

Athletics

- Athletics is the third most popular sport for female participation
- Women athletes are unlikely to formalise their involvement by joining a club, but many do choose organised competition

All data are based on those adults (16 and over) who said they had taken part in the sport at least once in the last four weeks (Active People Survey 2007-08), unless stated otherwise. See Note 1.

Women who take part in athletics – overview

Trends in women's athletics participation

Taken part at least once a week (moderate intensity)



Taken part at least once in the last four weeks

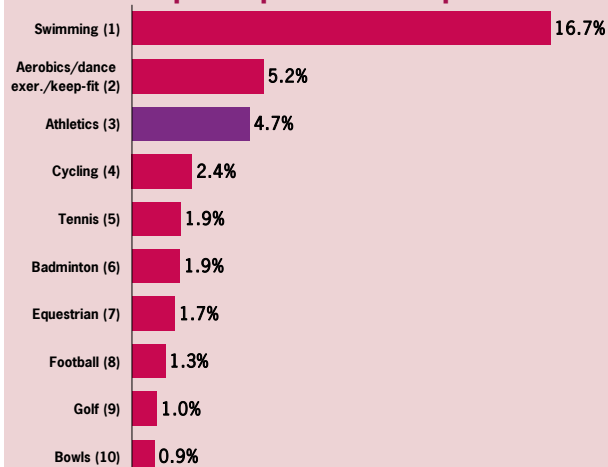


Base: All female respondents (APS1 = 212,568, APS2 = 113,056)

Participation overview

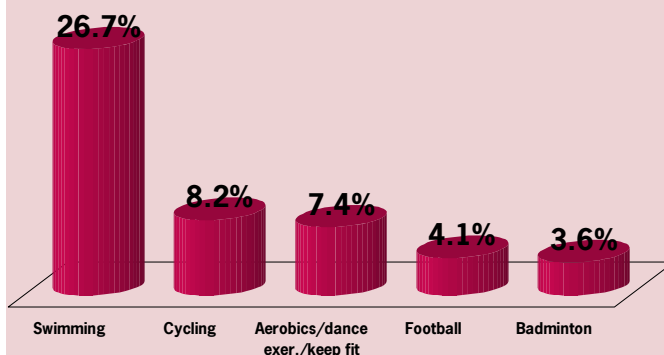
- Between AP1 and AP2 we saw a significant increase in women's participation in athletics, driven in the main, by a rise in road running and jogging
- It is the third most popular sport for women and girls, behind only swimming and aerobics/dance exercise/keep fit
- The one sport very popular with female athletes is swimming, with a quarter of athletes taking part.

How does athletics fare? Women's participation in all sports



Base: All female respondents. Figure for cycling is respondents who took part in at least four recreational cycles in the last four weeks at moderate intensity

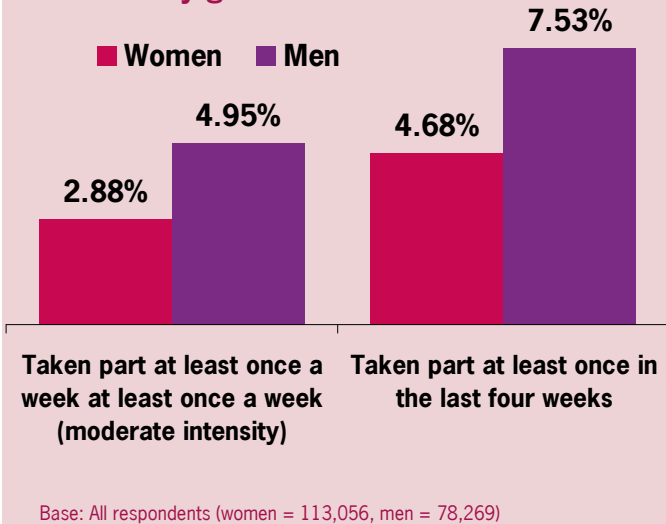
Other sports popular with female athletes



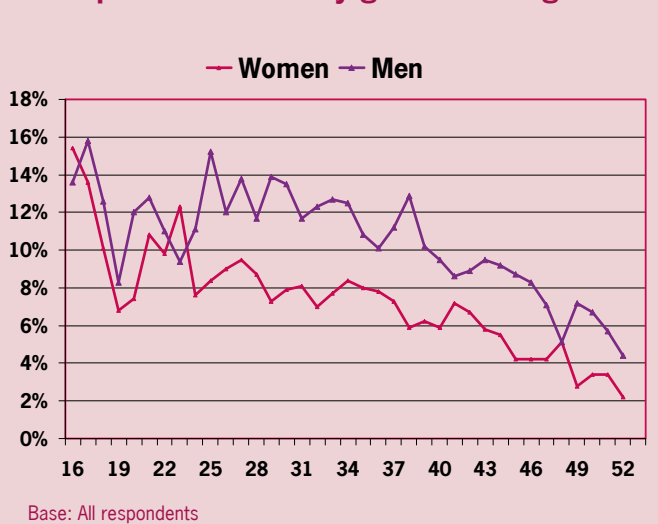
Base: All female respondents who played athletics at least once in the last four weeks (4,591)

Demographic profile of athletes

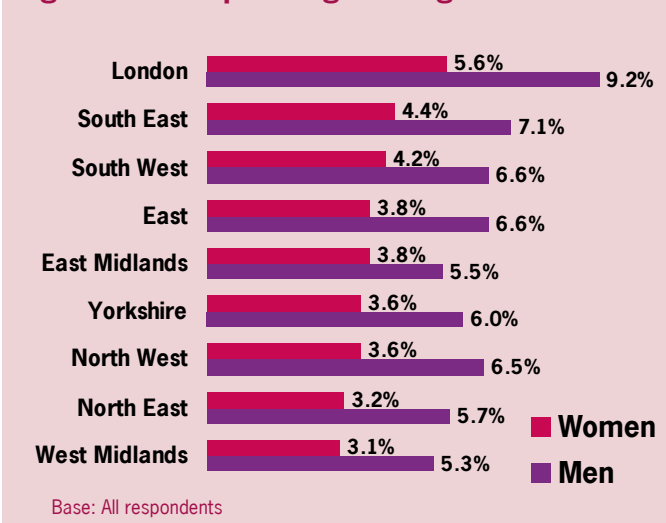
Proportion of people who take part in athletics by gender



Focus on drop off: proportion of people who take part in athletics by gender and age



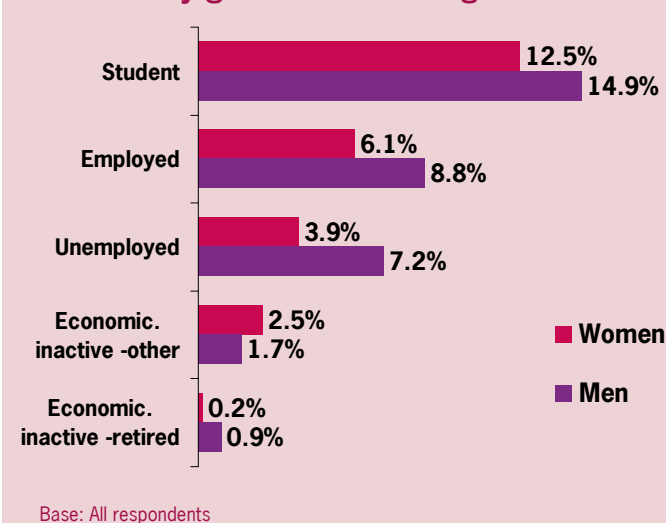
Profile of people who take part in athletics by gender and Sport England region



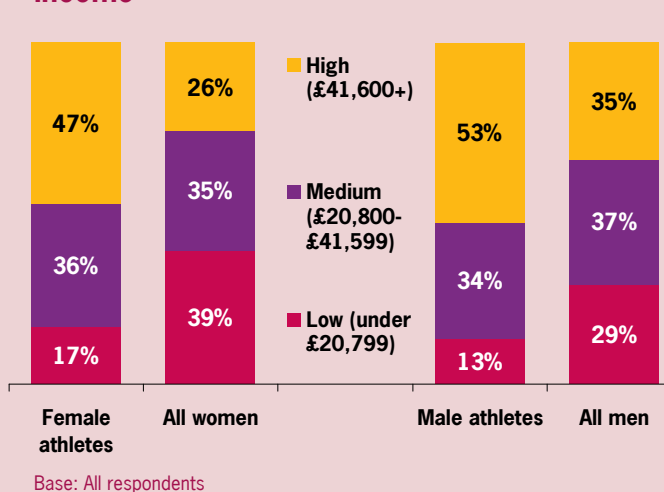
Participation – demographics

- Athletics is broadly a mixed sport, at the younger ages there are actually more women taking part than men (specifically at age 16 and part of the early 20s)
- Unlike some sports, athletics manages broadly to retain participants through their 20s, with a more gradual drop out through middle age
- London and the South East have the highest women's participation rates. Yorkshire and the North West are less well represented amongst women than men

Proportion of people who take part in athletics by gender and working status



Profile of the general population v. people who take part in athletics by gender and income



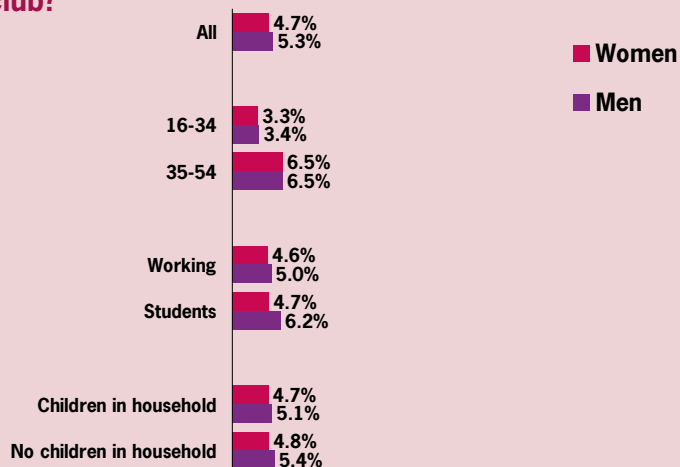
Organised participation



Club membership

- Most women take part in athletics informally, without ever becoming a member of a club
- Women are slightly less likely than their male counterparts to join a club.

Who takes part in athletics as a member of a sports club?



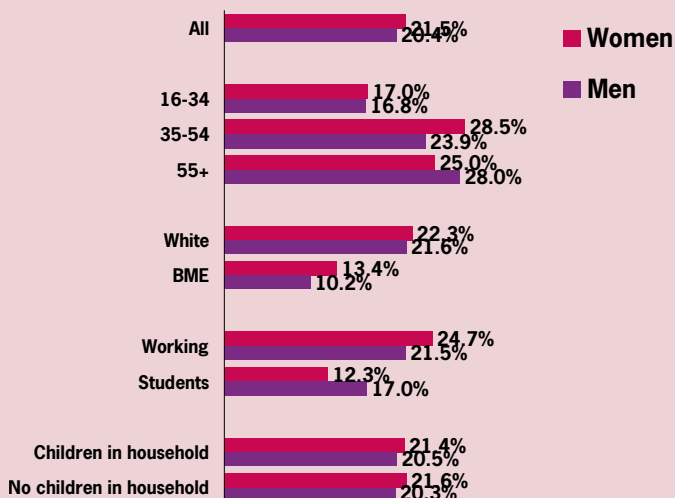
Base: All respondents who had taken part in athletics at least once in the last four weeks. See Note 2



Taken part in organised competition

- Interestingly though, women are keen to test their skills in organised competition. One in five do so, far more than ever join a club
- The numbers who take part in organised competition peak at the ages of 35-54 with nearly three in ten athletes choosing to do so
- For students however (and particularly women), their involvement tends to be more informal – only 12% compete

Who takes part in organised competition?



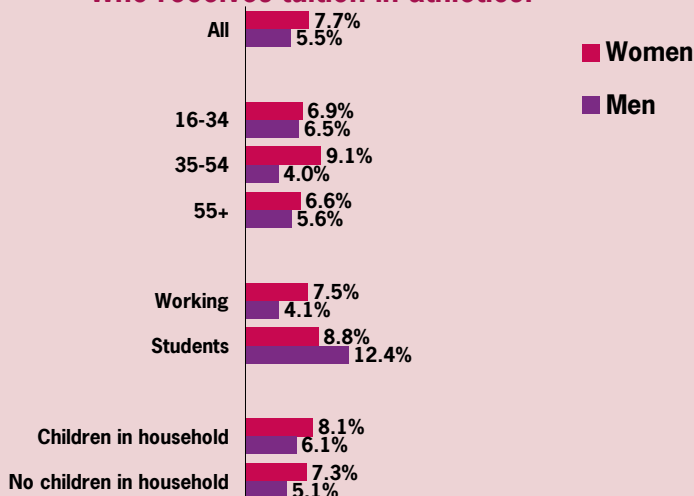
Base: All respondents who had taken part in athletics at least once in the last four weeks. See Note 3



Received tuition or coaching

- Compared to many sports, athletics is very much self-taught. Nevertheless, women are more likely to receive tuition than men
- 35-54 year old women are twice as likely as their male counterparts to seek out coaching
- Experience of coaching for students is relatively high, but female students less so

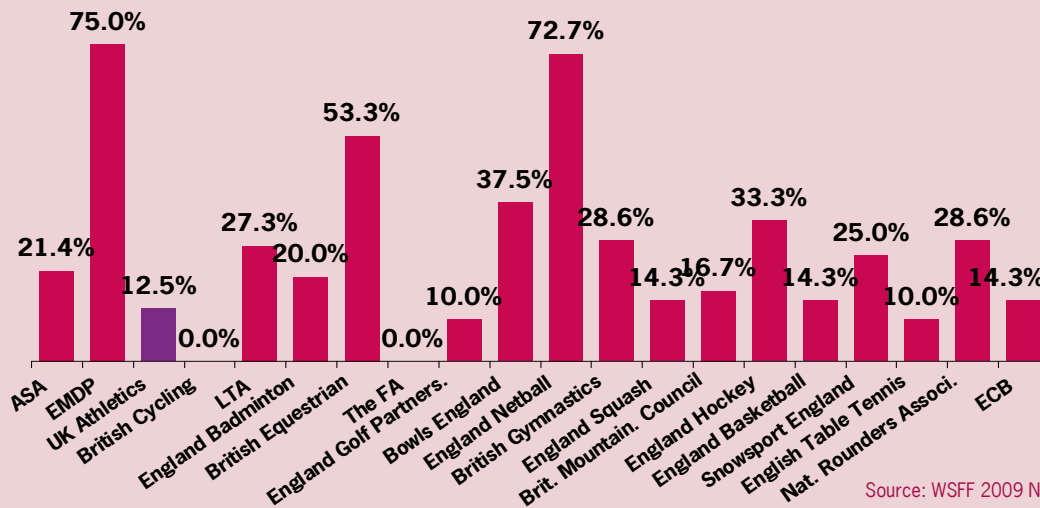
Who receives tuition in athletics?



Base: All respondents who had taken part in athletics at least once in the last four weeks. See Note 4

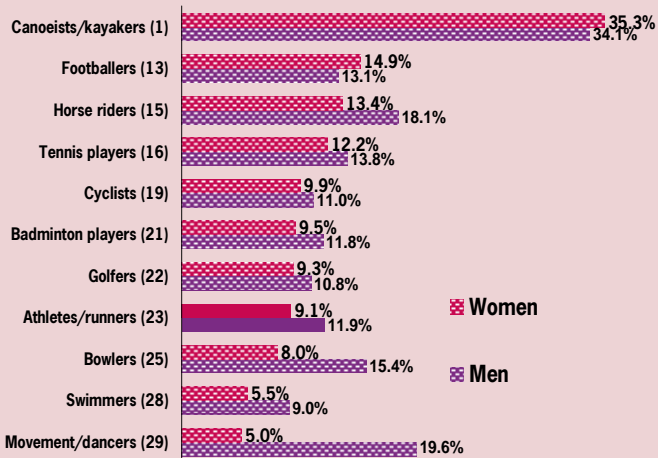
Women as leaders, coaches and volunteers

Women as leaders of sport
% of NGB Board members who are women



Source: WSFF 2009 NGB audit. See Note 5

Women and men as volunteers



Base: All respondents who take part in athletics at least once a week. Top 10 sports for women. Figure in brackets is the sport's ranking out of 29 sports for volunteering. See Note 6

Women as leaders, coaches and volunteers

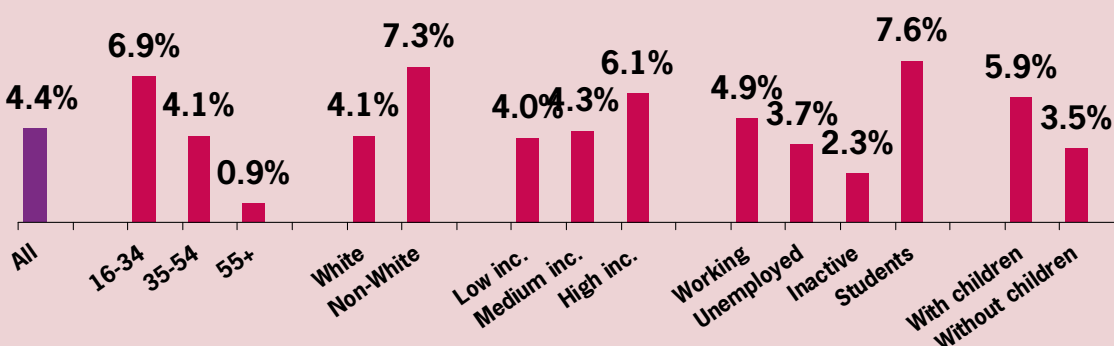
- UK Athletics has below average female representation on its board
- Perhaps because of the choice that many women athletes make to participate outside the traditional club environment, the data also shows that they are less likely to volunteer than other sport participants

Latent demand

- Athletics has one of the highest latent demands, with one in twenty women want to try it or do more. Women with children and BME women appear to represent a big opportunity

Women's demand for athletics

Profile of women who want to do more athletics than they currently do



Base: All female respondents who said they wanted to do more sport and physical activity

Satisfaction with experience of athletics

Satisfaction of female athletes compared with average for all women who do any sport/activity



Source: Sport England's Satisfaction with the quality of the sporting experience survey (2009). Base: Female respondents (16+) who rated their satisfaction as 8-10 on a 1 to 10 scale. Figures in brackets are satisfaction percentages for all sportswomen. See Note 7

Satisfaction

- Athletics participants satisfaction with their sport ranks 17th out of 46
- For women participants, they are particularly satisfied with the ease of participating, and the release and diversion their sport gives them.
- However, women participants are particularly dissatisfied with the social aspects, plus some of the aspects associated with coaching and officialdom

To sum up...

Women athletes tend to interact with the sport informally, and many are unsatisfied with the social aspects and fail to join a club. The clear opportunity here is to convert women participants into club members and volunteers.

There is clear latent demand for athletics, particularly amongst mothers and the BME population. Focusing on these audiences, and encouraging more formalised taking part should result in sustained and increased participation.

Notes

- 1 Source for all data is the Active People Survey 2 (2007-08) unless otherwise stated. 16 year olds and over in England only. For some sports, there are no data as sample sizes are too small.
- 2 Club membership is based on those who have been a member of a sports club to participate in athletics in the past four weeks. These figures may not correspond with NGB affiliation figures.
- 3 Organised competition is defined as 'having taken part in any organised competition in athletics in the last 12 months'.
- 4 Received tuition is defined as 'having received tuition from an instructor or coach to improve your performance in athletics in the last 12 months'.
- 5 In 2009 WSFF undertook an audit of all 46 Sport England funded National Governing Bodies (NGBs). NGBs were asked to provide demographic data about board members, affiliated coaches and members. Sports chosen for comparison are the top participation sports for women. Data not available for all NGBs.
- 6 Volunteering is defined as 'volunteering to support sport for at least one hour a week'. Sports chosen for comparison are the top participation sports for women.
- 7 Survey respondents were asked to rate their perceived satisfaction for 75 questions across ten themes. Figures in brackets are aggregate satisfaction percentages of the individual theme questions. Domains ranked in order of satisfaction for all women.

To convert overall percentages to numbers use the following figures:

Survey	Male 16+	Female 16+
APS 1	19,756,900	20,954,000
APS 2	20,170,100	21,266,200

Source: Office for National Statistics England Population Estimates, 2005 and 2007

WATCH THIS SPACE...

To be updated with sport specific data from Active People Survey 3...

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