Physical Activity
Fast Facts

Health Benefits

Regular physical activity provides important health benefits for preventing chronic diseases and their associated risk factors.

A single bout of moderate-to vigorous physical activity provides immediate benefits for health for adults including:[1]

- **improved sleep quality**
- **reduced feelings of anxiety**
- **reduced blood pressure**

Emerging research suggests physical activity may also help[2]

boost immune function

Getting enough physical activity **could prevent:**

- **1 in 8 cases** of breast cancer[3]
- **1 in 12 cases** of diabetes[3]
- **1 in 15 cases** of heart disease[3]

Physically active adults have **a significantly lower risk** of developing several commonly occurring cancers including:[1]

- bladder
- breast
- colon
- lung
- endometrium
- esophagus
- kidney
- stomach

Economics/Cost-Effectiveness

$117 billion in annual health care costs are associated with inadequate physical activity.[4]

A **10%** increase in state-level physical activity in those 65 and older significantly reduced Medicare costs **by 1%** in 2-3 years.[5]

Increasing the percent of youth playing sports in the United States from **50%** *to* **63%** would save **$80 billion** in direct health care costs + **1.8 million** quality years of life[6]

Adults

Only 1 in 4 (25.3%) adults **fully meet the physical activity guidelines** for aerobic and muscle strengthening in their free time.[7]

M T W TH F S S

Less than 1 in 3 (31.5%) of adults aged 18 years and over performed **muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days of the week** during leisure time.[9]

48.1%

Less than half of adults aged 18 years and over engaged in leisure time aerobic physical activity of

at least moderate intensity for at least 150 minutes per week *or* **vigorous intensity for at least 75 minutes per week**

or an equivalent combination.[10]

1 in 4 (26.3%) adults **do no physical activity** in their free time.[8]

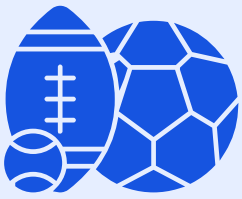
Physical Activity
Fast Facts

Youth

Only 1 in 6 (16.0%) high school students **fully meet the youth physical activity guidelines** for aerobic and muscle-strengthening in their free time.[3]

Less than 1 in 4 (23.9%) high school students were **physically active for at least 60 minutes on all 7 days** of the past week. (i.e., met the youth aerobic guideline).[12]

Less than half (44.9%) of high school students participated in **muscle-strengthening activity on at least 3 days** of the past week. (i.e., met the youth muscle-strengthening guideline).[13]



Half (54.7%) of children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 years **participated in a sports team or sports lessons** after school or on weekends in the past 12 months.[14]

Only 1 in 5 (19.0%) high school students **participate in daily school physical education** in an average school week.[11]

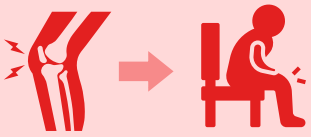
Health Conditions

Falls were the most common cause of injuries treated in the emergency department (ED) in 2017, accounting for approximately **one-third of the 26.5 million ED visits** related to injuries for which a cause of injury was reported.[15]

A program of supervised exercise therapy (SET) can provide structure, accountability, and professional guidance.

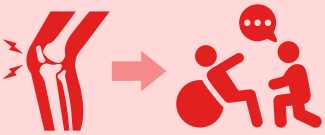
In June 2024, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) gave a Grade B recommendation for exercise interventions in older, community-dwelling adults to reduce fall risk.[16]

47.9%



of adults aged 18 years and over with provider-diagnosed arthritis **experienced a limitation in activity due to arthritis or joint symptoms.**[8]

54.6%



of adults aged 18 years and over with provider-diagnosed arthritis **received health care provider counseling for physical activity or exercise.**[17]

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Community Design

1 in 5 adults aged 18 years and over **walked or used a bicycle to get to and from places.**[18]

Activity-friendly communities **can attract businesses and improve employment opportunities,** which may help local economies thrive.[19]

Walkable communities may **promote opportunities for social interaction and involvement that are beneficial** for physical and mental health.[19]

Every dollar spent on parks, trails and greenways leads to over $3 worth of benefits. A systematic review of economic evidence from seven studies found a median benefit to cost ratio of 3.1, meaning **every dollar spent led to $3.10 worth of benefits.**[20]

Older Adults

41.3 percent

of adults aged 65 years and over with reduced physical or cognitive function **engaged in light, moderate, or vigorous leisure-time physical activities** in 2018.[21]

Preventing Premature Death

110,000

premature deaths per year could be prevented if adults age 40 and older were more physically active.[22]

76.9 deaths per 100,000 population aged 65 years and over were caused by **unintentional falls** in 2018.[23]

Approximately

10%

of deaths among adults ages 40 to 69 years

and

7.8%

of deaths among adults age 70 years and older

are attributed to individuals not meeting the aerobic physical activity guidelines.[24]

Military Readiness

Only 2 in 5 young adults are **weight eligible and physically prepared for basic training.**[25]

Physical Activity
Fast Facts

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