

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN THE FORMATION OF SKILLS FOR AN ACTIVE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE IN YOUNG PEOPLE

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**Abstract:** *Sports activities play a crucial role in developing the skills for an active and healthy lifestyle in adolescents, providing students with the opportunity to experience and engage in a variety of activities in order to develop their motor, social and intellectual skills. The purpose of the paper is to highlight the essential role that sports activities have in skills training, necessary for an active and healthy lifestyle in adolescents. The objectives of the research include, examining the physical benefits of sports activities on the health of adolescents, highlighting the development of motor skills through sports activities, analyzing the impact of sports activities on the social and emotional development of adolescents, especially through identifying strategies and resources available to encourage adolescents to participate in sports activities and adopt an active and healthy lifestyle. Sports activities are essential for training the skills for an active and healthy lifestyle in adolescents, contributing to the improvement of physical and mental health, the development of social and emotional skills, and the increase of self-confidence and self-esteem.*

**Key words:** *sports activities, skills training, active and healthy lifestyle, adolescents.*

## 1. Introduction

Research on the importance of sports activities in the formation of skills for an active and healthy lifestyle in adolescents is extremely relevant in the current context, given a number of considerations such as: concern for the health of young people. In recent years, there has been a worrying downward trend in physical activity and sports practice among young people. Increasing sedentary lifestyles,

technology addiction and unhealthy lifestyles have led to weight, physical and mental health issues among the young population [5].

Adolescence is a crucial time in physical, mental and emotional development, and adopting an active and healthy lifestyle during this period can have a major impact on the lives of the adults these teenagers will become [2]. By promoting sports activity and a balanced lifestyle, teenagers will develop skills that will accompany

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them throughout their lives, help them maintain their health and improve their quality of life [1]. In the context of the current challenges related to the health of the young population, there is an urgent need to promote and encourage the adoption of an active lifestyle among adolescents. This research can provide solid scientific evidence on the benefits of leisure time sports activities, helping to inform and motivate teenagers in this direction. The results of this research will provide valuable information for decision-makers and for the development of policies, strategies and programs aimed at stimulating the participation of adolescents in sports activities, in order to improve their health and well-being.

Therefore, it is necessary to increase the participation of the population in regular physical activities. Practicing physical exercises or sports has become an essential objective of the normality and modernity of the 21st century society. The involvement of the young generation in such activities is imperative, recognizing the beneficial effects on the body both from a morpho-functional and psychosocial point of view.

Adopting an active and healthy lifestyle in work, living and ways of spending free time provides moral and spiritual satisfaction, compliance with norms and rules of conduct, training and strengthening skills in the field of personal health, through active participation for preventive purposes and in promoting health [4].

## **2. Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this is to highlight the essential role of sports activities in the

formation of the skills necessary for an active and healthy lifestyle in adolescents.

## **3. Materials and Methods**

In the research, various research methods were used such as the analysis of bibliographic sources, synthesis, systematization, generalization and classification, the case study method and the interview method.

All these research methods were used in an integrated and complementary way to obtain a complete picture of the importance of sports activities in the formation of healthy habits in adolescents. It is important to note that the promotion of sports activity must be done in an attractive way, adapted to the interests and preferences of teenagers. It must also take place in a safe and non-competitive environment to encourage participation in a positive and healthy way.

## **4. Results**

The research activity was carried out on a number of 80 teenagers, thus the motivations and barriers in practicing sports activities were identified, taking into account the particularities of sports activities.

The particularities of sports activities highlight how they can contribute to the integral development of adolescents, both physically and psychologically, socially and emotionally. The main particularities of sports activities among teenagers:

- Motivations and barriers in practicing sports
- Individual, social and environmental factors influencing participation.

- The role of family, friends and institutions in promoting sport [6].
- In Figure and Table 1 we present the main motivations and barriers in practicing sports among teenagers, which were systematized following the application of the interview.

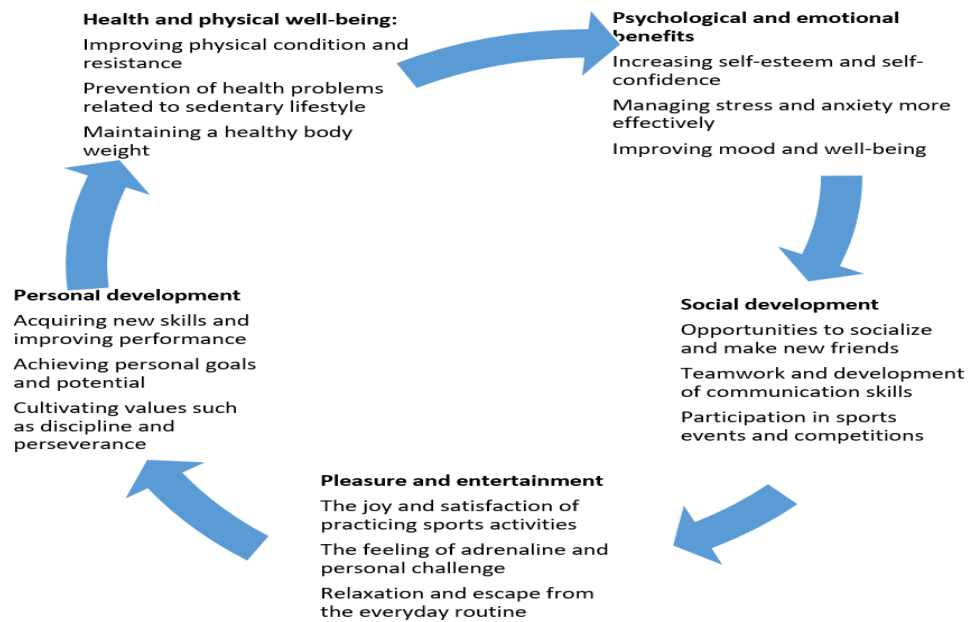


Fig. 1. *Motivations in practicing sports*

*Barriers in the practice of sports by adolescents*

Table 1

1. Lack of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very high school or work load</li> <li>• Difficulty in balancing sports activities with other responsibilities</li> </ul>	39%
2. Limited access to facilities and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack or remoteness of sports structures</li> <li>- High costs of participation in sports activities</li> </ul>	11%
3. Lack of motivation and interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preference for other leisure activities</li> <li>- The perception that sport is not a priority</li> </ul>	13%
4. Health and fitness factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical or physical problems that prevent the practice of sports</li> <li>• Lack of skills and confidence in one's own abilities</li> </ul>	29%
5. The influence of the social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pressure from family or friends</li> <li>- Stigma and negative judgments from others</li> </ul>	8%

Identifying and addressing these motivations and barriers is essential to encourage youth participation in sports activities.

To interpret the answers of the 80 teenagers based on the information provided, we will analyze each category, their proportions and implications.

1. Lack of time (39%). This is the most frequently cited reason for non-involvement in sports activities. Reasons include: - Very high school or work load: Many graduates face extremely demanding academic or professional schedules, leaving little time for sports activities. - Difficulty balancing sports activities with other responsibilities, thus we find that time management becomes a major challenge and sports activities are often the first to be sacrificed.
2. Limited access to facilities and resources (11%). This factor is mentioned by fewer teenagers, but it remains a significant problem: - Lack or remoteness of sports structures, which makes it difficult for teenagers to get involved in sports activities. - High costs of participating in sports activities: The expenses associated with playing sports can discourage participation, especially for adolescents with limited financial resources.
3. Lack of motivation and interest (13%). This category refers to personal attitudes and preferences: - Preference for other leisure activities: some teenagers prefer to spend their free time in other ways, such as socializing, cultural activities or resting. - The perception that sport is not a priority, thus the lack of interest in sport may be caused by considering other activities as more important or attractive.

4. Health and fitness factors (29%). Health problems and physical fitness play an important role: teenagers who have health problems or physical limitations may have difficulty participating in sports activities. Sometimes teenagers lack confidence in their sporting abilities and avoid participating for fear of embarrassing themselves or not performing well.

5. The influence of the social environment (8%). This is the least frequently mentioned category. External influences, such as the expectations of family or friends, can discourage participation in sports. The fear of being judged or stigmatized for involvement in sports can discourage young people.

Analyzing these answers, we can see that the main factors that influence the participation of teenagers in sports activities are related to time management and health problems or physical condition. Limited access to facilities and resources, as well as lack of motivation and the influence of the social environment are also relevant factors, but affect a smaller percentage of adolescents.

This information can be useful for educational institutions and sports communities to develop programs and strategies to address these barriers and encourage active participation in sports.

By integrating sports activities into the daily life of young people, an environment conducive to their full and balanced development is created, preparing them for the challenges of adult life [9].

Studies show that physical exercises can improve cognitive function, attention and school performance in young people. Participating in group physical activities can help develop social skills, self-esteem and cooperation. At the same time, by

promoting physical activities and a healthy lifestyle we will obtain long-term benefits, as healthy habits formed in youth are more likely to be maintained in adulthood, reducing the risk of later diseases [8].

Therefore, strategies to promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle in young people represent an extremely important investment in the long-term health and well-being of this population.

These strategies must involve families as well as schools and the community as a whole.

Promoting physical activities and a healthy lifestyle in young people is essential for their harmonious development and the prevention of long-term health problems [3]. In Table 2, we present some strategies and suggestions to encourage young people to adopt these habits:

*Strategies and suggestions for promoting physical activities*

Table 2

<b>Education and awareness</b>	<b>Accessibility of sports activities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing lessons about the benefits of physical activity and healthy nutrition into the school curriculum.</li> <li>• Workshops and seminars by organizing interactive sessions in schools and communities to educate young people and parents about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate infrastructure: ensuring that there are accessible and well-equipped parks, sports fields and gyms.</li> <li>• School sports programs that will develop and support sports teams and clubs within schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Promotion through technology</b>	<b>The role of family and community</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive apps and games: using technology to make exercise more engaging. Apps that track progress or offer rewards can also motivate young people.</li> <li>• Social media campaigns: using influencers and popular platforms to promote health and physical activity messages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement of parents by encouraging them to be role models and actively participate in physical activities with their children.</li> <li>• Community events: organizing marathons, bike rides or sports days in which the whole community can participate.</li> </ul>
<b>Diversity of activities</b>	<b>Balanced nutrition</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of sports and activities: offering a wide range of activities to attract as many young people as possible, from traditional sports to more modern activities such as dancing, yoga or skateboarding.</li> <li>• Extracurricular activities: encouraging participation in clubs and extracurricular activities that promote physical exercises and health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition education: teaching young people how to make healthy food choices and how to plan their meals.</li> <li>• Healthy school meal programs: ensuring that school canteens offer nutritious and balanced options.</li> </ul>
<b>Psychological support</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting mental health through physical activity is closely related to mental state.</li> <li>• Organizing counseling and support sessions for young people experiencing stress or anxiety.</li> </ul>	

By implementing these strategies, young people can be better equipped to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle in the long term, thereby contributing to a healthier and happier society.

Strategies to promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle among young people play a key role in encouraging their participation and engagement. Figure 2 shows the most important strategies:

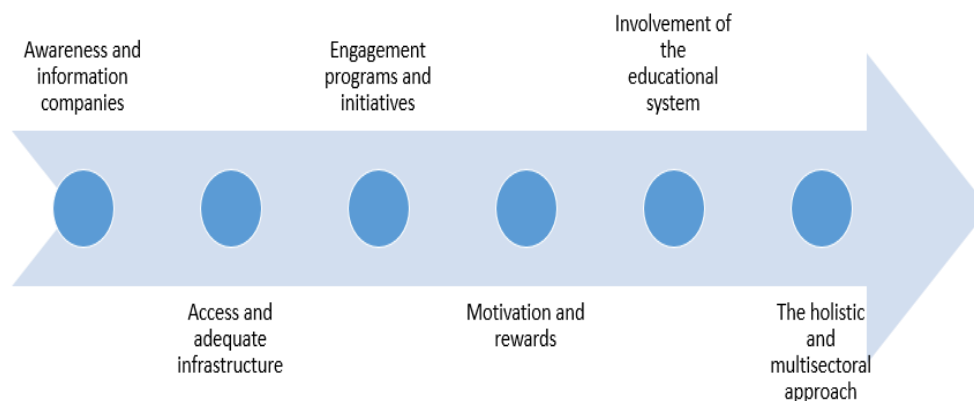


Fig.2. *Strategies to promote physical activities*

Promoting physical activities and a healthy lifestyle in adolescents is an important issue, considering the benefits it can bring. Effective strategies to encourage these practices is to inform young people about the importance of physical exercises and healthy eating.

This information can be transmitted in schools through media campaigns, workshops, etc.; encouraging the local community to provide opportunities for physical activities, such as sports clubs, fitness centers, landscaped parks; implementing government policies and programs to support physical activity among young people, for example by introducing more physical education lessons in the curriculum or subsidizing sports equipment; promoting positive role models who inspire and encourage young people to adopt an active lifestyle, such as performance athletes or healthy public figures; encouraging young people to set

personal goals and develop action plans tailored to their needs and preferences, thus leading to increased motivation and long-term commitment; including the family and group of friends in the process of adopting a healthy lifestyle [7]. This social support is essential to maintain these habits in the long term. Implementation of integrated community, school and family strategies can have a significant impact on increasing physical activity and adopting a healthy lifestyle among adolescents (6).

These strategies aim at creating a favorable environment, offering attractive opportunities, cultivating motivation and actively involving young people. Combining these elements is essential to encourage the adoption and maintenance of long-term healthy behaviors. Thus, we must mention that the most important strategies for promoting physical activities and a healthy lifestyle in adolescents are:

- Regular physical activity that has a significant positive impact on physical development, cardiovascular, muscular and metabolic functions.
- Physical activity helps improve mental health, reducing the risk of depression and anxiety.
- Adopting a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity and a balanced diet, can effectively prevent chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease or some types of cancer.
- Physical exercises can improve cognitive function, attention, and school performance.
- Participating in group physical activities promotes the development of social skills, self-esteem and cooperation.
- Healthy habits acquired in youth are more likely to be maintained in adulthood, reducing the risk of later illness [7].

Thus, promoting physical activities and a healthy lifestyle in teenagers will be an extremely valuable investment, with benefits on multiple levels: physical, mental, academic, social and long-term. This requires the involvement and coordinated efforts of families, schools and the community as a whole.

## 5. Conclusions

The importance of sports activities in the formation of skills for an active and healthy lifestyle in teenagers is indisputable. These activities not only improve physical and mental health, but also contribute to the development of discipline and important values in life. By involving schools and parents, teenagers will be able to cultivate a healthy lifestyle

and the benefits will be felt in the long term.

- There is a wide range of sporting activities, from classic organized sports to more informal and recreational physical activities. This diversity allows teenagers to choose activities that best suit their interests, preferences and abilities.

- Participation in sports activities is influenced by factors such as: accessibility, cost, infrastructure, family and community support, as well as personal desire and motivation. Effective promotion strategies must take these factors into account to facilitate adolescent access and participation.

- Encouraging teenagers to adopt an active lifestyle, including regular sports activities, will have significant long-term benefits for physical and mental health.

- Schools, sports clubs, community organizations and public authorities play a key role in facilitating access and participation of adolescents in sports activities. The collaboration and coordination of the efforts of these institutions is crucial to ensure a diversified and accessible offer of sports activities.

Thus, sports activities represent an essential component for the healthy and balanced development of adolescents, requiring an integrated approach at the family, school and community level.

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