

# The state of the game

## Player and club survey

A comprehensive survey to discover why people play Walking Football and how it affects their lives.



# Why did we undertake this survey?

The growth in the sport has been exponential since its inception in 2009, with more clubs, more teams and tens of thousands more players.

As the Governing body for Walking Football in England, it was important to know how the game was progressing and if it was achieving the goal set out by John Croot at its inception.

The answers to this survey will also help us to shape the game of the future.

If you completed the survey, thank you.

# The methodology

We created three different surveys. The first was aimed at players and was trying to discover what made them play in the first place and what it means to them. We also wanted to find out more about their experiences playing now and what they wanted for the future.

The second survey was to get more insight into how clubs and teams operate.

The third and final survey, was to determine the health challenges and health benefits of people playing Walking Football.

The surveys were sent to our 1800 subscribers in our newsletters and also shared on social media.

The questions were a mix of yes/no, multiple choice and questions where the respondents could compose their own answers.

## Details

Number of responses:	1332
Subscribers:	787
Non subscribers:	545

# Headlines

★ Over 80% of clubs are playing WFA rules most of the time

★ Over 50% of players are aged between 60 and 70

★ Nearly 40% have been playing for more than 4 years

★ Over 50% were introduced to Walking Football by a friend

★ Over 70% said it was the highlight of their week

★ Over 80% of players are interested in playing in tournaments

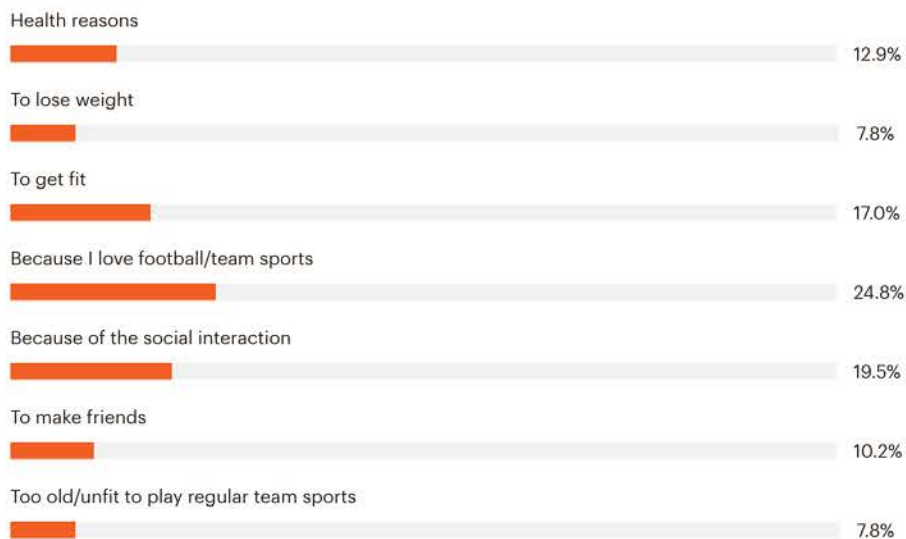
★ Two thirds of players would like to play at a higher level

★ Over 50% of clubs have WFA qualified referees

# The first set of questions are from the player survey

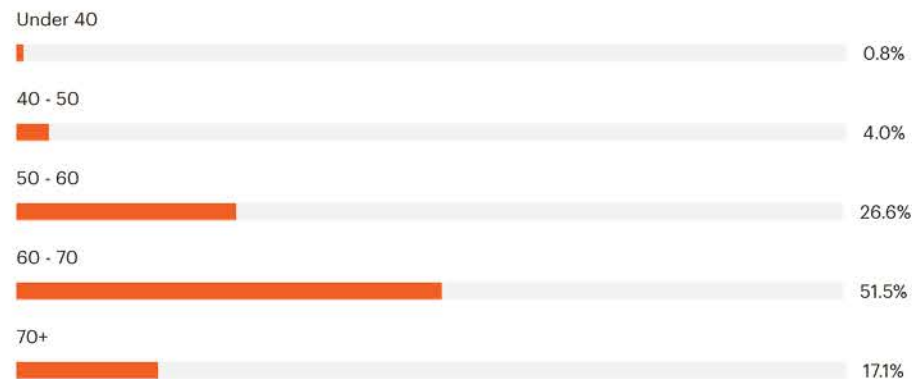
Question 1 has 601 answers (Checkboxes)

“Why do you play Walking Football? (you can tick multiple)”



Question 2 has 602 answers (Radio Buttons)

“What age bracket are you?”



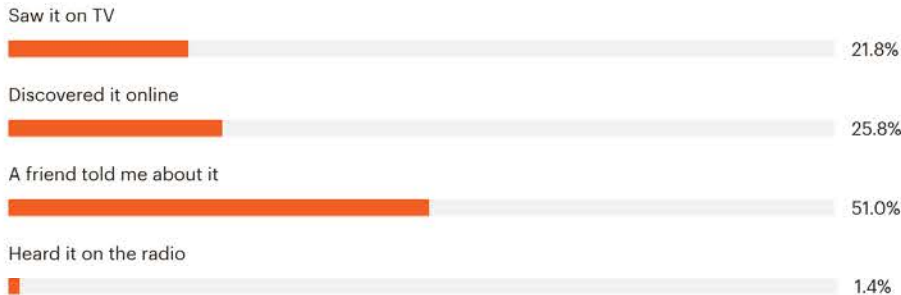
Question 3 has 601 answers (Radio Buttons)

“How long have you been playing?”



Question 4 has 587 answers (Checkboxes)

**“How did you discover Walking Football? (you can tick multiple)”**



Question 5 has 528 answers (Open Text)

**“What do you love most about playing Walking Football?”**

“The comradeship, social interaction, health and mental benefits. The opportunity to progress through competition. The banter and to meet old and make new friends”

“Being able to play the game I love, never thought it would have been possible at my age (67)”

“The whole social interaction and love of the game”

“The opportunity to play football at my age and to be part of a team of like-minded people. It gives me a real sense of belonging. Playing football is my passion and my life. Walking Football is so very precious to me”

“Great exercise and social interaction. Always loved football but never had the chance to play (female 60+) before”

“That as a female you can play with and against the men unlike regular football. And I don’t have to give up a game I love when my body gives up on me”

“The buzz I used to get when playing football and the fact at my age I can still play. Brilliant”

“I love everything about it I have made some very special friends since I joined”

“Being able to still play a game I love. The exercise and the banter with like minded people”

Question 6 has 575 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Are you interested in playing in tournaments?”



Question 7 has 597 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Would you be interested at playing at a higher level, such as regional or higher?”



Question 8 has 599 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Would you be comfortable paying in a mixed gender game?”



Question 9 has 601 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Has your club/session returned to play yet?”



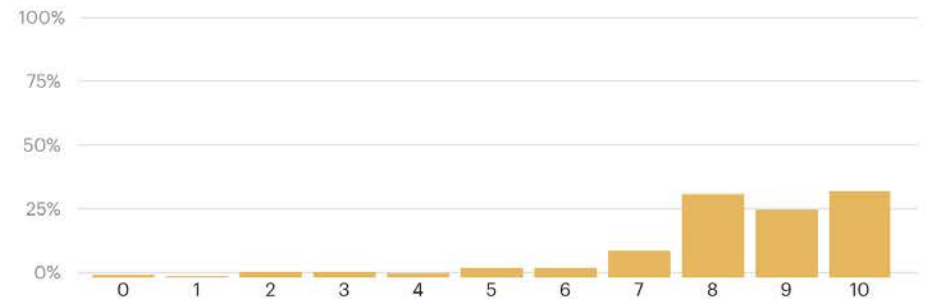
Question 11 has 598 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you feel you have enough information to return to play safely?”



Question 12 has 602 answers (0-10 Range)

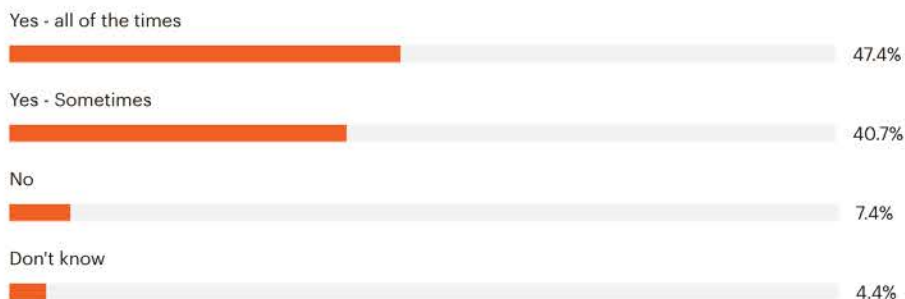
“On a scale of 1 - 10 how safe do you feel returning to play?”



# These next set of questions are from the club survey

Question 1 has 405 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you play by the WFA rules?”



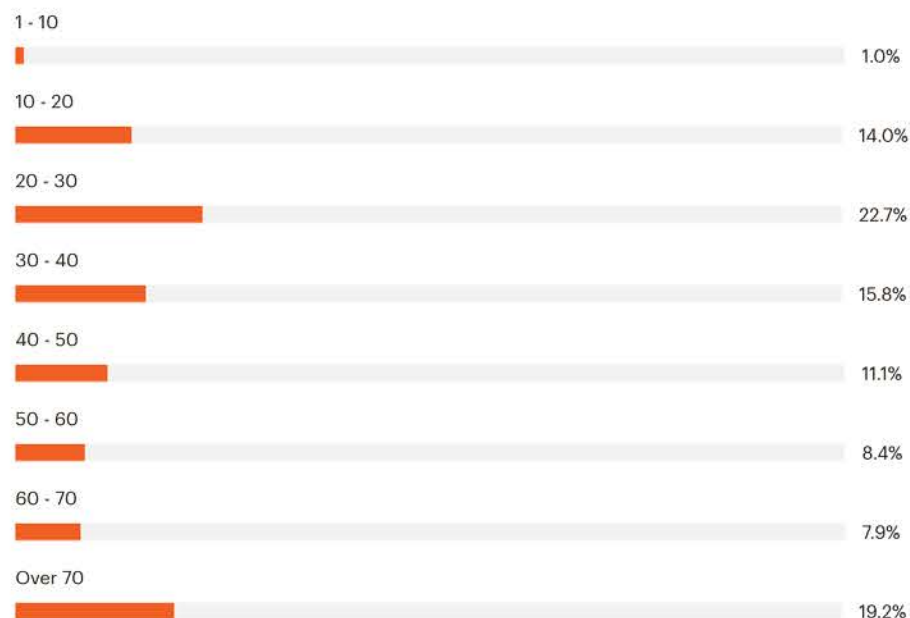
Question 2 has 407 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you play indoors or outdoors?”



Question 3 has 404 answers (Checkboxes)

“Approximately how many members do you have?”





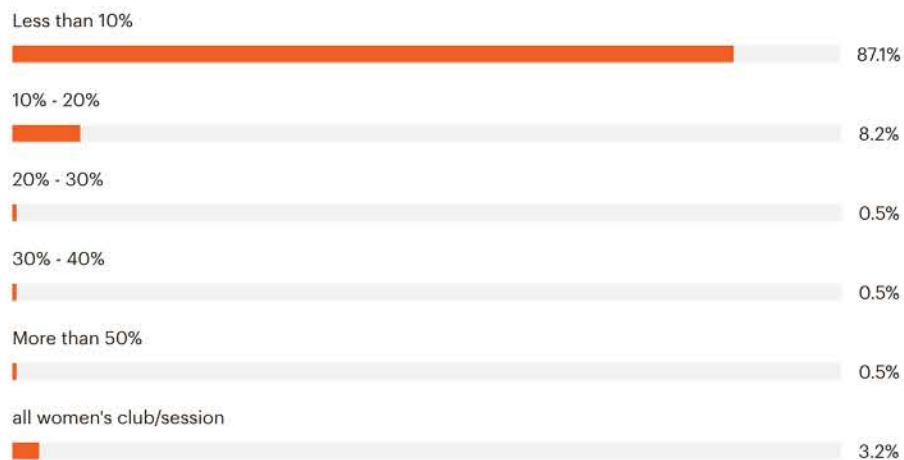
Question 4 has 405 answers (Checkboxes)

“What surface do you play on? (you can tick multiple)”



Question 5 has 404 answers (Radio Buttons)

“What percentage of your members are female?”



Question 6 has 406 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Does your club enter teams into tournaments?”



Question 7 has 406 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you have qualified WFA referees at your club?”



Question 8 has 408 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Does someone referee the games/sessions?”



Question 9 has 406 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you have a first aid kit?”



Question 10 has 407 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you have a health and safety policy?”



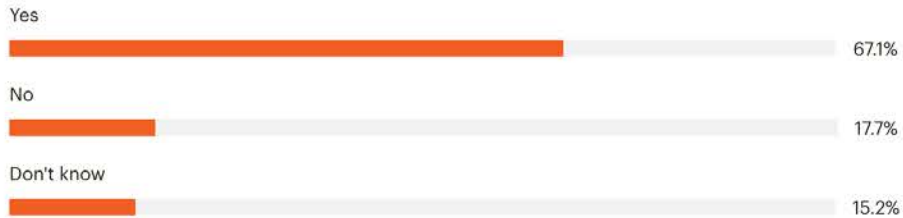
Question 14 has 404 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Has your club got an Emergency first aid procedure?”



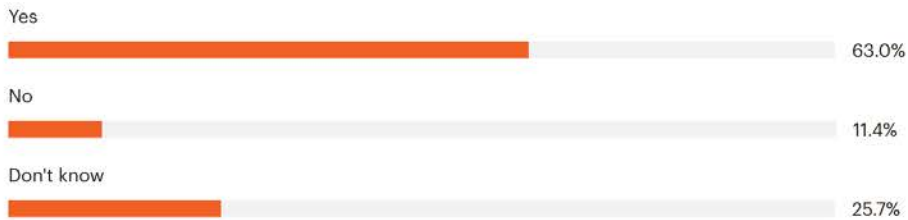
Question 15 has 407 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Does your club require new players to provide their health declaration information as part of the new player registration before their 1st session?”



Question 16 has 405 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Does your club have insurance for the clubs activates?”



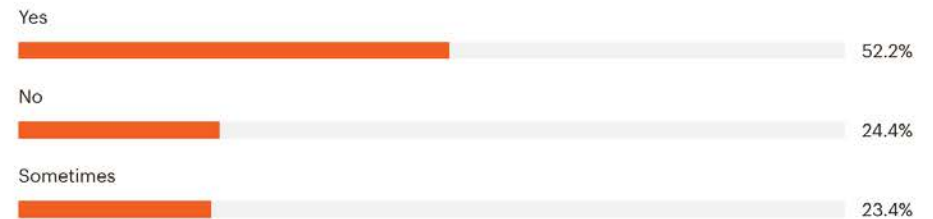
Question 17 has 409 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you include ‘warm up time’ before play?”



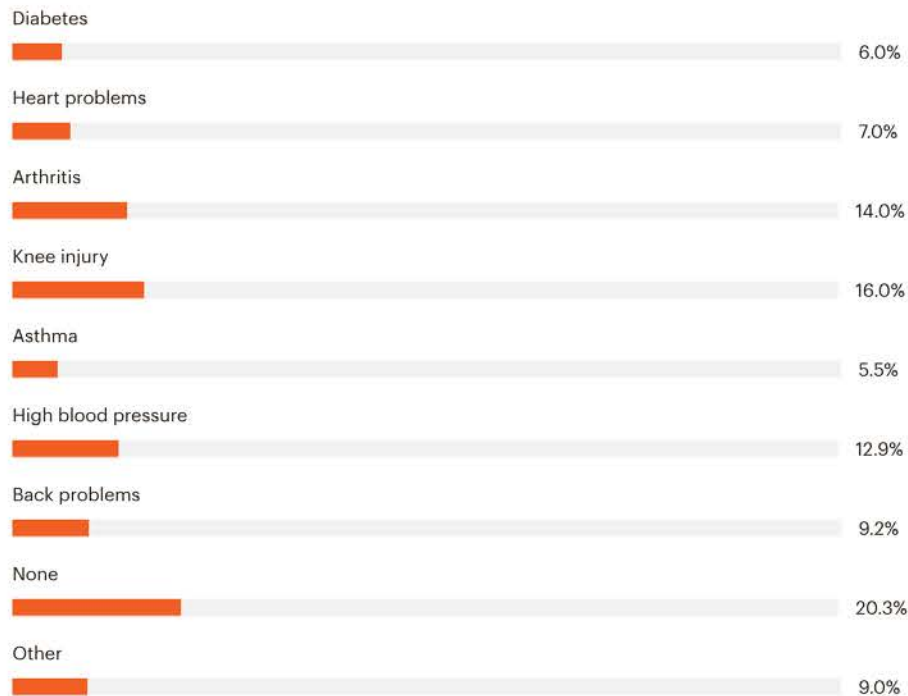
Question 18 has 406 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Do you provide a ‘New Player WF Introduction’ I.e introduce the rules, venue facilities and emergency arrangements, before they play their 1st session?”



Question 1 has 314 answers (Checkboxes)

“Do you have any long-term health conditions? (You can tick multiple)”



Open text responses to "other":

“Diabetes, Parkinsons”

“Asthma,Lung and kidney disease”

“Left patella removed and hip replacement”

## These are the responses to the health survey

Question 2 has 34 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Have you recovered from Cancer?”



Question 3 has 188 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Are you on any regular medication?”



Question 4 has 57 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Have you ever or still do suffer from depression?”

Yes



Question 5 has 91 answers (Open Text)

“If you answered yes to the question above, has playing Walking Football helped and if so how?”

“Definitely helped, social interaction, and surprisingly competition games have exercised both my body and mind”

“Helped me recover fitness levels and re-engage with my friends which helped my ‘mental’ recovery from the isolation of time spent in treatment”

“Yes - Monday Mornings are the highlight of my week”

“Exercise and the human contact of comradeship helps lift the mood ”

“The friendship and camaraderie from being involved with walking football is of huge importance and helps immensely with regard to things like depression”

“The regular contact with my team mates is invaluable in making me feel better”

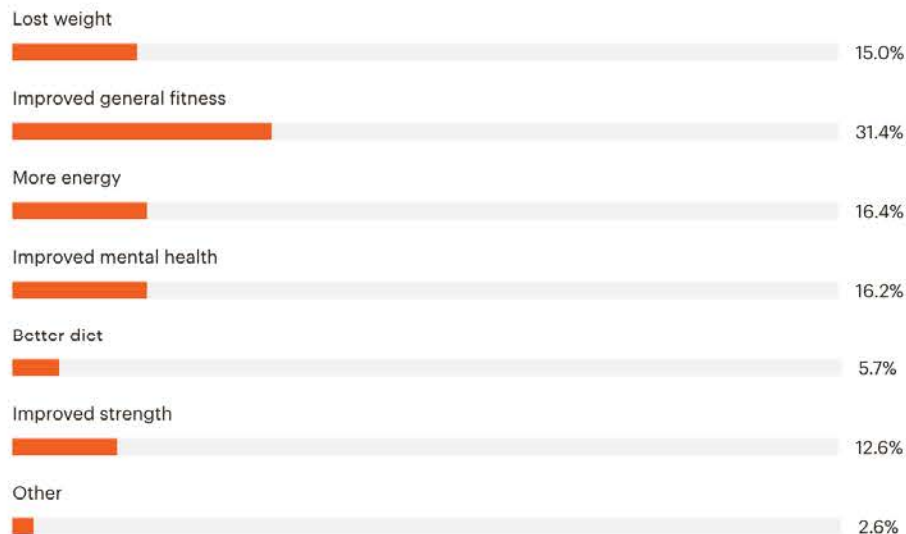
“Great for mind and body, camaraderie is a big thing as well”

“WF helped me after lockdown, not through playing, but keeping in touch with team mates on our clubs Whatsapp group”

“I came into walking football primarily to help me overcome and recover from a mental health breakdown in 2017. It has helped enormously and I love participating in the WFA social functions, tournaments and weekly sessions which a large element is the camaraderie and most importantly the banter”

Question 6 has 314 answers (Checkboxes)

“What have been the health benefits of playing Walking Football? (you can tick multiple)”



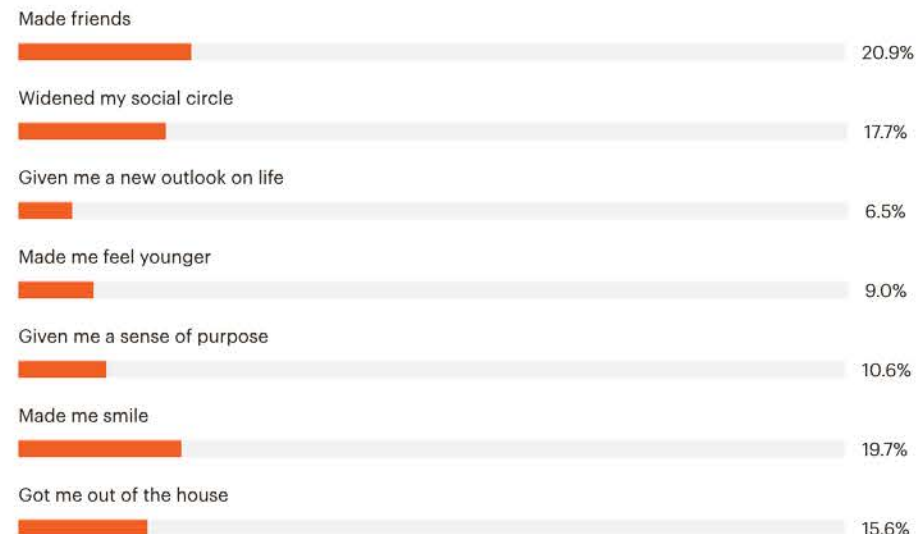
Open text responses to "other":

“Simply being able to play football gives one a happiness not found anywhere else.”

“I was diabetic and overweight. Since starting walking football I have lost 4 stone and declared free from diabetes”

Question 7 has 318 answers (Checkboxes)

“What, if any have been the social benefits of playing Walking Football? (you can tick multiple)”



Question 8 has 227 answers (Radio Buttons)

“Would you say Walking Football is now the highlight of your week”



# Summary

We think the exercise was very worthwhile and yielded some results we expected and some we didn't.

The most important thing was that almost unanimously the responses were a positive and so Walking Football and The WFA are doing something right.

We will continue to develop the sport for the benefit of the thousands of people for whom playing Walking Football is the highlight of their week...and of course, for those players for whom it has been life changing.

Thanks again for your participation.

