

FINLAND

COUNTRY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2024

World Bank classification: High income
Total population: 5 548 241
Median age (years): 43.4
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (€): 37 560
GDP for health (%): 7.4
GDP for education (%): 5.5
GDP for sports (%): 1.4
Population, male (%): 49.4
Population, female (%): 50.6
Life expectancy, males (years): 78.7
Life expectancy, females (years): 83.8

Source: Eurostat
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00205/default/table?lang=en&category=t_demo.t_demo_mor



Photo: © Päivi Aalto-Nevalainen

► National recommendations on physical activity for health

Target groups included

YES	Children (< 5 years)	YES	During pregnancy
YES	Children and adolescents (5–17 years)	YES	During breastfeeding
YES	Adults (18–64 years)	YES	People with disability
YES	Older adults (≥ 65 years)	YES	People with chronic diseases
NO	Frail and very elderly adults (≥ 85 years)		

Early childhood (2016): <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/78924>

Other groups (updated 2024): <https://ukkinstituutti.fi/en/products-services/physical-activity-recommendations>

SUCCESS STORY

The websites, brochures and pictures that present national recommendations for physical activity for different target groups call for their use in exercise counselling and discussions with health-care customers. The materials are available in English, Finnish and Swedish and in plain Finnish on the ukkinstituutti.fi website. The pages were viewed more than 300 000 times in 2023, and support materials for the recommendations were viewed 50 000 times.

Online applications are available for assessing exercise by school-aged children, adolescents and adults. The web application gives a short written summary and a visual summary of the user's physical activity as compared with the recommendation. It also includes brief research information about the importance of physical activity for health and well-being and guides to tips for improving activity, if it appears to be necessary. The two applications are available in Finnish, Swedish and English. In 2023, the applications were used more than 23 000 times.



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Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

Sectors with surveillance systems



Health

YES



Education

YES



Sports

YES



Transport

YES

STATISTICS
YOUTH
ENVIRONMENT

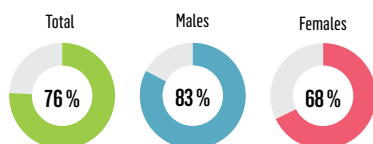
Other

YES

Prevalence of physical activity

Physical activity indicators

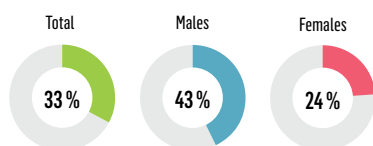
4 years



Piilo study, 2023; <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-263-739-0>

3 h/day of light, brisk or strenuous movement with at least 1 h/day of brisk or strenuous movement

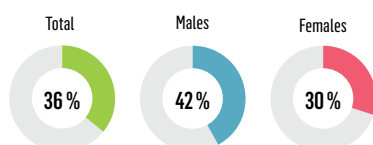
7–15 years



COSI, 2019; <https://www.hzjz.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Publikacija-Eurpska-inicijativa-pracenja-debljije-u-djece-Hrvatska-2021.2022.-CroCOSI.pdf>

≥ 60 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day, according to an accelerometer

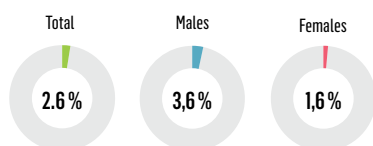
7–15 years



COSI, 2019; <https://www.hzjz.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Publikacija-Eurpska-inicijativa-pracenja-debljije-u-djece-Hrvatska-2021.2022.-CroCOSI.pdf>

On how many days a week has the respondent been physically active for at least 60 min/day?

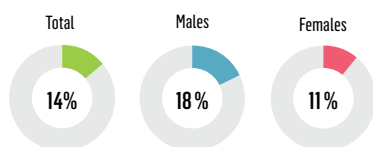
16–20 years



EHIS, 2019; <https://www.hzjz.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/EHIS-publikacija.pdf>

≥ 60 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day, according to the accelerometer

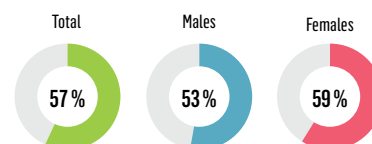
16–20 years



EHIS, 2019; <https://www.hzjz.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/EHIS-publikacija.pdf>

On how many days a week has the respondent been physically active for ≥ 60 min/day

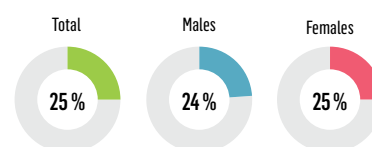
20–64 years



FINFIT2021, 2021–2022; <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/164370>

91 min of moderate physical activity and 414 min of vigorous physical activity

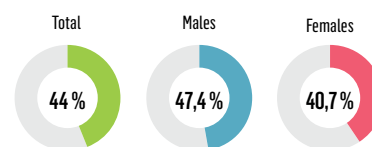
20–64 years



FINFIT2021, 2021–2022; <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/164370>

Moderate physical activity = ≥ 150 min/week or ≥ 75 min/week of vigorous physical activity or moderate physical activity + 2 times vigorous physical activity = ≥ 150 min/week and ≥ 2 times/week muscle strengthening and/or motor ability training

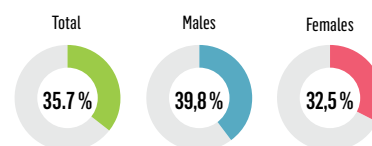
20–64 years



National Healthy Finland Study, 2022; <https://thl.fi/en/research-and-development/research-and-projects/healthy-finland-survey>

Moderate physical activity for ≥ 150 min/week or vigorous physical activity for ≥ 75 min/week or combination with muscle strengthening ≥ twice/week

≥ 65 years



National Healthy Finland Study, 2022; <https://thl.fi/en/research-and-development/research-and-projects/healthy-finland-survey>

Moderate physical activity for ≥ 150 min/week or vigorous physical activity for ≥ 75 min/week or combination with muscle strengthening ≥ twice/week

► National government coordination mechanism and leadership on the promotion of physical activity

The Sports and Physical Activity Policy Coordination Body, established in 2020 by the Ministry of Education and Culture, supports all ministries and sectors in advancing physical activity. The body coordinates, monitors and evaluates the actions of ministries and sectors in sports policy. The body prepares ministries' actions for the Government Programme's "Get Finland Moving" programme. The body continues the previous work of the Steering Group for HEPA.

<https://okm.fi/en/policies-and-development-sport>

► Funding for the promotion of physical activity for health

Funding allocated specifically to physical activity promotion by sector



Health

YES



Education

YES



Sports

YES



Environment

YES



Urban planning

YES



Transport

YES

"GET FINLAND
MOVING"
PROGRAMME

Other

YES

► National policies or action plans for the promotion of physical activity for health

National policy highlights

National Nature Recreation Strategy 2030 and Action Plan 2023–2025

The aim of the National Nature Recreation Strategy 2030 is to improve the well-being of Finnish citizens by fostering a connection with nature and enhancing appreciation of natural environments. Its strategic goals include improving accessibility to natural environments, promoting health and well-being through outdoor activities, ensuring sustainability in nature recreation, identifying resources and fostering cooperation among stakeholders and encouraging diverse recreational uses of nature. It targets all Finnish citizens, particularly those with health and well-being challenges. The aim is to enhance public health and well-being, foster greater appreciation and sustainable use of natural resources and increase participation in outdoor recreational activities.

<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/164145>

The National Transport System Plan 2021–2032

The programme for the promotion of walking and cycling in Finland, led by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, increases the requirements for walking and cycling in municipalities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from traffic and promote public health. The goal is to achieve a 30% increase in walking and cycling by 2030, which is equivalent to 450 million additional walks and bike journeys, corresponding to 35–38% of all travel. The anticipated outcomes include reduced traffic emissions, fewer road accidents, improved public health and significant societal cost savings, amounting to billions of euros. The measures include developing infrastructure and land use, allocating funds, shaping public opinion, enhancing economic direction and legislation, fostering collaboration, identifying responsible parties and promoting active travel.

<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/160720>

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National On the Move Programme Family

The national promotion programme for physical activity, i.e. National On the Move Programme Family, promote a physically active lifestyle for different age groups and demographic groups. The programmes are financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. On the Move programmes includes:

Families on the Move <https://www.liikkuvaperhe.fi>

Early Childhood Education and Care on the Move <https://liikkuvavarhaiskasvatus.fi>

Finnish Schools on the Move <https://liikkuvakoulu.fi/en/home/>

Studies on the Move <https://liikkuvaopiskelu.fi/>

Adults on the Move <https://liikkuvaaikuinen.fi/en/>

Older people on the move <https://www.ikainstituutti.fi/in-english/older-people-on-the-move/>

<https://okm.fi/en/promotion-of-physical-activity>

National policies or action plans for the promotion of physical activity for health



- 1 Government report on sports policy
<https://okm.fi/-/valtioneuvosto-antoi-selonteon-liikuntapolitiikasta>
- 2 Get Finland Moving Programme
<https://okm.fi/suomi-liikkeelle>
- 3 Government resolution for promoting health and well-being
<https://stm.fi/en/-/hallitus-maaratietoiset-toimet-turvaavat-kestavan-hyvinvoinnin-kaikissa-elamanvaiheissa-vuoteen-2030-mennessa>
- 4 National health and well-being programme Terveystieteiden (To Your Health)
<https://stm.fi/etusivu>
- 5 Sustainable Growth Programme for Finland – boosting reforms and investments – Valtiovarainministeriö (vm.fi)
<https://vm.fi/etusivu>
- 6 National Nature Recreation Strategy 2030 and Action plan 2023–2025
<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/164145>; <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/165226>
- 7 Healthy Parks, Healthy People Finland
<https://julkaisut.metsa.fi/assets/pdf/lp/Muut/healthyparks.pdf>
- 8 Programme for the promotion of walking and cycling
https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/160720/LVM_5_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- 9 The National Transport System Plan 2021–2032
https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163391/VN_2021_77.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- 10 National on the Move Programme Family
<https://okm.fi/en/promotion-of-physical-activity>

Sectors involved in the design of the policy or action plan



Health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sports	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Urban planning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Transport	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Plan for evaluation of a specific policy



Policy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Target groups included



General population	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Children < 5 years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Children and adolescents (5–17 years)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Adults	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Older adults (≥ 65 years)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frail/elderly (≥ 85 years)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
People with disability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
People with chronic diseases	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pregnant women	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Breastfeeding women	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low socio-economic groups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ethnic minorities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Deprived of liberty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Migrants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Unemployed people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



SUCCESS STORY

In the Get Finland Moving Programme 2024–2027, the Government's aim is to increase physical activity in every age group. To achieve this, a cross-administrative programme is being established to promote physically active lifestyles and functional capacity. The programme comprises 16 actions with a total of 35 measures for the administrative branches of ministries. The programme is implemented and monitored by a ministerial working group on physically active lifestyles and functional capacity, which is one of seven ministerial working groups. The programme shall have a full-time secretariat. The coordination body for sport policy is preparing the programme. An annual appropriation of € 20 million will be allocated for implementation for 2024–2027.

<https://okm.fi/suomi-liikkeelle>

► Sports clubs for health

Finland implements the WHO Guidelines for sports clubs for health programmes through its national quality programme, "Tähtiseura" (Star Club), launched in 2018. It encompasses all sports associations and caters to all age groups, from children and adolescents to adults and elite athletes. The principles are embedded in Tähtiseura to ensure that national and regional sports associations and individual clubs are committed to promoting health through sports. An auditing system supports implementation of the principles by clubs. This system provides the Finnish Olympic Committee and other stakeholders with real-time data on the number of clubs that actively integrate sports clubs for health principles into their offers. The Star Club website connects clubs, associations and policy-makers to the Sports Clubs for Health website, facilitating access to relevant resources and tools. As of March 2024, 618 Tähtiseura clubs representing 47 sports disciplines had been certified. The clubs cover multiple certified areas, catering to children and adolescents (604 clubs for 47 sports), adults (167 clubs for 32 sports) and elite athletes (25 clubs for 6 sports). Finland has an estimated 6000–13 000 sports clubs, depending on the definition used.

<https://www.olympiakomitea.fi/en/our-services/our-services-for-sports-clubs/>

► Increasing access to exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups

Finland has a multifaceted approach to enhancing access to exercise and physical activity for socially disadvantaged groups, including disabled people, immigrants, ageing populations and people with low economic means. They prioritize inclusion by mainstreaming considerations of accessibility into sports policy and funding. The Government's comprehensive 2018 report, "The State as a promoter of adapted physical activity and para sports", describes the extensive cross-sectoral work conducted, beyond the Ministry of Education and Culture, to foster physical activity and para sports through diverse projects and grants. In 2023, the Ministry of Education and Culture introduced guidelines for discretionary Government grants for construction of sports facilities, ensuring accessibility, non-discrimination and ecological sustainability. These initiatives are designed to create inclusive sports environments and ensure equal opportunities for participation and engagement in various roles.

<https://minedu.fi/-/valtioneuvosto-antoi-selonteon-liikuntapolitiikasta;>

<https://www.sportscience.fi/adapted-physical-activity/apa-related-research-in-finland/the-government-as-a-promoter-of-adapted-physical-activity-and-para-sports.html;>

<https://www.liikuntaneuvosto.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Liikuntapaikkarakentamisen-suunta-asiakirja.pdf>

► Counselling on physical activity and exercise prescription






The national sports council commissioned a report on HEPA as part of education in the health-care and social welfare sector. The report shows that health-care and social welfare education and training programmes include a few courses that directly involved promotion of exercise and physical activity. The only exception was physiotherapy, in which exercise and physical activity were discussed.

<https://www.liikuntaneuvosto.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Terveystta%CC%88-edista%CC%88va%CC%88-liikkuminen-ja-liikunta-osana-sote-alan-koulutuksia.pdf>



FINLAND

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Health professionals who are trained in health-enhancing physical activity

						WELLNESS COACHES
	Medical doctors	Physiotherapists	Nurses	Nutritionists/ dieticians	Psychologists	Other health professionals
	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
Undergraduate	YES	YES	—	—	—	—
Postgraduate	YES	—	—	—	—	YES
	Optional	Mandatory				Optional

Physical education in schools

Primary schools	Average per week	Secondary schools	Average per week	
	2–3 Mandatory		5–6 Optional	Average per week: In General Upper Secondary education there are two compulsory modules (1 module = 2 study Points-approximately 28 h and 30 min. Mandatory hours: In General Upper Secondary education there are two compulsory modules (1 module = 2 study points = approximately 28 h and 30 min) and 3 national voluntary modules.
			If you have a course, you have 5–6 h/week. If you don't have a course, you have 0 h/week	

HEPA in training of physical education teachers

YES	Part of undergraduate studies	Mandatory	—	Part of postgraduate studies
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SUCCESS STORY

Health education is an independent subject for grades 7–9, ensuring that students learn the theory of HEPA. Physical education teachers are trained in both physical and health education, with a strong focus on HEPA content. In the Move! system, 5th and 8th graders are monitored and receive feedback on their physical functional capacity. This system reaches entire age groups and is based on the expertise of health-care professionals, teachers and physical education teachers. Physical education teachers conduct measurements during lessons and integrate the data into extended health checks.

<https://www.oph.fi/en/education-and-qualifications/move-monitoring-system-physical-functional-capacity>

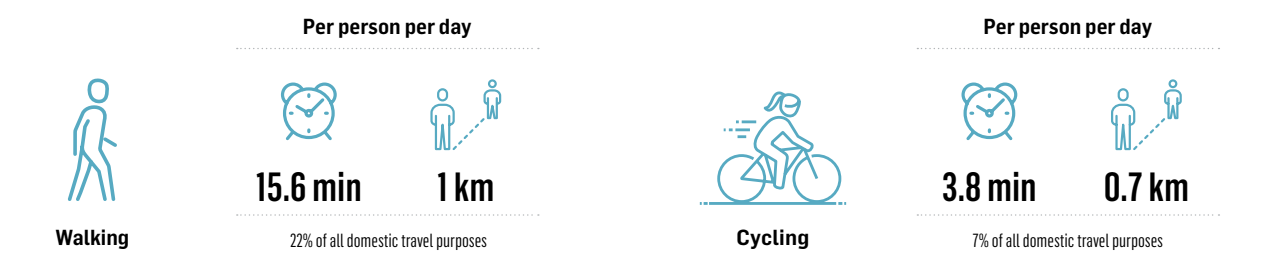


Promotion of physical activity in schools

YES	During school breaks	YES	After school
YES	During lessons	YES	Active travel to and from school

► National travel survey

Walking and cycling for all travel purposes (commuting, shopping, leisure, work)



► Infrastructure for leisure-time physical activity

In Finland, the European Guidelines for Improving Infrastructure for Leisure-time Physical Activity are part of the national strategy for improving leisure-time physical activity and sports facilities. The strategy promotes intersectoral collaboration, with application of research and development to sports facilities, expert advice and information about construction and maintenance and subsidies for local authorities for construction and renovation of facilities. This strategy has led to Finland being among the countries with the most sports facilities in the world in relation to the population.

► Promotion of physical activity in the workplace



Various entities promote active travel to work, including Traficom (Finnish Transport and Communications Agency) and the Finnish Road Safety Council and On the Move programmes. Workplace on the Move is a theme within the On the Move Programme funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. It recommends strategies for employers to promote physical activity among their employees, including active travel to work.

<https://liikkuvaakuinen.fi/en/>

Workplace on the Move also provides information, solutions and tools to employers at management level to help their employees integrate physical activity into their work days.

<https://liikkuvatyoelama.fi/en/workplaces-on-the-move/>

SUCCESS STORY

Since the beginning of 2021, employers have provided a bicycle benefit to employees in Finland, which has been very popular. A report indicated that the policy encouraged 40% of respondents to cycle more during snow-free periods, and 60% used electric bicycles. The benefit has reduced or even completely replaced driving. Workplace on the Move provides strategies and management recommendations to employers that have improved the quality of leadership and directly influenced the level of participation in physical activity by employees.

<https://www.vero.fi/en/individuals/tax-cards-and-tax-returns/income/earned-income/fringe-benefits-from-employment/>

The best methods to increase employees' physical activity at the workplace: <https://liikkuvatyoelama.fi/en/recommendations-for-physical-activity-promotion-at-work/>

► Community interventions for older adults



National guidance or programme for community interventions to promote physical activity in older adults

YES

Two programmes for community interventions promote physical activity in older adults: Strength in Old Age and Older People on the Move. Strength in Old Age promotes independence, autonomy and quality of life for older adults, especially those experiencing a decline in functional capacity. The services include exercise counselling, guided strength and balance training and opportunities for daily exercise and outdoor exercise. The activities are locally organized in cooperation with nongovernmental organizations, municipalities and older adults. The programme includes systematic evaluation of success. Older People on the Move is part of the On the Move Programme but for improving the physical and social capacity of people aged ≥ 65 and ≥ 75 years who live independently at home but have early signs of functional decline and older people in home care, service housing or institutional care. Activities are designed, developed and launched in collaboration with nongovernmental organizations, municipalities and other actors.

<https://www.voimaavanhuiteen.fi/en/>; <https://www.ikainstituutti.fi/in-english/older-people-on-the-move/>

► National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

Exercise Day of Your Dreams: an annual event in which individuals and organizations host exercise events, inspired by WHO's Move for Health Day.

Finland – an Active Nation and People: a long-term initiative by the Finnish Olympic Committee to promote well-being throughout society by encouraging commitments to an active lifestyle.

Stair Days: a campaign that encourages working-age people to choose stairs over lifts, with various promotional materials.

Etukeno Online Events: Free sessions addressing active lifestyles and immobility and discussing the role of physical activity in the working life.

School campaigns: "Salaliiketeoria" for primary schools and "Sisu-treenit" for secondary schools. Both promote physical activity during the school day.

Adventure campaign: Encourages family activities and provides tools for discussing physical activity, part of the Joy in Motion and Families on the Move programmes.

Campaigns for the elderly:

Go Out with the Elderly: Annual challenge to take elderly individuals for walks;

National Outdoor Day for the Elderly: Promotes outdoor activities in September;

Older People on the Move Week: Offers movement opportunities and information on training; and

National Senior Dance Day: encourages senior participation in dance on 29 April.

European Week of Sport and Schools Action Day: Promote sport and physical activity for school-aged children across Europe.

National Cycling Challenge and Week: Campaigns promoting cycling through events and challenges at workplaces and schools.

Marketing campaigns on national television: Various campaigns to promote physical activity.

Get Finland Moving Programme's different campaigns

<https://suomiliikkeelle.fi/en/get-finland-moving/>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYNE6MNSElc>

Media used in national campaigns



Television

YES



Radio

YES



Newspapers

YES



Social media

YES



Public events

YES



Public figures

YES

Acknowledgments

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