

## *Sport Attitudes and Sport Engagement: A Sociological Survey in St. Petersburg in Russia*

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### **Resumo**

a Política esportiva da Rússia nas últimas décadas resultou na elaboração em 2009 da estratégia para o desenvolvimento do Esporte e da Educação Física até 2020 e do Programa Estadual "desenvolvimento da Cultura Física e do esporte" a partir de 2014. Os pontos-chave destes documentos são a preocupação com a saúde da população, o desenvolvimento demográfico e a segurança nacional. Como resultado da implementação destes programas ao longo da última década, houve uma mudança significativa no envolvimento dos russos no desporto. Portanto, é interessante estudar quais são as atitudes e a auto-estima dos residentes russos em relação ao lazer esportivo. Em 2021, realizamos um estudo com residentes de São Petersburgo na forma de uma entrevista online seletiva. O estudo demonstrou que a maioria dos residentes tem atitudes positivas em relação ao desporto, forte consciência da sua importância para a saúde e para o desenvolvimento de traços de personalidade fortes. Descobrimos também que os fortes laços de comunicação são importantes para St. Petersburg para formar as atitudes desportivas, bem como a sua vontade de pagar por esta forma de lazer. O estudo confirmou o papel fundamental do tempo livre na decisão dos inquiridos de praticar desporto. A comparação de alguns parâmetros com outros semelhantes nos países da União Europeia mostrou similaridade no nível de envolvimento desportivo com os países escandinavos. Os resultados do nosso estudo ajudaram-nos a tirar conclusões sobre o processo de formação de atitudes dos residentes de São Petersburgo que determinam o seu envolvimento nas práticas desportivas.

**Palavras-chave:** Estilo de vida, socialização, atitudes desportivas, envolvimento desportivo, Rússia.

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### **Resumen**

La política deportiva de Rusia en las últimas décadas ha dado como resultado la elaboración en 2009 de la Estrategia para el Desarrollo del Deporte y la Educación Física hasta 2020 y el Programa Estatal "Desarrollo de la Cultura Física y el Deporte" a partir de 2014. Los puntos clave de estos documentos son la preocupación por la salud de la población, el desarrollo demográfico y la seguridad nacional. Como resultado de la implementación de estos programas en la última década, ha habido un cambio significativo en la participación de los rusos en el deporte. Por lo tanto, es interesante estudiar cuáles son las actitudes y la autoestima de los residentes rusos hacia el ocio deportivo. En 2021 realizamos el estudio de los residentes de San Petersburgo en forma de entrevista selectiva en línea. El estudio demostró que la mayoría de los residentes tienen actitudes positivas hacia el deporte, una fuerte conciencia de su importancia para la salud y para el desarrollo de rasgos de personalidad de voluntad fuerte. También descubrimos que los fuertes lazos de comunicación son importantes para St. Los residentes de Petersburgo para formar las actitudes deportivas, así como a su disposición a pagar por esta forma de ocio. El estudio confirmó el papel clave del tiempo libre en la decisión de los encuestados de practicar deporte. La comparación de algunos parámetros con otros similares en los países de la Unión Europea mostró similitud en el nivel de compromiso deportivo con los países escandinavos. Los

resultados de nuestro estudio nos ayudaron a sacar conclusiones sobre el proceso de formación de actitudes de los residentes de San Petersburgo que determinan su participación en las prácticas deportivas.

**Palabras clave:** estilo de vida, socialización, actitudes deportivas, participación deportiva, Rusia.

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### **Abstract**

The sport policy of Russia over the past decades has resulted in elaboration in 2009 the Strategy for the Development of Sport and Physical Education until 2020 and the State Program “Development of Physical Culture and Sport” from 2014. The key points of these documents are the concern of the population’s health, demographic development and the national security. As a result of the implementation of these programs over the past decade, there has been a significant shift in the engagement of Russians in sport. Therefore, it is interesting to study what are the attitudes and self-esteem of Russian residents towards the sport leisure. In 2021 we conducted the study of St. Petersburg residents in the form of a selective online interview. The study demonstrated that the majority of the residents have positive attitudes towards sport, strong awareness of its importance for the health and for the development of strong-willed personality traits. We also found out that the strong ties of communication are important for St. Petersburg residents to form the sport attitudes, as well as to their willingness to pay for this form of leisure. The study confirmed the key role of free time in the decision of respondents to engage in sport. Comparison of some parameters with similar ones in the countries of the European Union showed similarity in the level of sport engagement with the Scandinavian countries. The results of our study helped us to make conclusions regarding the process of attitudes’ formation of St. Petersburg residents that determine their involvement in sport practices.

**Keywords:** lifestyle, socialization, sports attitudes, sports involvement, Russia.

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### **Introduction**

For a number of years, we have been studying what place sport take in the lifestyle of Russians (Sinyutin, Gonashvili, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020a, 2020b, 2021a, 2021b). The predominant object of empirical research is the population of St. Petersburg. Thanks to this it was possible to confirm the trend of increasing interest in sport in Russia recorded by the public services over the past decade. Both the audience of sport fans and the number of people engaging in sport leisure are increasing. There is a stable correlation between these two growth lines. In addition, the surveys confirmed that the indicators of engagement in sport recorded by The Ministry of Sport of the Russian Federation and regional sport committees correspond to the statements of Russians themselves.

In our study we proceed from the notion of the sport influence on personal development. The process of socialization includes the formation of attitudes, value orientations and behavioral competences in the process of an individual’s involvement in sport practices. Therefore, we suggest that respondents consider their personal qualities, motivation and lifestyle in terms of accumulated sport experience. At the same time, we share Jessica Lee’s point of view that in modern society there is a tendency of increasing public importance of personal sport leisure activities, under the insistent patronage of the state (Lee, 283). Undoubtedly, for Russian society the factor of state sport policy is significant. But precisely because of the complexity of Russians’ perception of this problem, this study

was abstracted from the issues of the state role in the sport socialization of the individual. This problem was addressed only partly, in connection with other issues. Because of this, we also did not address the important issue of the links between national sport policy and the UN sustainable development strategy, which is outlined in the Lindsey and Darby's article (Lindsey, Darby, 2019).

Reflecting the general sport socialization trends in Russia, St. Petersburg has some peculiarities. The general characteristics of the city are the high level of education of its citizens, developed cultural and educational spheres, high living standards for the country and large city budget, which altogether increase the opportunities for citizens to practice sport, compared to the residents of other regions of Russia (Sinyutin, 2021c). In addition, the migration situation in the city, forming significant flows of newcomers, especially from the nearest regions of Russia, leads to the formation of a certain part of economically successful population strata, whose status needs cultural legitimation, which can be done through demonstrative sport practices. For St. Petersburg at the moment the significant conditions for sport socialization are early involvement, starting from childhood, and the presence of a significant share of spare time in a person's life. These circumstances are reflected in the social structure of attitudes, values and competences of the citizens with regard to sport. At the same time, fluctuations of public interest in sport and changes in the state sport policy have affected the differentiation of generational involvement.

The link between sport leisure and employment also prompted us to consider the role of organizations where St. Petersburg residents work, in the process of their involvement in practicing sport. It was interesting to find out the extent to which city residents are oriented towards linking sport practices to the workplace and in what spheres of activity such orientations are mostly strong. At last, we attempted to find out the extent to which an individual economic status continues to influence on his involvement in sport and on the formation of his sport attitudes.

According to the statistical data of The Ministry of Sport of the Russian Federation in 2021, the number of people engaged in sport (3-79 years old) was 65 million 253,714 people, or 49.4% of the Russian population (MSRF). A survey of Russians conducted by the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion (WCIOM) in 2021 showed that 56% of respondents are engaged in sport or physical activity (WCIOM, 2021). According to the Government of St. Petersburg (LASPB, 2022), in 2021, the number of residents who are systematically engaged in sport reached 2 million 341 thousand 169 people, which is 48.6% of the city population. There are 8,571 sport facilities for this purpose. The share of children and youth (3-29 years old) engaged in sport is 89%. Thus, we can conclude that the degree of St. Petersburg residents' engagement in sport activities almost corresponds to the all-Russian indicator.

According to the data of the Federal State Statistics Service for the year 2022 (FSSS), the rates of informal sport settings in St. Petersburg are 13.8% for men and 10.6% for women, which is almost half the average for Russia (21.5% and 20.5% respectively). This indicates that St. Petersburg residents prefer to spend their sport leisure time in specially equipped places and in a publicly organized way. Since informal sport settings is the most difficult parameter to track, so, for example, it turns out that, according to the WCIOM survey, the proportion of Russian citizens who do informal sport settings reach 84% (WCIOM, 2021).

Compared to the period of 1990-2000, when physical culture and sport were in a relative decline in St. Petersburg, the last decade has witnessed a significant positive dynamic of growth in the number of people engaged in sport. Thus, in 2006, the number of people practicing sport were 603 thousand 464 people, in 2010 - 854 thousand 300 people, in 2014 - 1 million 336 thousand 884 people, in 2018 - 2 million 105 thousand 808 people (SPb, 2011; FK&S, 2019; MSRF, 2021; LASPB, 2022;). The state sport policy plays an important role in this growth process. However, the increase continued only until it reached the level of about 50% of those involved in sports. Then the growth process slowed down, which we explain by institutional barriers at the level of stereotypes of life goals and needs. To overcome them, it is not enough to use the simplest and obvious motives, but it is necessary to form a process of interest and involvement in social relations.

It is worth mentioning that the trend of increasing engagement in sport is also typical for European countries. Eurobarometer studies have recorded an increase in the percentage of people who engage in sport over the past decade, from 39% in 2009 to 42% in 2013 and to 46% in 2017 (Eurobarometer2017).

## **Literature review**

The sociology of sport has accumulated a significant body of literature examining issues of engaging in sport leisure and sport socialization in the context of capitalist society (Rigauer, 1981; Gruneau, 1983; Hargreaves, 1986; Dunning, 1999; Giulianotti, R. 2005; Malcolm, D. 2012; Coakley, 2017). A separate emphasis has been placed by researchers in recent years on the function of sport as a social capital (Seippel, 2006; Collins, Holmes, Slater, 2007; Nicholson, Hoye, 2008; Sherry, E, Karg, A and O'May, F., 2011; Schüttoff, U., Pawlowski, T, Downward, P and Lechner, M., 2017; Gemar, 2021; Sánchez-Santos, J., Rungo, P., Lera-López, F., 2022). In one way or another, the researchers raise the question of the social significance of sport activities for the modern individual.

The study of sport leisure in Russia is based on the experience of Soviet studies of the impact of physical culture and sport, on the one hand, on the development of a harmonious personality of a Soviet man, and on the other hand on the formation of a healthy and active worker and defender of the

Motherland (Ponomarev, 1962; Frenkin, 1962; Zholdak, 1969; Vilensky, Illinich, 1987). In this literature an important factor of sport socialization of personality is considered the state.

Sociologists J. Clarke and C. Critcher believe that the state, under the aegis of the importance of maintaining social order and influencing the individual, imposes on him the necessary ways of spending his leisure time (Clarke, Critcher, 1994). As they point out, over time, individuals' leisure time becomes subservient to the state and the capitalist order it supports, it loses elements of freedom and choice, and become akin to paid work. We believe that in general, as the system of needs develops, more and more demands are made on individuals to fill their free time meaningfully. At the same time, the commodification of social life intensifies the transformation of the most diverse means of satisfying human needs into a single commodity form.

Contemporary studies of Russians' leisure time show that they give priority to watching television in their non-working time (Pogreshaeva, 2000; Shmerlina, 2007; Roschina, 2007). One cannot fail to see the interests of large media corporations here. Perhaps the importance of new communication technologies is increasing for the new generations, especially when it comes to the so-called "innovators" (Abramov, Zudina, 2010). However, young generations remain in the same segment of meaningful filling their time in. If "contemplative" consumption of time is typical for the leisure time of almost one third of Russians, then sport leisure time does not exceed 5%. This picture masks, on the one hand, the complexity (or even poverty) of the actual conditions of leisure culture, and, on the other hand, the notions (differently developed) of ways of getting pleasure outside working hours.

Global statistics confirm the fact that sport leisure time is a factor of a relatively high level of well-being. The validity of this rule in Russia is proved by the study of the Russians lifestyles (Roschina, 2016). On the other hand, some researchers point out the importance of the institutional design of sport leisure time for each particular case (Borgers, Pilgaard, Vanreusel, Scheerder, 2018).

## **Methods**

The empirical basis of this study is the conducted public opinion survey (following the paradigm of quantitative research method) on the example of St. Petersburg in relation to sport practices and its socializing functions of mental work employees. The study was conducted from January to March 2021 on the basis of Toi Opinion Company with a representative sample of 500 respondents (R=500), representing a mini-model of the entire adult population of St. Petersburg. With such sample size inaccuracy does not exceed  $\pm 4.5\%$  (with 95% confidence interval), which indicates high reliability of the data. The research method is an online interview.

The size of the subsample in the group analysis is indicated by the Latin letter “n” (for example, n=243 (243 people were interviewed in the analyzed group). Statistical inaccuracy in the analysis of the entire sample (N=500) is no more than  $\pm 4.5\%$ . When analyzing small groups, the statistical inaccuracy increases many times (up to  $\pm 10-20\%$ ), which should be taken into account when assessing the behavior of socio-demographic groups and subgroups.

For the substantive issues of the empirical study, we obtained types of graphical data such as linear distribution for the whole sample, linear distribution by subgroups (for example, by gender, age, education, income, occupation, sport, attitude to sport and profession), and opinions of socio-demographic groups. Illustrative material is presented in the following forms:

- Distribution charts with a 100% response rate (pie charts), used in cases where the question assumes a single response from each respondent (e.g., the relationship between sport and personal development)
- Charts with a sum of responses greater than 100% (ranking charts) are used when a question allows for more than one response from each respondent. Response options on the chart are ranked in descending order or in ascending order of the proportion of respondents who selected a particular option.
- Cross-tabulations with socio-demographic characteristics to distribution charts with the sum of responses equal to 100%. For basic indicators, cross-tabulations with socio-demographic characteristics are given after distribution diagrams. When describing trends in behavior of different groups, we listed the groups in which distribution of answers significantly differs from average values upward or downward. It should be emphasized that listing groups in the same sentence does not mean their overlapping.
- Cross-tabulations with socio-demographic characteristics to distribution charts with a sum of responses not equal to 100%.
- Aggregate distributions based on socio-demographic cross-tabulations with a response sum not equal to 100%.

The attitude within the empirical research was understood as a predisposition fixed in the social experience of an individual to perceive and evaluate sport practices as socially significant, as well as the readiness of an individual to certain actions oriented towards sport practices.

The empirical study had the following goals:

1. Determine whether engaging in sport contributes to personal development;
2. Identify what personal qualities sport helps to develop;
3. Identify who more motivates a person to exercise;

4. Identify stop factors from engaging in sport;
5. Determine the perception of one's health in relation to the duration of professional activity and sport activity;
6. Determine the degree of sport influence on professional activity;
7. Determine at what age individuals start engaging in sport;
8. Identify the reasons for quitting sport activity;
9. Determine the share of St. Petersburg residents who are currently engaged in sport;
10. Determine the level of activity in sport;
11. Determine the influence of holidays on sport activity;
12. Identify what would encourage an individual to engage in sport with his colleagues;
13. Evaluate the necessity for employers to organize sport leisure activities for their employees.

## Results and discussion

### 1. The relationship between sport and personal development

The majority of St. Petersburg residents believe that sport has a significant impact on personal development. 57% of respondents are convinced that sport contributes to personal development, another 36% agree that sport rather contributes to personal development. Only 2% strongly disagree that sport contributes to personal development, and another 4% believe that sport rather does not contribute to personal development. The link between sport and personal development is more evident for younger audience (age 29 and younger) and students, while audience over 40 (particularly pensioners) are less likely to associate sport with personal development. For those currently engaged in sport, the impact of sport on personal development is also more evident.

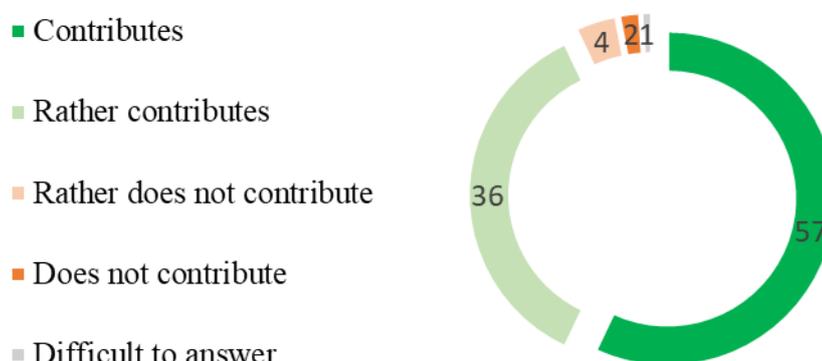


Figure 1. Interrelation of sport and personality development

### 2. Personal qualities influenced by sport

According to St. Petersburg residents who believe that sport has an impact on personal development, this impact is most often associated with such personal qualities as endurance (mentioned by 31% of residents), willpower (28%) and determination (27%). The development of these three qualities is perceived as the main result of engaging in sport. Respondents also believe that sport helps to develop perseverance (23%) and discipline (20%), while a significant proportion also link sport to qualities such as patience (16%), self-confidence (16%), physical strength (13%), hard work (11%) and stamina (10%). The other personal qualities were cited by less than 10% of the audience, so they are less likely to be associated with the direct result of engaging in sport.

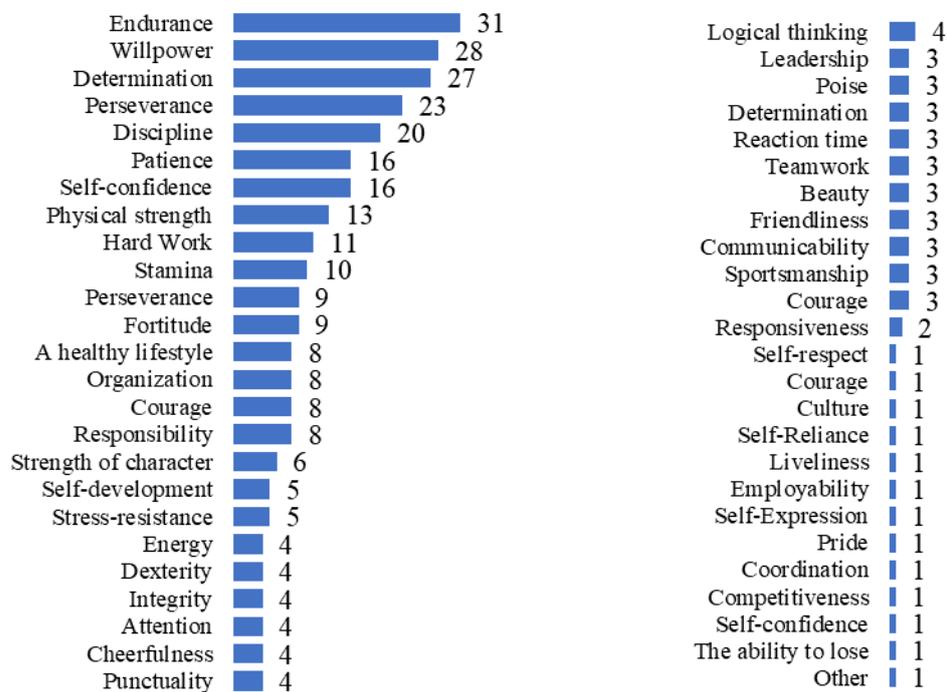


Figure 2. Personal qualities influenced by sport

Citizens of St. Petersburg value in sport such personal qualities that allow them to implement their willpower in action against obstacles and over a long period of time. These qualities of character are necessary in different spheres of life, but especially in professional activities that provide income and well-being, which increases the importance of sport socialization for the implementation of long-term life models and strategies, especially in the context of growing risks and uncertainties.

### 3. Key characteristics of sport

In the perception of the target audience, sport is most often associated with health (80%), discipline (74%), fitness (67%), result (61%), mastery (58%), interaction (55%), team (55%) and participation (54%). According to residents of St. Petersburg, winning (35%) and competition (34%)

are less important than participation (54%). At the same time, the importance of the result is high (61%), apparently, the result in sport is a broader concept than winning a competition. Respondents tend to idealize the idea of sport, so such characteristics as profit, income, fame and jackpot are less associated with sport, being less socially approved than key sport characteristics. The importance of such characteristics as leadership, and beauty, as well as leisure and recreation, is at an average level: they are secondary parameters in terms of association with sport.

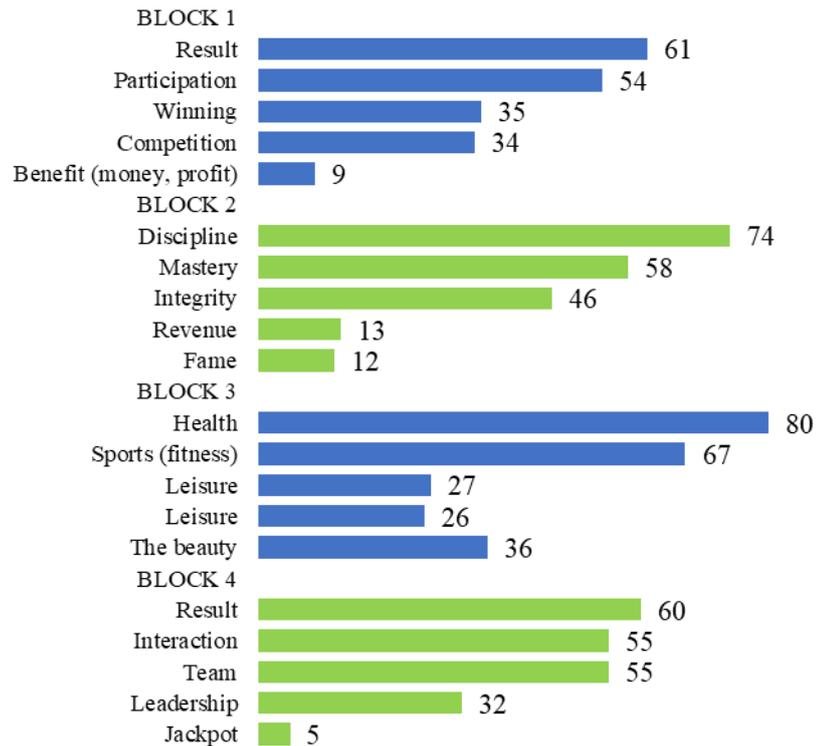


Figure 3. Key characteristics of sport

Dialectics of social relations in the context of perception of sport shows that for some respondents, sport is an ultimate value of a healthy lifestyle, and for others sport is an instrumental value to achieve the defined result.

#### 4. Perception of sport as a manifestation of a healthy lifestyle

The majority of St. Petersburg residents perceive sport as a direct manifestation of a healthy lifestyle. 58% strongly agree that engaging in sport is a manifestation of a healthy lifestyle, with another 35% rather agree with this statement. Only 4% would rather disagree with the idea that sport is a manifestation of a healthy lifestyle, with the survey revealing none who completely disagree with this idea. Sport as a manifestation of a healthy lifestyle is perceived more often by younger audience and less

often by audience aged 40-49. For those who are currently engaged in sport, it is more often a manifestation of a healthy lifestyle.

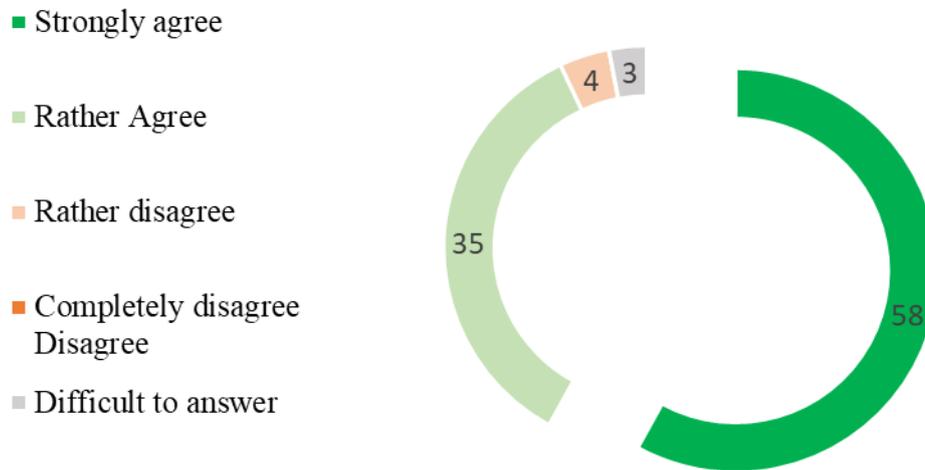


Figure 4. Perception of sport as a manifestation of a healthy lifestyle

Thus, we can conclude that for the majority of St. Petersburg residents sport is a direct manifestation of a healthy lifestyle with 93% of respondents agreeing with this point.

#### 5. Social structures of motivation to practice sport

Close family members (parents, children, spouses) most often motivate the target audience to engage in sport: 52% of St. Petersburg residents admit this. Close relatives more often motivate the younger audience under 30 years old to engage in sport. Friends make an important contribution to motivation to exercise: they influence 33% of the audience. Friends more often motivate men than women. Colleagues at work (8%) and extended family members (5%) are relatively rarely motivate to exercise, while managers motivate no more than 2% of St. Petersburg residents. A notable segment of the audience are the residents who are not motivated by anyone to engage in sport (31%).

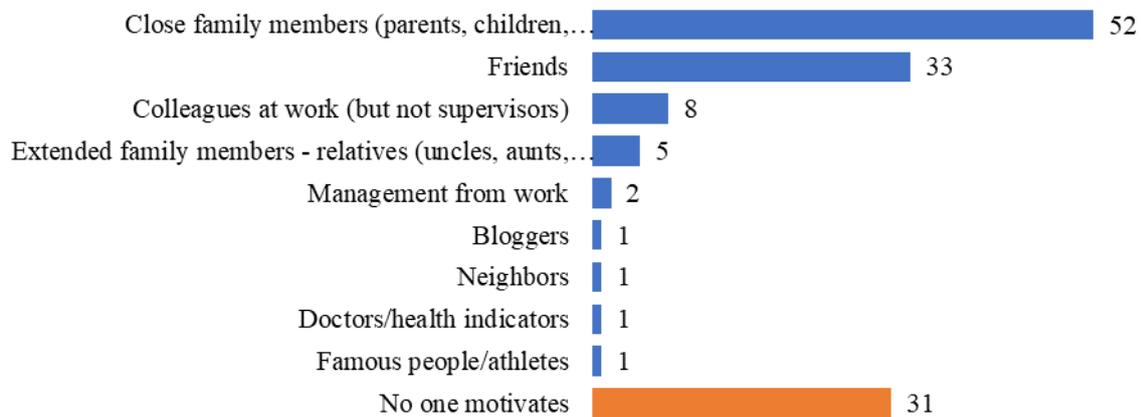


Figure. 5. Social structures of motivation to practice sport

The motivation for sport for St. Petersburg residents is intimate rather than public, and it is formed in the system of strong ties. Therefore, the family remains the dominant center for the formation of attitudes towards sport, and relatives are the guides. It turns out that this type of motivation needs a high degree of trust in its formation.

6. Barriers for engaging in sport

The most important barrier to exercise is lack of free time, this was mentioned by 44% of the audience. Lack of free time is more often a limiting factor for men than for women, and is the most important factor both for those currently engaged in sport and for those who do not exercise. Other significant barriers are lifestyle (27%) and current state of health (24%). Psychological state and financial situation are significantly less important barriers for engaging in sport. The occupation, marital status, social standing and work culture are even less significant barriers to engage in sport. There are no barriers for 18% of the audience. The lack of barriers for exercising is more typical for those who are currently engaged in sport.

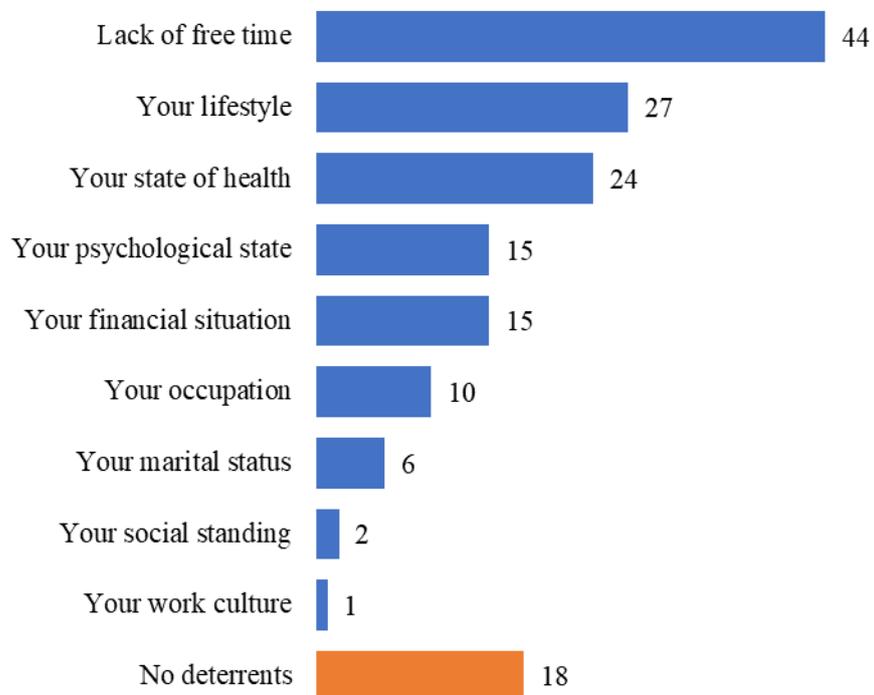


Figure 6. Barriers for engaging in sport

It has been confirmed that sport activities as a form of recreation require time, free from the provision of the basic necessities of life, which in modern society is supported by different means of income. Thus, there is a connection between sport practices and an individual's financial status which defines person's way of life.

It is interesting to compare the data on barriers with those in the European Union. According to Eurobarometer research conducted in December 2017, the main barriers for Europeans to engage in sport are lack of time (40%), lack of motivation or interest (20%), health status (14%), high price (7%), and rejection of competitive activities (6%) (Eurobarometer 2017).

#### 7. Time spent on professional activities

More often St. Petersburg residents spend 6 to 8 hours a day at work (34%), less often 8 to 10 hours a day (28%), or less than 6 hours a day (26%). The proportion of respondents spending more than 10 hours a day at work is 12%. Among women and the younger part of the audience (29 years old and under), the time spent on work is less on average. High-income audience more often spend 8 to 10 hours at work, and respondents with low income (at the living wage level) more often spend 6 to 8 hours a day at work.

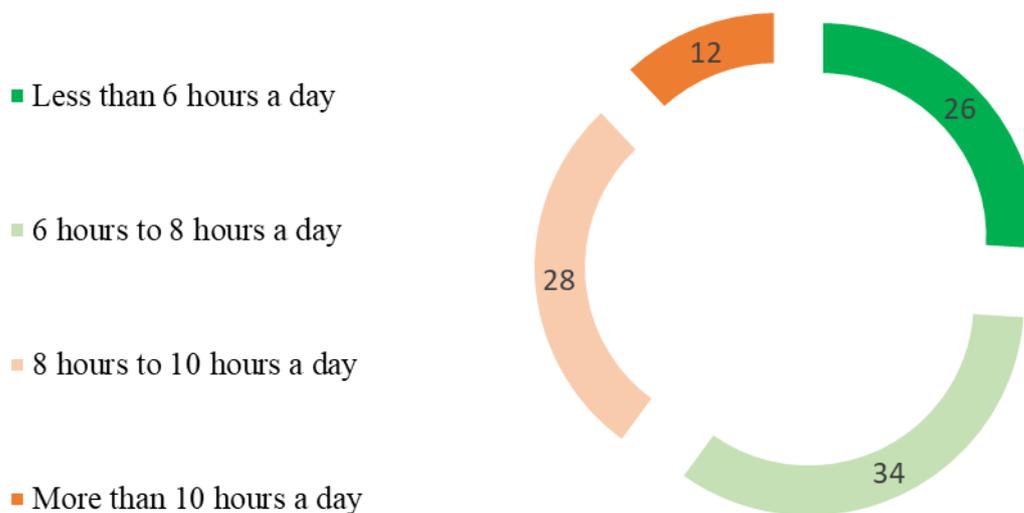


Figure 7. Time spent on professional activities

The relationship between income and time spent on work was confirmed. It is important to note that predominantly St. Petersburg residents with labor income participated in the survey. In this social category of city residents there is a paradoxical situation when high income does not leave many opportunities for leisure activities, including sport practices. However, being motivated to engage in sport, these residents treat their free time as a particularly valuable resource and are willing to invest

substantial money in sport activities. As a rule, these are the most expensive sport clubs and high-quality sport infrastructure. On the other hand, lower income employments form wider and more flexible opportunities for sport leisure activities.

8. Self-assessment of health

Average residents of St. Petersburg assess their health by 3.5 points on a scale from 1 to 5. Self-assessment of health is expectedly higher in the younger age subgroups (39 years old and younger). Respondents who are currently engaged in sport assess their own health significantly higher (3.8 points) than those who are not engaged in sport (3.3 points). The responses of St. Petersburg residents confirm the widespread truth that sport is an important factor to feel healthy.

Table 1. Self-evaluation of health

		n=	Average score (scale 1-5)
Degree	there is	18	3,7
	No	482	3,5
Sport	Engaged in sport	248	3,8
	Do not engaged in sport	252	3,3
Gender	male	250	3,5
	female	250	3,5
Age	18-29	110	3,7
	30-39	125	3,7
	40-49	85	3,4
	50-59	90	3,3
	60 and over	90	3,4

9. Following events in the world of sport

The concept of the world of sport implies primarily professional and high-performance sport, but can also include regular sport life of the local and regional community at amateur and public levels. St. Petersburg residents have demonstrated a fairly high level of involvement in the world of sport: 36% follow events in the world of sport once a week, while a quarter of the audience follows sport events daily (24%). Another 14% follow events in the world of sport once a month, 5% do so once every six months, 2% do so once a year, and 2% follow them even less frequently. 12% of St.

Petersburg residents are not interested in sport events and do not follow them at all. The frequency of following sport events is higher among men aged 40-49, skilled workers and managers.

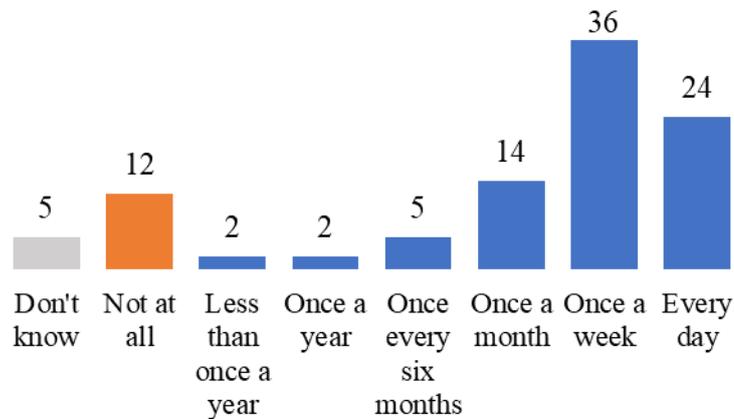


Figure 9. Following events in the world of sport

This question showed the activity and interests of citizens as passive consumers of sport events, or as a sport public. The survey confirmed that in St. Petersburg, media and Internet have significant influence on spectators as means of involvement in sport and as a way to follow events in the sport world.

#### 10. Willingness to allocate part of the budget to sport activities

The market for sport-related services has a considerable potential, with more than half of respondents reporting a willingness to allocate part of their personal budget for sports activities:

- 16% state this with confidence,
- 46% are more likely to do so.

20% are rather not ready to allocate a budget for sport, while 11% would definitely not do so. Willingness to spend money on sport is higher among the younger part of the audience (29 years old and younger), as well as among those who are already engaged in sport and those who believe that sport helps in professional activities.

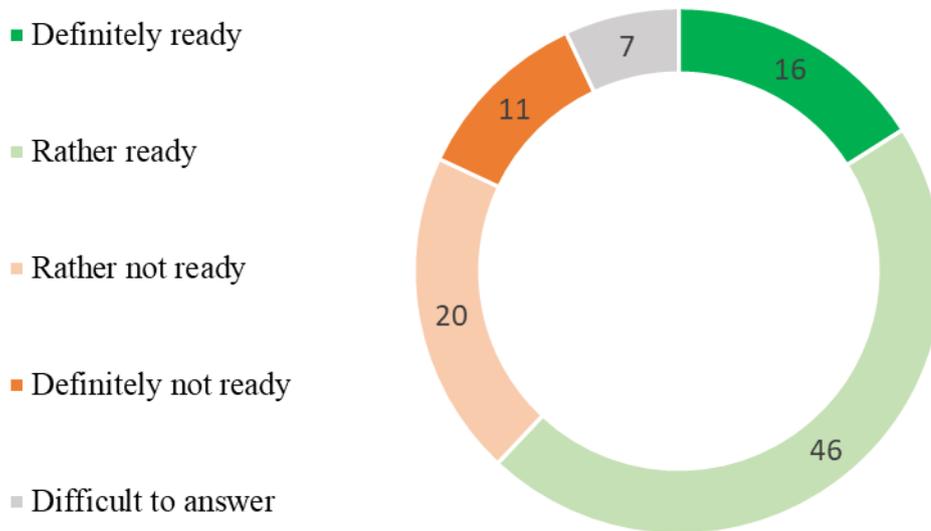


Figure 10. Willingness to allocate part of the budget to sport activities

In total, more than 60% of citizens are not only motivated to engage in sport, but also willing to pay for their hobby. At the same time, this shows the excess of demand over supply in the sport services market of St. Petersburg, and attracts state, city and private investors in this segment of the economy.

#### 11. Sport contribution to the professional activity

St. Petersburg residents often note that sport help them in professional activities. 13% believe that sport definitely help them at work, another 45% say that sport activities are rather help them in their professional life. 19% would rather disagree that sport help them at work, and 11% see absolutely no connection between sport activities and professional activities. Residents of St. Petersburg aged 39 and younger, as well as those who are currently engaged in sport, speak more often about the connection between sport and work.

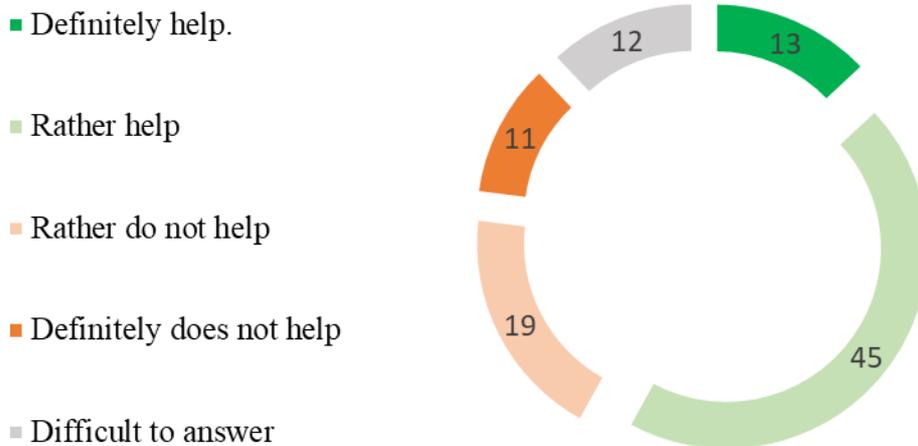


Figure 11. Sport contribution to the professional activity

The respondents' answers indicate the formation of the attitude in the public consciousness regarding the benefits of sport for successful work. This is facilitated both by the affirmation of positive attitudes towards sport in close relationships (family, friends, neighbors), as well as by the purposeful impact on the promotion of such an attitude by the state and the media. It is likely that the perception of the actual effect of sport involvement on performance at work contributes to the fixation of the attitude.

12. Preferred company in the free time

The vast majority of St. Petersburg residents prefer to spend their free time with their family members (71%). Spending time with family is more often preferred by those who are currently engaged in sport. 41% of the audience prefer spending time with friends. The company of friends is more attractive to men and the audience aged 29 and under. 21% would like to be on their own in their free time. The share of those who prefer solitude is higher among the audience aged 40-49.

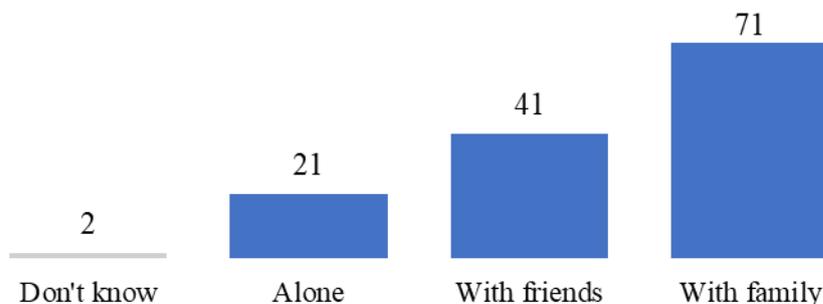


Figure 12. Preferred company in the free time

Researchers have repeatedly noted that watching television and, in recent years, Internet resources are becoming central to how Russians spend their free time (Shmerlina; Levada). This is a passive form of leisure in terms of physical activity, opposite in the segment of free time to sport activity. The share of each of the opposite forms of leisure can either increase or decrease, but their importance as basic forms remains the same. The same researchers have shown that spending free time with friends is a typical leisure activity. According to the research of the Levada Center, while daily television watching is attractive to 53% of Russians, daily socializing with friends and relatives is attractive to 36% (Levada). A WCIOM survey in the summer of 2020 demonstrated that during the pandemic of COVID-19 among the ways of spending leisure time, it is the time for communication with family and friends that has grown the most (32%) (WCIOM 2020).

13. Age at which you started engaging in sport

Citizens of St. Petersburg start engaging in sport at an early age, most often at the age of 6-10 (32%) and at the age of 11-15 (27%). Another 14% of city residents started engaging in sport in their late teens at the age of 16-20 (14%). Only 9% engaged in sport when they were over 20 years old. The share of respondents who have never engaged in sport remains significant (18%). Men in general begin to engage in sport earlier, while among women there is a higher share of those who engaged in sport after the age of 20.

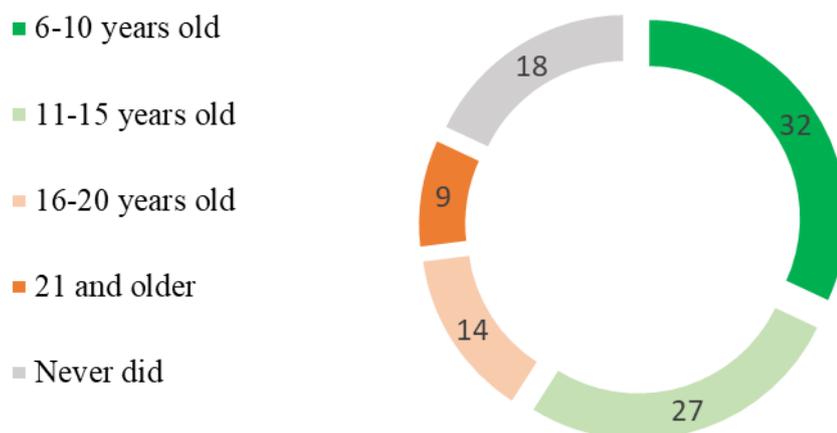


Figure 13. Age at which individuals started engaging in sport

About 60% of the city residents are involved in sport through a variety of children’s and youth sections and clubs before the age of 16. Moreover, this figure does not include physical training classes at school, which now exceeds 80% (Program 2020). It can also be noted that the generation of St. Petersburg residents of 30-39 years old were the latest started engaging in sport, because their

childhood fell on the 1990s, when there was a difficult economic situation and the decline of mass sport culture.

14. Current sport activities

Half of the surveyed citizens admitted that they are currently engaged in sport, which corresponds to the data of the City Sport Committee and the Government of St. Petersburg. (LASPB, 2022). According to federal statistics, this proportion is 44.1% in St. Petersburg (EMISS). Our survey has shown that the share of men who are currently engaged in sport is significantly higher. The proportion currently engaged in sport decreases with age from 73% among 18-29-year-olds to 24% among audiences aged 60 and older. There are more active athletes among managers and entrepreneurs, members of the liberal professions, military personnel, professionals and students.

Table. 2. Current sport participation

	Total	Gender			Age						
		male	female		18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and over		
n=	500	250	250		110	125	85	90	90		
Engaged in sport	50	53	46		73	64	46	30	24		
Do not engaged in sport	50	47	54		27	36	54	70	76		
	Total	Education					Income				
		academic degree	higher secondary	secondary / secondary	special incomplete secondary	corresponds	to minimum subsistence	subistence level	more than twice	more than threefold	more than fivefold
n=	500	11	331	147	11	37	139	102	134	75	
Engaged in sport	50	55	53	44	9	38	42	54	50	63	
Do not engaged in sport	50	45	47	56	91	62	58	46	50	37	

There is a strong correlation between involvement in sport and level of education. The more educated people begin sport earlier and are more engaged in sport at the moment. It is important to note that older people are less engaged in sport: after the age of 50, the share of people involved in sport is less than 30%. From the professional segment of citizens, military personnel (86%) stand out by their engagement in sport activity, pensioners (6%) and the unemployed (24%) are the least involved.

15. Reasons for not exercising

The main reason for not exercising corresponds to the key barrier in this category which is lack of time for sport (35%). More often working part of the audience, men and those of age 29 and younger complain about the lack of time. The second most important reason for giving up sport is health and well-being problems: 22% complain about this. Younger audience (29 and under) are less likely to attribute giving up sport to poor health. Relatively significant reasons for refusing to engage in sport also include lack of motivation (14%, more often cited by younger respondents) and lack of willpower, when it is difficult to make oneself to engage in sport (13%). Other reasons for not engaging in sport are less significant and are mentioned not frequently than 7%.

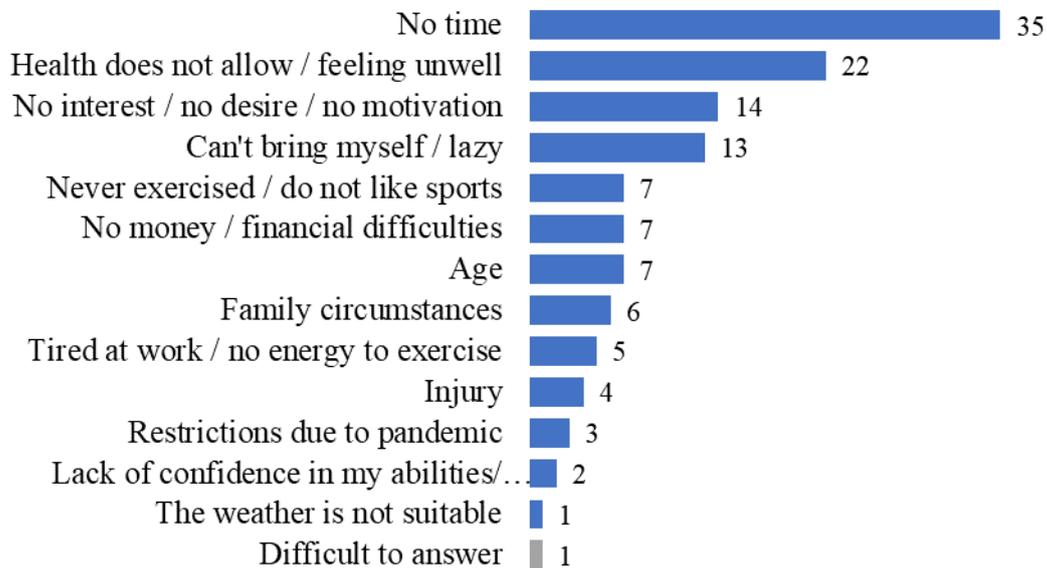


Figure. 15. Reasons for not exercising

16. Preferred physical activity

In St. Petersburg, the most common sport among residents is running (20%) and gym (20%). Swimming (17%) and cycling (15%) are also widespread, another 11% do aerobics/fitness. 8% of citizens go in for gymnastics, another 8% play football, 7% go skiing, 5% play volleyball, 4% go skating

and 3% play basketball. The share of other sports does not exceed 1%. Men more often than women go running and play soccer, and fitness is more common among women. The young audience in general is engaged in a large number of different sports. From the age of 40, swimming dominates in the ranking of sports, while running and gym, which imply high stress on the body, take second place.

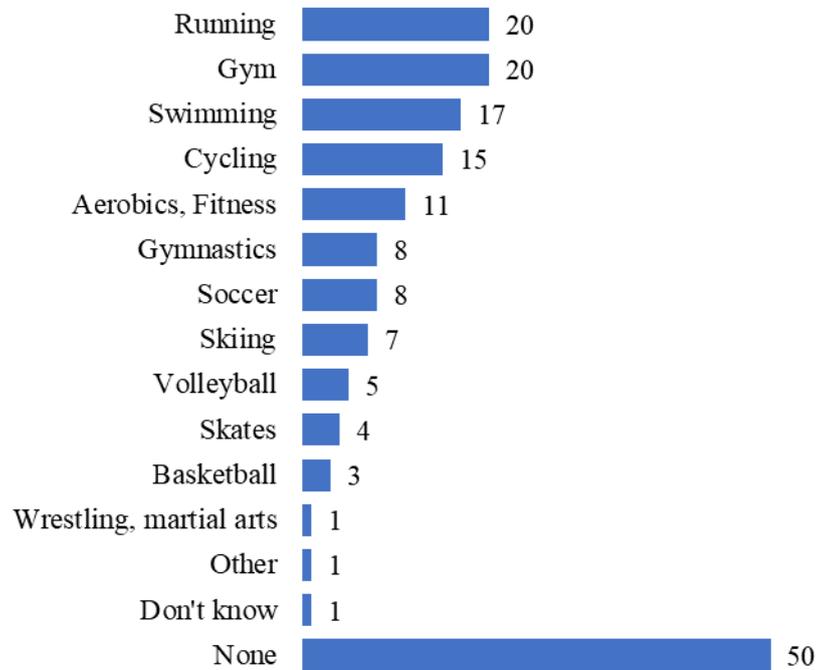


Figure. 16. Preferred sports

The respondents' answers confirm the list of popular types of sport in St. Petersburg, which was presented in an earlier similar study based on the Resource Center "Center for Sociological and Internet Research" of the Science Park of St. Petersburg State University in 2016 (Sinyutin, 2016). Over five years, the popularity of running, gymnastics and cycling has only increased, while fitness, martial arts and wrestling have become slightly less attractive.

The results we obtained regarding the popularity of sports across Russia can be compared with the data from the WCIOM survey of 2021 (WCIOM). The first place takes running, athletics or sport walking (36%). In the second place is fitness or comprehensive exercise (25%, among women 35%); in the third place is therapeutic exercise (18%, and 28% among those over 60). Popular sports activities also included skating, skiing (18%), cycling (18%), and swimming (12%). Overall, the most preferred sport practices in St. Petersburg does not differ significantly from the all-Russian.

#### 17. Availability and type of sport category

In Russia there is a Unified All-Russian Sport Classification that defines the procedure for awarding and confirming sport titles and categories. If sport ranks are mainly connected with successes in professional sport, categories are assigned for achievements at amateur level. A category remains valid for 2-3 years. Possession of a category means regularity of engagement in sport at a high level of mastery. As of 2021 there are 952,474 people with sport categories in Russia (MSRF). There are 10,198 registered athletes among them in St. Petersburg.

In our survey, 18% of St. Petersburg residents state that they have a sport category. Men and the younger audience are more likely to have a sport category. Those who have a sport category most often have the first adult category (53%), less often they are candidates for the master of sport (24%) or masters of sport (10%). The other types of sports categories are less common.

Table. 3. Availability and type of sport category

n=	Total	Gender		Age				
		male	female			male	female	
	88	60	28	29	16	16	14	13
<b>First adult</b>	53	46	66	60	30	62	50	61
<b>Candidate for Master of Sport</b>	24	30	11	24	38	13	29	15
<b>Master of Sport</b>	10	10	11	10	19	0	14	8
<b>Children's (1-2-3) category</b>	5	5	4	0	0	13	7	8
<b>Junior (1,3) category</b>	5	5	4	3	13	6	0	0
<b>Second adult</b>	2	2	4	3	0	0	0	8
<b>4th grade in chess</b>	1	2	0	0	0	6	0	0

18. Frequency of engagement in sport

In St. Petersburg, residents prefer exercising with a frequency of predominantly three times a week (27%). 11% of St. Petersburg residents exercise once a week. The segment of those who exercise irregularly, once every six months, stands out significantly (23%). 9% of St. Petersburg residents exercise almost every day. Those who actively engaged in sport (every day) is higher among respondents under the age of 40. The share of those who engage in sport three times a week is 22% among women and 31% among men. 17% of St. Petersburg residents never exercised.

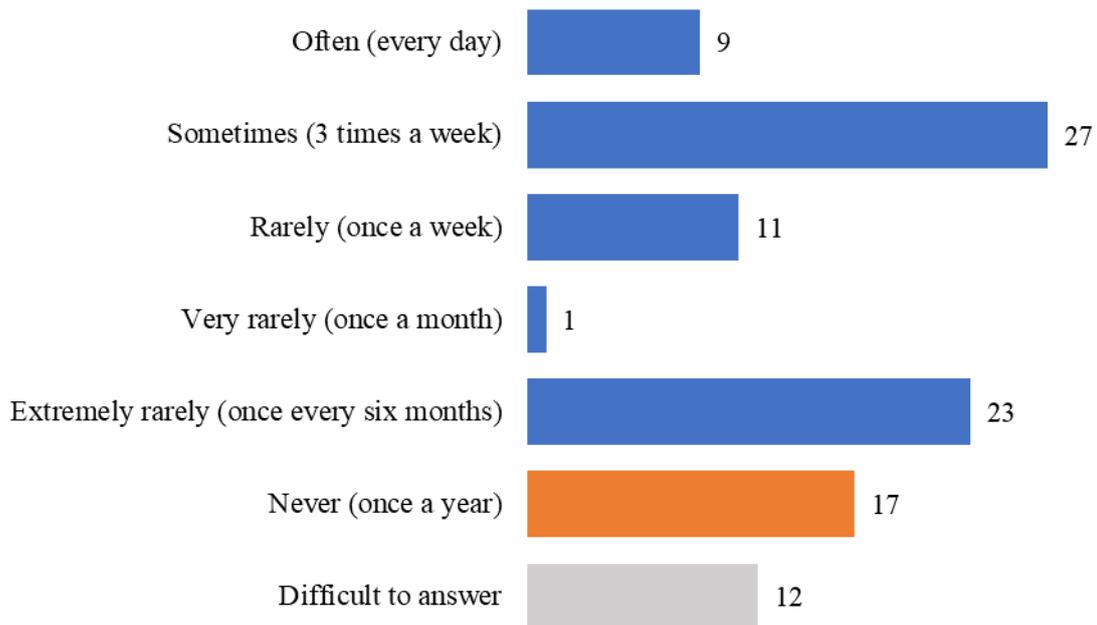


Figure. 18. Frequency of engagement in sport

Due to slightly different grading, it is not possible entirely compare figures for St. Petersburg and the European Union (Eurobarometer 2017). But it is possible for a couple of categories. Regularity for Europeans is 5 activities per week and it is 14% in relation to 9% of daily activities for residents of St. Petersburg. In terms of the category “never exercised”, St. Petersburg would rank third from the bottom in the EU, between Denmark (20%) and Sweden (15%). In general, the level of regular sport activity for St. Petersburg residents is comparable to that in Scandinavian countries.

#### 19. Increasing the frequency of sport engagement during holiday

In terms of increasing the frequency of sport engagement during holiday, two closely related segments can be identified:

45% of the audience say that the frequency of exercise during the holiday has increased (18% are sure about this, 27% believe that the frequency is rather increasing). The proportion of this segment is higher among men and the audience under 30. People who are currently exercising are more likely to increase the frequency of their sport activity during holiday.

50% of the audience believes that the frequency of exercise does not increase during holiday. 27% are absolutely certain that the frequency of exercise does not increase, another 23% believe that it is more likely does not increase. The proportion of this audience is higher among women and older age groups.

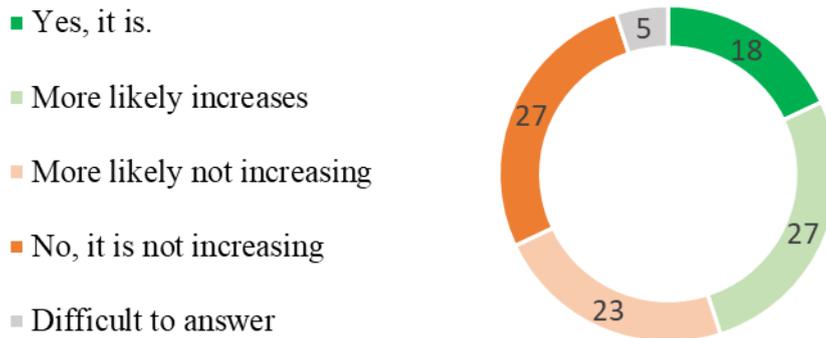


Figure 19. Increasing the frequency of sport engagement during holiday

20. Motivation to exercise during the working week

The most important driver for engaging in sport during the work week is taking care of one's own health, according to 34% of the audience. This attitude is a priority for St. Petersburg residents and Russians as a whole, according to the research by the All-Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research, although it is almost twice in number: Russians are mainly motivated to maintain and improve their health (63%), as well as to improve their mood (12%) and to relieve tiredness and support their working capacity (8%) (WCIOM 2021). Much more significant for St. Petersburg residents than for Russians in general are motives such as physical fitness (27%) and pleasure from exercising (27%). Discipline (15%) and results (12%) are less important factors, while team activities (2%) make almost no contribution to motivation in engaging in sport. Health considerations more often motivates men and the audience under 40.

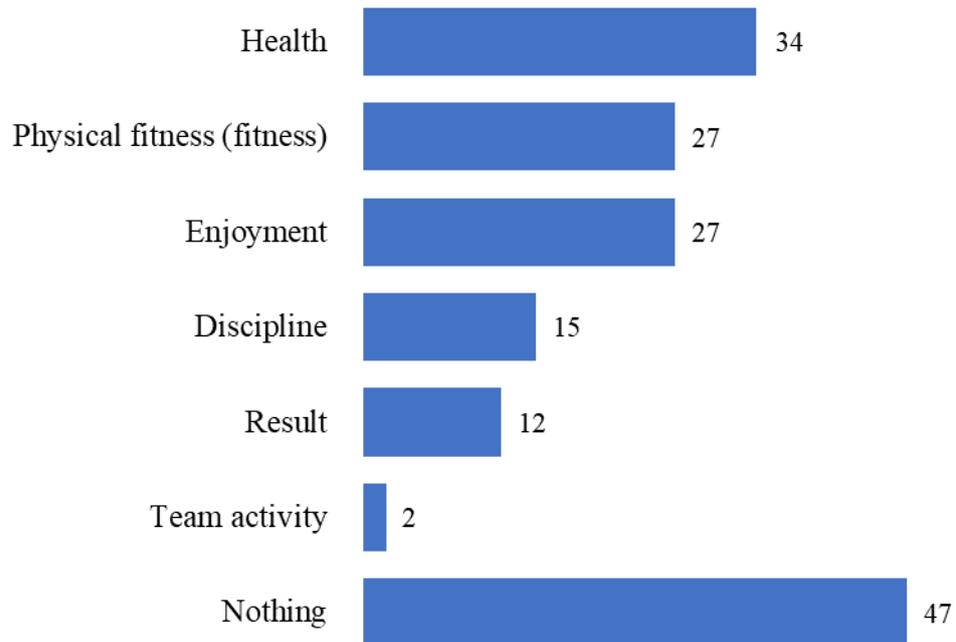


Figure 20. Motivation to exercise during the working week

It is interesting to compare the level of motivation in St. Petersburg with the data for the European Union. According to Eurobarometer research in 2017, Europeans are primarily motivated to engage in sport for following considerations: better health (54%), better fitness (47%), relaxation (38%), and having fun (30%) (Eurobarometer 2017). It is important to mention, that unlike our survey, there multiple answers were possible. Nevertheless, the priorities are almost qualitatively the same.

#### 21. Colleagues' attitudes towards sport activities

The attitude of colleagues to sport activities is most often not significant for St. Petersburg residents, so the majority of respondents had difficulties to assess it (63%). The remaining audience assesses the attitude of colleagues as definitely positive (16%) or rather positive (21%). Negative attitude of colleagues to sport activities was not revealed in the course of the survey. However, despite the absence of the option suggesting a negative attitude of colleagues in respondents' answers, quite a large number of citizens found it difficult to answer the question. Probably, this indicates a lack of confidence in accurately understanding the attitudes of their colleagues and a lack of discussion of this issue with them. Also, difficulty to answer this question correlates with low levels of education and income.

#### 22. Potential motivation to engage in sport with colleagues

A friendly team (43%) and free time after work (41%) could primarily influence the decision of St. Petersburg residents to engage in sport with their colleagues. Personal interest could also be an important factor (34%). Slightly less important would be a pay raise (23%) and the development of personal contacts (21%). Lack of family obligations (12%) and opportunities for career advancement (11%) are the least likely to influence the decision to engage in sport with colleagues. 16% of respondents do not see anything that would motivate them to exercise with their colleagues.

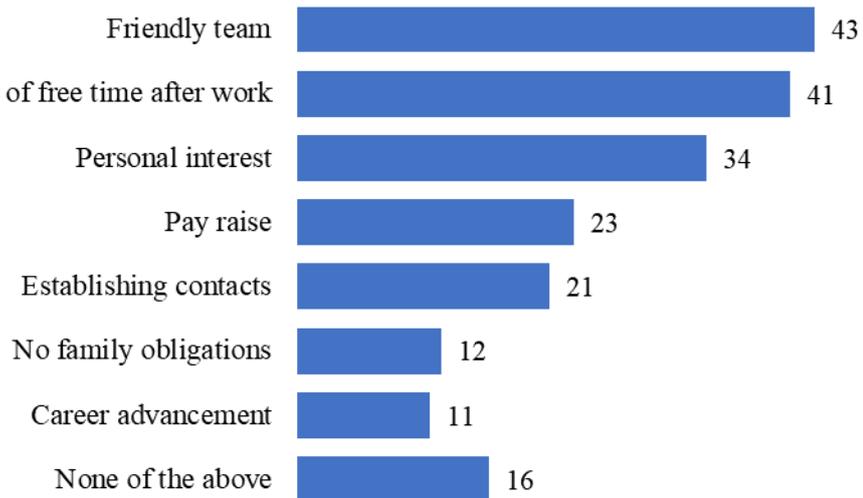


Figure 22. Potential motivation to engage in sport with colleagues

23. The necessity for the employer to organize sport leisure activities

15% of respondents are sure about the necessity for employer-sponsored sport and recreational activities, with another 30% believing that it is rather necessary. 25% doubt the necessity of sport leisure organized by the employer, and 18% are sure that it is not necessary. Men and those under 30 are more interested in employer-sponsored sport leisure activities.

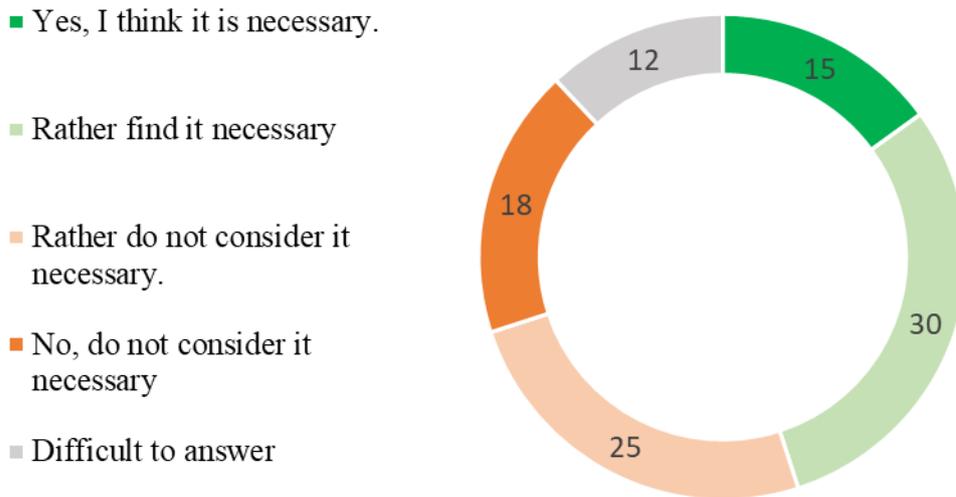


Figure 23. The Necessity for the employer to organize sport leisure activities

The responses of St. Petersburg residents to this question are dominated by uncertainty. Most likely, they have not yet encountered the problems and experiences (both positive and negative) created by the sport leisure activities in the workplace. At the same time, Russians cannot grasp the effectiveness or harm of additional communication with colleagues under the auspices of employer in their free time.

**Main findings**

The conducted study has led us, firstly, to several conclusions regarding the process of attitudes formation of St. Petersburg residents determining their engagement in sport. Sport experience of people from strong ties (relatives, friends, colleagues) is the most significant, because its results, especially long-term ones, provide direct and reasonable arguments to the consciousness of the respondents, which are trustworthy for the citizens, and because the demonstrative adaptation of this experience serves as a convenient tool for constructing relations with these strong ties. However, one must keep in mind that both respondents and these strong ties are influenced by media (public and private) that have their own interest in the dissemination of information, and whose credibility is built on the simulated avoidance of dilettantism in vital matters.

Secondly, we identified, the basic social attitudes of St. Petersburg residents in engagement in sport, as well as the level of their involvement in these activities:

1. 57% of St. Petersburg residents believe that sport has a significant impact on personal development, while another 36% believe that it rather contributes to it. The main results of sport activities are

considered obtaining such personal qualities as endurance (31%), willpower (28%) and determination (27%).

2. St. Petersburg residents generally associate engagement in sport with health (80%) and fitness (67%), discipline (74%), result (61%), skill (58%), participation (54%), interaction (55%) and team (55%). 93% of respondents cited the perception of sport as a direct manifestation of a healthy lifestyle. On average, St. Petersburg residents rate their health at 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 5. They are involved in the world of sport as an audience: 36% follow events in the world of sport once a week, while a quarter of the audience follows sport events daily (24%).

3. The most important driver for engaging in sport during the working week is taking care of one's own health, as mentioned by 34% of the audience. In terms of weekday sport motivation, other important parameters include physical fitness (27%) and getting pleasure from exercising (27%). Close relatives (52%), friends (33%), and less frequently, work colleagues (8%) are seen as the most important motivators for sports activities by residents of St Petersburg. The vast majority of residents prefer to spend their free time with family members (71%) and 41% prefer spending time with friends. 21% would like to be on their own in their free time.

4. The key barrier to engaging in sport is the lack of free time (44%). Lifestyle (27%) and current health status (24%) are also significant barriers. The main reason preventing to exercise corresponds to the key barrier, which is lack of time for sport (35%), the second most important reason for not practicing sport is problems with health and well-being: 22% of citizens complain about it.

5. 13% of respondents believe that exercising definitely help them in their work, another 45% say that sport activities rather help in professional activities. More often St. Petersburg residents spend 6-8 hours a day at work (34%), less frequently 8-10 hours a day (28%) or less than 6 hours a day (26%).

6. Citizens of St. Petersburg start engaging in sport at an early age, most often at the age of 6-10 (32%) and at the age of 11-15 (27%). Half of the citizens are currently engaged in sport. Most often, city residents engage in sport three times a week (27%), another 11% of city residents exercise once a week. 45% of respondents indicated an increase in the frequency of sport activities during holidays (18% are sure about this, while 27% believe that the frequency is rather increasing).

7. In St. Petersburg, the most common sport practices are running (20%) and gym (20%). Also popular are swimming (17%), cycling (15%) and aerobics/fitness (11%).

8. The sport services market has considerable potential, as more than half of St. Petersburg residents say they are ready to allocate part of their budget to sport activities: 16% state this with certainty, while 46% are rather willing to do so.

9. The colleagues' attitude to exercise is most often not significant, so majority of respondents found it difficult to assess (63%). In the course of the survey, we did not reveal negative attitude of colleagues to

sport practices. A friendly team (43%) and free time after work (41%) would primarily influence the decision to start exercising with colleagues. The necessity for sport activity to be organized by the employer was mentioned by 15% of respondents, with another 30% saying that it is rather necessary.

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