

# **SPORTS AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE**

## **The Importance of Sports**

A sport is usually defined as an organized, competitive, and skillful physical activity requiring commitment and fair play. It is governed by a set of rules or customs. In a sport the key factors are the physical capabilities and skills of the competitor when determining the outcome (winning or losing). In contrast, some games such as card games and board games, though these could be called mind sports and some are recognized as Olympic sports, require only mental skills. Events such as scoring goals or crossing a line first often define the result of a sport. However, the degree of skill in some sports such as diving and figure skating is judged according to well-defined criteria.

Although they do not always succeed, sports participants are expected to display good sportsmanship, and observe standards of conduct such as respecting opponents and officials, and congratulating the winner when losing.

Sports in most countries take many forms. Sports can be divided into organized and non-organized, competitive and recreational, spectator and participative, team, dual and individual, amateur or professional. For example, in a game of basketball, two teams compete against one another to determine who can score the most points. Athletes, besides competing against other humans, also compete against nature in sports such as whitewater kayaking or mountaineering, where the goal is to reach a destination, with only natural barriers impeding the process. Competitive sports are governed by rules agreed upon by the participants. Violating the rules is considered to be unfair competition. A regularly scheduled (for instance annual) competition meant to determine the “best” competitor of that cycle is called a championship. Recreational sports, as opposed to competitive, are sports done for recreation, not for victory.

Organized sports are sports organized through institutions and organizations such as clubs, associations, schools and so on. Spectator sport is characterized by the presence of spectators, or watchers, at its matches. Baseball, basketball, cricket, football and ice hockey are spectator sports, while hunting is not. Many spectator sports attract huge crowds to encourage the favorite teams to victory.

An individual sports refers to a sport in which participants compete as individuals, such as archery, athletics, cycling, etc., dual sports, such as dual tennis and fencing, and team sports, where teams compete against each other (such as cricket or football).

Professional sports, as opposed to amateur sports, are sports in which athletes receive payment for their performance.

The benefits of sports are abundant. For most people, this is simply enjoying a favorite activity. But this is also a great way to stay in shape. People who participate in sports on a regular basis tend to have more of a positive body image than those who have sedentary life. They constructively use their energy which is great for keeping a person happy and healthy: reduce the chances of blood

cholesterol and lower blood sugar level, reduce the risk of hypertension as well as other disorders related to stress, such as anxiety and depression.

The benefits of team sports also include fostering team spirit and developing valuable leadership qualities. Team sports teach one to accept both victory and failure with a positive attitude. They develop social skills, ability to interact with others.

The benefits of sports especially apply to children. Individuals who have played sports from an early age have stronger bones and stronger muscles. Children learn valuable skills for dealing with life's ups and downs, how to strategize to come up with the best ways to score and win, how to become more independent and feel better about themselves. The result is positive self-esteem and self-confidence, which are extremely important for determining later happiness and success. Besides, studies show that children who participate in sports do better academically as well as with school activities.

### Active vocabulary

score – счет очков (в игре);

sportsmanship – спортивное мастерство; увлечение спортом; поведение, достойное настоящего спортсмена;

to compete – соревноваться, конкурировать;

sedentary – сидячий, малоподвижный;

self-esteem – самоуважение, чувство собственного достоинства;

self-confidence – уверенность в себе, самоуверенность;

hypertension – повышенное кровяное давление.

### Questions

- 1. What standards of conduct should be observed by the sportsmen?*
- 2. What types of sports do you know?*
- 3. What benefits can sports bring to a child? to an adult?*

### **Extreme Sports**

Nowadays people are getting more and more interested in extreme sports which are also called action sports or adventure sports. It is difficult to determine exactly when the term “extreme sports” appeared, but many believe it can be traced to the early 1970s, when rock climbing and marathon running – then considered extreme – gained popularity. It refers to some activities which are perceived as having a high level of danger or difficulty and often involving speed, height, a high level of physical exertion, and highly specialized gear or spectacular stunts. Among the most popular extreme sports are BASE jumping, extreme canoeing, caving, cliff jumping, freestyle motocross, hang-gliding, ice climbing, jet skis, kite-surfing, extreme biking, mountain biking; paragliding, rock climbing,

skateboarding, extreme skiing, snowboarding, surfing, windsurfing, white water rafting, sky diving, and their number is rapidly increasing.

There are several reasons why extreme sports appeared. First, they probably gained popularity as a reaction to the safety of modern life. People lacked a feeling of danger in their everyday activities, and started to seek out danger or risk. Fans usually fight with their fear while jumping off cliffs, doing, for instance, cave exploration. By performing such feats they get to know the limits of their courage and can overcome feeling of fear. Second, they represent a new youth culture and are a sort of youth rebellion against conventional sports. Then, extreme sports create the feelings of happiness and achievement and are more memorable than traditional sports. They allow people to experience the rush or high due to increased levels of dopamine and endorphins which appear because of the high level of physical exertion. Further, they normally result from advances in sports technology. For example, the invention of sticky rubber-soled climbing shoes and artificial climbing walls broadened the appeal of rock climbing. To conclude, extreme sports are advertised in mass media. Television coverage of competitions and events has brought extreme sports and their participants in the focus of attention. The televised X Games and Olympics are just two examples.

### Active vocabulary

gear – механизм, устройство, инструмент, прибор;  
stunt – остановка роста, задержка в росте;  
canoeing – гребля на байдарках и каноэ;  
caving – спелеология;  
jet skis – водные лыжи;  
rebellion – восстание, противодействие;  
conventional – обычный, традиционный;  
exertion – напряжение, усилие; приведение в действие.

### Questions

- 1. What are the most popular extreme sports in your country?*
- 2. Why did extreme sports appear?*
- 3. What makes people practise extreme sports?*

## **Health and Healthy Lifestyle**

It is universally known that the only way to live a long and healthy life is a healthy lifestyle. Though it is a well-known fact that life expectancy is increasing, the reason why the average figures are higher now is not that all people live longer than before. One cause is that, due to medical research, many illnesses were eliminated; then, fewer people die in wars. Generally, the life of modern man is endangered by several factors, such as increasing pollution of the environment by industry and transport; sedentary lifestyle, the quality of food and water, epidemics and pandemics of contagious illnesses, etc. Therefore, the only way to escape deterioration of health caused by these factors is to reduce their influence by a healthy lifestyle.

For most people, a healthy lifestyle means living life in a way that helps the person to be both physically and emotionally healthy. Many things go into creating a healthy lifestyle, including proper nutrition, appropriate exercise, positive relationships, adequate rest. Making a life-long commitment to a healthy lifestyle can reduce the effects of chronic mental illness, give one more energy, increase self-esteem and confidence.

A healthy diet is one that helps maintain or improve health. It is important for the prevention of many chronic health risks such as: obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

A healthy diet involves consuming appropriate amounts of all nutrients, and an adequate amount of water. The first principle of a healthy diet is to eat a wide variety of foods. This is important because different foods make different nutritional contributions. Secondly, fruit, vegetables, grains, and legumes – foods high in complex carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins, and minerals, low in fat, and free of cholesterol – should make up the bulk of the consumed calories. The rest should come from low-fat dairy products, lean meat and poultry, and fish. It is also important to maintain a balance between calorie intake and calorie expenditure – that is, not to eat more food than the body can utilize. A healthy diet implies cutting down on salt, sugar and fat.

Frequent and regular physical exercise is a critical part of staying healthy. There are all kinds of reasons why many of us find it hard to start exercising – our day-to-day lives require a lot less physical activity than in our grandparents' or even parents' day, most of us own cars and rely on them to get around, and more and more people spend hours sitting in front of computers. The pressures of home and family life can also mean it feels as if there is little time left to fit in exercise. But there are several good reasons for starting regular exercise which will make even a partial improvement to one's fitness. First, physical inactivity is an independent risk factor for coronary heart disease. Conversely, exercise means a healthier heart because it reduces several cardiovascular risks, including high blood pressure. Secondly, being physically active can preserve good mental health and help one to manage stress, anxiety and even depression. Thirdly, regular exercise can help one achieve and maintain an ideal weight or fight obesity, which can be

important in managing many health conditions, or may just make one feel happier about his(her) appearance. Fourthly, exercise helps strengthen muscles to some degree, helps with all sorts of health niggles, such as digestion, poor posture and sleeplessness, and physical activity can be beneficial for a range of medical conditions, from diabetes to lower back pain. Exercise boosts the immune system.

Most adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least five days per week. Examples include walking briskly, mowing the lawn, dancing, swimming for recreation or bicycling. Stretching and weight training can also strengthen the body and improve fitness level. It is believed that young people would be the last ones who have to worry about their fitness, but sadly, this is not the case for everyone. It seems fewer and fewer young people are interested in playing sport or getting involved in other physical activities – and there is a battery of excuses for avoiding it.

Research indicates that positive relationships are important for good health. Love and positive relationships impact health and well-being. We all need to be supported and comforted. Statistics shows that happily married people live longer than singles and have lower rates of diseases including cancer and heart failure. Not only did increased levels of happiness significantly improve longevity, but these couples, acting as a team, also become better equipped to control stress in life that can be detrimental to your health. If you have supportive, loving relationships you are more likely to feel happy and satisfied in your life. Sometimes relationships can contribute to things like stress, depression, loss of self-esteem or confidence and even physical illness. The understanding of what positive relationships mean will vary from one person to another, but most people would probably agree that respect, trust, honesty, equality, companionship, mutual emotional support, economic security are all important parts of an adult relationship.

Adequate sleep is another important component of good health, necessary for the normal functioning of the nervous and endocrine systems.

One more component of healthy lifestyle is, of course, giving up unhealthy habits, such as smoking and drinking alcohol. There is strong evidence which indicates that too much alcohol increases risk of several cancers. It can also make it difficult to maintain a healthy weight, and can damage the nervous system and the liver. Quitting smoking is one of the most effective ways to cut the risk of developing cancer and lung diseases. Smoking is a significant risk factor for a wide range of cancers as well as being a direct cause of nine out of 10 cases of lung cancer. This is because cigarette smoke contains approximately 4,000 compounds, some of which are known to be carcinogenic (cancer-causing).

#### Active vocabulary

average – средний, нормальный;

endanger – подвергать опасности;

pandemic – пандемия, пандемический;

contagious – заразный, инфекционный;

obesity – тучность, ожирение;  
fiber – волокно, нить;  
expenditure – затраты, расходы;  
to niggle – заниматься пустяками; надоедать; суетиться; обманывать.  
digestion – пищеварение;  
posture – осанка, поза, положение;  
longevity – долголетие;  
detrimental – пагубный, причиняющий вред;  
compound – строение, состав; составной, сложный.

### Questions

1. What are the components of a healthy lifestyle?
2. What does a healthy diet involve?
3. Why is physical activity so important for a healthy lifestyle?
4. What unhealthy habits are critical for the people's health?