

# ITALY

## COUNTRY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2024

World Bank classification: High income  
Total population: 59 030 133  
Median age (years): 48  
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (€): 28 250  
GDP for health (%): 7.1  
GDP for education (%): 4.1  
GDP for sports (%): 0.8  
Population, male (%): 48.8  
Population, female (%): 51.2  
Life expectancy, males (years): 80.7  
Life expectancy, females (years): 84.8

Source: Eurostat  
[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00205/default/table?lang=en&category=t\\_demo.t\\_demo\\_mor](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00205/default/table?lang=en&category=t_demo.t_demo_mor)



Photo: © Lorenzo Spizzichino

### ► 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 |
| YES | Frail and very elderly adults (≥ 85 years) |     |                              |

Link to national recommendations: [https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C\\_17\\_pubblicazioni\\_3285\\_allegato.pdf](https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pubblicazioni_3285_allegato.pdf) [https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C\\_17\\_pubblicazioni\\_2828\\_allegato.pdf](https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pubblicazioni_2828_allegato.pdf)

#### SUCCESS STORY

The National Prevention Plan 2020–2025 states that physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour contribute to the burden of chronic diseases and significantly affect healthy ageing. One of the strategic objectives of the Plan is promotion of conscious adoption of a healthy, active lifestyle at all ages and in life and work settings, integrating individual change and social transformation. One of the programmes is Active Communities, with the objectives of encouraging participatory planning of intersectoral interventions at regional and local levels for promotion of physical activity; programmes to increase physical activity in all age groups; facilitating the inclusion of people at socio-economic disadvantage and in fragile situations; and providing adequate information to citizens on opportunities for physical and sporting activities in their communities. All the Italian regions have developed a regional prevention plan, with specific objectives and related indicators. The guidelines are available to health-care and non-health-care workers, decision-makers and stakeholders involved in promoting physical activity and preventing noncommunicable diseases, outlining their skills and roles so that they can design and implement effective interventions.

<https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/prevenzione/dettaglioContenutiPrevenzione.jsp?id=5772&area=prevenzione&menu=vuoto>



# ITALY

## COUNTRY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2024

### ► Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

#### Sectors with surveillance systems



Health

YES



Education

YES



Sports

NO



Transport

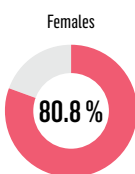
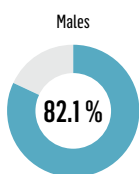
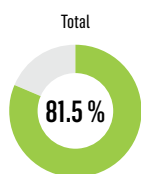
NO

### ► Prevalence of physical activity

#### Physical activity indicators

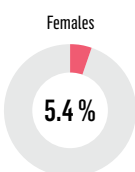
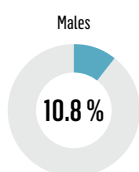
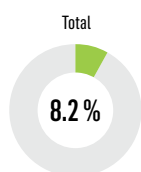
##### 6–10 years

OKKIO alla SALUTE, 2023; <https://www.epicentro.iss.it/okkioallasalute/la-sorveglianza>



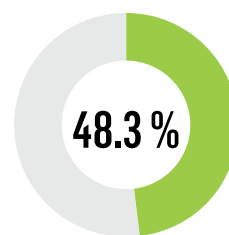
##### 11–15 years

HBSC, 2022; <https://www.epicentro.iss.it/hbsc/indagine-2022-attivita-fisica>



##### 18–69 years

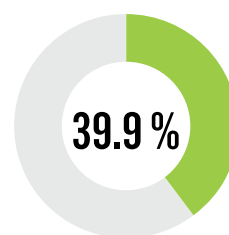
Total



Progressi delle Aziende Sanitarie per la Salute in Italia (PASSI), 2022–2023; <https://www.epicentro.iss.it/passi/dati/attivita-oms>

##### ≥ 65 years

Total



PASSI D'Argento, 2021–2022; <https://www.epicentro.iss.it/passi-argento/dati/attivita-oms>

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

Although there is no formal national Government coordination mechanism, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Department for Sport at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and National Olympic and Paralympic Committees are working on HEPA. Moreover, since 2023, the Constitutional Charter of Italy considers the right to health as inalienable and fundamental and recognizes the educational, social and psychophysical well-being value of sporting activity in all its forms.

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

#### National policy highlights

##### National Prevention Plan 2020–2025

The Plan is designed to guide prevention and health promotion throughout the country. Its aim is to support the health and sustainability of the National Health Service through evidence-based actions, ensuring effectiveness, equity and sustainability. In a “One Health” approach, the plan addresses the interconnected health of humans, animals and the environment. It sets out six main objectives: tackling noncommunicable diseases, addressing addiction, reducing road and domestic accidents, improving workplace safety, managing environmental and climate-related health issues, and controlling priority infectious diseases. Regions are required to develop regional prevention plans that reflect the national goals. The plan also includes a robust evaluation system to track progress and outcomes, ensuring that improvements in health and equity are continuously monitored and achieved.

<https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/prevenzione/dettaglioContenutiPrevenzione.jsp?id=5772&area=prevenzione&menu=vuoto>

##### Essential levels of assistance

The essential levels of assistance are core health services provided by Italy's National Health Service to all citizens, either free of charge or for a small fee, funded through general taxation. The essential levels of assistance promote physical activity to prevent noncommunicable diseases, offering counselling by health professionals and implementing programmes in schools, workplaces and communities. These initiatives increase physical activity, particularly targeting at-risk groups. This comprehensive approach includes promoting healthy lifestyles, organized screening programmes and interventions tailored to encourage regular physical activity and reduce the chronic disease burden.

<https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/lea/dettaglioContenutiLea.jsp?lingua=italiano&id=1300&area=Lea&menu=leaEssn>

##### Gaining health: making healthy choices easy

The strategy, led by the Ministry of Health, promotes physical activity and healthy lifestyles by engaging all sectors of society. This comprehensive initiative targets the prevention and treatment of diseases through intersectoral policies at national, regional and local levels. It emphasizes the importance of an active lifestyle for the entire population, including those with disabilities and mental health issues, and supports practical actions such as walking groups, guided routes for children and sports opportunities for the disabled. The strategy also addresses eating disorders through educational programmes in schools and collaboration with sports organizations. The goal is to encourage lifelong healthy habits, prevent obesity and enhance physical and psychological well-being for all age groups.

[https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C\\_17\\_opuscoliPoster\\_25\\_allegato.pdf](https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_opuscoliPoster_25_allegato.pdf)

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



- 1 National Prevention Plan 2020–2025  
<https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/prevenzione/dettaglioContenutiPrevenzione.jsp?id=5772&area=prevenzione&menu=vuoto>
- 2 Essential Levels of Assistance in the National Health System  
<https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/lea/dettaglioContenutiLea.jsp?lingua=italiano&id=1300&area=Lea&menu=leaEssn>
- 3 Gaining Health: Making Healthy Choices Easy  
[https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C\\_17\\_opuscoliPoster\\_25\\_allegato.pdf](https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_opuscoliPoster_25_allegato.pdf)

#### Sectors involved in the design of the policy or action plan



|           |   |   |   |                |   |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|---|----------------|---|---|---|
| Health    | 1 | 2 | 3 | Environment    | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Education | 1 | 2 | 3 | Urban planning | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Sports    | 1 | 2 | 3 | Transport      | 1 | 2 | 3 |

#### Plan for evaluation of a specific policy



|        |   |   |   |
|--------|---|---|---|
| Policy | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--------|---|---|---|



### Target groups included

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

### ► Sports clubs for health

Italy has not implemented the WHO Guidelines for Sports Club for Health Programmes due to lack of information and possibly insufficient focus on aligning sports clubs with the guidelines. Instead, Italy promotes physical activity and healthy lifestyles through national programmes and associations such as the Italian Union of Sport for All, the Italian National Olympic Committee and the Italian Paralympic Committee. These organizations collaborate with regional governments to develop regional prevention plans and apply validated good practices in different contexts and age groups. They also work with national, regional and local entities to define and implement strategic objectives and policies that encourage a culture of active living and healthy lifestyles throughout the country.

### ► Increasing access to exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups

Increasing access to exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups is a focus of the Active Communities programme within the National Prevention Plan. The aim is to foster healthy and active lifestyles to help control noncommunicable diseases. It specifically engages individuals with disabilities, those facing mental health challenges and people in socio-economic hardship, who are typically less active and harder to reach. The programme conducts regional and local intersectoral interventions to mitigate risk factors, promote active ageing and decrease the prevalence of diseases and disabilities. Activities include mapping available opportunities for physical activity and ensuring that information about access is readily available to disadvantaged populations.

### ► Counselling on physical activity and exercise prescription

The National Prevention Plan promotes counselling on healthy behaviour, including physical activity, by health professionals in both the public and private sectors, in primary care and hospitals. The Italian guidelines (2021) consider exercise as a therapeutic tool for chronic diseases like cancer, obesity, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, to improve overall health and the quality of life.

### ► Physical education in schools

Primary  
schools



Average  
per week

1

Mandatory

Secondary  
schools



Average  
per week

2

Mandatory

### HEPA in training of physical education teachers

|                          |                               |           |                          |                              |           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Part of undergraduate studies | Mandatory | <input type="checkbox"/> | Part of postgraduate studies | Mandatory |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|

### ► Promotion of physical activity in schools

|                                     |                      |                          |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | During school breaks | <input type="checkbox"/> | After school                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | During lessons       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Active travel to and from school |

### ► National travel survey

The PASSI surveillance system collects information on active travel for usual journeys.

### ► Infrastructure for leisure-time physical activity

The Italian Union of Sport for All, a national sports association, has participated in formulating the European Guidelines for Improving Infrastructures for Leisure-time Physical Activity in the past few years and has been supporting and developing policies for the creation of national inter-sectoral strategic alliances for promoting health and active life policies through sport.

<https://www.uisp.it/nazionale/polinternazionali/impalanet>

### ► Promotion of physical activity in the workplace



**National guidance or programme to promote active travel to work (e.g. walking, cycling)**

**YES**

The National Prevention Plan 2020–2025 promotes adoption of a healthy, active lifestyle at all ages and in both life and work settings. The programme “Workplaces that Promote Health” supports health promotion in the workplace according to the Workplace Health Promotion model recommended by WHO. All the Italian regions have developed a regional prevention plan, identifying specific objectives and related indicators.

<https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/prevenzione/dettaglioContenutiPrevenzione.jsp?id=5772&area=prevenzione&menu=vuoto>

### ► Community interventions for older adults



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

**YES**

The National Prevention Plan includes a programme Active Communities, the specific objectives of which are to 1) encourage participatory planning of intersectoral interventions at regional and local levels for the promotion of physical activity; 2) implement programmes to increase physical activity for all, focusing on the inclusion of people at socio-economic disadvantage and in fragile situations; 3) promote active ageing to reduce the burden of disease and disability; and 4) provide adequate information to citizens on opportunities for physical and sporting activity in their communities.

<https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/prevenzione/dettaglioContenutiPrevenzione.jsp?id=5772&area=prevenzione&menu=vuoto>

► **National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity**

Communication campaigns have been conducted to raise awareness about the health benefits of regular physical activity and sport and the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles at all ages.

<https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/stiliVita/homeStiliVita.jsp>

**Media used in national campaigns**



Television

YES



Radio

NO



Newspapers

NO



Social media

YES



Public events

YES



Public figures

NO

Last updated: 4 November 2024.

**Acknowledgments**

This publication was funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the WHO Regional Office for Europe and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



© World Health Organization 2024. Some rights reserved. This work is available under the CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo>).