

RETIRED FEMALE OLYMPIAN HEALTH



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Retired Female Olympian Health Survey Version 2 dated 6th November 2025

You are being invited to take part in research investigating the health of retired female Olympians and females from the general population. **Females from the general population will form the 'control group' for this research.** Responses from the control group will be compared with those of retired Olympians. This comparison will allow us to see whether any patterns observed among retired Olympians are unique to that group or reflect broader trends in the general population.

This research is facilitated across four sites (United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada and Australia) and supported by SportScotland Institute of Sport, UK Sports Institute, US Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Canadian Olympic Committee and La Trobe University, Melbourne. This research is led by Dr Lauren Guilfoyle at the University of Edinburgh. Before you decide whether to take part it is important you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of the study is to explore and compare the current health status of retired female Olympians with the female non-Olympian general population. In doing so, we hope to better understand the long-term potential benefits and consequences of sustained Olympic-level sporting participation on female athlete health. To date, few research studies have included females in retired athlete research and so our understanding of musculoskeletal, mental, brain and cardiovascular health in retirement is limited. Further, there is a substantive gap in our understanding of reproductive, breast and pelvic floor health in retired female athletes. We hope to address this gap through this current study.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You are invited to participate in this study because you are 16 years or older and have **not** previously competed at the Olympic Games (Summer or Winter), nor is it likely that you will.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

No – it is entirely up to you. However, if you do decide to take part but wish to withdraw during survey completion or following submission of your responses, will not be able to withdraw your information as all data will be anonymous at input.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DECIDE TO TAKE PART?

If you do decide to take part, please keep this Information Sheet. You will be asked to complete an Informed Consent Form to show that you understand your rights in relation to the research, and that you are happy to participate.

You will be asked to complete a comprehensive online survey that asks you to report information relating to your musculoskeletal, mental, cognitive/brain, cardiovascular, reproductive and breast health. The questionnaire should be completed in a safe environment at a time that is convenient to you. The questionnaire should take around 45 minutes to complete and is also available in French. We acknowledge that it is a long and comprehensive survey, but we do appreciate your help in addressing this under researched area.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

By sharing your experiences with us, you will be helping the research partners (UK Sports Institute, SportScotland Institute of Sport, US Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Canadian Olympic Committee, LaTrobe University, University of Edinburgh) to better understand the long-term potential benefits and consequences of sustained Olympic-level sporting participation for female athletes that may differ from the female general population. This information will guide organisations in the provision of appropriate resources to Olympians in retirement and improve care for currently competing female Olympians that extends beyond performance and prioritises long-term health. If you opt-in to provide us with your contact details (following submission of the survey), we can directly signpost you to any publicly accessible resources developed from this research as they become available and also provide you with an overview of findings from both the retired Olympian and general population groups.

We do acknowledge that this research will likely benefit active and retired female Olympians more than the general population – but participation from the general population is vital to identify trends within the Olympian cohort.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR DISADVANTAGES ASSOCIATED WITH TAKING PART?

There are no significant risks associated with participation; however, some individuals may find some of the question domains sensitive. These include anxiety, depression, eating disorders, harassment and abuse, fertility, pregnancy loss. No questions will be mandatory, and you can choose to skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Support services for participants are signposted at the end of this information sheet and within the survey.

WILL MY TAKING PART BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All the information we collect during this research will remain anonymous and there are strict laws which safeguard your privacy at every stage. We will not ask you to provide personally identifiable information at any time during the survey. Once the survey has been completed, you will be asked if you would like to submit your contact details to receive updates related to this project or any resources developed as a result of this research. This will take you to a separate webpage to ensure that your survey response and contact details are not linked - in any way.

HOW WILL WE USE INFORMATION ABOUT YOU?

All information that you provide will be anonymous at input and therefore unidentifiable. Your anonymous data will only be viewed by the research team at the University of Edinburgh. When data collection and analysis is complete, data will be aggregated (grouped together) and suppression techniques applied to ensure that very low or rare responses are not identifiable. This aggregated and suppressed data will be shared with our research partners in summary reports (United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, SportScotland Institute of Sport, UK Sports Institute, Canadian Olympic Committee, LaTrobe University). All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer file. Once we have finished the study, we will keep the data for a period of ten years. After this time, all data will be deleted. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that you took part in the study.

What are your choices about how your information is used?

Given the anonymous nature of data input, you will not be able to withdraw your information after completing and submitting the survey.

Where can you find out more about how your information is used?

For further information about data privacy for research participants please refer to: <https://data-protection.ed.ac.uk/privacy-notice-research>

You can also ask one of the research team by sending an email to Dr Lauren Guilfoyle (Lauren.Guilfoyle@ed.ac.uk), or Dr Debbie Palmer (debbie.palmer@ed.ac.uk).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY?

The results of this study may be summarised in published articles, reports and presentations. You will not be identifiable from any published results. Quotes or key findings will always be reported anonymously in any formal outputs.

WHO IS ORGANISING AND FUNDING THE RESEARCH?

This study has been organised by Dr Lauren Guilfoyle (University of Edinburgh), Dr Debbie Palmer (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Alan MacPherson (University of Edinburgh) with the support of the Retired Female Olympian Health steering group.

The study is being funded by SportScotland Institute of Sport, UK Sports Institute, United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC), and Moray House School of Sport and Education at the University of Edinburgh; and supported by the Canadian Olympic Committee and LaTrobe University, Melbourne.

WHO HAS REVIEWED THE STUDY?

The study proposal has been reviewed and approved by Moray House School of Education and Sport Research Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh (LGUIL07102025).

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

If you have any further questions about the study, please contact the lead researcher, Dr Lauren Guilfoyle (lauran.guilfoyle@ed.ac.uk).

If you would like to discuss this study with someone independent of the study, please contact Dr Jung Woo (Jay) Lee – Deputy Director of Research, Engagement and Impact (J.W.Lee@ed.ac.uk).

If you wish to make a complaint about the study, please contact: The Research Governance Team (cahss.res.ethics@ed.ac.uk) or the Data Protection Officer (dpo@ed.ac.uk).

SUPPORT SERVICES

You might wish to find out more information or want to seek support about any of the topics mentioned in this survey. If you are concerned about your own immediate health – please seek support from your General Practitioner (GP) or Primary Care Physician.

Other resources and support services are listed below:

Country-specific resources:

To find a suitable resource within your country for several issues (e.g., Abuse & Domestic Violence, Anxiety, Bullying, Depression, Eating & Body Image, Gambling, Physical Illness, Pregnancy & Abortion, Self-Harm, Sexual Abuse, Stress, Substance Use, Suicide, Trauma & PTSD), please click on the link below:

<https://findahelpline.com/>

1. Type and/or select your country (e.g. United Kingdom).
2. Select what you need help with (e.g. anxiety).

Female athlete resources:

Global Alliance for Female Athletes: <https://yourgafa.com/resources>

