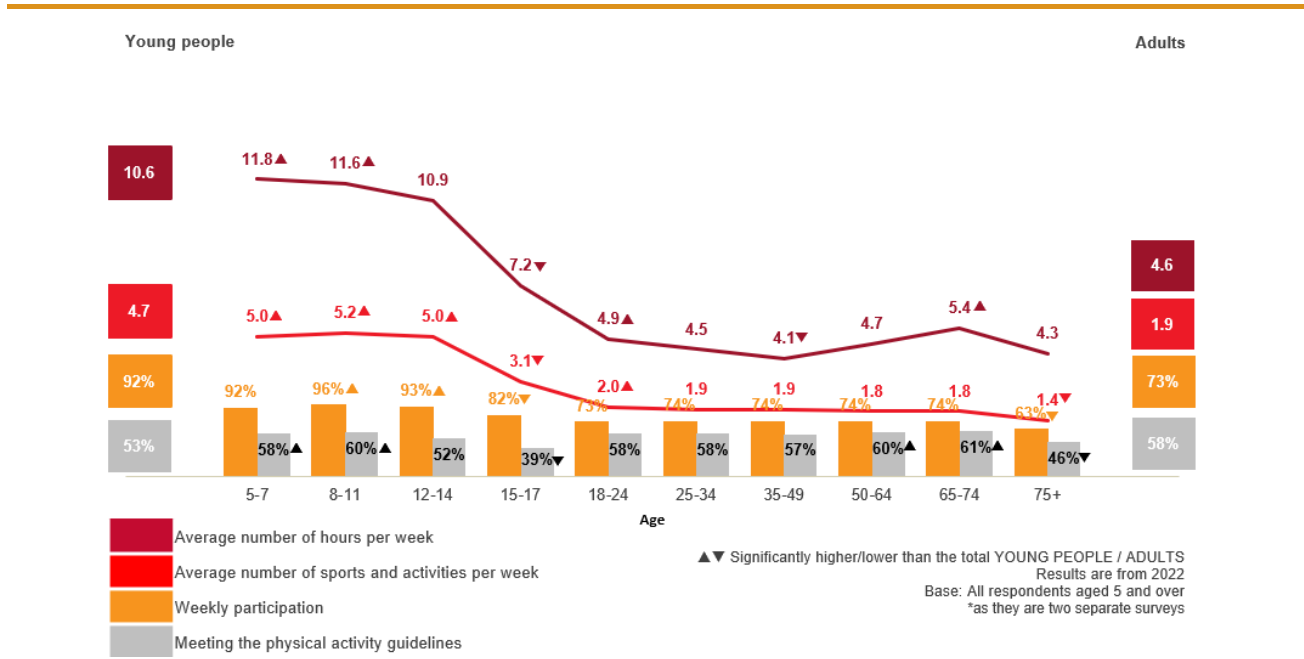
	Young people	Adults
Weekly participation	92%	73%
Average number of hours being active	10.6	4.6
Average number of sports and activities a week	4.7	1.8
Meeting guidelines (young people: at least 7-plus hours per week; adults: at least 2.5 hours per week)	53%	58%

Results are from 2022
Base: All respondents aged 5 plus

New Zealanders are most active when they are tamariki. Average number of hours decreases with age, with a steep decline for rangatahi aged 15 to 17.⁷ Other significant indicators – including weekly participation, the average number of sports and activities participated in, and the proportion meeting the physical activity guidelines – peak among tamariki aged 8 to 11 and are all lower between ages 15 and 17.

For adults, the proportion participating each week is consistent by age. In contrast, the amount of time spent being active differs by age: it is lowest between ages 35 and 49 but increases with age, peaking among those aged 65 to 74. Adults between ages 18 and 24 also spend more time in weekly participation than all adults (figure 1).

⁷ Interpret the decrease in the context of the potential impact of the introduction of conditional incentives for rangatahi to complete the survey. These incentives encouraged a broader range of responses from rangatahi who may not have previously taken part. Please see the executive summary and appendix A in the Active NZ Changes in Participation July 2023 report, for more information.

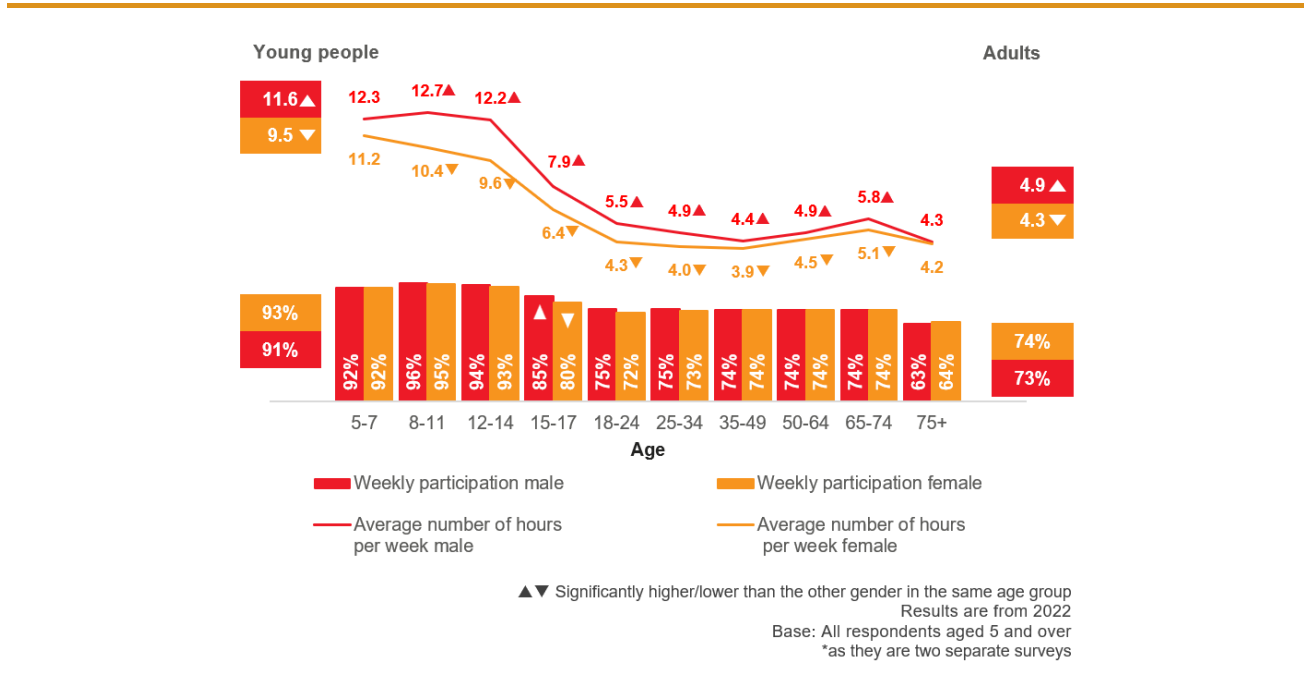
Figure 1: Participation indicators by age


By age and gender

Between ages 8 and 17, fewer females than males participate each week, and they also spend less time participating. Young males spend around two hours more time being active each week than young females.

The gender gap in weekly participation is evident among older rangatahi (aged 15 to 17). Specifically, 85 percent of males aged 15 to 17 participate each week compared with 80 percent of females.

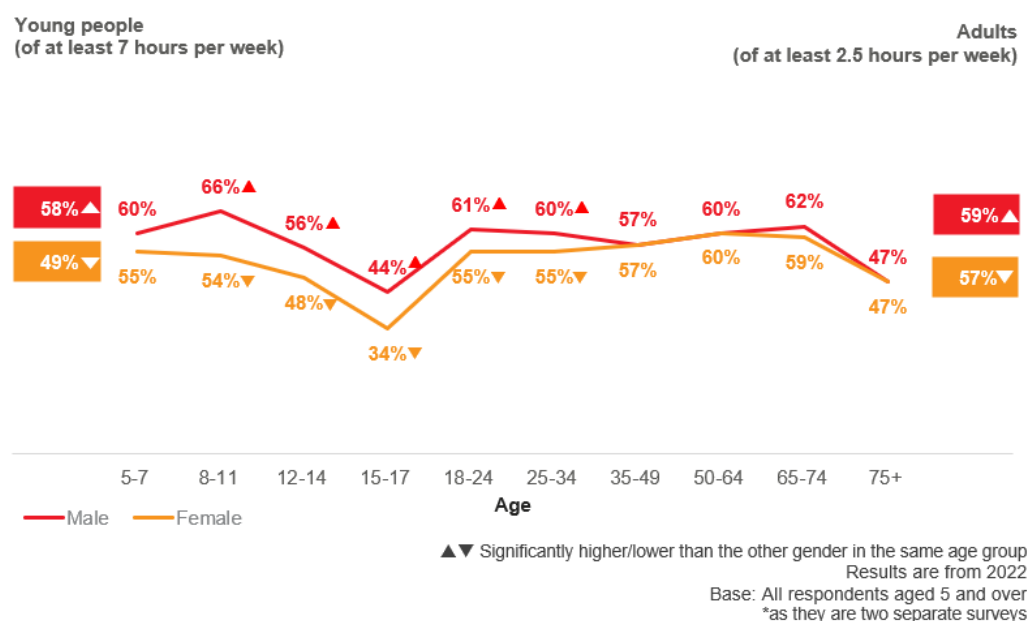
Among adults, weekly participation is similar for males and females by age. However, on average, males spend more time each week being active than females, the exception is for adults aged 75-plus where time spent is matched (figure 2).

Figure 2: Participation indicators by age and gender


A gender gap is also evident in the proportion of young people who meet the recommended physical activity guidelines of 7-plus hours each week. Overall, young males are consistently more likely to meet the guidelines than females. This pattern is evident among both older tamariki and rangatahi.

Males between ages 18 and 34 are more likely to meet the guidelines than females, but this gap closes among older adults (figure 3).

Figure 3: Meeting physical activity guidelines by age and gender



By ethnicity

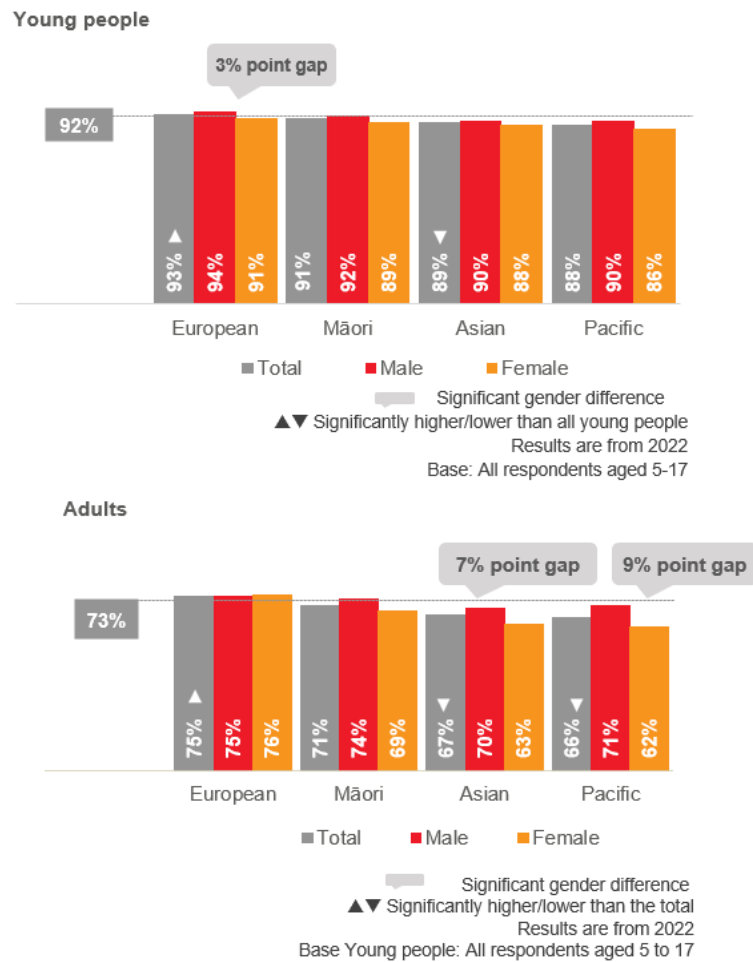
Differences can be seen in weekly participation by ethnicity for young people and adults.

Compared with all young people, young European are more likely to participate and young Asian are less likely to participate each week (93 percent and 89 percent respectively; 92 percent all young people). While rates of participation among young Pacific are also lower (88 percent), this difference is not statistically significant (due to a lower sample size for this group).

A similar pattern is observed for adults: adult European are more likely to participate each week, while Pacific and Asian adults are less likely to participate each week.

However, in contrast to young people, a gender gap is evident in participation of adult Asian and Pacific. Among Asian adults, weekly participation is 7 percentage points higher for males; among Pacific adults, weekly participation is 9 percentage points higher for males (figure 4).

Figure 4: Weekly participation by ethnicity and gender

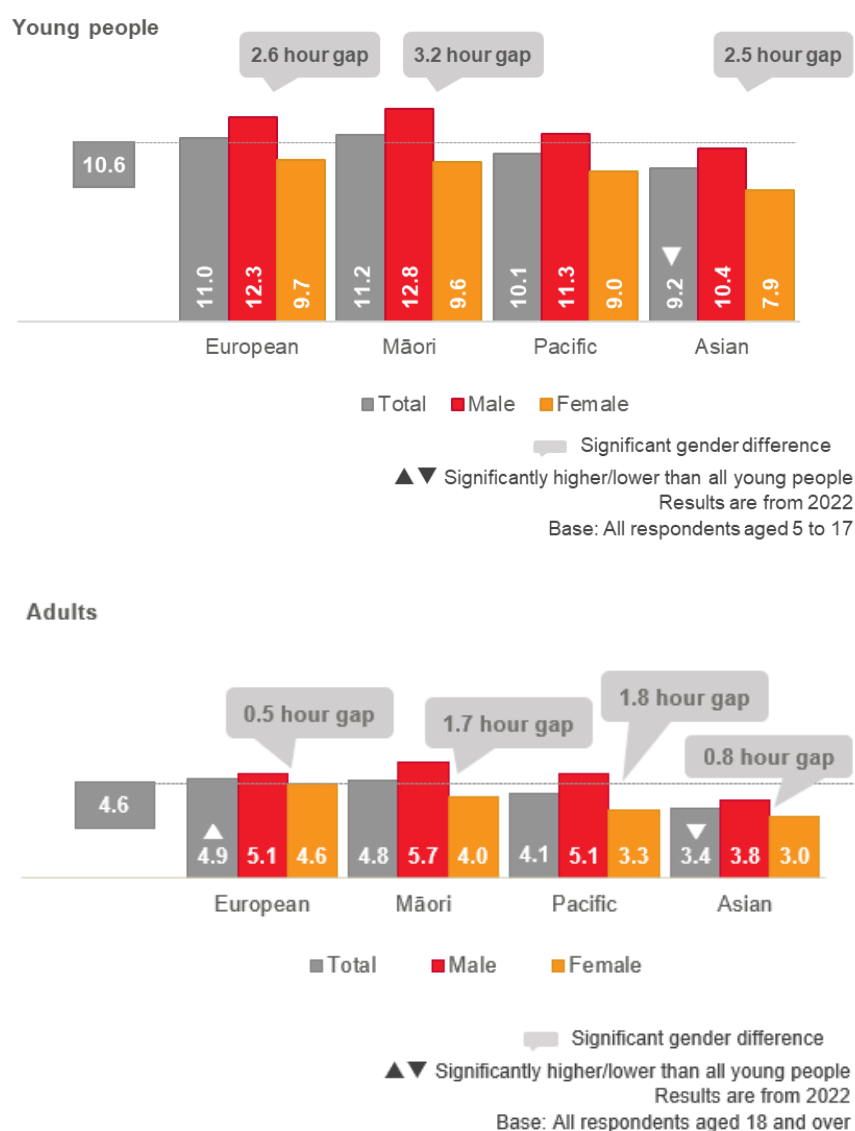


Differences are also evident in time spent in weekly participation by ethnicity.

On average, young Asian spend less time being active compared with all young people (9.2 hours, compared with 10.6 hours). Young Asian females spend less time being active than males (7.9 hours, compared with 10.4 hours).

A gender gap can also be seen in time spent in weekly participation for young European and Māori. Young European males spend 2.6 hours more being active each week (12.3 hours, compared with 9.7 hours for females). Among young Māori, the gap is 3.2 hours (12.8 hours among males, 9.6 hours among females (figure 5).

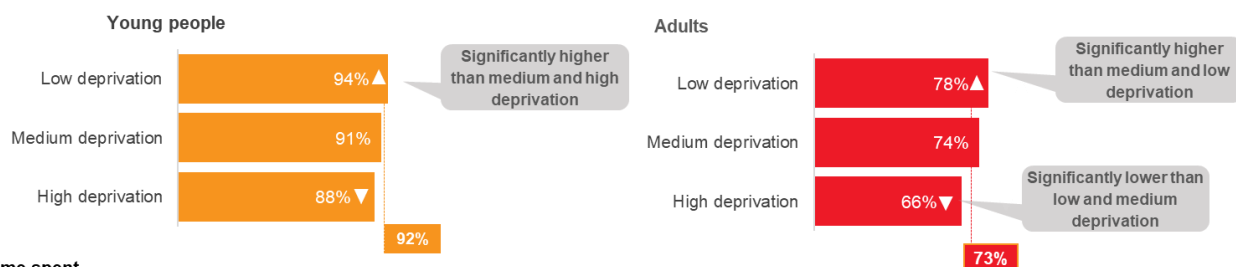
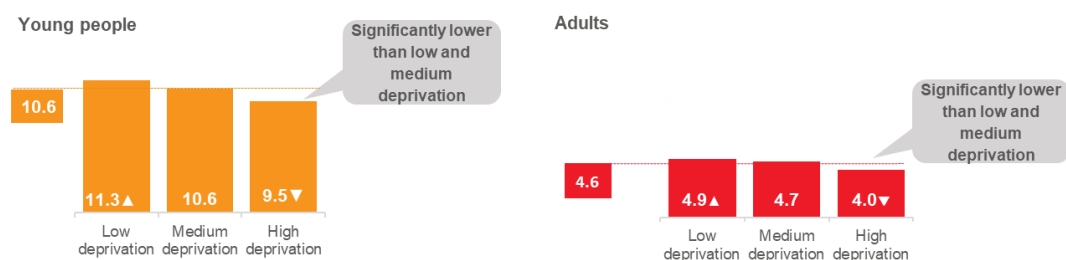
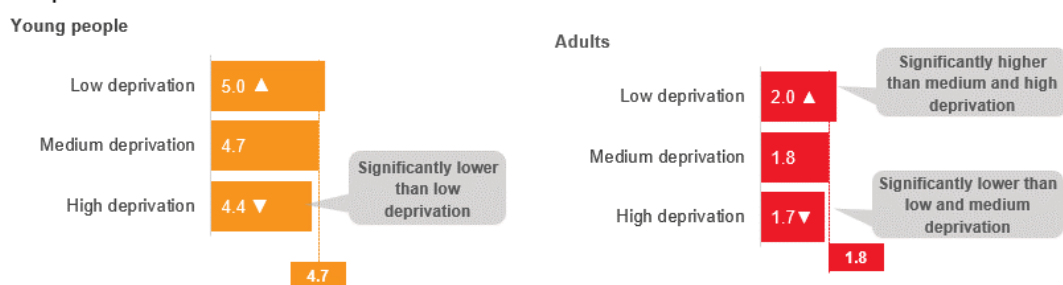
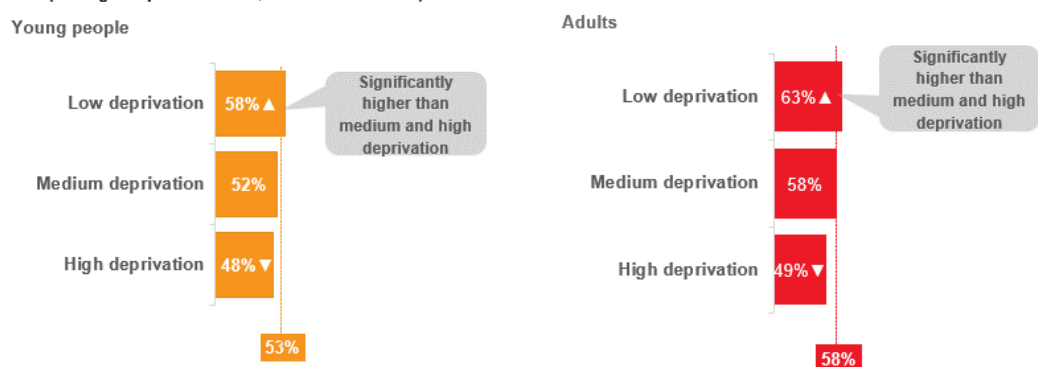
Figure 5: Average hours spent being active each week by ethnicity and gender



By deprivation

Fewer young people from high deprivation areas participate each week compared with all young people (88 percent, compared with 92 percent for all young people); they also spend less time being active (9.5 hours, compared with 10.6 hours) and participate in fewer sports and activities (4.4, compared with 4.7 sports and activities).

A similar – but more pronounced – pattern is observed for adults. Adults from high deprivation areas are less likely to participate weekly (66 percent, compared with 73 percent for all adults), to spend less time being active (4.0 hours, compared with 4.6 hours in total), and participate in fewer sports and activities (1.7, compared with 1.8 sports and activities) (figure 6).

Figure 6: Participation by deprivation⁸
Weekly participation

Time spent

Average number of sports and activities

Meeting guidelines (Young People: 7+ hours; Adults 2.5+ hours)


▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than the total
Results are from 2022
Base: All respondents aged 5 and over

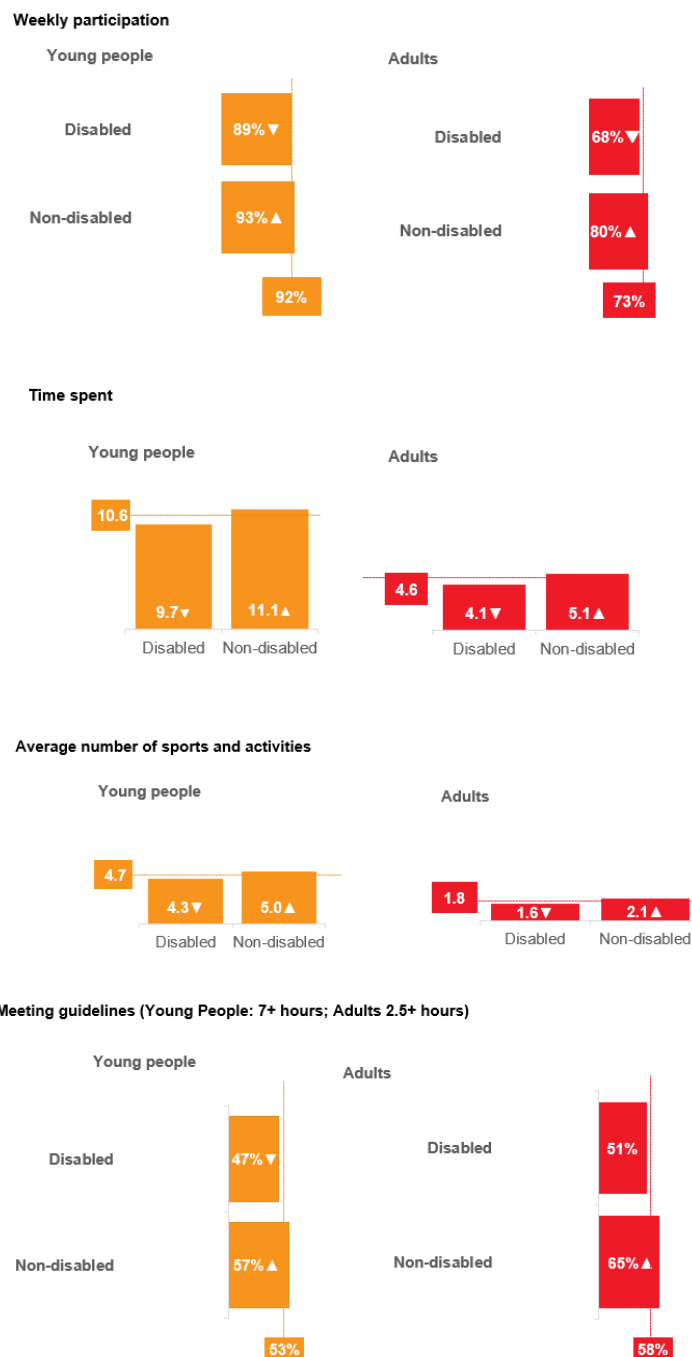
⁸ NZDep2018 combines census data relating to income, home ownership, employment, qualifications, family structure, housing, access to transport and communications. NZDep2018 groups deprivation scores into deciles, where 1 represents the areas with the least deprived scores and 10 the areas with the most deprived scores. Note: Deprivation Index: Low 1–3, Medium 4–7, High 8–10.

By disability

Young and adult disabled are less active than non-disabled.

Fewer disabled people participate each week and meet the recommended guidelines for physical activity. Furthermore, on average, disabled people spend less time on fewer sports and activities. This pattern is present for both young people and adults (figure 7).

Figure 7: Participation by disability



▲▼ Significantly higher/lower than the total young people/adults

Results are from 2022

Base: All respondents aged 5 plus

How young people are active

This section describes levels of informal and organised participation among young people. Informal participation includes playing alone and with others, and extra training or practising without a coach or instructor. Organised participation includes participation in competitions or tournaments, practising with a coach or instructor and physical education (PE). Differences by age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, and disability are highlighted.

Insights

By age

- Time spent in informal participation decreases as young people age. It is at its highest between ages 5 and 7 and at its lowest between ages 15 and 17. Organised participation peaks between ages 8 and 14 and is at its lowest between ages 15 and 17.⁹
- The drop in time spent in organised participation between ages 15 and 17 is driven by lower levels of participation in PE (not competition), compared with all young people, while the drop in time spent in informal participation is attributed to less time spent in play (alone or with others).

By gender

- Weekly informal participation is higher for males than females.
- No difference is evident in participation in organised activity by gender.

By ethnicity

- Weekly informal and organised participation is higher for young European. This is largely accounted for by higher weekly play and participation through competitions or tournaments.
- Weekly informal participation is lower for young Asians, a by-product of their lower levels of playing or hanging out with family and friends. No notable differences can be seen in weekly informal or organised participation among Māori and Pacific.

By deprivation

- Weekly informal and organised participation is lower for young people from high deprivation areas, driven by lower levels of participation in competition (not PE).
- Males from high deprivation areas are less likely to train or practise with a coach or instructor.

By disability

- Weekly informal and organised participation is lower for young disabled people and more so for young female disabled people.

⁹ As noted earlier, estimated rates of participation may have been influenced by the introduction of conditional incentives for this group. Please see the executive summary and appendix A in the Active NZ Changes in Participation August 2023 report, for more information.

By age

The balance of how young people spend their active time changes with age. Young tamariki spend most of their time in informal participation, particularly play (8.1 hours per week). Time spent in informal participation decreases as young people age. It is at its highest between ages 5 and 7 and at its lowest between ages 15 and 17. Organised participation peaks between ages 8 and 14 and is at its lowest between ages 15 and 17.¹⁰

The drop in time spent in organised participation between ages 15 and 17 is driven by lower levels of participation in PE (not competition), compared with all young people, while the drop in time spent in informal participation is attributed to less time spent in play (alone or hanging out with family and friends) (table 2).

Table 2: Average hours spent per week in organised and informal activity by age

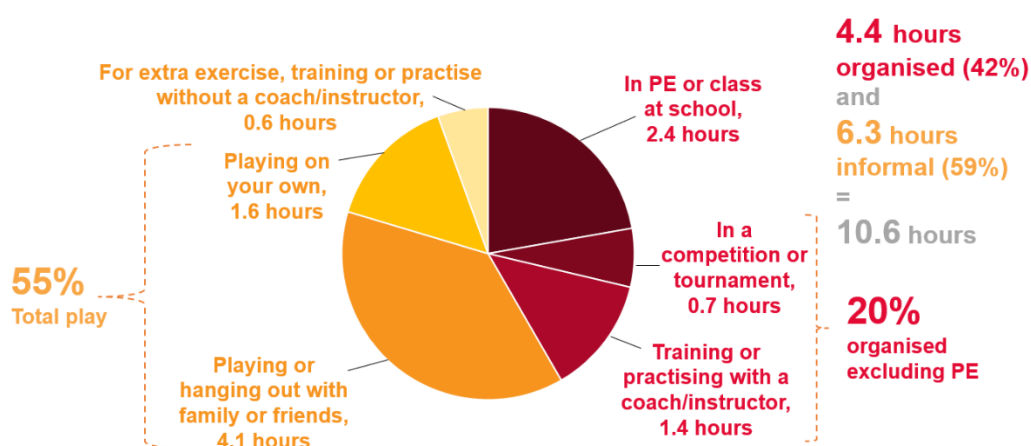
2022	All young people	5–7	8–11	12–14	15–17
Organised					
• Physical Education (PE) or class at school	2.4	2.4	2.8▲	2.8▲	1.1▼
• Total competition (organised excluding PE)	2.1	1.3▼	2.2	2.5▲	2.1
Informal					
• Total play (hanging out with friends or family and on your own)	5.8	8.1▲	6.2	5.1▼	3.3▼
• Extra exercise, training, practise without a coach or instructor	0.6	0.2▼	0.4▼	0.9▲	1.2▲
Total time	10.6	11.8▲	11.6▲	10.9	7.2▼
Organised combined	4.4	3.6▼	5.1▲	5.3▲	3.2▼
Informal combined	6.3	8.3▲	6.6	5.9	4.3▼

▲ ▼ Significantly higher/lower than all young people
Results are from 2022
Base: All respondents aged 5 to 17

Of the hours young people spend participating weekly, 59 percent are spent in informal participation and 41 percent are in organised participation (figure 8).

¹⁰ As noted earlier, estimated rates of participation may have been influenced by the introduction of conditional incentives for this group. Please see the executive summary and appendix A in the Active NZ Changes in Participation August 2023 report, for more information.

Figure 8: Time spent being physically active per week in organised and informal sport and activities (hours)



Results are from 2022
Base: All respondents aged 5 to 17

By gender

- Weekly informal participation is higher for young males than females (81 percent, compared with 78 percent). This difference is largely accounted for by more playing alone (54 percent for males, compared with 46 percent for females).
- Overall, no difference is evident in organised participation by gender. However, young females are more likely than young males to train or practise with a coach or instructor (50 percent, compared with 46 percent among males).

By ethnicity

- Weekly organised and informal participation is higher for young European compared with all young people (participation in competitions or tournaments 27 percent, compared with 25 percent; people training and practising with a coach or instructor 51 percent, compared with 48 percent). In terms of informal sports and activities, young European are more likely to play each week compared with all young people (72 percent, compared with 69 percent).
- Young Asian are less likely to participate in informal sports and activities (73 percent, compared with 80 percent among all young people). This result is due to lower levels of playing or hanging out with family and friends (63 percent, compared with 69 percent for all young people).

By deprivation

- Weekly organised and informal participation for young people from high deprivation areas is lower compared with their counterparts in low deprivation areas. They are less likely to participate in competitions or tournaments (21 percent, compared with 30 percent for young people from low deprivation areas) or to train with coaches or instructors (37 percent, compared with 58 percent).
- Males from high deprivation areas are less likely to train or practise with a coach or instructor compared with their male counterparts from low deprivation areas (32 percent, compared with 57 percent).

By disability

- Weekly organised and informal participation for young disabled people is lower than for non-disabled young people (organised participation 71 percent, compared with 79 percent; informal participation 77 percent, compared with 81 percent) – driven by young disabled females.

Competitive and non-competitive participation

This section describes levels of competitive and non-competitive participation for young people and adults. For young people, competitive participation is a sub-set of the past seven days of organised participation (excludes PE). For adults, this is derived from participation in competitive sports and activities over the past 12 months. Direct comparison of the magnitude of difference between young people and adults cannot be made. Differences by age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, and disability are highlighted.

Insights

By age

- Most young people participate only in non-competitive sports or activities (66 percent), while 25 percent participate in both competitive and non-competitive activities, and only 1 percent participate exclusively in competitive activities. Eight percent of all young people do not participate in any sports or activities.
- Participation in competitive sports and activities peaks among older tamariki, with lower rates of participation observed for older rangatahi.
- In contrast, participation in non-competitive sports and activities is consistent among young people between ages 5 and 14, although lower participation rates occur among older rangatahi.

By gender

- Competitive and non-competitive weekly participation is higher for males compared with females.

By ethnicity

- Differences can be seen in competitive and non-competitive participation within European, Māori, Asian and Pacific young people. Young European are more likely to participate in non-competitive sports and activities, while young Pacific are less likely to participate in non-competitive sports and activities. Young Asian are less likely to participate in non-competitive activities, such as playing with family, friends or on their own. This is similar to young Māori females, who are less likely to play on their own than young Māori males.

By deprivation

- Young people from low deprivation areas have higher levels of weekly competitive and non-competitive participation. The reverse is the case for young people from high deprivation areas who are also over-represented among non-participants.

By disability

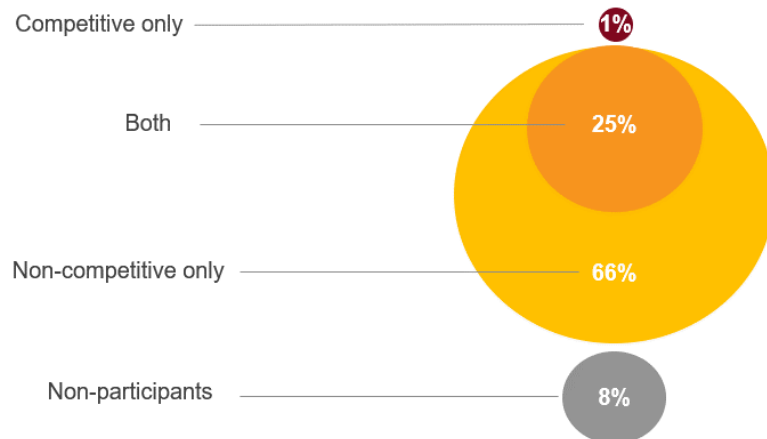
- Young disabled people are more likely to be non-participants. This is particularly the case for young disabled females.

By age

Most young people participate in non-competitive sports and activities.

Sixty-six percent exclusively participate non-competitively, while 25 percent participate in both competitive and non-competitive sports and activities. Only 1 percent participate solely in competitive sports and activities (figure 9).

Figure 9: Young people – Participation in competitive and non-competitive sports and activities in the past 7 days

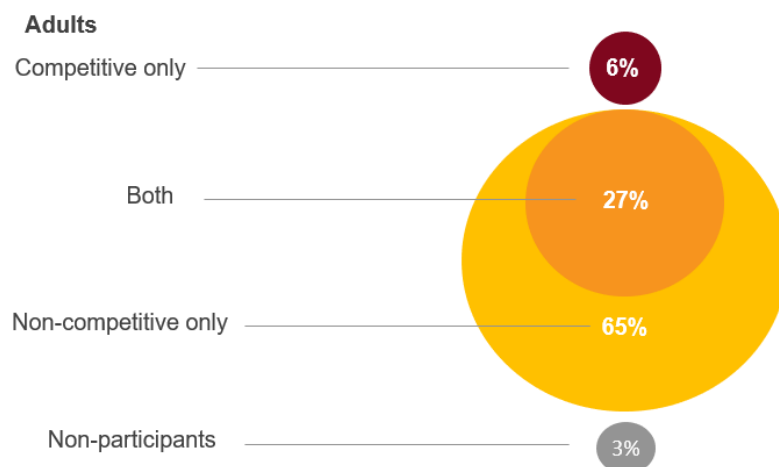


Results are from 2022
Base: All respondents aged 5 to 17

In the past 12 months most adults have participated in competitive and non-competitive sports and activities.

Sixty-five percent exclusively participate non-competitively, while 27 percent participate in both competitive and non-competitive sports and activities. Six percent of adults have participated exclusively in competitive sports (figure 10).

Figure 10: Adults – Participation in competitive and non- competitive sports and activities in the past 12 months



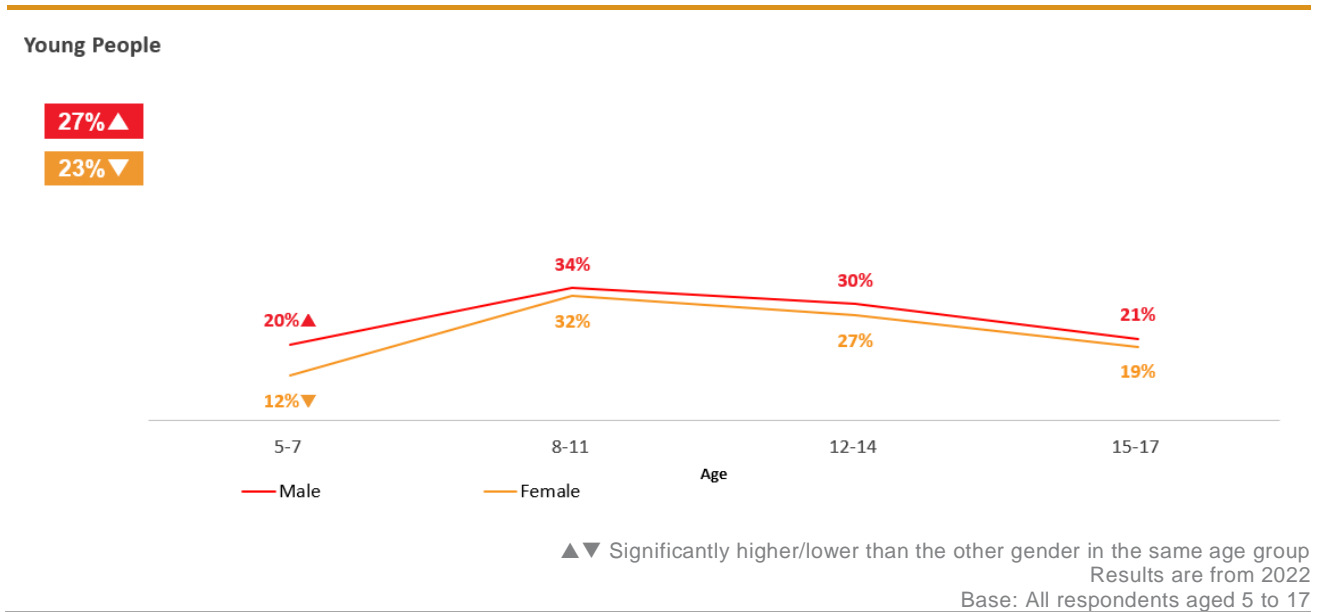
Results are from 2022
Base: All respondents aged 5 to 17

By age and gender

Weekly participation in competitive sports and activities peaks at 33 percent among tamariki between ages 8 and 11.

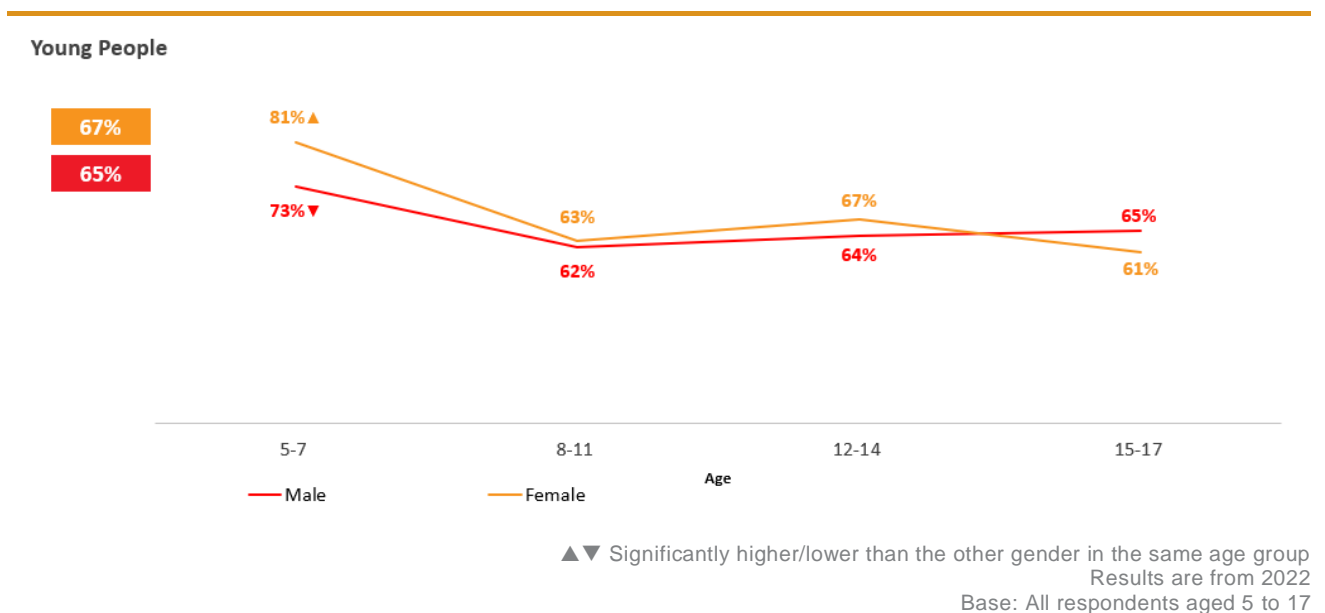
A gender gap is evident for younger tamariki, with males more likely than females to participate in competitive sports and activities (20 percent among males, compared with 12 percent among females). This gender gap is not present for older tamariki and rangatahi (figure 11).

Figure 11: Young people – Participation in competitive sports and activities by age and gender



Participation in non-competitive sports and activities peaks for tamariki aged 5 to 7. In contrast with competitive sports and activities, the gender gap is reversed: female tamariki aged 5 to 7 are more likely to participate in non-competitive sports and activities than males. The gender gap then closes for older tamariki and rangatahi (figure 12).

Figure 12: Young people – Participation in non-competitive sports and activities only by age and gender



By ethnicity

- Young Pacific are less likely to participate in non-competitive sports and activities (86 percent, compared with 91 percent for all young people), stemming from lower rates of participation in activities involving training or practising with a coach or instructor (39 percent, compared with 48 percent).
- Young European are more likely to participate in non-competitive sports and activities (92 percent, compared with 91 percent for all young people). Young European males are particularly likely to participate in this way.

By deprivation

- Young people from low deprivation areas are more likely to participate in competitive and non-competitive sports and activities (30 percent in competitive and 94 percent in non-competitive, compared with 25 percent and 91 percent for all young people). On the other hand, young people from high deprivation areas are more likely to be non-participants (12 percent, compared with 8 percent among all young people).

By disability

- Young disabled people are more likely to be non-participants (11 percent, compared with 8 percent among all young people). Non-participation is higher among disabled females than males and disabled rangatahi than disabled tamariki.

Appetite to increase participation

This section looks at the extent to which New Zealanders wish to increase their participation in play, active recreation, and sport. Differences according to age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, and disability are noted.

Insights

By age and gender

- Motivation differs across the lifespan of New Zealanders. While more than half of young people would like to increase their participation, this desire is greatest among adults aged 18 to 49.
- Females between ages 18 and 24 have a greater appetite to increase their participation than males, however, this gap closes for older adults.
- Aside from later in life, appetite to increase participation is inversely associated with the amount of time spent being active per week. For example, young people spend more time being active and are less likely to want to increase their participation. Adults aged 18 to 49 spend less time being active and are more likely to want to increase their participation.

By ethnicity and gender

- Asian young people and adults are both more likely to want to increase their participation compared with all adults.
- Adult European and Māori females are more likely to want to increase their participation than their male counterparts. No differences can be seen in appetite to increase participation among Pacific.

By deprivation

- No differences are evident in appetite to increase participation by deprivation.

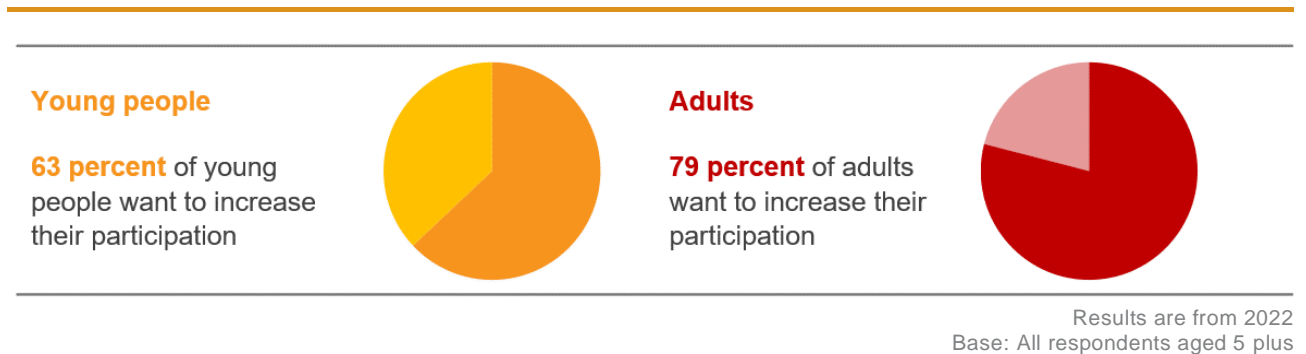
By disability

- Young disabled people are more likely to want to increase participation.
- This pattern is reversed for disabled adults, who are less likely to want to increase participation than non-disabled adults.

By age and gender

Most New Zealanders want to be more active. This desire is pronounced among adults: 79 percent of adults and 63 percent of young people want to increase their participation (figure 13).

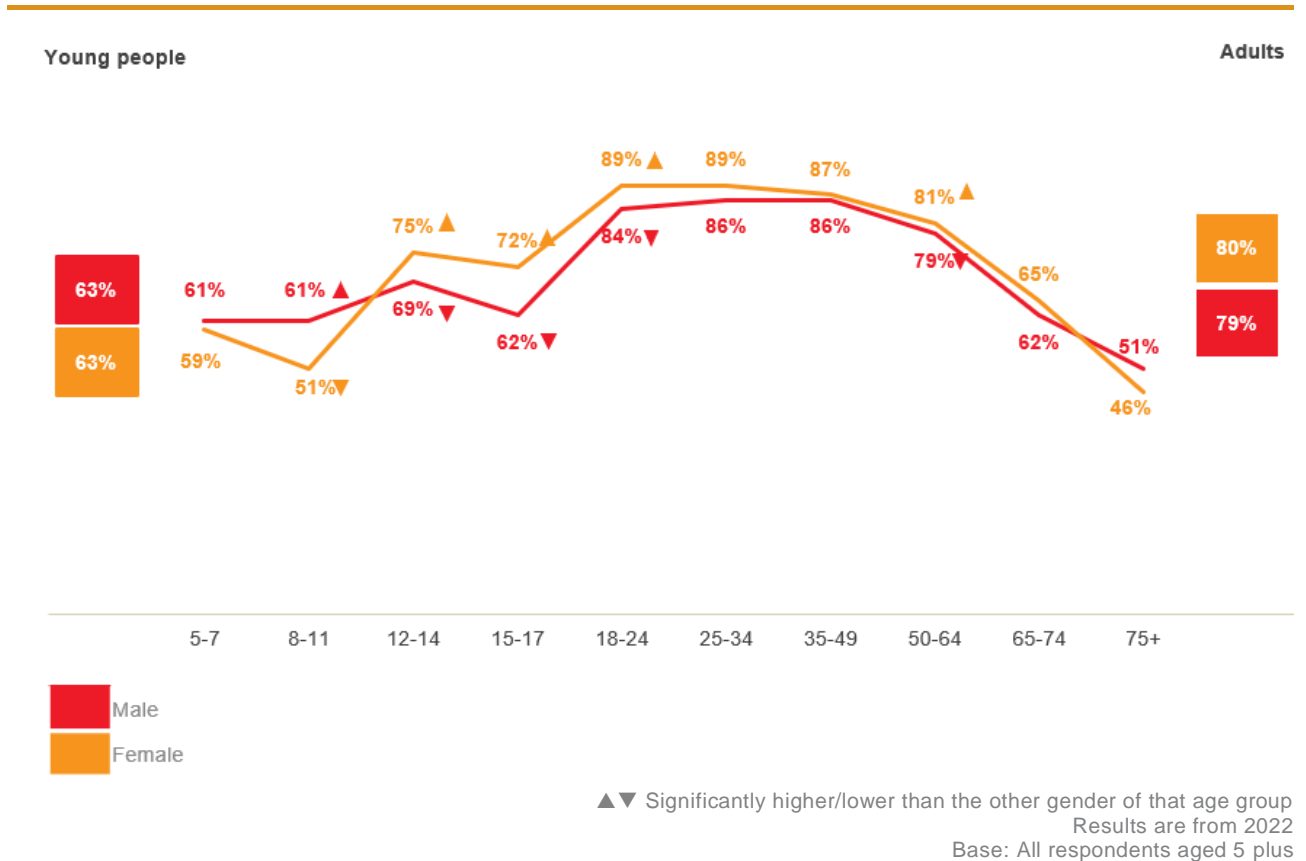
Figure 13: Proportion who want to increase participation



Appetite to increase participation varies across New Zealanders' lifespan. While young people are more active than adults, most want to increase their participation: 63 percent of young males and females want to increase their participation. Among tamariki, males are more likely than females to want to increase their participation. Among rangatahi, females are more likely than males to want to increase their participation.

Moving into adulthood, the appetite to increase participation peaks for adults between ages 18 and 49, then decreases as individuals age. Females aged 18 to 24 have a greater appetite to increase their participation than males, but this gap disappears among adults aged 25-plus (figure 14).

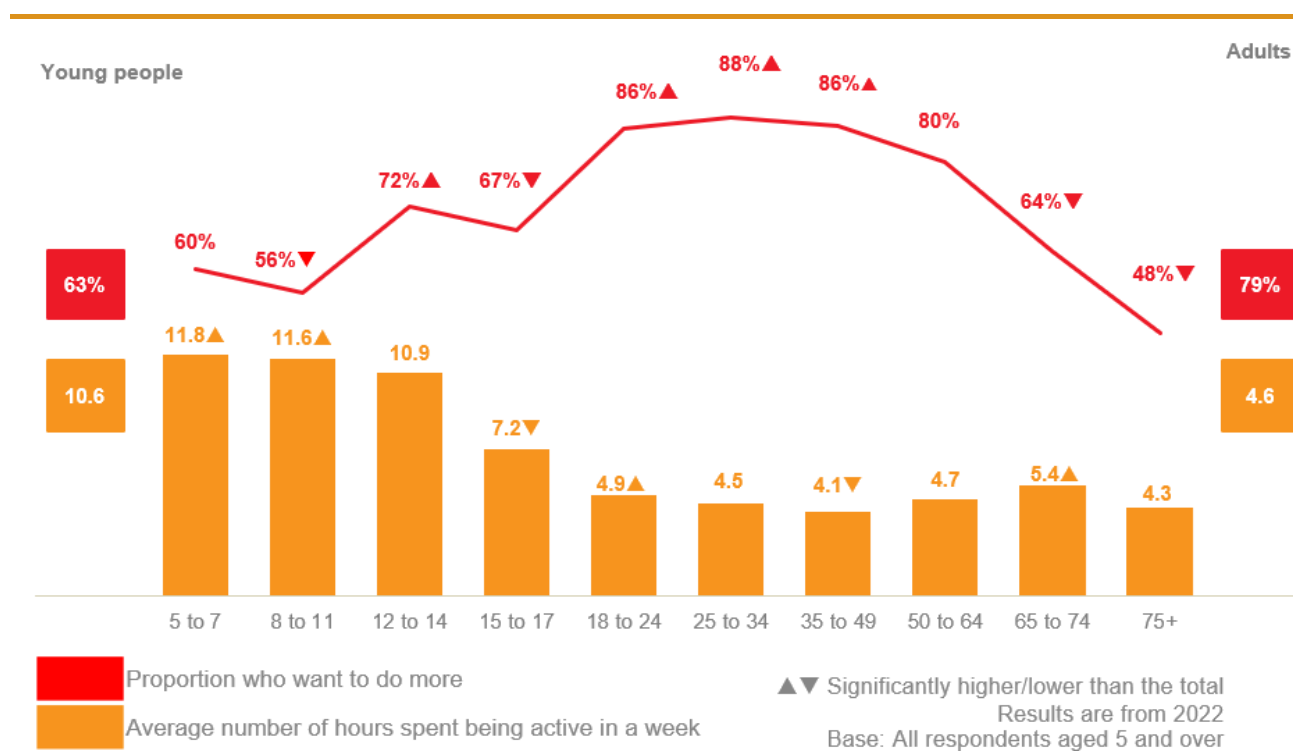
Figure 14: Proportion who want to increase participation by gender within age



Appetite to increase participation varies by age. In general, the appetite to be more active is inversely related to the amount of time spent being active per week. Young people spend the most time participating – an average of 10.6 hours each week – and are the least likely to want to increase their participation, aside from those aged 65-plus. However, for rangatahi, the pattern is slightly different. Specifically, younger rangatahi tend to want to increase their activity while spending an average amount of time being physical active, while older rangatahi have a lower appetite to increase their activity and spend less time being active.

Appetite to increase activity starts to decline among those aged 50 to 64, with a more pronounced decrease from aged 65-plus (figure 15).

Figure 15: Time spent being active and proportion who want to increase participation by age (hours)



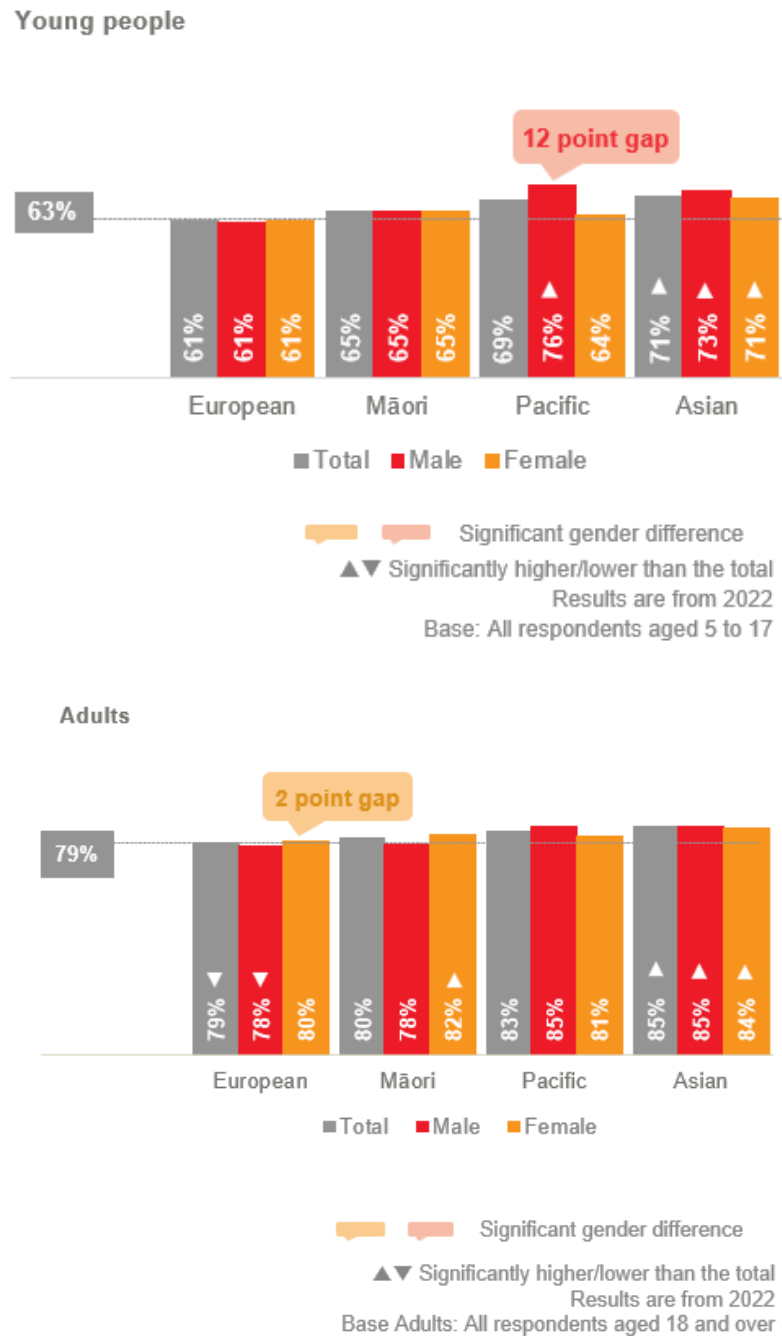
By ethnicity and gender

Appetite to increase participation differs by ethnicity and gender.

Young Asian are significantly more likely to want to increase their participation (71 percent, compared with 63 percent among all young people). This is consistent for young Asian males and females. Young Pacific males are significantly more likely to want to increase their participation compared with young Pacific females (76 percent, compared with 64 percent).

Among adults, more variation occurs by gender. While Asian males, Asian females and Māori females are more likely than average to want to increase their participation, European females are more likely than their male counterparts to want to be more active (80 percent compared with 78 percent). Pacific males and females are equally likely to want to increase their level of participation (figure 16).

Figure 16: Proportion of young people and adults who want to increase participation by gender within ethnicity



By deprivation and disability

No differences can be seen in appetite to increase participation by deprivation (see figure 17).

In contrast, substantial differences are evident by disability and age. Disabled young people are more likely to want to increase their participation than non-disabled (69 percent, compared with 59 percent). This pattern is reversed for adults, where disabled adults are less likely to want to increase their participation compared with non-disabled (78 percent, compared with 81 percent) (figure 18).

Figure 17: Proportion who want to increase participation by deprivation

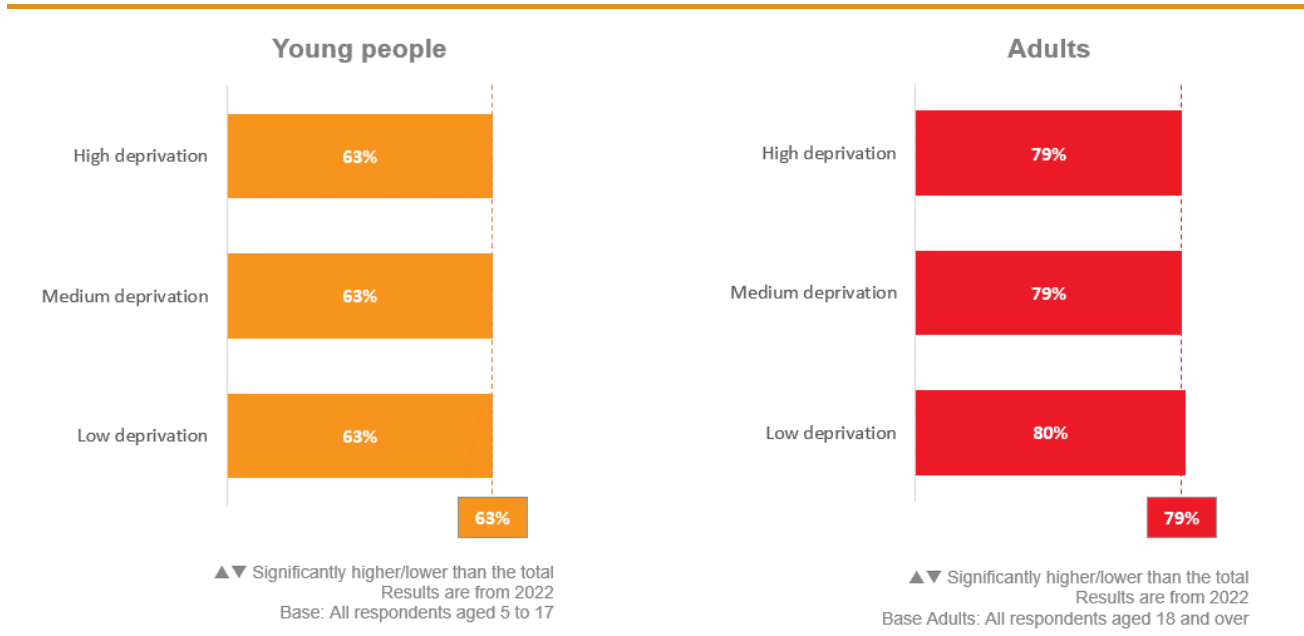
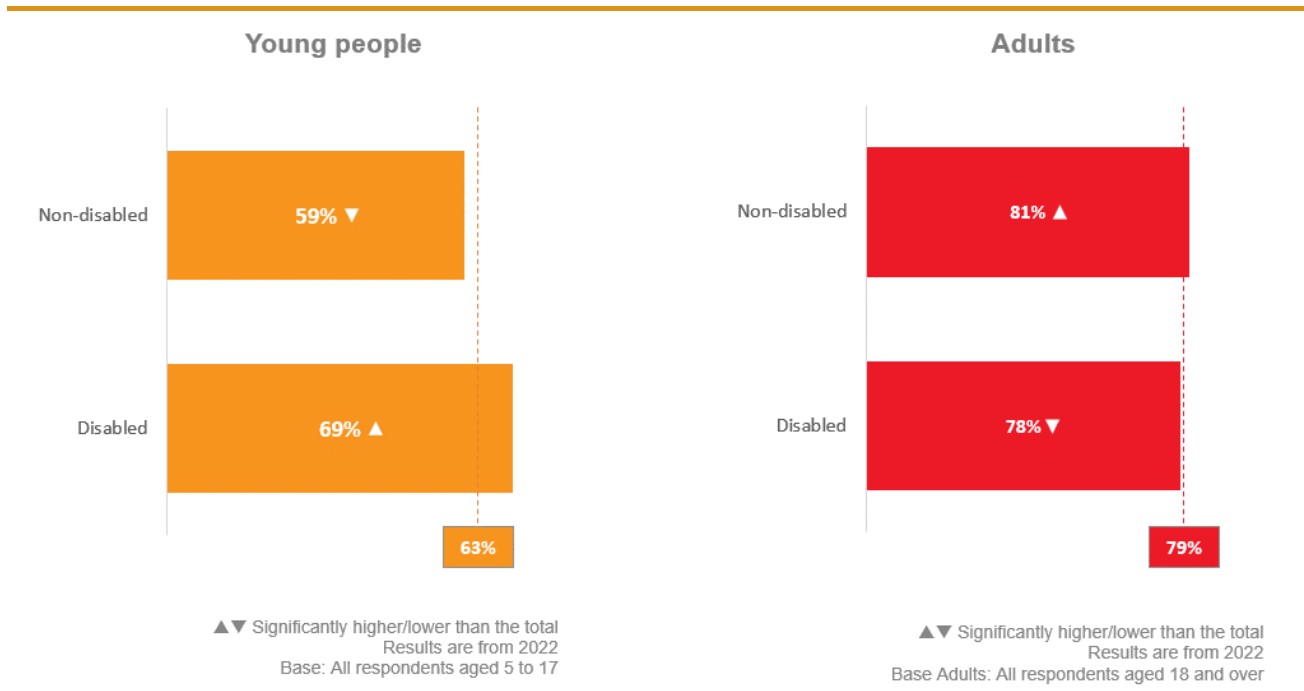


Figure 18: Proportion who want to increase participation by disability



Barriers

This section looks at the barriers to increasing participation for young people and adults. Differences according to age, gender, ethnicity, deprivation, and disability are described.

Insights

By age

- Among tamariki, rangatahi and adults who want to increase participation, the biggest barrier is 'other commitments taking priority'.
- Adults aged 65-plus view themselves as having more time available to be active but are more likely than all adults to consider their poor health or existing injuries as a barrier.

By gender

- For both male and female adults, 'other commitments' are the main barrier to participation in additional physical activities.
- Females are more likely than males to have barriers of being too tired, struggling with motivation, and a lack of confidence.
- In contrast, males are more likely to consider they are already doing a good amount of physical activity or have a different interest taking up their time.

By ethnicity

- 'Other commitments/being too busy' is the most common barrier to being more active among adults and young Europeans, Māori, Asian and Pacific. European adults and young people are especially likely to consider this to be a barrier.

By deprivation

- Young people from low deprivation areas are more likely to consider being busy as a barrier, while those from high deprivation areas are more concerned with sports or activities being too expensive or having no one to do them with.
- Adults from high deprivation areas are less concerned about 'other commitments' than adults from low deprivation areas. Instead, they are more likely to view a lack of equipment or motivation as barriers.

By disability

- Both disabled young people and adults are more likely to consider motivation and being too tired as barriers to increasing physical activity compared with their non-disabled counterparts.

By age

On average, young people (aged 8 to 17) who want to do more identify 2.5 barriers to increased participation, while adults identify 2.9 barriers. Being 'too busy' is the main barrier for young people (32 percent), followed by a lack of motivation (21 percent) and a preference for other activities (20 percent). Other commitments taking priority is the dominant barrier for adults (65 percent) (table 3).

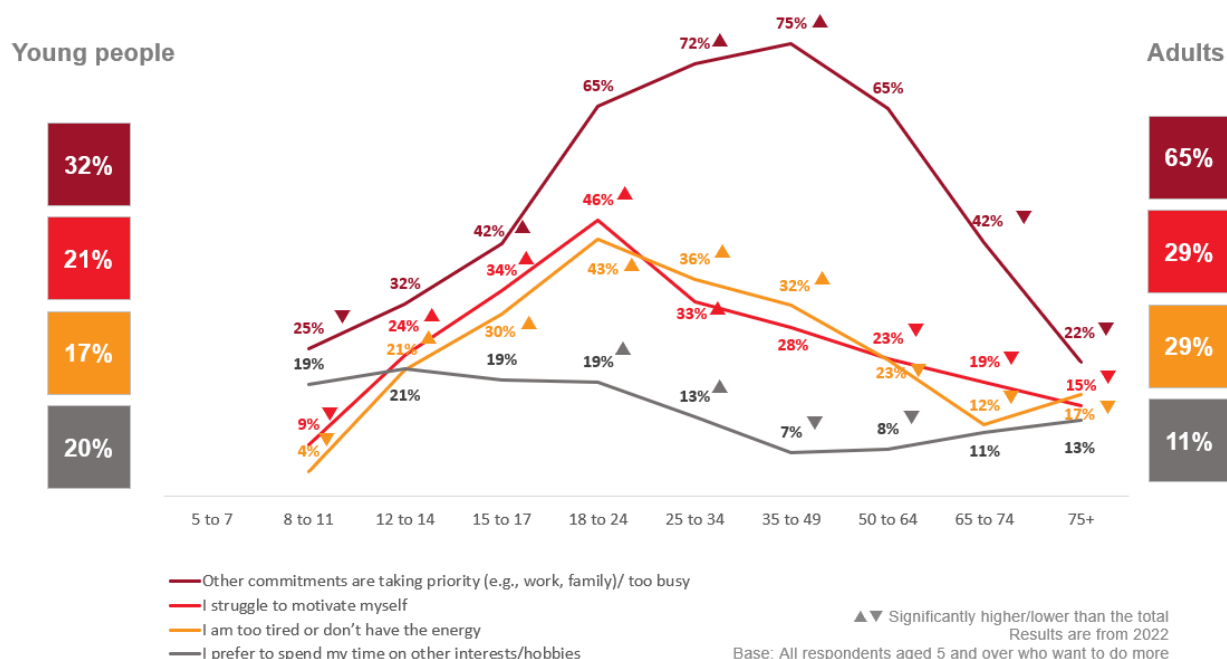
Table 3: Most prevalent barriers to increasing participation among those who want to do more

Young people aged 8 plus		Adults	
32%	Too busy	65%	Other commitments are taking priority (eg, work, family)
21%	It's hard to motivate myself	29%	I am too tired or don't have the energy
20%	I prefer to do other things	29%	I struggle to motivate myself
17%	Too tired/don't have the energy	21%	I've got out of the habit
16%	The weather	17%	The weather
2.5 barriers on average		2.9 barriers on average	

With increasing age, the most common barrier progressively becomes the presence of 'other commitments', peaking at ages 35 to 49 (75 percent).

Later in life, the pattern of barriers begins to change. While other commitments remain the top barrier for all age groups, older people are more likely to consider 'poor health' or 'existing injuries' as barriers (figure 19).

Figure 19: Most prevalent barriers for those who want to do more (by age)



By age and gender

Among both young people and adults, females are more likely than males to struggle with motivation (24 percent, compared with 18 percent) and being too tired (24 percent, compared with 10 percent).

While young females are significantly more likely than young males to prefer to do other things, this pattern is reversed for adults. Adult males are significantly more likely than adult females to list doing other things as a barrier. Young females are significantly more likely than young males to list other commitments taking priority as a barrier, while no differences occur between adult males and females (table 4).

Table 4: Most prevalent barriers to those who want to do more (by gender)

	Young males	Young females	Adult males	Adult females
Too busy/other commitments take priority	30%	34% ▲	65%	65%
I struggle to motivate myself	18%	24% ▲	25%	32% ▲
I am too tired or don't have the energy	10%	24% ▲	24%	34% ▲
Prefer to do other things/interests/hobbies	16%	23% ▲	13% ▲	9%

▲▼ Significantly higher/lower than the other gender

Results are from 2022

Base: All respondents aged 5 and over who want to do more

By ethnicity

- European adults and young people are more likely to view other commitments or being too busy as a barrier (66 percent and 34 percent, respectively). Pacific adults and young people are less likely to view this as a barrier (60 percent and 17 percent, respectively).
- Pacific and Asian adults are more likely than European adults to consider being unable to afford their preferred activities as a barrier (both 19 percent, compared with 14 percent among the total population). Pacific (20 percent), Māori (13 percent) and Asian adults (12 percent) are all more likely than average (9 percent) to consider not having the equipment they need as a barrier.

By deprivation

- Young people from low deprivation areas are more likely to consider being too busy as a barrier than young people from high deprivation areas (37 percent, compared with 26 percent). Young people from high deprivation areas are more likely than their counterparts from low deprivation areas to consider not being able to afford physical activities (15 percent, compared with 8 percent) as a barrier.
- Adults from high deprivation areas are less likely to list 'other commitments taking priority' as a barrier than adults from low deprivation areas (60 percent, compared with 68 percent), although it is nevertheless the most common barrier for both groups. Adults from high deprivation areas are more likely to cite an inability to motivate themselves (31 percent) and a lack of equipment (15 percent) as barriers (27 percent and 7 percent in low deprivation areas, respectively).

By disability

- Disabled adults are more likely to view being too tired (33 percent), a lack of motivation (32 percent) and a lack of fitness (19 percent) as barriers to increased physical activity (25 percent, 24 percent, and 10 percent among non-disabled adults). This is driven mainly by female disabled adults.
- For disabled young people, struggles with motivation (30 percent), being too tired (25 percent) and preferring to do other things (23 percent) are the most common barriers to participation, and are more prevalent among disabled than non-disabled young people.

Appendices

A	COVID-19 environment in 2022	Page 34
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B	Regional differences	Page 36
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C	Research objectives and method	Page 38
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D	Question wording and base descriptions	Page 40
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Appendix A: COVID-19 environment in 2022

Table 5 outlines the COVID-19 environment during the lifecycle of Active NZ. This should be taken into consideration when reading this report.

Table 5: COVID-10 environment over the duration of Active NZ

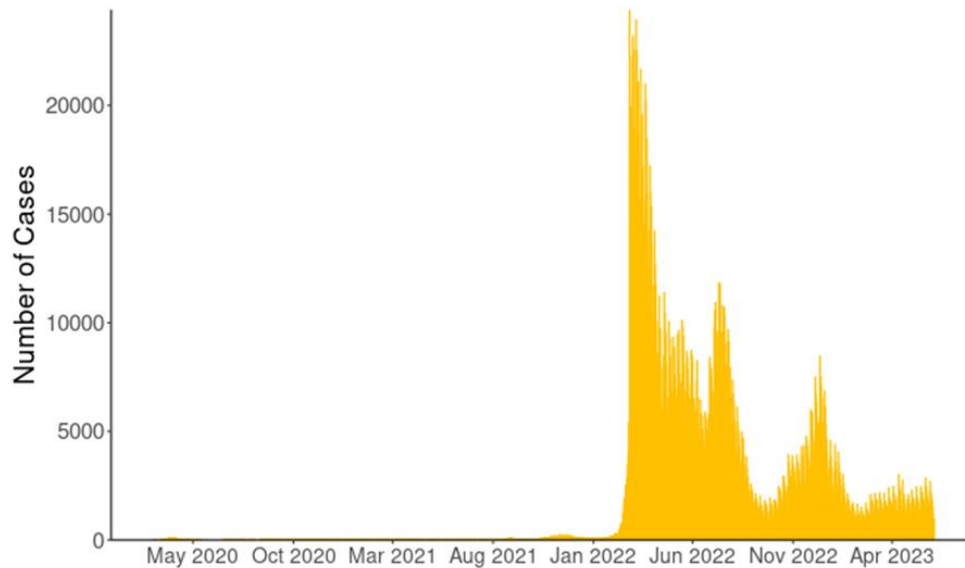
	2017–19	2021	2022
	Pre-pandemic	COVID-19 lockdowns	COVID-19 sickness (see figure 18)
COVID-19 measures and guidelines:	N/A	Use of alert level system. Level 3 or Level 4 lockdowns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auckland (Northland and Waikato) lockdowns (Alert Level 3 or Alert 4): 14–17 Feb 2021; 28 Feb to 7 Mar 2021; 17 Aug to 2 Dec 2021 National lockdowns (Alert Level 4): 17–31 Aug 2021. 	Use of traffic light protection framework (Dec 2021 to Sep 2022). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As shown in figure 18, COVID-19 cases peaked three times in 2022, with reported cases significantly above 2020 and 2021 levels. No lockdowns, but isolation¹¹ requirements differed over the year for cases and household contacts, close contacts, and advice to stay at home if unwell (eg, in January 2022, case isolation was 14 days, and close contacts isolation was 10 days).
School absences per year: ¹²	10.6%	11.3%	16.0%
School absences due to illness per year:	4.1%	4.7%	6.9%

¹¹ Isolation examples sourced from Doctor NZ: www.nzdoctor.co.nz/timeline-coronavirus.

¹² School absences sourced from Education Counts: www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/attendance.

As shown in figure 20,¹³ COVID-19 cases peaked three times in 2022 as the Omicron variant spread in New Zealand. Reported cases remained well above 2020 and 2021 levels throughout 2022. The latter two peaks in 2022 are likely to significantly understate the true prevalence of COVID-19 in New Zealand at the time. This is due to a change from PCR testing to RAT testing in March 2022,¹⁴ which resulted in a lower percentage of cases being reported. The Ministry of Health estimated that only about half of cases were being reported in mid-2022.

Figure 20: COVID-19 cases reported each day, sourced from Ministry of Health



¹³ COVID-19 daily confirmed and probable cases sourced from Ministry of Health: www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-data-and-statistics/covid-19-current-cases#daily-cases.

¹⁴ See: <https://www.policycommons.ac.nz/covid-19-policy-resources/covid-19-timeline/covid-19-timeline-2022/>

Appendix B: Regional differences

Figure 21: Weekly participation by region

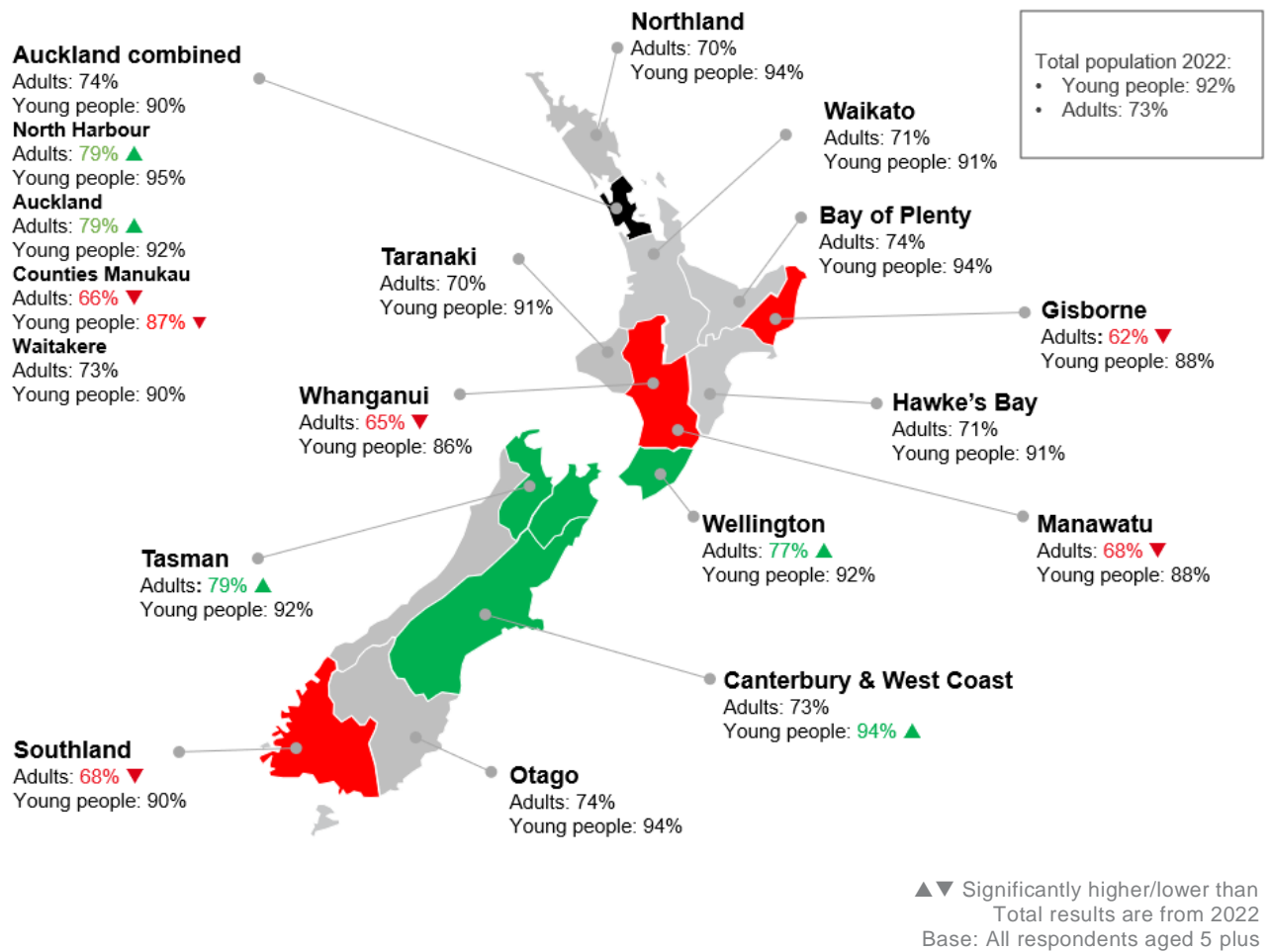
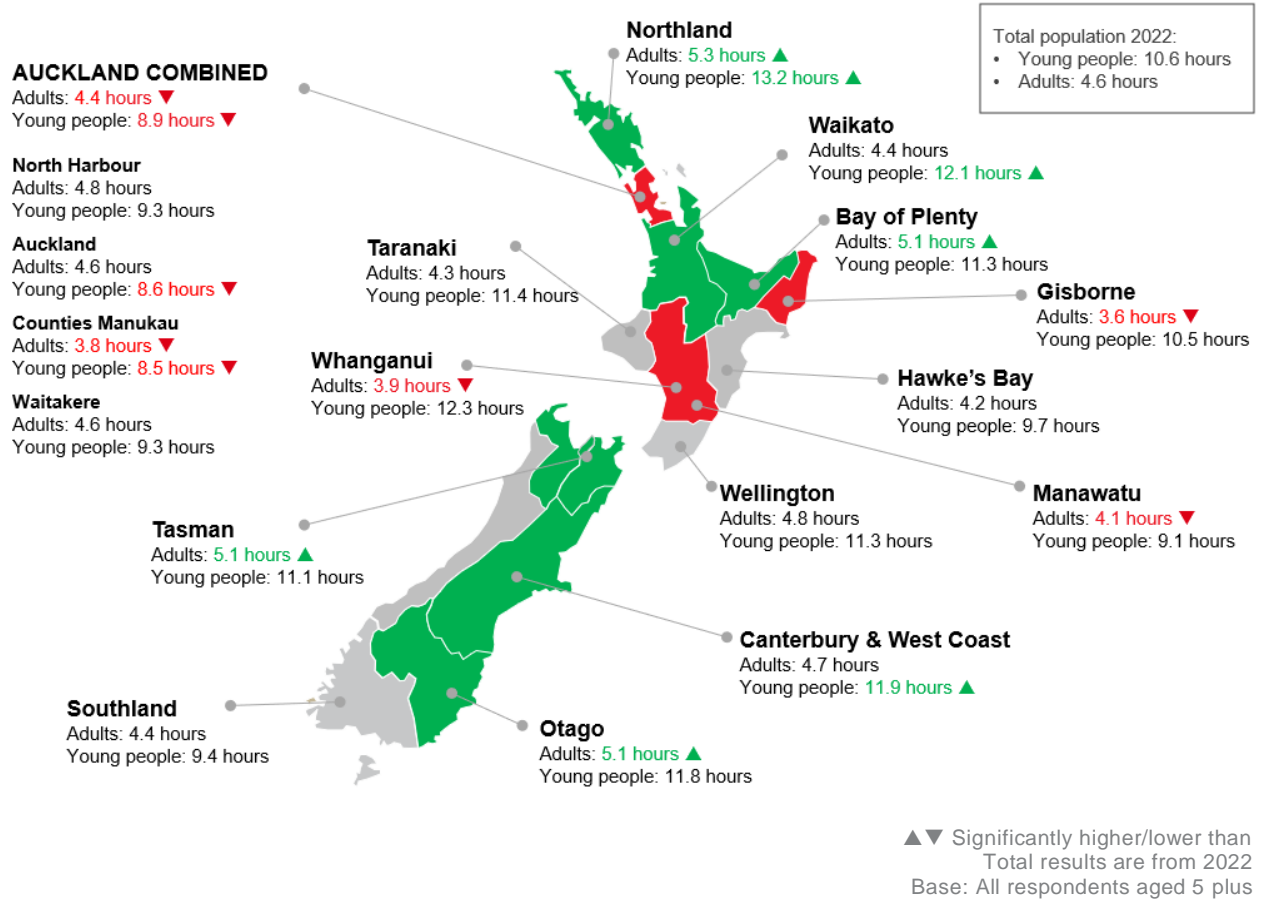


Figure 22: Time spent participating by region



Appendix C: Research objectives and method

This research aims to:

- collect information on the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘where’ young people and adults participate
- identify and describe links between participation (and non-participation) and other influential factors, and the ‘why’ and ‘why not’ people participate
- measure the quality of participation and the contribution participation makes to an individual’s health and wellbeing
- understand the value placed on participation in play, active recreation, and sport by people in New Zealand.

Survey method

Target respondents are selected at random from the Electoral Roll. Mailings are then sent inviting them to complete the survey online. Before 2022, non-responders were subsequently sent a paper copy of the survey. However, following analysis that demonstrated the low take-up of paper copies by younger people, those aged 18 to 49 no longer received paper copies from 2022.

A summary of the two approaches for those aged 18 to 49 and 50-plus is presented below.

Respondents aged 18 to 49

ELECTORAL ROLL	INVITATION LETTER	REMINDER POSTCARD 1	REMINDER LETTER
Sample selected from Electoral Roll	<p>Invitation letters are sent to the named adults (aged 18-plus) inviting them to complete the questionnaire online (with instructions and log-in provided).</p> <p>A postcard is included to encourage young people aged 12 to 17 to complete the children and young people’s questionnaire online.</p> <p>An 0800 number and email address are provided for questions.</p>	<p>About a week later, a reminder postcard is sent thanking respondents and acting as a reminder to those still to respond.</p> <p>This communication is targeted to adults only.</p>	<p>A week after the postcard, non-respondents are sent a reminder letter to complete the survey online.</p> <p>A flyer is included for ages 12 to 17 to complete the survey online.</p>

Respondents aged 50-plus

ELECTORAL ROLL	INVITATION LETTER	REMINDER POSTCARD 1	SURVEY PACK	REMINDER POSTCARD 2
Sample selected from Electoral Roll	<p>Invitation letters are sent to the named adults (aged 18-plus) inviting them to complete the questionnaire online (with instructions and log-in provided).</p> <p>A postcard is included to encourage young people aged 12 to 17 to complete the children and young people’s questionnaire online.</p> <p>An 0800 number and email address are provided for questions.</p>	<p>About a week later, a reminder postcard is sent thanking respondents and acting as a reminder to those still to respond.</p> <p>This communication is targeted to adults only.</p>	<p>A week after the postcard, non-respondents are sent a survey pack with a hardcopy of the questionnaire, letter, and a reply-paid envelope.</p> <p>A flyer is included for ages 12 to 17 to complete the survey online (no paper questionnaire is available for the children and young people’s survey).</p>	A final reminder is sent to adults who have not yet taken part in the survey.

Note: Parents or caregivers are asked to respond on behalf of tamariki aged 5 to 11 in their household (and encouraged to do the survey with their child and/or check responses with them).

Fieldwork period

Fieldwork dates for the surveys are as follows:

- 2017 survey: 5 January 2017 to 4 January 2018
- 2018 survey: 5 January 2018 to 4 January 2019
- 2019 survey: 5 January 2019 to 4 January 2020
- 2021 survey: 5 January 2021 to 4 January 2022
- 2022 survey: 13 January 2022 to 4 January 2023.

Completed responses

Across the five years, responses have been received from n=112,457 adults aged 18-plus and n=25,237 young people aged between 5 and 17.

Using online and postal self-completion sequential mixed methods, we target 20,000 adults and 5,000 young people per year. Unfortunately, it was not possible to meet these targets (despite sending more mailings than has been the case) due to a lower-than-expected response rate. The number of responses in 2022 was 4,015 young people and 15,118 adults. This reflects the experience of other social research studies in 2022.

Weighting

Results have been weighted to the total New Zealand Regional Sports Trust population using 2013 Census statistics for the data between 2017 and 2019, and 2018 Census statistics for the data of 2021 and 2022.

Appendix D: Question wording and base descriptions

Figures 1 to 9 (aged 5-plus) and tables 9 to 12 (aged 5 to 17)

Table 1 (aged 5-plus) and table 2 (aged 5 to 17)

Base: All respondents aged 5 plus

Q12 (5–17) In the last 7 days (not including today) have you done any physical activity specifically for sport, physical education (PE), exercise or fun?

Q7 (18+) Thinking back over the last 7 days (not including today) have you done any physical activity that was specifically for the purpose of sport, exercise, or recreation?

Note: The physical activity guidelines were agreed to by the Ministry of Health and Sport NZ and they outline the minimum levels of physical activity required to gain physical health benefits:

- young people need to do at least 7 hours of activity per week at any intensity.
- adults need to do at least 150 minutes of activity per week at any intensity.

Q8. (18+) Which of the following have you done in the last 12 months?

Q11. (18+) In the last 12 months, have you done this as a competitive sport or competitive activity?

Q16b (5–17) About how many minutes did <you/name> spend doing <insert activity> in the last 7 days (not including today) when...?

Q19 (18+) Still thinking about the physical activities you have done in the last 7 days, in total how many hours did you spend being physically active for sport, exercise or recreation?

Q13a (5–17) Please tick all the ways <you/name> have been physically active for sport, PE, exercise, or fun in the last 7 days (not including today).

Q8a (18+) Which of the following have you done in the last 7 days? Please only select the activities where you have been physically active specifically for sport, exercise, or recreation.

Figures 13 to 18 (aged 5 plus)

Base: All respondents aged 5 plus

Q22 (5–17) Would <you/name> like to be doing more physical activity for sport, PE, exercise or fun than what <you/they> do now?

Q31 (18+) Overall, would you like to be doing more physical activity for sport, exercise, or recreation than you are currently doing?

Figure 19 (aged 5 plus)

Tables 3 and 4 (aged 5 plus)

Base: All respondents aged 5 plus

Q23 (5–17) Why are <you/name> not doing as much physical activity as <you/they> would like?

Note: reporting is based on those who want to be doing more.

Q32 (18+) For what reasons are you not doing as much physical activity as you would like?

Note: reporting is based on those who want to be doing more.