

**Physical Education
Teach Yourself Series**

**Topic 16: Contemporary Issues associated
with Physical Activity and Sport (Unit 2)**

SAMPLE

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SAMPLE

Contemporary Issues associated with Physical Activity and Sport

An individual's level of physical activity or sports participation can be influenced by a number of factors and can fluctuate according to their age and stage of life. Some of the issues that can influence a person's physical activity levels include: age, gender and gender inequality, cultural diversity, access to facilities, risk management and safety and access to physical activity for different population groups e.g. children.

As it appears in Unit 2

Contemporary Issues associated with Physical Activity and Sport

1. Declining levels of physical activity across the lifespan

As we age our participation in sport and physical activity generally decreases. Our physical activity levels peak during adolescence, while activity levels tend to be at their lowest beyond the age of 65 years. Generally, the greater variety of physical activity you participate in when you are young, the more likely you are to be sufficiently active as you age. In addition, if your parents and siblings are very active or inactive, you are most likely to follow in their footsteps and adopt a similar lifestyle, for as we know we are all a product of our environment. As people get older, their interests, needs and physical ability can change, so the more ways in which one can be active, the greater the ability to overcome these barriers.

It is vital that people of all ages maintain an adequate level of physical activity and sport as the health benefits of participating on a regular basis never subside.

2. Active Transport

Active transport is physical activity undertaken while traveling in a "self-powered" manner from destination to destination. Active transport involves an individual choosing a healthier alternative instead of the more sedentary mode of transport. Some examples of active transport include:

- Walking to the shops
- Running to work or school
- Rollerblading to a friend's house
- Riding to the train and then riding from the train to work

Issues that may negatively influence this type of physical activity include:

- Cost e.g. bike, helmet etc
- Safety e.g. a lack of safe roads/track and personal safety concerns
- A lack of social support
- Age
- Fitness Levels

3. Gender Equity

For as long as humans have graced the earth, there has always been an inequality between males and females when it comes to sport. According to historical records the first ancient Olympic Games, which can be traced back to 776 BC, were dedicated to the Olympian gods and were staged on the ancient plains of Olympia. These games involved men competing while naked and women being excluded from spectating and competing. Unfortunately, it took until the 1900 Paris Olympic Games for women to be given the right to compete at the Olympics. While we have seen some positive steps made towards developing greater gender equity in sport, many outdated rules and regulations still exist and discriminate against women.

Other issues that create an inequality between males and females in physical activity and sport include:

- Perceptions that women are inferior to males
- Less funding and support provided to female athletes
- Less prizemoney
- Golf clubs that have, in the past, only accepted male members
- Perceptions that women cannot, and should not, play contact sports or undertake ultra-endurance events

Strategies that have been implemented to create gender equity include:

- Women only gyms – to break down barriers relating to self-confidence/self-esteem
- Women's and Men's leagues in sports traditionally associated with the opposite gender e.g. The Australian Football League is establishing an AFL Women's League and Men's Netball competitions and mixed competitions currently exist.
- The Australian Open Tennis Tournament became the second only event to offer equal prizemoney to men and women.
- Equal funding and pay for female and male sports and athletes.

4. Cultural diversity

Australia's population is a very multicultural one with, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one in four Australians now being born overseas and a further one in five have had at least one overseas-born parent (Migration, Australia 2013-14), Australian Bureau of Statistics (Catalogue No. 3412.0, 2015, Canberra). For sports to flourish and grow sports administrators and all levels of the Australian Government need to continue to ensure that all sports and physical activities are inclusive for all.

Some of the barriers which may prevent people from backgrounds from having equal access to or participating in sport and physical activity include:

- Language barriers to approach and become involved in the sport.
- Lack of knowledge or understanding of the sport and/or club structures.
- Cultural and religious differences and expectations.
- Timetabling of activities and competitions.
- Negative attitudes towards new members from different cultural backgrounds.
- Little cultural diversity in players, elite representatives, coaches.
- Lack of diverse role models.
- Transport issues (lack of accessible and safe transport to venues).
- Limited opportunities to learn more about the sport and its rules.
- Prohibitive costs of registration fees, uniforms and equipment.
- Inflexibility of uniform requirements.

- An emphasis on winning and competition has increasingly been found to be in conflict with attitudes towards inclusiveness and community engagement.

Strategies that can be used to increase the access to physical activity and sport that people from different cultural backgrounds include:

- Engage communities early - When planning to include people from different cultural backgrounds make sure it involves people from diverse backgrounds early in the process.
- Build trust - Try to understand the situations that people from diverse backgrounds are in, particularly if it is early in the settlement process and engage accordingly. Be clear about expectations and roles.
- Recognise diversity within communities - Differences exist between different communities, and also within groups. Take time to understand communities and offer a range of targeted programs and activities.
- Identify who the community leaders are and build trusting relationships.
- Address language issues - Consider the need to have written, electronic and verbal information translated or made available in plain English. Understand that English may not be a first language for many people so think about the best means of communication.
- Build partnerships with multicultural organisations and build engagement into existing programs and activities.
- Learn about barriers to inclusion - Find out more on the barriers to inclusion for people from diverse backgrounds, for example, playing on religious occasions, alcohol, uniforms, dress
- Demonstrate respect

5. Risk Management and Safety

No matter what risk management and safety rules and guidelines are in place prior to competition, minor and major injuries will still occur. From a legal point of view, sports governing bodies need to be proactive, rather than reactive and foresee what injuries may occur, the possible causes of those injuries and what will be the best strategies to put in place to prevent or reduce risk and impact of the injury.

Some issues that need to be considered in relation to risk management and safety include:

- Appropriate instruction and training needs to be provided to coaches and participants
- Equipment, particularly safety equipment, needs to be accessible to all participants and in good working order
- A Duty of Care needs exercised by all officials at all times
- Risk management plans need to be in place
- Ground and court conditions need to be inspected prior to use.

Solutions to Review Questions

1. *Answer:* B

Explanation:

Driving a car is not correct as it is the only method of transport listed that is not self-powered.

2. *Answer:* B

Explanation:

Being over-aroused will not lead to non-participation in physical activity, but will have a greater impact on performance once the event has begun.

3. *Answer:* D

Explanation:

Factors influencing participation in physical activity and sport do vary according to a person's age and the context in which they are exercising in e.g. physical activity will be different for children than it is for the elderly and contextual factors e.g. weather, time of day/year, venues/facilities/geographic location etc will influence an individual's activity levels and choices.

4.

Examples of issues that create an inequality between males and females in physical activity and sport include:

- Perceptions that women are inferior to males
- Less funding and support provided to female athletes
- Less prizemoney
- Golf clubs that have, in the past, only accepted male members
- Perceptions that women cannot, and should not, play contact sports or undertake ultra-endurance events

Examples of strategies that can be implemented to create gender equity include:

- Women only gyms – to break down barriers relating to self-confidence/self-esteem
- Women's and Men's leagues in sports traditionally associated with the opposite gender e.g. The Australian Football League is establishing an AFL Women's League and Men's Netball competitions and mixed competitions currently exist.
- The Australian Open Tennis Tournament became the second only event to offer equal prizemoney to men and women.
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5.

a.

i.

- Adequate warm-up
- Sufficient training
- Use of sports tape and ankle braces etc

ii. Stages of Life include: childhood, adolescence, adulthood (early, mid and late adulthood), middle-age.

b.

Childhood – e.g. lack of access/transport

Adolescence- e.g. school demands

Adulthood/middle age – e.g. family and work demands

c.

Lack of access/transport – Ride a bike to where they need to go provided they ride in numbers or with adult supervision along a safe route.

School demands - make a study/homework timetable that incorporates exercise sessions within it or use lunchtimes at school to ride a bike in the school gym while reading over study notes.

Family and work demands – use active transport to work, walk with the pram and exercise as a family.