



Impact of Covid-19 Restrictions on
Sport and Recreational Walking

Introduction & Key Findings

Key Findings

The number of people taking part in sport has reduced due to the various restrictions in respect of organised sports.

The numbers walking for recreation remain significantly ahead of 2019.

Overall levels of physical activity have decreased since earlier phases of Covid-19 restrictions, however remain ahead of where they were in 2019.

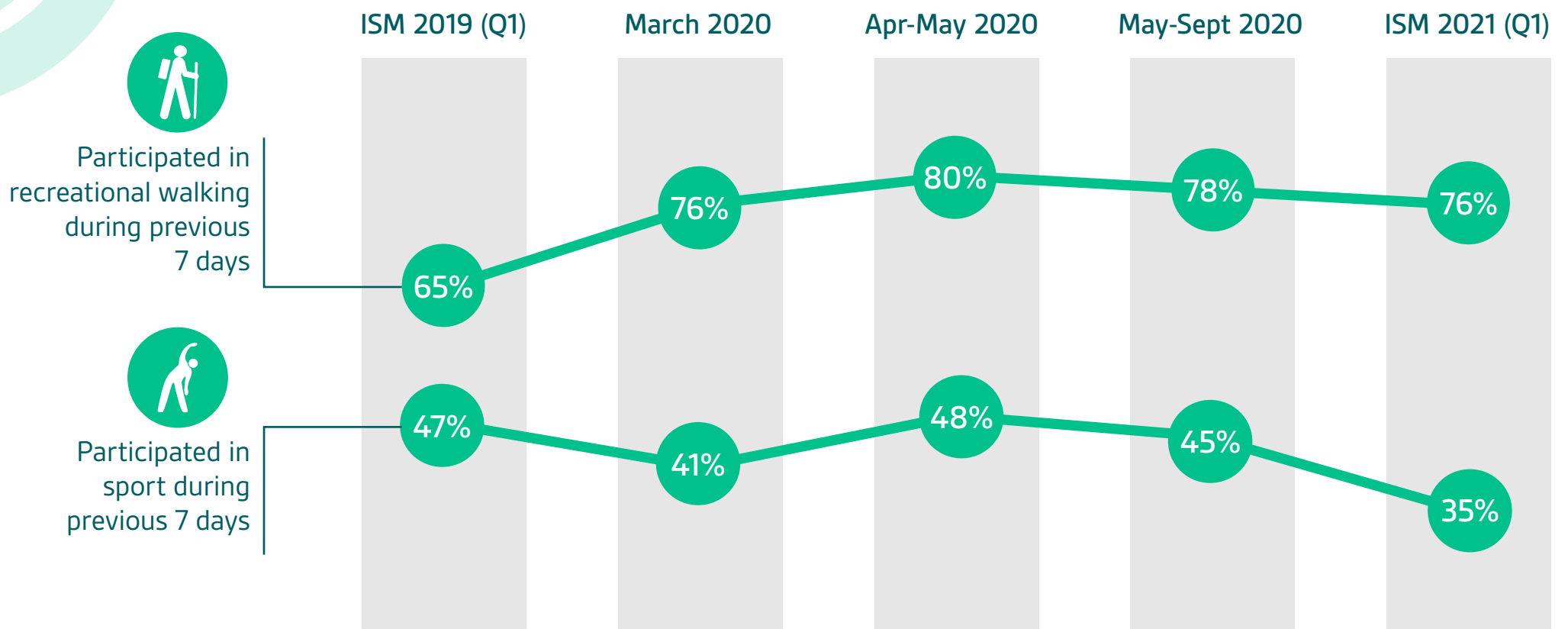
Those that have given up a sport intend to recommence it again once restrictions have ended. Similarly, those that have taken up new activities intend to continue participating in them into the future.



Introduction

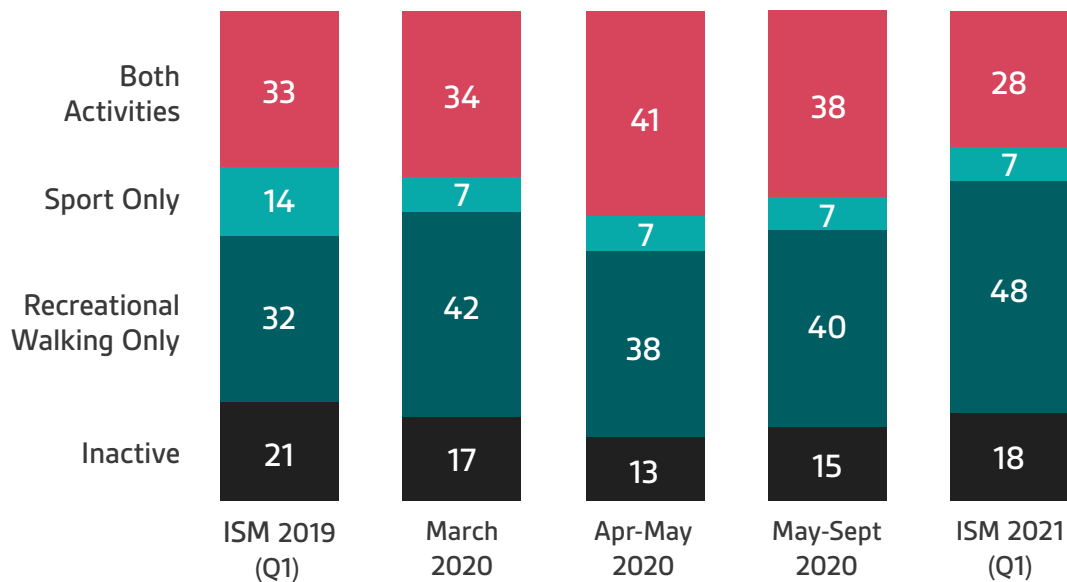
- This interim report presents the results from the first 3 months of data collection on the Irish Sports Monitor 2021 (ISM 2021).
- Comparisons are provided to the equivalent period for ISM 2019, along with equivalent research conducted during 2020.
- Full technical details are provided in the Appendix.

There has been a reduction in sports participation however walking for recreation remains ahead of 2019 levels



Levels of inactivity remain lower than in 2019

Types of Activity Participated In




Inactive means taking part in no sport or recreational walking. It has the same meaning as sedentary in the National Sports Policy.

Commentary

- Women more likely than men to be active during Q1 2021 with 85% of women reporting activity, compared with 80% of men.
- Strong social and age gradients exist. 90% of ABC1s are active, compared with 78% of C2DEs. Similarly, 87% of under 25s are active, compared with 74% of those aged over 65.

Participation in **Sport** during previous 7 days

The gender gap in sports participation has been eliminated, as was the case during the first period of restrictions



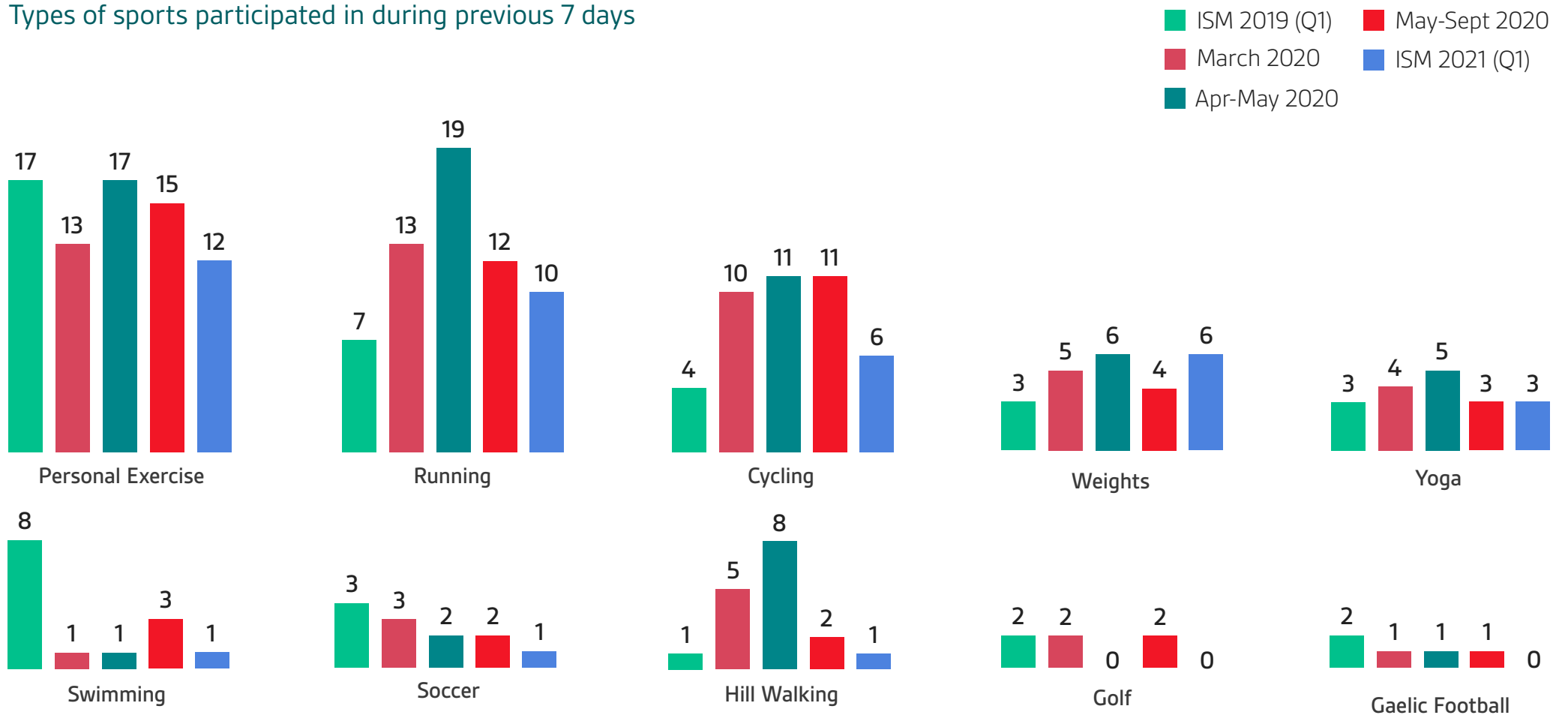
		ISM 2019 (Q1)	March 2020	Apr-May 2020	May-Sept 2020	ISM 2021 (Q1)
Gender	Men	49	43	48	48	35
	Women	45	38	49	42	34
Age Group	16-24*	73	60	75	75	58
	25-34	55	44	58	56	45
	35-44	50	50	55	51	39
	45-54	43	38	41	38	28
	55+	31	25	30	25	19
Location	Dublin	53	47	53	49	39
	Rest of Leinster	48	41	47	43	37
	Munster	43	34	46	45	31
	Connacht/Ulster	42	40	46	39	31
Social Class	ABC1	59	52	59	59	45
	C2DE	38	34	40	34	26

- As during the first period of restrictions, the gender gap in sports participation has been eliminated with equal proportions of men and women participating in sport.
- Participation rates are lower across all age groups when compared to the 2019 measurement.
- There have been decreases in participation among both social class groups, and a strong social gradient remains with those in the C2DE social class much less likely than ABC1s to participate in sport.

* Figures shown for measurements in 2020 are among 15-24 year olds


Levels of running, cycling and weight training are higher than in 2019

Types of sports participated in during previous 7 days



Participation in **Recreational Walking** during previous 7 days

Walking for recreation remains ahead of 2019 levels despite recent reductions for most groups



		ISM 2019 (Q1)	March 2020	Apr-May 2020	May-Sept 2020	ISM 2021 (Q1)
Gender	Men	62	71	77	75	72
	Women	69	81	85	82	80
Age Group	16-24*	55	75	86	83	72
	25-34	67	76	81	79	76
	35-44	62	81	84	76	77
	45-54	66	80	81	78	82
	55+	71	70	73	77	74
Location	Dublin	64	75	80	80	73
	Rest of Leinster	63	78	81	78	76
	Munster	70	75	80	78	79
	Connacht/Ulster	65	76	77	77	75
Social Class	ABC1	69	82	86	83	83
	C2DE	63	74	75	76	73

* Figures shown for measurements in 2020 are among 15-24 year olds

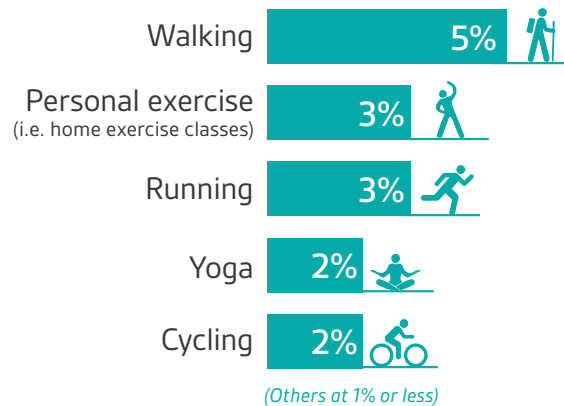
- Women remain more likely than men to walk for recreation with a similar gap when compared to ISM 2019.
- Walking for recreation is more robust among those aged over 45 with recent reductions seen across younger age groups.
- There have been recent decreases among both social class groups and the social gradient is consistent with previous waves.

Roughly 1 in 6 have taken up a new activity since the Covid-19 restrictions with the majority expecting to continue the activity after the restrictions end

17%

Have taken up a new sport or physical activity that they did not normally participate in prior to Covid-19 restrictions

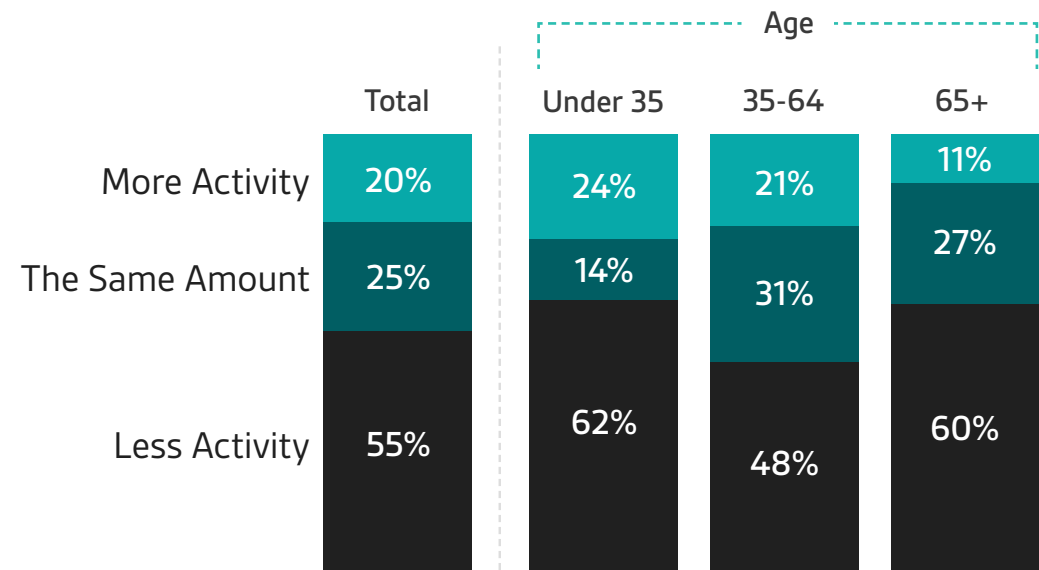
Type of activity taken up



85%

Expect to continue in the new activity after restrictions are lifted

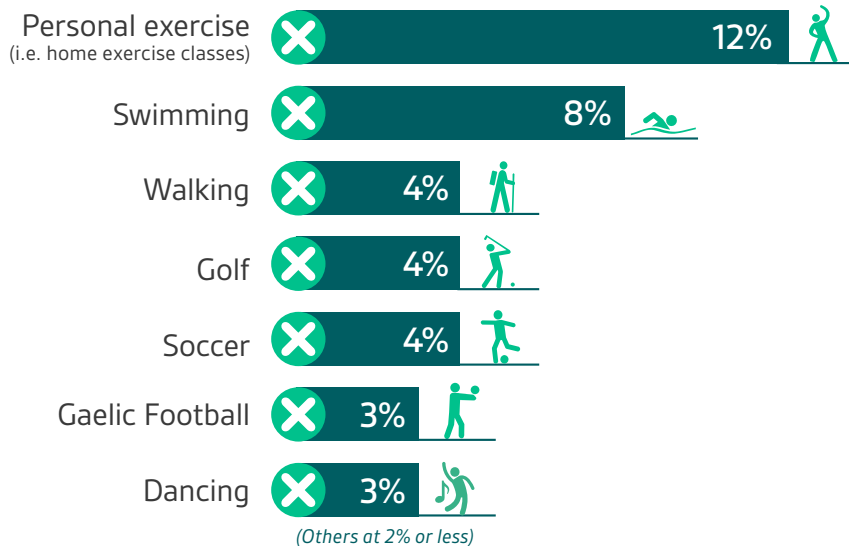
Q. In the past 7 days do you think you have done more, less, or the same amount of physical activity compared to a typical week before the Covid-19 restrictions were introduced?



Just over 2 out of 5 people have given up an activity due to Covid-19, however the majority plan to return once restrictions are lifted

44% Have given up a sport or physical activity
(56% of those aged under 35)

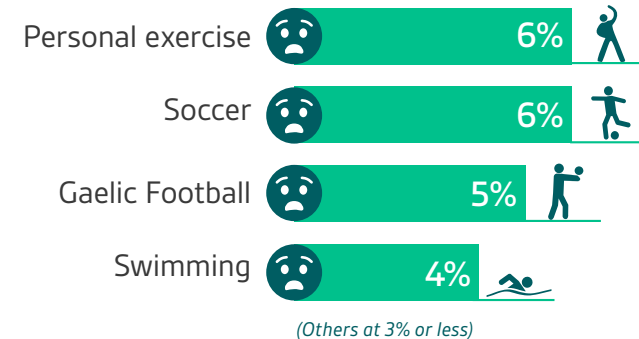
Type of activity given up



89% Say they will return to this activity after restrictions are lifted

48% Agree with the statement "I am fearful of participating in certain sports or physical activities because of Covid-19"

Activities people fear because of Covid-19



Appendix - Technical details

- The Irish Sports Monitor (ISM) is a large population study undertaken biennially in order to provide trends in participation in sport and physical activity in Ireland. Data collection is conducted by telephone among a representative sample of the population aged 16 and older.
- During 2020 a number of additional telephone survey measurements were undertaken to understand the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions on sport and physical activity. These replicated the questions asked on the ISM and were representative of the population aged 15 and older. Data collection was undertaken by telephone.
- Fieldwork dates and sample sizes for this research are as follows:

Phase	Fieldwork dates	Sample size
ISM 2019 (Q1)	Jan-Mar 2019	2,129
Delay phase	16 - 31 March	1,003
Stay at home phase	1 - 13 April	1,009
	15 - 28 April	1,006
	30 April - 15 May	1,000
Roadmap for Reopening of Society & Business	14 May - 11 September	3,414
ISM 2021 (Q1)	Jan-Mar 2021	2,129





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