



Pandemic impacts participation

[Sport NZ published a study into the impact of COVID-19](#) which shows the pandemic has **severely affected participation in physical activity** across the country. The study involved a series of surveys of between 2,500 and 4,500 adults (18 years and older) between April 2020 and April 2021.

[The study found there was a decrease in the number of physical activities](#) that people participated in each week, a decline in the amount of time spent being active, a significant drop in the number of adults meeting the physical activity recommendations and an impact on habitual physical activity.



Based on these findings, the research team from Victoria University of Wellington concluded that **urgent action is needed to re-activate NZ adults** and **prevent the unfavorable physical and mental health outcomes** likely to result if the trends observed persist in the long-term at a broader population level.

[Sport NZ is investing in the sector](#) and working with partners to lift physical activity levels as restrictions ease.

What's behind the decline?

[The BMC Public Health journal published a research article](#) that looked at the factors associated with reduced levels of physical activity during the pandemic in March 2021. Three key findings were:

1. Social distancing requirements had a significant impact on activity levels.
2. About 30% of the respondents presented moderate or severe symptoms of depression, and around 23% showed moderate or severe symptoms of anxiety during the social distancing period.
3. Low levels of physical activity, low family monthly income and the participants' age were associated with higher incidences of anxiety and depression.

These findings provide important insights into the reasons behind the decline in activity levels since the start of the pandemic and can help activity providers implement strategies to grow their activities and re-activate local communities.

Note: These findings are not based on NZ data. Information was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that was answered by 2140 Brazilians of both sexes who were recruited through online advertising. For more information about the NZ situation, check out these studies that examine the link between:

- [Physical Activity and Psychological Well-Being](#); and
- [Changes in Physical Activity Pre-, During and Post-lockdown COVID-19 Restrictions](#).



Strategies for Activity Providers

1. [Upskill in mental health first aid](#) so you can guide a person towards resources and professional help if required. **See upcoming training opportunity.**
2. Offer a range of low-impact, gentle exercise options: High intensity exercise can exacerbate feelings of anxiety.
3. [Create a safe supportive space](#) by maintaining good hygiene practices and creating a welcoming, inclusive environment.

Importantly: [make sure you have a good self-care plan](#) in place for yourself (and staff); connect regularly with other activity providers and reach out for help if you are struggling.

Good places to go for information and support are:

- [Exercise NZ website](#); and
- [Mental Health Foundation website](#).

[Education, Training and Development](#)

The Active Canterbury website is a great place to go to find out about upcoming education and training opportunities. Click on the link above to view resources and see what's coming up over the next few months.

[Autumn Activity Providers Workshop](#)

Date: Saturday 14th May, 2022.

Time: 12.30 to 4.30pm.

Location: Pioneer Recreation and Sport Centre (75 Lyttelton Street).

Cost: FREE, but registration essential

CPDs: You will earn 2.5 CPDs if you attend the entire workshop.

Join us for an action-packed afternoon of guest speakers and practical sessions.

Register at online by **Friday 6th May** at:

www.activecanterbury.org.nz/training/autumn-activity-providers-workshop.

[ExerciseNZ on Tour](#)

Date: Friday 20th May 2022.

Time: 9am to 2pm.

Location: Online.

Cost: From \$50 for members of ExerciseNZ, YogaNZ and REPs.

CPDs: 5 CPD points.

This half-day workshop is designed for Facility Managers and Exercise Professionals. It includes guest speakers, industry updates, your choice of 3 elective sessions, plus Q&A.

[Basic Mental Health First Aid Workshop](#)

Date: Saturday 18th June 2022.

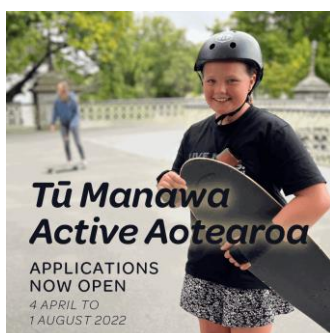
Time: 1 to 5pm.

Location: Mental Health Education and Resource Centre (MHERC) - Level 1/12 Hazeldean Road, Addington, Christchurch.

Cost: FREE, but registration is essential. Places are limited.

This workshop will assist community activity providers (exercise instructors, class, group and programme leaders, trainers and volunteers) to develop the skills to respond to people experiencing mental distress. It will teach you how to recognise and effectively respond and support individuals using a framework.

Register online by **Friday 10th June** at: www.activecanterbury.org.nz/training/basic-mental-health-first-aid-workshop-for-activity-providers.



[A small-scale research project](#) was recently undertaken to investigate what helps or hinders engagement in physical activity for People of Pacific Heritage.

The study found:

1. A **high value is placed on collectivism and communitarianism**

which may limit individual choices of physical activity participation but facilitate physical activity through collective responsibility for all.

2. **Culturally- and community-based group activity programmes** are likely to be more effective

Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa provides funding for programmes or projects delivering play, active recreation and sport experiences for tamariki and rangatahi. These may be new or already operating. Applications for round two are now open until **Monday 1st August 2022**.

Research shows there are some groups who are more at risk of missing out or being less active, including those living with a disability, in higher deprivation communities and girls and young

[Long Covid](#) is when symptoms persist past four weeks from the initial infection and can last for several months. International estimates suggest 10 to 30% of COVID-19 cases will experience ongoing symptoms. The most important thing you can do is **rest and avoid any intense exercise** or busy activities in your recovery, says Dr Anna Brooks, a cellular immunologist at the University of Auckland.

“It is incredibly important to avoid Graded Exercise Therapy (GET) – or any

than programmes that focus on the individual.

3. Working alongside community leaders, such as church leaders, may help further the importance of physical activity engagement for health benefits.

women. Programmes or projects that reach these groups will be prioritised.

[The Sport Canterbury website has information on the funding criteria,](#) how much you can apply for, and the funding process. You can also phone them on 03 373 5060.

overexertion or stressors too soon, as this may exacerbate symptoms and cause further damage.”

For more information, check out:

- ["Rushing back to exercise could cause Long Covid"](#) by Zoe Madden-Smith; and
- [Health Navigator website.](#)



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We welcome your feedback and comments.