Youth Personalities

Young people have complex relationships with sport and physical activity based on their unique personalities and experiences.

Thoughtful Improvers
Mature / Non-competitive / Self-development

Thoughtful Improvers are mature, independent and worry about how other people think and feel. They like to use their free time productively and have a wide range of interests. They tend to be less contented than other young people and developing themselves is important to them. This is reflected in their relationship with physical activity. Although they can feel embarrassed taking part, they exercise because they’re often unhappy with their bodies and tend to feel guilty for skipping a workout. They aren’t competitive and don’t usually count sport or exercise as a hobby, but they do recognise its benefits. In addition to staying in shape, it helps them cope with stress, and can make them feel good.

Cautious Introverts
Loyal / Careful / Self-reliant

Cautious Introverts are happiest relaxing and spending time with their intimate group of close-knit friends, or alone. They tend to have a lower opinion of themselves and are not comfortable trying new things for fear of being exposed. They are loyal to friends and family and usually choose to stick with the familiar. These young people tend to face more challenges than other groups; they might struggle financially, and lack freedom and support from those around them. As a result, they’re careful decision makers and thrifty consumers. They don’t consider themselves sporty in any way and are less likely to take part in physical activity or recognise its benefits.

Looking to encourage young people to be more active? These six personalities help you engage with young people in the way that’s right for them.

19% of young people aged 14-25 are in this personality

Thoughtful Improvers
Deliver against their expectations
- Give them something to be proud of – recognise and reward their achievements
- Make them feel part of something
- Make any competition fun

Keep them coming back
- Deliver against their expectations
- Keep it safe and supportive to reduce fear of judgement
- Create a fun, friendly and relaxed environment

Attract their attention
- Highlight opportunities to achieve personal goals
- Offer support to set and reach these goals
- Tap into their fitness and weight-loss aspirations

17% of young people aged 14-25 are in this personality

Cautious Introverts
Deliver against their expectations
- Reassure them and build their confidence
- Help them to enjoy and feel good about themselves

Keep them coming back
- Recognise and reward taking part
- Open up new opportunities to develop themselves if their confidence improves long-term

Attract their attention
- Connect keeping fit to feeling good about themselves: having made the effort to take part
- Don’t bring ‘sport’ into it
- Keep it small, familiar and supportive

Sport England
218 Bloomsbury Street
London WC1B 3HF
Confident Intellectuals

Driven / Educated / Focused

Confident intellectuals are driven, focussed and highly motivated. They lead busy lives, filled with hobbies they care deeply about. They are much more enthusiastic about music, gaming or computing than getting active. They have an open mind, optimistic view of the world and are comfortable in their own skin. They value their freedom and believe in themselves. Young people in this group prioritise success, achieving goals and doing something worthwhile. However, sport and exercise often makes them feel embarrassed and leads to negative feelings about physical activity. They aren’t competitive and even though they do occasionally recognise that sport and physical activity is good for them, it certainly isn’t high on the to-do list.

Everyday Youths

Mainstream / Easy-going / Content

Easy-going and relaxed, young people who fit into this group tend to be happy in their own skin and prefer to go with the flow. They’re generally satisfied with their achievements and appearance, and so can seem less driven than other groups. They aren’t competitive and are happier to stick to activities that are comfortable and familiar. They prioritise friends, family and relaxing by themselves as well as with the people they love. These young people tend to feel quite positive about sport and physical activity, but they can lack motivation and are less likely to make the time to take part.

Sport Enthusiasts

Self-assured / Sociable / Image-conscious

Sport Enthusiasts are mad about sport. Their friends and family are sporty. Their heroes are sports stars. Sport and physical activity is part of who they are. They are continually striving to improve and succeed at every activity or challenge they take on. They enjoy strong family relationships and support networks and like to use their time productively. They have lots of hobbies compared to other groups, including various sports and physical activities. They aren’t just active because they enjoy it, sport is another means to achieving their goals. They are positive about sport and physical activity and on board with the benefits. These young people are conscious of their health and fitness and want to test their competitive nature, all while having fun.

Ambitious Self-starters

Achievers / Proactive / On the go

Typically well-educated and from wealthier backgrounds than other groups, Ambitious Self-starters want to have it all. They are continually striving to improve and succeed at every activity or challenge they take on. They enjoy strong family relationships and support networks and like to use their time productively. They have lots of hobbies compared to other groups, including various sports and physical activities. They aren’t just active because they enjoy it, sport is another means to achieving their goals. They are positive about sport and physical activity and on board with the benefits. These young people are conscious of their health and fitness and want to test their competitive nature, all while having fun.

Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confident Intellectuals</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday Youths</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Enthusiasts</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious Self-starters</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages are based on the proportion of young people aged 14–25 who fit into each personality type.