

Despite Olympic fever, British women remain indifferent about sport

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A new survey reveals that more than half of British women did not play competitive sport or spend any time on intensive workouts such as running or cycling, in a given week. Seven months on from the 2012 Olympics, British women are still less likely than their European counterparts to devote any time to competitive sport, with Britain trailing behind Germany, Denmark, Sweden and France, according to a new multi-national survey on sport and exercise habits. Following record turn-outs for women's football at the Olympics, the countdown to this summer's UEFA Women's EURO in Sweden offers an opportunity for women to kick start heart-healthy physical activities and set themselves the goal of being more active.

"Playing sport can be an important part of an active, [healthy lifestyle](#). In combination with everyday physical activities, such as gardening or even doing household chores, sport can help reduce the risk of heart disease, the number one killer of women, responsible for the deaths of 1 in 3 women worldwide. According to the [World Health Organization's](#) Global Recommendations on Physical activity for Health, adults aged between 18-64 years should do 150 minutes of [moderate physical activity](#) (gardening, dancing or [brisk walking](#)) or 75 minutes of [vigorous physical activity](#) (playing sport, running or aerobics) per week. Ahead of International Women's Day, we encourage women to take care of their [heart health](#) to avoid paying the penalty of an inactive lifestyle", said Johanna Ralston, CEO of the World Heart Federation.

Indeed, the survey reveals that British women are not only indifferent to

sport, but 1 in 3 women do not do enough physical activity, putting themselves at risk of cardiovascular disease ([CVD](#)), which includes heart disease and stroke. More than 2 million women in the UK are just below the threshold for a healthy level of physical activity. They could reduce their risk of CVD if they set themselves the goal of doing just one hour more per week of playing sport or doing everyday physical activities such as gardening or household chores.

The multi-national survey conducted by YouGov in France, Sweden, UK, Denmark and Sweden, and commissioned by the World Heart Federation reveals that in the UK:

- 54 per cent of women in the UK did not play competitive sport or do any vigorous physical activity in the week of the survey compared to 34 per cent in Denmark, 44 per cent in Germany, 47 per cent in Sweden and 52 per cent in France
- 18 per cent of women admitted to being physically inactive and did not exert themselves at all
- Younger women in the UK are more likely to have played competitive sports, with 63 per cent of women aged 18-34 years devoting time to intensive workouts or playing sport in the week they were surveyed

The World Heart Federation's "Make a Healthy Heart your Goal" campaign in partnership with UEFA Women's EURO 2013 will be officially launched tomorrow on International Women's Day. The campaign encourages women and girls to set themselves the 'goal' of becoming more physically active, by practising sports such as football and incorporating physical activities into their everyday lives, to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

"Ahead of the UEFA Women's EURO 2013 in July, we are calling on

women and girls across Europe to achieve their physical activity 'goal' by playing football. Football is an empowering and unifying experience for women and girls. UEFA believes that every girl should have the opportunity to play football locally regardless of skill or talent and it is our goal to support this aim through our partnership with the World Heart Federation," said Karen Espelund, Member of the UEFA Executive Committee and Chairwoman of the UEFA Women's Football Committee.

Provided by World Heart Federation

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