

Marketing sport and exercise to girls from 15 to 19 years old

What interests these girls?

Most girls of this age mainly think about their friends and family. If friends and family aren't involved in sport then it is much less likely that they will be. Girls of this age are generally interested in feeling healthy and take part in sport to compensate for their poor eating habits.

What stops them taking part?

1. How much sport they play is heavily influenced by how good they think they are, and how confident they feel about playing and about their physique. Most girls who think of themselves as good at sport tend to play a lot, and those that think of themselves as bad tend to play less. This is obviously a negative cycle leading to only the top few continuing to play, and most others dropping out.
2. At this age, girls tend to go through a lot of change, which means a change in their routine and often they have less spare time, money and energy.

So . . . what can we do?

As many girls in this age group stop playing sport, there is a need to make them see it is beneficial to their health and well being to keep physically active when they leave school. This could involve:

- Providing and promoting opportunities for the whole family to get involved. This could mean family members playing their own sports at the same time, playing sport as a whole family or offering opportunities for family members to get involved without having to play.
- Getting groups of friends to play together. When providing such sessions or opportunities try to focus on the fun aspects of playing, and not the competition.
- Organising women only sessions. This will have the benefit of combating the negative feelings that many girls have about not being good enough, which are often brought on by playing with stronger boys.
- Using the right photography to improve the image of sport – show that that all young women can enjoy it, not just sporty types. Use photos of people slightly older than themselves, but normal people not sports people. (free high-quality sport photographs can be found at www.sportengland.org/marketingsport)
- Run free or 'taster' sessions in sport. This has been proven to interest people into giving something a try and if run effectively to get people staying exercising.
- Providing information on where and when they can 'pay and play' at locations which are relevant to young people. These could include colleges, youth clubs or where their family members will see them.