

## Are recreational drugs banned in sport?

### Learning Outcomes

- ★ Identify the psychoactive drugs on the Prohibited List
- ★ Give an example of the key motivators for using psychoactive drugs
- ★ Identify ways to avoid the pressures of using psychoactive drugs

**Psychoactive drugs** are chemical substances that alter **brain function to produce changes in mood, perception, cognition or behaviour**. Not all are illegal or harmful, e.g. coffee, but **illegal drugs** such as Cocaine, MDMA and LSD are. **Pharmaceutical products** such as Codeine and Diazepam are on **WADA's Prohibited List** and are banned from use in-competition, so would require a **Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE)** for treatment of a medical condition.

**Psychoactive drugs** are included within the following **categories** of the **WADA Prohibited List**:

- **Stimulants (e.g. Cocaine, MDMA)**
- **Narcotics (e.g. Heroin, Morphine, Codeine)**
- **Cannabinoids (e.g. Cannabis and THC).**

Other drug categories that include psychoactive drugs but are not explicitly defined within the WADA Prohibited List, are:

- **Psychedelics (e.g. LSD, Mescaline)**
- **Dissociatives (e.g. Ketamine, Nitrous Oxide).**

Psychoactive drugs may be used for **recreational purposes** in a **social context, out of curiosity, to self-medicate, or as a result of perceived peer pressure**. Some sports such as **football** ban the use of social drugs both in- and **out-of-competition** in order to protect the health and welfare of players.

The 2021 Code introduced the term '**Substances of Abuse**' which relates to prohibited substances that are frequently **abused in society outside of the context of sport**. This includes:

- **Cocaine**
- **Diamorphine (heroin)**
- **Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA)**
- **Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).**









In cases where such substances are found **in-competition**, there may be a reduction in the length of sanction if use occurred **out-of-competition and was unrelated to sports performance**. With a focus on **athlete welfare**, a further reduction in sanction could be applied if an **approved treatment programme** is completed.

Research common **recreational drugs** at [Talk to FRANK](#) and then use **Activity 14.1** to identify different **slang** and **terminology** for drugs.

Read the [Recreational Drugs Risks](#) information and consider the **four different motivations** for **recreational drug use** in **Activity 4.2**.



Review the list of [current UKAD ADRV Sanctions](#) then reflect on the **three different scenarios** in **Activity 14.3**.

### Quick Links:

-  [2021 Code Changes Infographic](#)
-  [Current UKAD ADRV Sanctions](#)
-  [FA Social Drugs Policy](#)
-  [FA Social Drugs Policy Video](#)
-  [Recreational Drugs Risks](#)
-  [Think Real Resources](#)
-  [Talk to FRANK](#)
-  [FA Social Drug Guide](#)



### You will need:

-  Handouts
-  Scissors

### Assessment Options

**Scaffold:** Produce a presentation slide to outline the lifestyle factors that could affect an athlete's decisions.

**Task:** Develop a presentation that explores the motivational factors that may influence decision making.

**Challenge:** Use a case study to review the motivational factors for an athlete and any potential reputational damage.

Psychoactive Drug	Potential Physical Harms
<b>Stimulants</b>	Palpitations/ heart arrhythmia, cravings (for more), dependence or addiction, paranoia, mental health issues (anxiety/ depression). Extreme cases can involve fits or heart attacks. The use of antidepressants with some stimulants (e.g. MDMA) can cause serotonin syndrome, which can be fatal if not treated quickly. Some of these issues may only last whilst the drug is active but can become more entrenched if use is frequently repeated.
<b>Narcotics</b>	As narcotics are opiates/opioids, the primary risk is overdose, especially if taken with alcohol or other depressants (e.g. Diazepam, GHB). Many narcotics are taken in pill form, but some (e.g. Heroin, Morphine) can be injected. Poor injecting practices, including the sharing of injecting equipment, can lead to damage to veins, bacterial infection or the transmission of blood borne viruses.
<b>Cannabinoids</b>	Cannabis is usually smoked, often mixed with tobacco and can result in lung damage. The use of cannabis has been associated with mental health issues, but the evidence base is unclear, and a causal relationship has not been established. However, it is possible that people with pre-existing or latent mental health issues may seek to self-medicate with Cannabis and that THC (the primary active ingredient) may exacerbate those issues. High doses can produce temporary dissociation and paranoia.
<b>Psychedelics</b>	These do not typically produce adverse physical effects but can lead to psychological issues.
<b>Dissociatives</b>	Ketamine (a widely used dissociative) can have extremely adverse effects on the genitourinary system with prolonged, repeated, use. In extreme cases surgery can be required to address the damage caused.
<b>General</b>	<i>The use of psychoactive drugs can impair motor control, coordination and perception, leaving the end-user more at risk of accidents.</i>



On the right are **18 different terms** for **recreational drugs**. Each drug has **three** different terms on the grid by which it may be known. **Cut out** each of the terms and then place them into groups.

1. Group the terms into threes based on the different names, chemical terminology or slang that could be used to describe them.
2. Which of the terms refer to stimulants, narcotics or cannabinoids?
3. Which of the terms refer to psychedelics or dissociatives?

Ecstasy	Tab	THC
Cocaine	Acid	Heroin
Charlie	Weed	NOS
LSD		MDMA
Cannabis	Diamorphine	Brown
Nitrous Oxide	White	Chargers
Methylenedioxymethamphetamine		



<b>Ecstasy</b>	<b>MDMA</b>	<b>Methylenedioxy-methamphetamine</b>	<i>Stimulants</i>
<b>Cannabis</b>	<b>THC</b>	<b>Weed</b>	<i>Cannabinoids</i>
<b>Cocaine</b>	<b>Charlie</b>	<b>White</b>	<i>Stimulants</i>
<b>Heroin</b>	<b>Brown</b>	<b>Diamorphine</b>	<i>Narcotics</i>
<b>LSD</b>	<b>Acid</b>	<b>Tab</b>	<i>Psychedelics</i>
<b>Nitrous Oxide</b>	<b>NOS</b>	<b>Chargers</b>	<i>Dissociative</i>



Outside of a therapeutic context, **psychoactive drugs** may be used:

- for **recreational purposes** in a social context (e.g. nightclubs, parties)
- **out of curiosity**
- for **self-medication**
- as a result of perceived **peer pressure** (being in a social group that habitually uses drugs).

1. The four key motivations for using psychoactive drugs are stated in the grid on the right. Next to each motivation write a short scenario to explain how a young athlete could find themselves using a psychoactive drug.
2. Which drug was chosen for self-medication and why was it selected?
3. Which of the four motivations are most likely to affect a young athlete at school or college?
4. Extension Task: What could be the reputational damage to an athlete and their sport, should they choose to use recreational drugs?

Motivators	Example Scenario
Recreational Purposes	
Out of Curiosity	
Self-Medication	
Peer Pressure	



## Activity 14.3: What would you do?

On the right are **three different scenarios**. As the scenarios are read, students should imagine they are a **young athlete** who has just made it into a **national training squad**.

- 1. Review the scenario and then be prepared to explain what, as a young athlete, you would do in this situation.**
- 2. Would the response change if the person in the scenario wasn't due to compete for the next two months?**
- 3. Would the response change if the person in the scenario was an international athlete? For Scenario B imagine this is meeting a friend for a chat instead of after school.**

### Scenario A

You have gone out in the evening and met friends in a club. After a few drinks, one of your teammate's friends offers you tablets which you think are ecstasy. A few of your teammates took the tablets but you don't want to take any and are happy with just having a drink, however they keep offering and you feel you need to take one to be part of the team. What are you going to say next time you are offered?

### Scenario B

You keep seeing adverts online for CBD oil which claims to aid the recovery of athletes. Your friend offers you a joint to smoke on the way home from school and from your understanding, CBD oil and cannabis are all made from the same plant. If CBD oil is advertised online then is it ok to smoke a joint?

### Scenario C

You are at your grandparent's 80th birthday and there are lots of helium balloons in the room with '80' written on them. Some of the older adults in the room are inhaling the helium from the balloons. Being as this is the first time you have seen all your family in ages, is this something you want to do?

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### Scaffold:

Produce a presentation slide to outline the different lifestyle factors that could have an impact on an athlete's decision to use recreational drugs.

**FRANK**  
0800 77 66 00 [talktofrank.com](http://talktofrank.com)  
Friendly, confidential drugs advice

### Task:

Develop a presentation that explores the different motivational factors an athlete may face, that could lead them to use recreational drugs. Consider the ethical values that should influence positive decision making for the athlete and how they may be viewed as a role model.

### Challenge:

Deliver a presentation that explains the motivational and lifestyle factors that could influence an athlete's use of recreational drugs, then using a case study, how education and ethical values should support the right choice for an athlete. In addition, consider the potential reputational damage to the athlete and their sport.