



Socio-cultural influences on physical activity

Thirteen influences that shape whether, how and why people move. Each one can open a door or close it, and most do both at once.

He Ao Kori, He Ao Mātauranga
A world of movement,
a world of learning

The people around us

Whānau, peers and role models

Whānau

The emotional, practical and financial support that makes taking part possible at all.

Supports

Subs paid, rides to games, someone on the sideline every week.

Limits

Study or work comes first, so there is no time left for training.

Peers and friends

Belonging and acceptance often decide whether an activity feels enjoyable.

Supports

A group signs up together, and the mates are the reason they keep coming.

Limits

A sport gets labelled uncool, so someone quietly drops it.

Role models

People engage more readily when they can see a relatable example of success.

Supports

Watching an athlete you identify with makes the sport feel possible.

Limits

With nobody visible who looks like you, it never feels like yours.

Identity and belonging

Gender, culture and discrimination

Gender

Stereotypes about which activities suit males and females shape who feels welcome.

Supports

Growing coverage of women's sport pulls more girls into rugby and football.

Limits

A boy avoids dance because he expects to be judged for it.

Cultural values and beliefs

Culture shapes identity, traditions and priorities, and so shapes what movement means.

Supports

Waka ama strengthens cultural identity and connection to whakapapa.

Limits

Commitments at home, church or marae leave less time for organised sport.

Racism and discrimination

Experiences of discrimination affect confidence, enjoyment and feeling included.

Supports

A club that actively includes builds belonging for everyone in it.

Limits

Racist comments from opponents turn into reasons to miss competitions.

Access and opportunity

Money, place, school and community

Socioeconomic status

Money decides access to gear, facilities, coaching and transport.

Supports

Private coaching and good facilities are within reach.

Limits

Hockey stops because fees and gear are beyond the family budget.

Accessibility

An opportunity only counts if this particular person can actually reach it.

Supports

Adaptive equipment at the local gym means full participation.

Limits

No bus home after training, so training is out.

School culture

Schools supply the opportunities, facilities, coaching and expectations.

Supports

Lunchtime sport costs nothing and needs no organising.

Limits

A focus on elite teams leaves beginners nowhere to start.

Community

People are shaped by what is available and valued where they live.

Supports

A coastal town runs surf lifesaving, so that is what everyone grows up doing.

Limits

A rural area lacks the numbers, coaches or grounds for a sport.

Screens and stories

Social media, media and technology

Social media

A constant supply of trends, role models and comparison.

Supports

Creators share workouts and training ideas worth trying.

Limits

Idealised bodies make someone feel they do not measure up, so they stay out.

Media

Coverage decides which sports get attention, and whose achievements are seen.

Supports

Coverage of the Black Ferns brings more girls into rugby.

Limits

Sports with little coverage draw fewer players and fewer resources.

Technology

Tracking, coaching and connection in your pocket, competing with your time.

Supports

Seeing progress on a watch keeps the training going.

Limits

Screen time takes the hours that would have been active ones.