

Research project provides insight into golfer lockdown habits

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A research project has provided a fascinating insight into how golfers continued to train during lockdown—practicing key skills such as

chipping, putting and even full golf shots from the comfort of their own home.

With the COVID-19 pandemic initially resulting in the closure of golf courses, researchers wanted to understand what golf activities golfers were performing in their home environment.

An extensive survey of almost 1,300 golfers, carried out by Abertay University and York St John University, also discovered some of the more creative ways in which they enjoyed the sport with some turning to virtual reality videogames.

Many golfers engaged in sedentary activities, such as watching online golfing tutorials, listening to golf-specific podcasts and watching the sport on TV.

Dr. Graeme Sorbie from Abertay University's Division of Sport and Exercise Sciences said: "During the early months of this pandemic sport and other recreational activities were suspended, creating a potential decline in physical activity which in turn can have a detrimental impact on physical and mental wellbeing. We surveyed golfers from nine countries over an eight-day period to gain an insight into how golfers were coping with this unprecedented situation, and the resulting dataset, which we are making freely available, was very interesting. The information could be used to enable future reports providing insight into physical and sedentary activities conducted during the quarantine restrictions from across a wide range of sports."

Dr. Alexander Beaumont, from York St John University's School of Science, Technology & Health said: "The dataset could also be used to provide specific golf-related recommendations if there was to be another move towards quarantine restrictions during the current pandemic, or even future pandemics. Of the UK participants who complete the survey,

these were representative of registered golfers within the UK and can be filtered according to demographics such as age, gender and golf handicap index. Also, with specific information recorded at the time, including country of residence, occupation and working status, the dataset can be used to individually assess the golf-related activities performed among these categories."

Dr. Matthew Wade, Head of Research at ukactive, said: "It's great to see that this data, collected during unprecedented times, is being made available for researchers. The growing movement of Open Science, and more transparent and accessible research, is something the ukactive Research Institute supports and embeds wherever possible. We hope this dataset can help golf associations, organizations, clubs and researchers understand further the links between golf and health, as we have seen through our recent research. As a nation, we must continue to show evidence of the value of sport and [physical activity](#) for our physical and mental wellbeing, something we celebrated during last month's Great British Week of Sport."

In a statement, the Women's Sports Network, the world's largest network focused on getting more women active through sport, said: "Most research shows that outdoor sports such as [golf](#) are hugely beneficial to women of all ages, but particularly for women 45 to 60 as they begin experiencing menopausal symptoms. Golf, particularly when played outdoors offers significant mental and physical stability which can provide support during periods of emotional stress—such as lock-down. Golf, and associated physical conditioning exercises, also offers alternative musculoskeletal/core control opportunities to women wanting to replace gym/yoga/Pilates sessions which are often carried out indoors and in large groups. We are particularly pleased to see the outcomes of this study and its significance to exercise opportunities for women per se should any further restrictions be placed on group sport."

Abertay University and York St John University researchers are continuing to work together, with further studies aiming to understand the impact on wellbeing.

The data report is published in *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*.

More information: Graeme G. Sorbie et al. Data Report: Golf-Related Engagement During COVID-19 Quarantine Restrictions (4–12th May 2020), *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living* (2020). [DOI: 10.3389/fspor.2020.00112](https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2020.00112)

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