

Physical activity includes a wide range of things and should not be mistaken for just sport. The recommendations for young people to be active are at least 60minutes per day of exercise that makes you puff and get sweaty. While this might include sports like hockey or touch, it could also include walking to school or skateboarding round the neighbourhood. You can also add up all the times you exercise through the day so getting 60minutes isn't actually that hard....

Most people I know are involved in some kind of physical activity even if it is not sport. When we had our class discussion we decided that our PE class were probably involved in more competitive sports than other students at our school but were not always necessarily more active. Personally, I find it rewarding to play competitive sport and I get a lot out of it but at the same time I can understand why some people would rather stay active doing their own thing. I think that is probably why I didn't really enjoy my junior PE lessons. I would get frustrated with the students who didn't try hard enough and these students seemed to get a hard time from the rest of us (especially if our team lost). They also looked really embarrassed when we did fitness testing because the same people were always at the bottom of the class. I guess it is not surprising they dropped PE as soon as they could....

Physical Activity has a lot of benefits. The World Health Organisation states that it is important for young people to be active for health reasons like preventing heart problems later on and obesity. I thought it was interesting that physical activity can also limit depression and anxiety. I am involved in different physical activities for different reasons. I go jogging with my Dad twice a week because I want to stay fit and healthy (and not get fat) but I play hockey because I love the game, hanging out with my friends, competing at the games on Sundays and I also love the practices. Most people in our class were similar to this when we talked about what role physical activity played in our lives – it's different for everyone.

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I think young people's physical activity habits are probably influenced a lot by the media, our friends and our parents. Both my Mum and Dad played hockey when they were younger and they organised for my brother and I to play right from primary school. I think they would be pretty upset if we quit but they don't push us too hard. I have a friend who is playing netball only because her Mum is crazy about it. She coaches the team and I think she assumes that my friend loves the game as much as her. Parents like this could be problematic for young people because they might put their kids off sport all together if they push them too hard.

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SPARC research shows that physical activity levels for young people have decreased slightly from 1997 – 2001. They do not give the reason for this but I think it might have to do with our age group spending a lot more time on computers and social networking than the kids did in 1997. I know myself that it can be hard to get off Facebook when it's time for hockey training, especially if it's cold and rainy outside. I think I am pretty motivated with my hockey and that is why I still go but I think if you didn't love the sport you played you might get distracted a lot easier.

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I think physical activity is significant in young people's lives no matter what level they participate. Like I said before, most of us participate in some sort of exercise even if it is not enough. Being good at sports is also considered 'cool' at our school and therefore most people will either try to play something well or will at least come and watch games like the 1st XV. SPARC research with 11-18 year olds showed that young people are will often choose particular sports depending on their level of social interaction and I definitely agree with this.

When we critiqued our Year 12 PE programme in the class discussion we couldn't really agree on anything as a class and this demonstrated that we are all individuals who participate in physical activity for different reasons. When the teacher organises our units she is never going to be able to please everybody as there is a huge variety of different physical activities available. I suggested in our class discussion that she should organise physical activities that not many people have done before so that we can all be learning together. I think some people get intimidated when we participate in activities that other people in the class excel in and therefore they don't try as hard. It is important to feel 'comfortable and confident when you are learning new physical activities so maybe this would help....