



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

# Healthmatters **Getting every adult active every day**





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## 1. What's recommended?

Adults in England should aim to take part in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week, according to guidelines from the UK chief medical officers.

Moderate intensity physical activities, such as brisk walking or cycling, cause adults to get warmer and breathe harder and their hearts to beat faster, but they can still carry on a conversation.

As well as being physically active, all adults are advised to minimise the time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

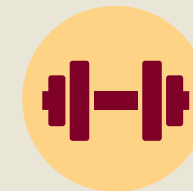
Many adults spend in excess of seven hours per day sedentary, and this typically increases with age.

## How much physical activity should you do?



This can also be achieved by 75 minutes of vigorous activity across the week or a mixture of moderate and vigorous

All adults should undertake muscle strengthening activity, such as



exercising  
with weights



yoga



or carrying  
heavy shopping

at least 2 days a week

Minimise the amount of time spent sedentary (sitting) for extended periods





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## 2. How active are we?

People in the UK are around 20% less active now than in the 1960s. If current trends continue, we will be 35% less active by 2030.

We are the first generation to need to make a conscious decision to build physical activity into our daily lives.

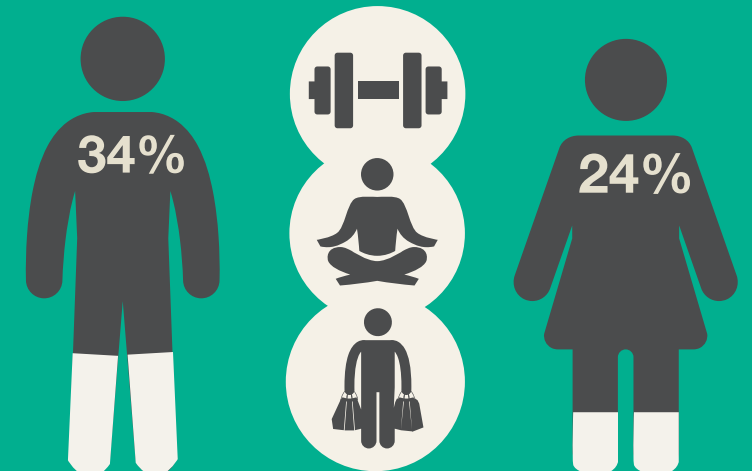
Fewer of us have manual jobs. Technology dominates at home and at work, the two places where we spend most of our time. Societal changes have designed physical activity out of our lives.

Increasing car use is a major contributing factor to lower levels of physical activity in the UK. In 1961, 69% of households did not own a car or van, but by 2012 this had decreased to 25%.

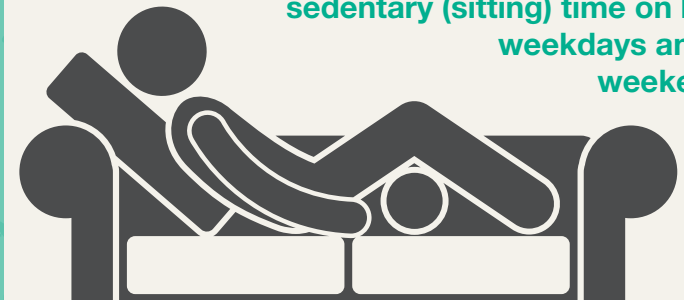
**1 in 4 women and 1 in 5 men** in England are **classed as physically inactive** – doing less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week



**Only 34% of men and 24% of women** undertake muscle-strengthening activities at least twice a week



**Men are more likely than women to average 6 or more hours of total sedentary (sitting) time on both weekdays and at weekends**





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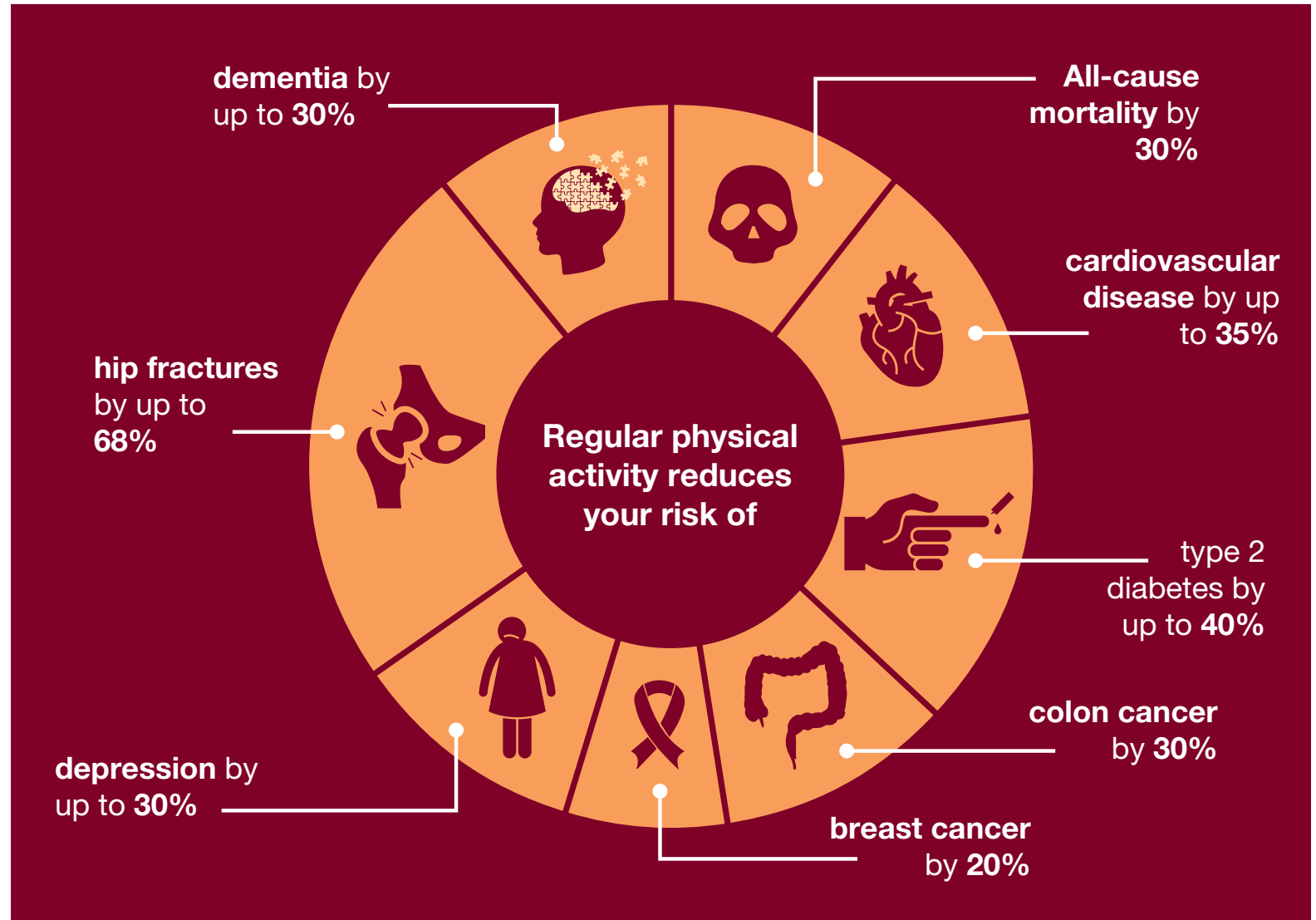
## 3. What are the health benefits of physical activity?

The first Sports Strategy in 13 years heralds a new approach which shifts the balance of investment to focus more on encouraging inactive and underrepresented groups to become more active.

Any physical activity is better than none. Start small and build up gradually. As little as 10 minutes of physical activity at a time provides physical and mental health benefits.

Persuading inactive people to become more active could prevent 1 in 10 cases of stroke and heart disease in the UK and 1 in 6 deaths from any cause.

In fact it's often said that if physical activity was a drug it would be classed as a wonder drug.





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## 4. How can we increase population physical activity?

PHE's national physical activity framework, Everybody Active Every Day, identifies four areas for local and national action.

### 1. Active society

People are more likely to be active if it is seen as 'normal', and if their friends and peers are also active.

### 2. Moving professionals

1 in 4 patients would be more active if advised by a GP or nurse.

### 3. Active environments

Our homes, workplaces and local environments should be designed to encourage physically active.

### 4. Moving at scale

Positive change needs to happen at every level, in every region and be measurable.

## Promote active travel



**Incorporate physical activity into everyday life, such as walking, cycling or combining with public transport instead of travelling by car**



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## 5. Creating an appetite for a revolution in physical activity

To scale up interventions, we need to base them on targeted community needs and then evaluate what really works.

Local health and wellbeing boards have the knowledge and understanding of their local communities and assets to make systematic implementation a reality.

Other key players include:

- health and social care commissioners
- NHS and other public sector organisations
- the sports and leisure sector
- community groups
- employers

It is important to note that this is not just about new investment – it is more about maximising existing assets.

### Call to action



**Health and social care commissioners** to integrate physical activity into clinical and social care pathways and services.



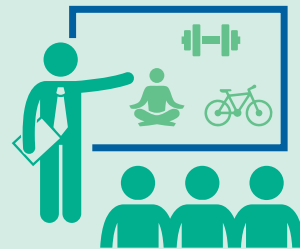
**County sports partnerships** to work with private and public sector organisations to promote workplace physical activity opportunities.



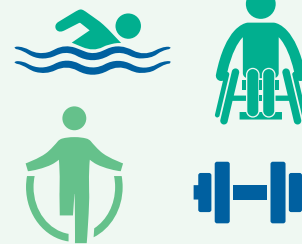
**NHS and other public sector organisations** to support active travel for staff and the public through active travel planning and local activation events.



**Local enterprise partnerships** and local authorities planners to invest in cycling and walking infrastructure to support local businesses with active travel and active retail.



**Health and social care providers** and sports and leisure providers to upskill staff to better support inactive people to become active every day.



**Local authorities** to work with leisure, fitness and sport providers to maximise the potential of local physical activity assets.



**Employers** to support staff to be physically active and break up sedentary activity in the workplace.



Work with **community groups** to activate and maximise the potential of parks and green spaces.