

ACTIVE LIFE

A stylized, geometric illustration of a city scene in warm tones of orange, yellow, and red. The scene depicts various people engaged in physical activity: a person climbing a staircase, a person running, a person walking with a shopping bag, and two people riding bicycles. The background features simplified buildings and a large sun or moon. The title 'ACTIVE LIFE' is prominently displayed in the center, with 'ACTIVE' in red and green and 'LIFE' in blue and red.

A technical package for increasing physical activity

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ACTIVE: a technical package for increasing physical activity

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ACTIVE: A TOOLKIT FOR ACTION

The Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030 provides a shared vision of **More active people for a healthier world** and sets out goals to achieve a relative reduction in global levels of physical inactivity of 10% by 2025 and 15% by 2030. The action plan outlines four objectives and 20 recommended evidence-based policies applicable and adaptable to all country contexts to increase levels of physical activity (7), and provides countries with a roadmap for implementing a national response to increase health and wellbeing. Collectively, the 20 recommended policies form a “whole system” approach to increasing the opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to be more physically active every day, at home, work, school and in their local communities.

This **ACTIVE technical package** is the first of several implementation tools that the World Health Organization (WHO) will develop to support countries plan, implement and evaluate the implementation of the Global Action Plan. It outlines four policy action areas, which directly reflect the four objectives of the Global Action Plan endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 2018, and identifies the key policies within each action area:

1. ACTIVE SOCIETIES
2. ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS
3. ACTIVE PEOPLE
4. ACTIVE SYSTEMS

ACTIVE is one of several WHO technical packages that support countries to prevent and reduce NCD risk factors - others include tobacco use (MPOWER), salt reduction (SHAKE), elimination of transfat (REPLACE) and reduction in alcohol (SAFER).

Implementation of the ACTIVE technical package will be supported by a series of “how to” toolkits, each one addressing in more detail the specific tasks and processes necessary to implement each policy recommendation across different settings and the life course. Priority areas for the “how to” resources focus on promoting physical activity through social marketing campaigns, in primary health care and by using school-based approaches. “How to” toolkits to support multisector planning of a whole systems approach, and on creating supportive environments for physical activity, will be forthcoming. WHO will also be developing a global monitoring framework and supporting capacity building initiatives to accelerate implementation across multiple sectors, including health, sports, transport, urban design, civil society, academia, private sector and community-based organizations.

FOUR POLICY ACTION AREAS

ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Promote safe, well maintained infrastructure, facilities and public open spaces that provide equitable access to places for walking, cycling and other physical activity.

ACTIVE SYSTEMS

Strengthen leadership, governance, multisectoral partnerships, workforce, research, advocacy and information systems to support effective coordinated policy implementation.

ACTIVE SOCIETIES

Implement behaviour change communication campaigns and build workforce capacity to change social norms.

ACTIVE PEOPLE

Ensure access to opportunities, programmes and services across multiple settings to engage people of all ages and abilities in regular physical activity.



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ACTIVE SOCIETIES

Implement behaviour-change communication campaigns and build workforce capacity to change social norms.



- Action 1.1* Communications:** Implement social marketing campaigns linked with community-based programmes.
- Action 1.2. Co-benefits:** Build awareness, through knowledge-sharing and information campaigns, of the multiple social, economic, and environmental co-benefits of physical activity, particularly from walking and cycling.
- Action 1.3. Mass participation events:** Implement regular mass participation initiatives.
- Action 1.4. Capacity-building:** Strengthen professional knowledge, within and outside the health sector, as well as in grassroots community groups and civil society organizations.

ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Promote safe, well maintained infrastructure, facilities and public open spaces that provide equitable access to places for walking, cycling and other physical activity.



- Action 2.1. Policy integration:** Integrate urban and transport planning policies, and prioritize the principles of compact, mixed-land use to deliver highly connected neighbourhoods.
- Action 2.2. Infrastructure:** Improve walking and cycling network infrastructure.
- Action 2.3. Safety:** Implement and enforce road safety and personal safety measures to improve the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable road users.
- Action 2.4. Public open spaces:** Improve access to good-quality public and green open spaces, green networks, recreational spaces (including river and coastal areas) and sports amenities.
- Action 2.5. Design:** Strengthen the policy, regulatory and design guidelines to enable all occupants and visitors to be active in and around the public buildings.

* Action 1.2 and 3.2 are recommended as 'Best' and 'Good' buys for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases (2).

ACTIVE PEOPLE

Ensure access to opportunities, programmes and services across multiple settings to engage people of all ages and abilities in regular physical activity.



- Action 3.1. Schools:** Ensure provision of good-quality physical education and positive opportunities for physical activity across pre-primary to tertiary educational settings.
- Action 3.2* Health care:** Implement systems of patient assessment and counselling on physical activity in primary and secondary health care and social services.
- Action 3.3. Multiple other settings:** Implement programmes in workplace, sport and faith-based settings, and in public open spaces and other community venues, to increase opportunities for physical activity.
- Action 3.4. Older adults:** Provide appropriately-tailored programmes and services to support older adults to start and maintain regular physical activity.
- Action 3.5. Least active:** Implement programmes and services that increase the opportunities for physical activity in the least active groups.
- Action 3.6. Whole-of-community:** Engage communities to implement comprehensive initiatives at the city, town or local level.

ACTIVE SYSTEMS

Strengthen leadership, governance, multisectoral partnerships, workforce, research, advocacy and information systems to support effective coordinated policy implementation.



- Action 4.1. Governance:** Strengthen national and subnational policies, recommendations and action plans, and establish multisectoral coordination mechanisms.
- Action 4.2. Data systems:** Enhance information systems and digital technologies to strengthen monitoring and decision-making.
- Action 4.3. Evidence:** Strengthen research and evaluation capacity to inform effective policy solutions.
- Action 4.4. Advocacy:** Escalate advocacy efforts to increase awareness, knowledge and joint action.
- Action 4.5. Resources:** Strengthen financing mechanisms to ensure sustainability.

Full details of each policy action are available in the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030, with recommended roles for different stakeholders listed in Appendix 2 (7).

What is physical activity?

There are many different ways to be physically active: walking, cycling, sports and other active forms of recreation (for example, dance, yoga, tai chi). Physical activity can also be undertaken as a form of transport (walking and cycling), at work and around the home (cleaning, carrying and care duties). All forms of physical activity can provide health benefits if undertaken regularly and of sufficient duration and intensity (3).

What is sedentary behaviour?

Sedentary behaviour is characterized by a very low energy expenditure, such as sitting, reclining or lying down (4). Extended periods of sedentary behaviour (for example sitting at work, during travel, or for leisure) are detrimental to health (5). All individuals, and especially children, should be advised and supported to limit long periods of sedentary behaviour by incorporating regular activity breaks throughout the day, and, in particular, to limit the amount of time spent using screen-based devices such as phones and tablets, and watching television.

active and thus can either enable or hinder participation. Understanding these causes of inactivity in a community is necessary for the development of effective tailored policy responses.

Of note, is that girls, women, older adults, people of low socioeconomic position, people with disabilities and chronic diseases, and marginalized populations are often less active than others because they have less access to appropriate places and programmes to support them.

Economic development and the associated changes towards more sedentary occupations and recreation, as well as the increasing use of motorized transport, can help explain the higher levels of inactivity seen in some high-, as well as middle-income, countries. Governments and communities must act to counterbalance these trends and provide the environments, facilities and services that support people to be active through more walking and cycling, sports and active recreation, as well as through incidental physical activity throughout each day.

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