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ACTIVE BRITS SPEND £15 BILLION* ON SPORT EACH YEAR

Brits who participate in sports and hobbies spend an average of £678 per person each year, reveals new research from M&S Money**, with the Olympics inspiring a quarter of active people to take up more sport.

The research, carried out amongst 1,055 UK adults who participate in sport, found that the most popular activity is going to the gym, followed by swimming and walking or hiking. Of the top ten activities, five are Olympic sports.

Top 10 sports/ hobbies and their cost

Sport / leisure activity	Percentage of people who participate	Average amount spent per month
1. Going to the gym	38%	£38
2. Swimming	21%	£26
2. Walking / hiking	21%	£26
4. Running / athletics	19%	£22
5. Cycling / mountain biking	17%	£29
6. Football	9%	£27
7. Dancing	8%	£29
7. Golf	8%	£82
9. Tennis	5%	£49
10. Snooker / pool	4%	£22
Average amount spent per person each month		£56***

Cost of keeping fit

However, keeping fit comes at a cost, with sporty Brits spending an average of £56 each per month on sports and leisure. The most expensive activities are those requiring specialist equipment, such as motorsports (£167 per month), horse riding (£156 per month) and triathlon (£123 per month).

The most popular sports tend to be slightly more affordable with an average spend of £38 per month on the gym and £26 for swimming and walking.

The time it takes

Active Brits participate in sport an average of once a week. However, those with gym membership and regular runners tend to go every 2-3 days.

The sports that are most commonly pursued on a daily basis are more specialist, reflecting their dedicated niche appeal. Twenty seven per cent of people who go horse riding do so on a daily basis, as do 16 per cent of those involved in martial arts. In comparison, just 12 per cent of people who go to the gym do so every day, despite it being the most popular activity overall.

Summer of sport to stop false starts?

The Olympics and other major sporting events held this summer have inspired 23 per cent of Brits who already participate in sport to take up even more. Younger Brits have been the most enthusiastic, with a fifth of active under 35s already involving themselves in more sport and a further fifth planning to do so.

However, past performance indicates that this new-found passion could be short lived. Over half of people surveyed said they have spent money on a sport they have given up quickly, or missed sessions, the most common being gym membership. If each of these had paid for just one month of unused expenses, the total amount wasted across the country would be £632 million.****

No retiring early

Promisingly, sporty Brits are committed to staying active in retirement with 79 per cent planning to carry on their existing sporting pursuits and seven per cent planning to take up a new one.

The most common sports to take up in retirement tend to be slightly more leisurely, such as walking (27 per cent), swimming (26 per cent) and cycling (15 per cent). Those that people plan to give up tend to be more physically demanding, or team sports, such as netball (57 per cent), rugby (55 per cent) and boxing (51 per cent).

Overall, participation in retirement is expected to be high, with 50 per cent saying they will go walking and 48 per cent saying they will go swimming on a regular basis.

Crawford Prentice, deputy CEO of M&S Money, said: "It's wonderful to see such a high level of participation in sport across the UK – clearly people are being inspired this summer. Our

study shows that although some sports are relatively costly and need some financial planning, there are plenty of activities which are low cost and offer the same health benefits and enjoyment of competing and participating.”

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

* Based on the average annual spend on participating in main sports / active hobbies per adult (£678 according to the consumer research**) multiplied by the proportion of the adult population that participate at this level of regularity (44% or 21,929,600; total adult population is 49,840,000 according to ONS).

** Research conducted by Opinion matters between 13/07/12 and 19/07/12, amongst 1,055 UK adults who participate in sports / active hobbies at least once a month.

*** The total amount of money spent on sport per month (£59,573.50) is divided by the total number of people who took the survey (1,055), giving the average amount spent per person on sport per month (£56).

**** Based on the average monthly spend on participating in sport / active hobbies per adult (£56.47 - according to the consumer research) multiplied by half the size of the adult population who participate in sport at this level of regularity (51% who have wasted money on a sport (11,184,096 according to ONS).

For further information please call the M&S Money press office:

Louise Wheble on 01244 686177 or louise.wheble@mandsmoney.com

Or Wriglesworth on

Louise Weaver / Hugh Murphy on 0207 4271400 or l.weaver@wriglesworth.com

About M&S Money

M&S Money (the trading name of Marks and Spencer Financial Services) was founded in 1985 as the financial services division of Marks and Spencer Group plc.

The company is a top-ten [credit card](#) provider and the second-largest [travel money](#) retailer in the UK. M&S Money also offers a range of insurance cover, including [home insurance](#) and [car insurance](#), as well as loans, savings and investment products.

In November 2004, Marks & Spencer sold M&S Money to HSBC. HSBC Holdings plc, the parent company of the HSBC Group, is headquartered in London. The Group serves customers worldwide from around 6,900 offices in over 80 countries and territories in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, North and Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa. With assets of US\$2,652bn at 30 June 2012, the HSBC Group is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations

M&S Money has an executive committee comprising an equal number of representatives from HSBC and Marks & Spencer.