Verbs for sports and leisure activities



We go skiing every winter.

When we talk about sport in a general way, we usually use the verb 'do':

Do you do any sport?

Or, occasionally:

Do you practise any sport?

However, 'practise' has a different meaning. 'To practise' is to do something, perhaps regularly, in order to maintain or improve our performance or specific skills, maybe before a particular event or competition. For example:

Footballers practise taking free kicks.
He's giving his first presentation so he needs to practise using PowerPoint.
She's doing well in her English course but doesn't have much opportunity to practise.

I practise cricket every week. ✖
I play cricket every week. Sometimes we practise our batting or bowling. ✔

I'm practising tennis today. ✖
I'm playing tennis today. I'm going to practise backhands because that's my weakness. ✔

To speak about named sports and activities, we use a specific verb. For example:

to swim
to cycle
to run
to climb
to ski

Do you do any sport?
Yes, I swim and cycle.

Or the following verbs: 'to go', 'to play', 'to do'.

To go

We use the verb 'to go' for lots of sports as well as other activities. Here are some examples:

'to go' + gerund	'to go for a' + noun
running	a run
cycling	a bike ride
climbing	a swim
swimming	a walk
hiking	a stroll
skiing	a drink
horse-riding	a meal
skateboarding	
fishing	
dancing	
shopping	

We tend to use 'to go' when we give extra information:

"Do you do any sport?"
"Yes, I ski and climb. I go climbing twice a week and I'm going skiing with friends in February."

To play

<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />	to play
Some competitive sports, especially those played with a ball	football tennis golf squash cricket rugby

Games **Note that we also say 'to have a game of...'**	**chess** **Monopoly** **draughts** **cards**
Console/computer games	**PlayStation/X-box games** **on a PlayStation/X-box**
Musical instruments	**the piano** **the violin** **the drums** **the guitar**

To do

<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />	To do
A form of exercise or something we do at the gym	**gymnastics** **aerobics** **spinning*** **weight-training*** **yoga** **pilates** ***[also used with 'go']**
Martial arts	**judo** **taekwondo** **karate** **kung fu**
Something that we try to solve	**a puzzle** **a quiz** **a crossword**

See also 'Make' or 'do'?

Examples

	
Do you fancy going out for a walk later? **No, it's too cold. Let's stay at home and play chess.**	**They love doing puzzles.**
	
She plays the piano really well - she practises every day.	**She does yoga before breakfast.**

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