

Thursday, 19 March 2015

The Top 20 sports played by Aussies young and old(er)

Swimming is the most common sporting activity in Australia, with around 1 in 2 kids and 1 in 10 adults regularly taking the plunge, the latest National Sports Participation report from Roy Morgan Research shows.

Combining data for the year to December 2014 from the Single Source survey of Australians aged 14+ and the Young Australians survey of kids aged 6-13 shows that overall 1 in 7 Australians regularly go swimming (14.4%), while nearly 1 in 9 go cycling (10.8%) and 1 in 12 play soccer (8.2%).

Just under half of kids 6-13 regularly go swimming (48.8%) or play soccer (48.7%), followed in popularity by cycling (37.7%), athletics/track & field (31.7%), basketball (30.5%) and dancing (30.3%). Just over 1 in 4 kids play cricket regularly (25.7%) and around 1 in 5 play netball (20.5%) or tennis (20.0%).

Gymnastics (18.1%) and Australian Rules football (17.9%) come in at 10th and 11th most popular, with 12th and below all with participation rates under 10% of kids: Hiking/Bushwalking (9.5%), Rugby League (9.3%), softball (8.9%), martial arts (8.8%), volleyball (7.7%), baseball (6.7%) and field hockey (5.9%), with around 1 in 20 kids regularly going off roller-blading/skating (5.2%) or horse-riding (4.9%).

Top 20 Sports and Activities by regular participation rate

	Age 6-13	(000s)	%	Age 14+	(000s)	%	TOTAL Age 6+	(000s)	%
1	Swimming	1198	48.8%	Swimming	1949	10.1%	Swimming	3147	14.4%
2	Soccer	1194	48.7%	Cycling	1419	7.3%	Cycling	2343	10.8%
3	Cycling	924	37.7%	Hiking/Bushwalking	847	4.4%	Soccer	1790	8.2%
4	Athletics/Track & Field	778	31.7%	Aerobics	623	3.2%	Dancing	1303	6.0%
5	Basketball	748	30.5%	Soccer	596	3.1%	Basketball	1088	5.0%
6	Dancing	743	30.3%	Dancing	560	2.9%	Hiking/Bushwalking	1079	5.0%
7	Cricket	631	25.7%	Tennis	471	2.4%	Tennis	961	4.4%
8	Netball	503	20.5%	Netball	343	1.8%	Cricket	959	4.4%
9	Tennis	490	20.0%	Basketball	340	1.8%	Athletics/Track & Field	874	4.0%
10	Gymnastics	444	18.1%	Cricket	328	1.7%	Netball	846	3.9%
11	Australian Rules	438	17.9%	Martial arts	242	1.3%	Aerobics	698	3.2%
12	Hiking/Bushwalking	232	9.5%	Body surfing	231	1.2%	Australian Rules	622	2.9%
13	Rugby League	229	9.3%	Surfing	211	1.1%	Gymnastics	569	2.6%
14	Softball	218	8.9%	Australian Rules	184	1.0%	Martial arts	457	2.1%
15	Martial arts	215	8.8%	Volleyball	133	0.7%	Rugby League	339	1.6%
16	Volleyball	189	7.7%	Gymnastics	125	0.6%	Body surfing	335	1.5%
17	Baseball	165	6.7%	Horse riding	122	0.6%	Surfing	330	1.5%
18	Field Hockey	144	5.9%	Rugby Union	113	0.6%	Volleyball	322	1.5%
19	Roller blading/skating	127	5.2%	Rugby League	110	0.6%	Softball	271	1.2%
20	Horse riding	119	4.9%	Field hockey	103	0.5%	Field Hockey	247	1.1%

Sources: *Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), January 2014 – December 2014, sample n = 15,944 Australians aged 14+;*
Roy Morgan Young Australians Survey, January 2014 – December 2014, sample n = 2404 Australians aged 6-13.

Discover your edge

Nearly all overall participation rates are naturally driven higher by the extra sportiness of Aussie kids: 6-13 year-olds are around five times more likely to regularly swim or cycle than those 14+ and 15 times more likely to play soccer. The only activity which adults are more likely than kids to participate in regularly is Aerobics.

However there are many, more adult, sports and activities—from darts to motorcycle racing, boxing to scuba diving—which we only ask about in the Single Source survey of those 14 and over, and participation in a few of these activities is often high.

45.3% of adults regularly go walking for exercise. With 8.8 million participants, this would make walking the clear number one activity, not just for adults but overall. Among adults, going to the gym/weight training (13.0%) is more common than swimming, while jogging (9.9%) overtakes cycling and yoga (4.0%) trumps aerobics.

There are only two sporting activities that we ask kids about, but not adults: 14.0% of 6-13 year-olds regularly play T-ball and 12.7% go skateboarding, making them the 12th and 13th most popular activities among kids.

Michele Levine, CEO, Roy Morgan Research, says:

“10 of the top 20 most popular sports and activities among Aussie kids aged six to 13 are team sports. Soccer is the clear favourite, with 1.2 million young players across the country, followed by around 750,000 basketballers, 630,000 cricketers and 500,000 netballers.

“But nearly all team sports move down the popularity list among those aged over 14, while many individual, non-competitive or exercise-based pursuits such as hiking, aerobics and surfing move up.

“The one constant is swimming, the number one sporting activity for kids and adults with over three million regular participants overall.

“By segmenting this latest data—readily available in Roy Morgan’s Single Source and Young Australians surveys—into finer age brackets, sports organisations would get a clear depiction of exactly when participation rates increase or decrease, and how that’s changing over time.

“Within these surveys, sports participants (or non-participants) can also be examined across a comprehensive range of demographic, attitudinal, and behavioural segments to give a complete picture of which groups are under-represented and what tactics might be implemented to drive growth.”

For more information about Roy Morgan’s Single Source and Young Australians surveys, and our 2014 Sports Participation data, please contact:

Vaishali Nagarathnam

Telephone: +61 (3) 9224 5309

Vaishali.Nagarathnam@roymorgan.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Discover your edge

About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years' experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
7,500	±1.1	±1.0	±0.7	±0.5
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE