

AT A GLANCE

WHO GUIDELINES ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR



World Health
Organization

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SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR**



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WHO guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour: at a glance

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<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/336657/9789240015111-eng.pdf>



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KEY MESSAGES

1 **Physical activity is good for hearts, bodies and minds.**

Regular physical activity can prevent and help manage heart disease, type-2 diabetes, and cancer which cause nearly three quarters of deaths worldwide. Physical activity can also reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and enhance thinking, learning, and overall well-being.

2 **Any amount of physical activity is better than none, and more is better.**

For health and wellbeing, WHO recommends at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week (or the equivalent vigorous activity) for all adults, and an average of 60 minutes of moderate aerobic physical activity per day for children and adolescents.

3 **All physical activity counts.**

Physical activity can be done as part of work, sport and leisure or transport (walking, wheeling and cycling), as well as every day and household tasks.

4 **Muscle strengthening benefits everyone.**

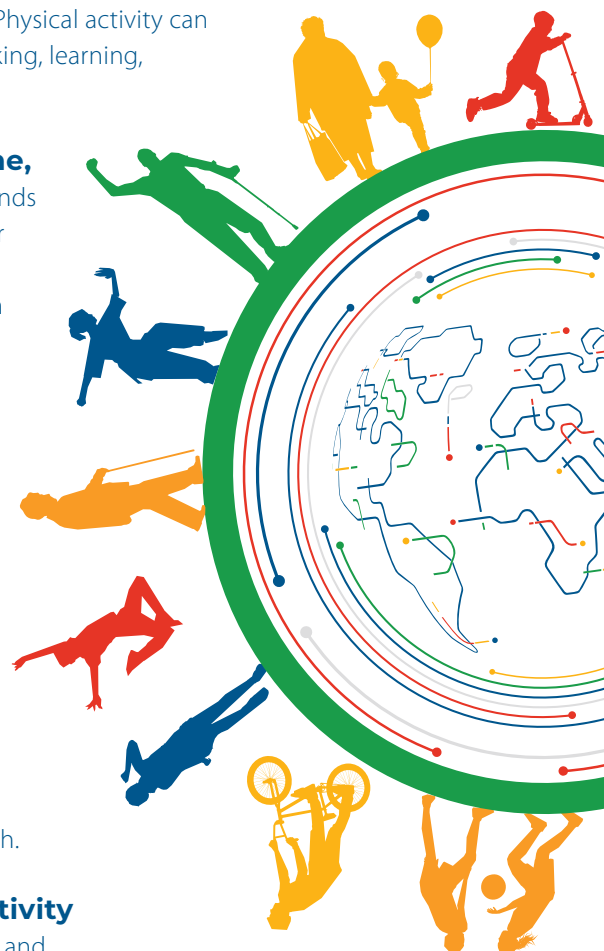
Older adults (aged 65 years and older) should add physical activities which emphasize balance and coordination, as well as muscle strengthening, to help prevent falls and improve health.

5 **Too much sedentary behaviour can be unhealthy.**

It can increase the risk of heart disease, cancer, and type-2 diabetes. Limiting sedentary time and being physically active is good for health.

6 **Everyone can benefit from increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour,**

including pregnant and postpartum women and people living with chronic conditions or disability.



Four to five million deaths per year could be averted if the global population was more physically active. These global guidelines enable countries to develop evidence-based national health policies and support the implementation of the WHO Global action plan on physical activity 2018-2030.

Action and investment in policies to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour can help to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Good Health and Wellbeing ([SDG3](#)), Sustainable Cities and Communities ([SDG11](#)), Climate Action ([SDG13](#)), as well as Quality Education ([SDG4](#)) among others.

EVERY MOVE COUNTS

Moderate-intensity activity will raise your heart rate, and make you breathe faster. Vigorous-intensity activity makes you breathe hard and fast. There are many ways you can strengthen your muscles, whether you're at home or in a gym.

INTRODUCTION

Regular physical activity is a key protective factor for the prevention and management of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular disease, type-2 diabetes, and a number of cancers. Physical activity also benefits mental health, including prevention of cognitive decline and symptoms of depression and anxiety; and can contribute to the maintenance of healthy weight and general well-being. Global estimates indicate that 27.5% of adults (1) and 81% of adolescents (2) do not meet the 2010 WHO recommendations for physical activity (3) with almost no improvements seen during the past decade. There are also notable inequalities: data show that in most countries girls and women are less active than boys and men, and that there are significant differences in levels of physical activity between higher and lower economic groups, and between countries and regions.

SCOPE

The *WHO Guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour* provide evidence-based public health recommendations for children, adolescents, adults and older adults on the amount of physical activity (frequency, intensity and duration) required to offer significant health benefits and mitigate health risks. For the first time, recommendations are provided on the associations between sedentary behaviour and health outcomes, as well as for subpopulations, such as pregnant and postpartum women, and people living with chronic conditions or disability.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The guidelines are intended for policy-makers in high-

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The guidelines were prepared in accordance with the *WHO handbook for guideline development* (4). In 2019 a Guideline Development Group (GDG) was formed comprising technical experts and relevant stakeholders from all six WHO regions. The group met in July 2019 to formulate the key questions, review the evidence-bases, and agree the methods for updates of literature, and, where needed, for additional new reviews. In February 2020, the GDG met again to review the evidence for the critical and important outcomes, consider the benefits and harms, values, preferences, feasibility and acceptability, and the implications for equity and resources. The recommendations were developed through consensus and posted online for public consultation. The final updated recommendations are summarized below. The GRADE¹ tables and evidence profiles are available as a [Web annex](#). Practical tools to support adoption, dissemination, communication campaigns and implementation of the guidelines will support governments and stakeholders work together to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviours across the life course.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The public health recommendations presented in the *WHO Guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour* are for all populations and age groups ranging from 5 years to 65 years and older, irrespective of gender, cultural background or socioeconomic status, and are relevant for people of all abilities. Those with chronic medical

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