



The importance of physical activity for adults

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading cause of global mortality and as such has been described as the best buy in public health.



Being active reduces the incidence of many non-communicable diseases including cardiovascular disease (including stroke and coronary heart disease), hypertension, type 2 diabetes, obesity, cancer, liver disease and osteoporosis.

Being physically active can reduce the risk of developing...

- cardiovascular disease by 33%
- stroke by 31%
- coronary heart disease by 14%
- colon cancer by 20-30%
- endometrial cancer by 27%
- breast cancer by 20-40%
- obesity – severely obese and inactive individuals lose 7.2 years of life compared to active people of a healthy weight
- hypertension – inactive adults have a 30% higher risk of high blood pressure than active adults.



Mental health benefits

Being active...

- lowers the risk of depression, distress and dementia by 20-30%
- improves sleep, enhances quality of life and wellbeing.





Physical activity guidelines for adults

The UK physical activity guidelines for adults describe the levels of activity

Guideline 1:

Adults should accumulate at least 150 (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in a week. Small activity bouts of at least 10 minutes can be added up to reach the goal. Moderate activities include walking, cycling, gardening or housework.

OR

The same benefits can be accumulated by doing 75 minutes of vigorous activity eg, running, playing sport or climbing stairs.

OR

A combination of moderate and vigorous activity can be performed.



Guideline 2:

Strength exercise should be performed at least twice a week to improve strength in all major muscles.



Guideline 3:

Adults should aim to minimise the time they spend sitting and break up long periods of time sitting down.

