

I have been involved in a number of different types of sports as I have grown up. Some I did just for a short period like a couple of terms and others I have kept going for a while. We also play a lot of fun sports with the whole family where rules don't really come into it! Some of the sports and physical activities I have done over the years include swimming, netball, T-Ball, dance, tennis, horse riding, and squash. My family (parents) say I have to be a part of at least one physical activity to keep me healthy and fit. There hasn't been a time where I haven't done any sport, and sometimes I have played more than 1 sport at a time.

When I was 5 I did a lot of swimming, I was told that it would help me gain important skills and it could possibly help and save mine and other people's lives in the future. I carried on with swimming until I was about 11 years old. I was a part of the swimming squad and this meant we swam up and down the pool non-stop for an hour. Our instructor would stop us only to give advice about our style or breathing etc. But overall it was simply just swimming non-stop. This is a great skill to learn and really good for overall fitness as it isn't hard on any part of your body. Sometimes if you have had an injury a physio will recommend swimming to help with your injury and also to keep your fitness levels up it is also good for developing the left and right hand side of the brain and is often recommended for people with learning disabilities. So although I know how good it was for me I didn't feel swimming was a sport I wanted to continue as I found it boring just swimming for an hour.

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I played T-Ball for a short time. My sisters played softball and because of my age I was put into T-Ball which is just the junior form of softball. It was quite fun but after a while we all decided we didn't want to continue with it.

Tennis was much the same. I never really took to this like I took to squash. I much prefer squash with the four walls around me and of course being inside certainly helps when it is freezing outside. The one rule in our family was if we wanted to try out new activities was once we joined and paid we had to stick at it for that whole term and not drop out until the end of the term.

Dance I did for a while as well. I did dancing for about two years which included iazz and hip-hop. I enjoyed dancing but hated having to perform in front of audiences. The fear of this ruined the enjoyment of dance for me.

We have a Bach up in Foxton beach and every Easter and sometimes Christmas the entire family comes up. Uncles, Aunties, cousins etc and it is so much fun. There is usually about 30 of us and we always have the volleyball nets up and the cricket set out. As I said before, rules aren't a big part of our family games and it is always so funny with each side trying to 'argue' whether a ball was in or not. The games bring us all together and even though there are different abilities and a wide range of ages, no one cares and we just enjoy the time and company of each other.

When I was 7 my sister was learning how to ride a horse she had many lessons that made her quite a good rider and I always went to the horse riding stables to watch her learn and pat the horses. I thought it would be a good idea to try horse riding as well. I wanted to follow in my sisters footsteps and do what she was doing so I copied her, but after a few practices I thought that it wasn't for me and I was too young and I was afraid I was going to fall off the horse because it was so big. I only spent one school term trying to learn how to ride a horse. I was more comfortable watching.

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I also started playing netball when I was in primary school. I decided to play because all my friends were and they wanted me to play as well. I loved playing netball because it is a team sport and it can be a fast moving game which I enjoyed, but not only was I having fun while playing netball, I was also gaining a lot of good skills such as good team work, communication and ball skills. Everyone that had come to watch me on a Saturday would all say I was a natural player, and I always had heaps of fun on the court. Each year I would join a team at my school which helped me increase my knowledge about netball. I played every year in primary and intermediate and in college I played in years 9, 10 and 1L. In year 11 I played in a social team. This means it's not as serious and we can all just have fun, relax and try new playing positions. My main position was centre and sometimes wing attack. I decided to stop in year 12 because of other sport commitments such as squash which I wanted to concentrate on.

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I started squash when I was 10 because my mum and my sister played and I thought it looked like heaps of fun. I would go down to the squash courts and practice with my coach and also on a Friday night with lots of other kids. At that stage I wasn't really into squash I was just going down to see my friends that I had made over the years. This all changed when I started playing in tournaments and winning and I thought 'wow I can do this' so I took things more seriously and got more training to help me improve. The training with my coach can be quite hard work because it is about learning control over the ball, how to place it, body positions when hitting the ball, where to stand and a lot of other strategies for the games I play. I started as a J5 in the squash grading and have moved up in grades during the years I have played, and I am now a D2, not far off a D1 and hoping to be a C2 by the end of this year. I practice on a Monday and a Tuesday and I play interclub on Wednesday I often have tournaments in the weekends. Tournaments are held all over New Zealand, but I have stayed in Wellington in the lower North Island.

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Physical activity and sports are important in my life as it helps me stay fit and healthy. For me I need to be a part of something or have a plan for each week of what I'm going to do such as my squash, zumba and running, so that I am totally sure I am going to be involved in physical activities and sports where as if I don't join up with anything or make up a plan for each week then I definitely know I won't end up doing it because I can be quite can be quite lazy at times, especially in winter. Next year when I leave college I think the best way for me to carry on with my physical activities and sports is to make sure I set a plan up for each week and set a goal at the start of the year so I have something to achieve by the end of the year. Also I am already a member of the Khandallah squash clubs. This means I know I am already a part of something so I will be sticking by squash when I leave college not only because I am already joined to the club but because I love squash and I am always meeting new people which is also the fun of it.