



# Amputee Sport and Physical Activity Survey 2016



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# Background

## About LimbPower

Established in 2009, LimbPower supports amputees and individuals with limb impairments to reach their full potential.

Our mission is to engage people with limb impairments in regular participation in physical activity, sports and the arts, to improve their quality of life and aid lifelong rehabilitation. In 2014, the charity was formally recognised as a National Disability Sports Organisation by the English Federation of Disability Sport.

## What we do

LimbPower aims to support amputees and people with limb impairments to find a sport or leisure activity they enjoy and is suited to their needs and ability. We run a number of national and local physical activity and sport events, and workshops each year to provide individuals with participation opportunities and support them on their personal journey to being more active. Whether they are keen to try something new, or wanting to get back into a much loved activity post amputation.

LimbPower also uses its expertise, experience and partnerships to promote local inclusion of people with limb impairments in sport and physical activity opportunities. We provide expert knowledge to disabled people, family members, healthcare professionals, sports providers and education professionals about how better engage people with limb impairments and adapt activities to meet their needs.

## Why we do it

At LimbPower, we know that losing the use of a limb can be a traumatic experience at any age, and that trying to engage in activity can be daunting. We also know about the positive impact that being physically active can have on a person's physical, mental and social wellbeing. Our events and programmes are designed to provide a safe, friendly and supportive environment for amputees and people with limb impairments to enjoy taking part in sport, physical activity and the arts.

For more information, please visit [www.limbpower.com](http://www.limbpower.com)



# Foreword

Kiera Roche, Chief Executive Officer, LimbPower

LimbPower embarked on this research to better understand the motivations and barriers to participation in physical activity and sport amongst people who have undergone an amputation or were born with a limb impairment. With a specific focus on the role of prosthetic sockets and prosthetic components when taking part in sport or being physically active. **We spoke to 249 amputees and people with limb impairments as part of this research.**

Our primary objective for this research was to identify and better understand people's **motivations and barriers to activity**.

As a result, we aim to adapt and develop LimbPower's events and programmes so they continue to meet the needs of people with limb impairments. Also, to provide participants with the right support on their journey to being more active.

As we expected, the most common barriers to taking part in physical activity and sport were the **limitations of their prostheses and poor socket fit or comfort**.

These findings highlight a need for further investigation into the role that prostheses and sockets can have on a person's engagement in sport and physical activity. Moving forward, LimbPower will use the results from this survey to produce a separate report, examining in detail the impact of using prostheses for sport and physical activity.

Despite these barriers, more people than anticipated **(36%) own a prosthesis specifically for sport use**. However, it is important to note that the sample surveyed in this research was an active one.

Over **8 in 10 respondents (83%)** would like to take part in more sport and physical activity in the future. The most common motivations for taking part in sport and physical activity are enjoyment, and to keep fit and healthy. This is incredibly encouraging as keeping fit and healthy has many positive physical and psychological health benefits for people with limb impairments. It also plays an important role in socket fit and socket comfort.

In line with other research into the sport and physical activity participation of disabled people, the most popular current activities are **swimming, walking, cycling and going to the gym**. Going forward we will look to focus more LimbPower events, workshops and resources on these core activities to encourage more regular and sustained participation among the amputee community. It is also important to look at how we can incorporate new activities that respondents are interested in taking up into our programmes, including **archery, canoeing/kayaking and running**.

Overall these survey results reinforce the importance of our work and provide us with a clearer understanding about people's attitudes towards sport and physical activity. LimbPower will use this insight to work with and advise key providers on how they can **deliver more appealing and suitable physical activity and sport opportunities** for amputees and people with limb impairments.



# Sample information

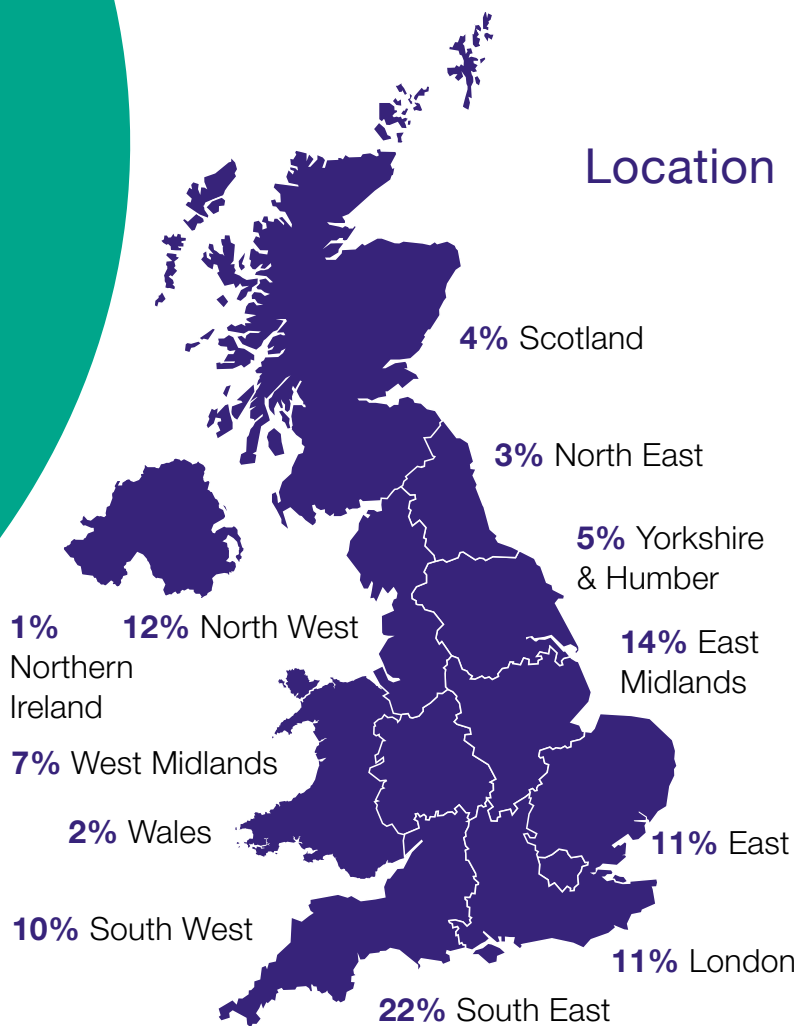
## Who we spoke to

**249** people with an amputation or limb impairment.

**62%** Male      **38%** Female

Average age: **48**

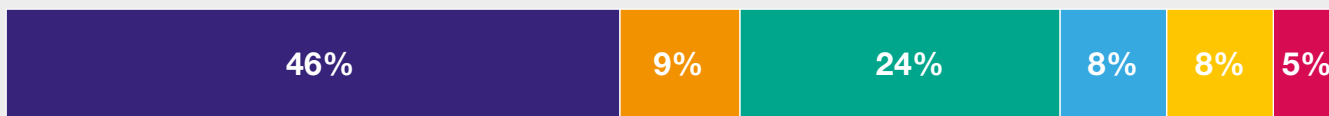
## Location



## Impairment information

### Type of amputation or limb impairment

- 46% Below-knee
- 9% Through-knee
- 24% Above-knee
- 8% Upper body
- 8% Multiple amputations/limb impairments
- 5% Other



### Cause of amputation or limb impairment

- 51% Accident or trauma
- 10% Peripheral vascular disorder
- 8% Congenital
- 7% Diabetes
- 5% Cancer
- 18% Other



# Assistive technology

## Prosthetic use

**79%** of respondents are currently using a prosthesis as part of daily life.



**58%** of prosthetic users own more than one prosthesis.

All prosthetics are supplied through the NHS for **87%** of prosthetic users.

Average duration of prosthetic use is **13 years and 7 months**.

**36%**

Over one third of prosthetic users surveyed have at least one prosthesis that is specifically for sport use.

**53%** of respondents use crutches in some situations.

**57%** of respondents use a wheelchair in some situations.

**21%** of respondents use an orthosis.



# Sport and physical activity participation

# 78%

Nearly 8 in 10 people surveyed have taken part in exercise, physical activities or sport in the last 12 months.

Groups of respondents most likely to participate in sport and physical activity include:

- Younger people, aged 36 years and under (**89%**).
- Above-knee amputees (**85%**).
- Those who have been using a prosthesis for 3-10 years (**86%**).
- Those who have a prosthesis that is specifically designed for sport use (**92%**).

## Sports and activities

The top ten most popular current sports and activities are:

-  Swimming – **35%** of all respondents
-  Weightlifting – **12%** of all respondents
-  Walking – **33%** of all respondents
-  Golf – **10%** of all respondents
-  Cycling – **29%** of all respondents
-  Running – **10%** of all respondents
-  Gym – **28%** of all respondents
-  Shooting – **9%** of all respondents
-  Fitness classes – **14%** of all respondents
-  Wheelchair basketball – **8%** of all respondents

The table below shows additional participation information around frequency of current participation, future intention to participate and use of prosthetics within each of the top five current activities.

Activity	Frequent participation: people taking part in sport once a week or more	Future participation: people intending to take part more in the next 12 months	People currently using a prosthesis when taking part in activities (always or sometimes)
Swimming	<b>59%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Walking	<b>93%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>99%</b>
Cycling	<b>66%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>90%</b>
Gym	<b>88%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>94%</b>
Fitness classes	<b>74%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>87%</b>

# Motivations and barriers



The **top five motivations** to take part in physical activity and sport are:

1. **67%** **Enjoyment/fun**
2. **61%** **Keeping fit**
3. **56%** **Improving health**  
This was especially common amongst older people and those who are currently inactive.
4. **43%** **Relaxing/ de-stressing**
5. **40%** **Socialising**  
This was more common for older people with limb impairments.

- Increasing confidence and self-esteem was one of the top five motivations for **middle aged (36-54) respondents**.
- Competition and improving their skills/performance ranked as highly motivating for **younger people, aged 36 and under**.





# Motivations and barriers



The **top five barriers** to taking part in physical activity and sport are:

1. **28%** **Prosthetic limitations**
2. **22%** **Socket fit or comfort**
3. **19%** **Lack of fitness**  
This was particularly common for older people and those who are currently inactive.
4. **18%** **Lack of facility support**  
This was more common among female respondents and people aged 36-54.
5. **17%** **Fear of falling**  
This was particularly common for male respondents.

- Other health conditions, fear of injury and not knowing how to find out about suitable opportunities, were among the top five barriers for **inactive respondents**.
- Fear of injury and other health conditions were among the top five barriers for **older respondents**.



# Future participation

## Latent demand

# 83%

**Over 8 in 10** respondents are interested in doing more sport or physical activity in the future.



Groups of respondents most likely to be interested in taking part in more sport or physical activity in the future are:

- Females (**92%**)
- Above-knee amputees (**90%**)
- Those who have started using a prosthesis in the last two years (**95%**)

## Sports and activities

The top ten sports and activities people are interested in taking up or doing more of in the future are:



Archery – **18%** of all respondents



Cycling – **18%** of all respondents



Swimming – **17%** of all respondents



Canoeing/kayaking – **17%** of all respondents



Running – **16%** of all respondents



Gym – **16%** of all respondents



Snowsports – **15%** of all respondents



Dancing – **15%** of all respondents



Climbing – **13%** of all respondents









Fitness classes – **13%** of all respondents

# Preferred sport formats

A number of alternative formats of traditional sports have been developed for amputees and other disabled people e.g. amputee football and wheelchair basketball.



The table below shows respondents preferred format for taking part in six popular sports.

Sport	Preferred format of those interested in the activity			
	Ambulant with a prosthesis	Ambulant without a prosthesis	In a wheelchair	On crutches
 <b>Basketball</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>2%</b>
 <b>Cricket</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>1%</b>
 <b>Football</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>15%</b>
 <b>Hockey</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>2%</b>
 <b>Rugby</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>5%</b>
 <b>Tennis</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>4%</b>

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