

Physical Activity Recommended for Health (AfPE, 2013)

Early Years (Under 5s)

1. Physical activity should be encouraged from birth, particularly through floor-based play and water-based activities in safe environments
2. Children of pre-school age who are capable of walking unaided should be active for at least 180 minutes (three hours), spread throughout the day
3. All under 5s should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (being restrained or sitting) for extended periods (except time spent sleeping).

Children and Young People (5 – 18 years)

1. All children and young people should engage in moderate# to vigorous* intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day
2. Vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week.
3. All children and young people should minimise the amount of time being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

Adults (19 – 64 years)

1. Adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more
2. Alternatively, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or a combination of moderate and vigorous intensity activity.
3. Adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.
4. All adults should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

Older Adults (65+ years)

1. Older adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits, including maintenance of good physical and cognitive function. Some physical activity is better than none, and more physical activity provides greater health benefits.
2. Older adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more.
3. For those who are already regularly active at moderate intensity, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or a combination of moderate and vigorous intensity activity.
4. Older adults should also undertake physical activity to improve balance and co-ordination on at least two days a week.
5. Older adults at risk of falls should incorporate physical activity to improve balance and co-ordination on at least two days a week.
6. All older adults should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

Moderate intensity activity#

Causes the participant to breathe faster, experience an increase in heart rate and feel warmer. They could continue a conversation quite comfortably.

Vigorous Intensity Activity*

Results in the participant breathing very hard, being short of breath, having a rapid heart rate and not being able to carry out a conversation comfortably.