



ENGAGE THROUGH SPORTS



**PÅ
SAMMA
LINJE**

 **folkhälsan**

If you are new to Finland and want to engage in sports and exercise together with others, this guide is for you. Here you can learn more about clubs – how they operate, how to start one, what do you get out of joining one, and where to find more information.



WHAT IS A CLUB?

A club is an organized group of people with a shared interest. Most clubs have no political or religious affiliation. In a club, you can pursue a certain activity in, for example, sports, music, or culture. The operations are non-profit in nature. In the Nordics, active participation in clubs is a common way to pursue your interests together with others. Anyone can join a club.

HOW DOES A CLUB OPERATE?

There are various types of clubs, and they all have members and organized activities. A club is led by a board, and positions on the board are open to anyone. All members can influence club operations through, for example, board member elections or a parents' meeting. Larger clubs have hired personnel who get paid for their work. Smaller clubs are often run by volunteers who are not paid. Many volunteers are driven simply by their own interest. Sports clubs are

sometimes supported by their community or government to help them cover their expenses. These subsidies are often not enough to cover all costs of running a club, such as rents for training facilities, instructor training, gear and equipment, competitions, travel, etc. A club can collect a membership fee to cover the rest of the expenses. A club can also raise money through volunteering, for example, holding raffles or providing table service at an event.



WHY JOIN A SPORTS CLUB?

Sports is a universal language; a ball bounces equally well in English or Serbian, a long jump is equally long whether in Swahili or in English. Through a club you can meet new people and make friends with similar interests. Through sports both children and adults can engage in physical activities, challenge themselves, and have fun. Sports improves well-being, builds confidence, and strengthens both body and mind. Those who involved in sports clubs generally get better grades than classmates who are not in sports clubs.

HOW TO JOIN A CLUB?

Many clubs welcome new members. If you're interested in joining a club, you can talk to a trainer at a practice or find contacts at a club's home page.

Most clubs let you try out a few times for free to give you an opportunity to choose the type of club that suits you best. A paid membership fee allows you to participate in all club activities for the period covered by the fee. As a paid member, you are expected to remain a member for the entire year. If you resign your membership before your membership period is over, you will not get your money back.

Do you want to join a club but find it too expensive? If you find the membership fee difficult to manage, you should discuss alternative payment options with the sports club management. Some sports clubs offer financial support to help cover your membership costs. If you have a contact at a social welfare or a community integration service, you might want to ask them about your eligibility for financial support to help you participate in organizational activities.

You can join a club even without a Finnish identity number. However, an identity number may be required for licenses, insurance, or competitions. Your identity number is never disclosed to anyone outside the club without your permission.



Getting started

- Every club has their own ways of communication and rules of conduct. If you're not sure about something, go ahead and ask! Most clubs are happy to answer your questions.
- Follow the club's rules, such as how to behave when you are training.
- The club trainers are responsible for running the practice while parents can cheer on and show their support.
- Respect the diversity of the group, pay attention, and work together with others.
- Show up in time for practice.
- Use designated training clothes or shoes – for example, indoor shoes are only for indoor use.
- Don't forget to take a shower to wash off sweat and dirt. It is important to wash up to stay fresh and healthy. Bring towel and spare clothes if there is a shower available.
- Help each other out, for example when someone needs a ride home.



HOW DO YOU START A CLUB?

A club is formed by a group of people who work together to pursue a shared interest. You need at least three people of 15 years or older to form a club. The club's chairman and vice chairman need to have their place of residence in Finland; in other words, they need a Finnish identity number. The founders of a club prepare a document that regulates how the club operates. Registering your club in the national register of associations gives your club more rights, such as the right to own property, facilities, fields, courts, or rinks, or to apply for finances to help you run the club.

READ MORE

Advice for those new to Finland:

Welcome Office in Ostrobothnia and Luckan in Uusimaa

Starting a club: Finnish Patent and Registration Office

This guide is written by people at the Luckan Association, the FSI (Finlands Svenska Idrott "På samma linje" and Folkhälsan's project "Hälsa i mångfald" project.

Editor: Sonja Rodén

Graphic design: Cecilia Lindström

Press: Grano, Vasa 2020



KEYWORDS

Exercise

To engage in physical activities for improved wellbeing.

Sports

Training, competing, and performing. Sports is physical activity for the purpose of having fun and improving wellbeing.

Health

Being healthy means keeping fit and feeling well.

Training

Activities designed to improve speed, strength, or skill at something. You can train with others or by yourself. For a team, training means engaging in sports activities together – for example, “we have practice on Sunday.”

Coach/trainer/instructor

The person in charge of running a practice.

Hobby

Something you do on your free time when you're not at school or at work. A hobby can also be called a free-time activity.

Club

A club is a group of people who have a shared interest in, for example, a specific sport.

Board

A group of people in charge of running the club and making decisions.

Member

A person who pays a membership fee and participates in the club's activities.

Membership fee

A payment made in exchange for the right to participate in club activities. The collected fees can be used to, for example, pay for facilities or buy gear or equipment.

License

A permission required to compete in a sport.

Insurance

A protection in case you are injured when training. Insurance can cover part of your medical treatment.

Voluntary work

A situation where several people help voluntarily and without pay to carry out something, such as putting up a tent.

Volunteering

Work without pay for e.g. people who assist coaches.

