

PORTUGAL

COUNTRY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2024

World Bank classification: High income
Total population: 10 352 042
Median age (years): 46.8
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (€): 19 310
GDP for health (%): 7.1
GDP for education (%): 4.3
GDP for sports (%): 0.9
% Population, male (%): 47.6
% Population, female (%): 52.4
Life expectancy, males (years): 78.9
Life expectancy, females (years): 84.5

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



Photo: © Sílvia Vermelho

► 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)		

Link to national recommendations: <https://www.dgs.pt/programa-nacional-para-a-promocao-da-atividade-fisica/materiais-de-divulgacao/recomendacoes-de-atividade-fisica-da-oms-traducao-portuguesa1.aspx>

► Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

Sectors with surveillance systems



Health

YES



Education

YES



Sports

YES



Transport

NO

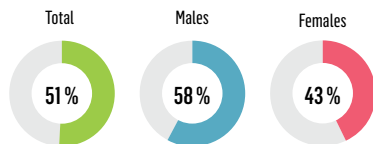
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COUNTRY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2024

► Prevalence of physical activity

Physical activity indicators

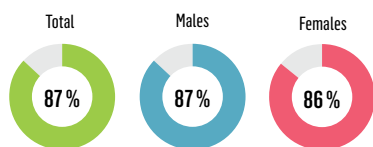
5–18 years



Survey on the Sporting Habits of the Portuguese School, 2022; <https://www.dgeec.medu.pt/api/ficheiros/65a93bf2971e5229a27665ea>

Extracurricular sports practice with a coach or teacher

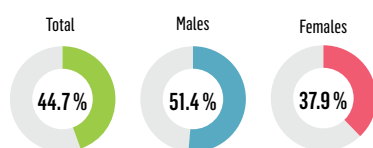
5–18 years



Survey on the Sporting Habits of the Portuguese School, 2022; <https://www.dgeec.medu.pt/api/ficheiros/65a93bf2971e5229a27665ea>

Independent physical activity

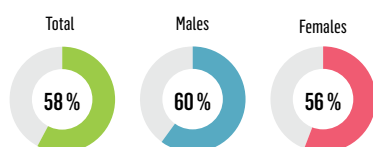
15–29 years



Physical activity assessment in primary health care ongoing surveillance system, 2023; https://www.dgs.pt/programa-nacional-para-a-promocao-da-atividade-fisica/ficheiros-externos-pnpaf/relatorio_pnpaf_2023_v11-pdf.aspx

≥ 150 min/week of moderate physical activity

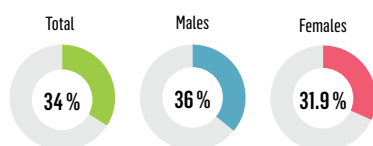
18–≥60 years



National Food Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey, 2015–2016; https://ian-af.up.pt/sites/default/files/IAN-AF%20Relat%C3%B3rio%20Resultados_0.pdf

> 150 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity

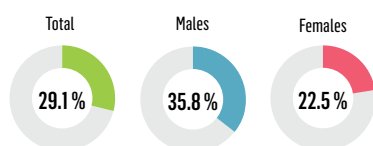
30–69 years



Physical activity assessment in primary health care ongoing surveillance system, 2023; https://www.dgs.pt/programa-nacional-para-a-promocao-da-atividade-fisica/ficheiros-externos-pnpaf/relatorio_pnpaf_2023_v11-pdf.aspx

≥ 150 min/week of moderate physical activity

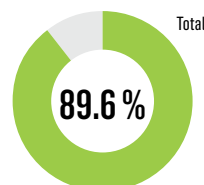
≥70 years



Physical activity assessment in primary health care ongoing surveillance system, 2023; https://www.dgs.pt/programa-nacional-para-a-promocao-da-atividade-fisica/ficheiros-externos-pnpaf/relatorio_pnpaf_2023_v11-pdf.aspx

≥ 150 min/week of moderate physical activity

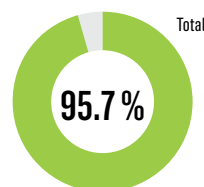
6–9 years



COSI, 2022; <https://repositorio.insa.pt/handle/10400.18/8630>

≥ 1 h/day on week days

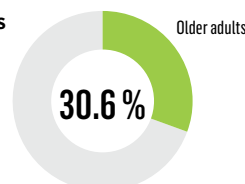
6–9 years



COSI, 2022; <https://repositorio.insa.pt/handle/10400.18/8630>

≥ 1 h/day at weekends

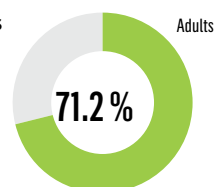
≥ 10–≥85 years



National Physical Activity and Sports Monitoring System, 2018; <https://fmh.devwork.pt/resultados/>

≥ 60 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity

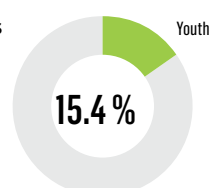
≥10–≥85 years



National Physical Activity and Sports Monitoring System, 2018; <https://fmh.devwork.pt/resultados/>

≥ 60 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity

≥10–≥85 years



National Physical Activity and Sports Monitoring System, 2018; <https://fmh.devwork.pt/resultados/>

≥ 60 min of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity

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

The Intersectoral Commission for the Promotion of Physical Activity, established in 2017 by the Ministry of Health, integrates monitoring, evaluation and public dissemination of information on indicators of progress in the promotion of physical activity, raising awareness among social partners and in public opinion and drawing up, operationalizing and monitoring the National Action Plan for Physical Activity. The Commission is a platform for coordinating and involving various services and bodies, including regional structures, local entities and civil society organizations, to converge measures to promote creation of opportunities for continued physical activity and sport for all.

<https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/despacho/3632-2017-106943778>; <https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/despacho/12965-2023-442682954>; <http://www.panaf.gov.pt/>



SUCCESS STORY

Portugal's National Strategy for Active Mobility (walking and cycling) 2020–2030 is led by the Secretary of State for Mobility. A Project Group is responsible for its implementation, and three governance structures ensure development and coordination of public policies. The Interministerial Commission for Active Mobility consists of members of the Government who are responsible for internal administration, justice, finance, sport, the economy and the sea, science, technology and higher education, education, labour, solidarity and social security, health, the environment and climate action, infrastructure, housing and territorial cohesion. The Advisory Council for Active Mobility includes civil society organizations, while the Network of Focal Points for Active Mobility includes all 24 public entities responsible for implementing the 72 measures of the two strategies.

<https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/resolucao-conselho-ministros/131-2019-123666113>
<https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/resolucao-conselho-ministros/67-2023-215338988>

► 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

—



Urban planning

—



Transport

YES



SUCCESS STORY

The Universal Support System for Active Living (Sistema Universal de Apoio à Vida Ativa) programme is managed by the Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth (IPDJ) and funded by the Recovery and Resilience Plan for 2021–2026. Its aim is to significantly enhance physical and emotional well-being in Portugal. With a total funding of €10.02 million, the programme has three objectives: to launch a national communication campaign and technological platform by 2025 to promote the benefits of regular physical activity and encourage healthier lifestyles; to extend school sports into the community by providing approximately 20 830 bicycles and helmets to schools by the end of 2024; and to implement workplace initiatives promoting physical activity, with plans set for 2025.

<https://ipdj.gov.pt/projetos-cofinanciados>; <https://transparencia.gov.pt/pt/fundos-europeus/pr/beneficiarios-projetos/projeto/C01-i09/>

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

National policies highlights

Deduction of value-added tax for sports

The new tax incentive, effective from the 2024 State Budget, significantly enhances support for physical activity by increasing the value-added tax deduction for gym expenses from 15% to 30%. This measure allows taxpayers to deduct 30% of the tax paid on gym memberships, fitness centre activities and related sports and recreational education from their personal income tax. The change acknowledges the vital role of physical activity in maintaining both physical and mental health. Its aim is to encourage greater public participation in fitness and sports.

State Budget Law for 2024, article 78º-F, Law nº 82/2023, 29 December <https://files.diariodarepublica.pt/1s/2023/12/25000/0000200322.pdf>

Second National Plan for Youth (2022–2024)

The Plan promotes healthier lifestyles among young people through targeted initiatives. The components include fostering food literacy, encouraging regular physical and sporting activities and preventing substance abuse. By integrating these aims with national and international policies, the Plan provides a comprehensive framework for improving the well-being of youth and aligning Portugal's youth policies with global standards and objectives.

Eixo IV – Estilos de vida saudáveis <https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/resolucao-conselho-ministros/77-2022-200907658>

National Strategy for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities 2021–2025

The Strategy promotes physical activity to enhance health and well-being for individuals with disabilities. It integrates adapted sports and physical activities into school programmes and encourages lifelong participation in both formal and informal activities. By ensuring access to diverse sports and leisure opportunities, the Plan improves the quality of life and overall health of people with disabilities, in alignment with broader health promotion goals and fostering a more inclusive society. The Strategy involves several Government areas: the National Institute for Rehabilitation coordinates its implementation, supported by the Strategy's Monitoring Committee and the Technical Monitoring Group.

<https://www.inr.pt/documents/11309/284924/ENIPD.pdf>

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



- 1 National Programme for Promotion of Physical Activity
<https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/despacho/6401-2016-74443131>
- 2 National Strategy for Active Mobility 2020–2030
<https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/resolucao-conselho-ministros/131-2019-123666113>
<https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/resolucao-conselho-ministros/67-2023-215338988>
- 3 National Sports for All Programme
<https://ipdj.gov.pt/programa-nacional-de-desporto-para-todos>
- 4 School Sports
<https://desportoescolar.dge.medu.pt/>
- 5 Programme FITescola®
<https://fitescola.dge.mec.pt/home.aspx>
- 6 Plan 21|23 School +
- 7 Deduction of value-added tax for sports
<https://files.diariodarepublica.pt/1s/2023/12/25000/0000200322.pdf>
- 8 II National Plan for Youth (2022–2024)
<https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/resolucao-conselho-ministros/77-2022-200907658>
- 9 National Strategy for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities (2021–2025)
<https://www.inr.pt/documents/11309/284924/ENIPD.pdf>

Sectors involved in the design of the policy or action plan



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

Plan for evaluation of a specific policy



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

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

► Sports clubs for health

The WHO Guidelines for Sports Club for Health Programmes have not yet been implemented in Portugal. The IPDJ plans to re-engage with project coordinators and use the Clube TOP initiative. Clube TOP is designed to enhance the effectiveness of grassroots sports clubs by improving their management practices and resource use, helping them become more sustainable and to serve their communities better. While Clube TOP does not apply the health guidelines, it could be instrumental in promoting and implementing them. The National Sport for All Programme is actively supporting local sports clubs and non-profit organizations to encourage physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour; it provided funding to 406 organizations in 2023.

<https://ipdj.gov.pt/programa-nacional-de-desporto-para-todos>; <https://clubetop.ipdj.gov.pt/ProgramaClubeTOP/>; <https://ipdj.gov.pt/clube-top>

► Increasing access to exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups

Although there is no specific public policy to encourage physical activity for socio-economically disadvantaged groups, various measures have been taken. The Escolhas Programme, active since 2001, supports vulnerable youth by integrating sports into its broader mission of social inclusion and community engagement, with over 1000 participants. In the National Strategy to Combat Poverty 2021–2030, sports are used to combat poverty and foster community connections. The National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination 2021–2025 and migrant integration programmes include sports to support marginalized groups and migrants. Funding is also provided to organizations such as Social Innovation Sports and Associação Cais for sports-based community integration projects.

Escolhas Programme: <https://www.programaescolhas.pt/infoe9g>; <https://candidatura.programaescolhas.pt/files/rcm-74-2023.pdf>; <https://candidatura.programaescolhas.pt/files/regulamento-pe-e9g.pdf> <https://www.programaescolhas.pt/>

National Strategy to Combat Poverty 2021–2030: <https://files.dre.pt/1s/2021/12/25100/0001900030.pdf>

National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination 2021–2025: <https://files.diariodarepublica.pt/1s/2021/07/14500/0002000072.pdf>

Associação Cais – Projeto Futebol de Rua: <https://www.socialinnovationsports.org/>; <https://www.ais.pt/futebol-de-rua/m>

► Counselling on physical activity and exercise prescription

Since 2017, the Portuguese Health Ministry has promoted physical activity in the National Health Service, especially for adult patients in primary health care. Two digital tools have been developed. A tool for assessing physical activity and sedentary behaviour in electronic health records (SCLínico) includes a "traffic light" system based on WHO recommendations: red for ≥ 7 h/day, yellow for 4–6 h/day and green for 0–3 h/day.

<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/3/815>

A brief counselling tool contains five guides tailored to patients' motivational and physical activity levels. The self-explanatory guides can be delivered via phone, email or print. A decision algorithm helps to select the appropriate guide.

<https://www.dgs.pt/programa-nacional-para-a-promocao-da-atividade-fisica/materiais-de-divulgacao/guias-para-avaliacao-e-aconselhamento-breve.aspx>

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Health professionals who are trained in health-enhancing physical activity

					
	Medical doctors	Physiotherapists	Nurses	Nutritionists/ dieticians	Psychologists
	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Undergraduate	YES	YES	—	—	—
Postgraduate	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
	Mandatory / Optional	Mandatory / Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional

SUCCESS STORY

VANGUARD is funded by the European Union Erasmus+ Programme to develop and implement undergraduate training in health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) for front-line health professionals to promote physical activity and better health outcomes for European citizens. VANGUARD involves institutions from six European countries, one of which is the Institute of Public Health of the University of Porto.

<https://vanguard-erasmus.eu/project/>

Physical education in schools

Primary schools	Average per week	Secondary schools	Average per week
	2		3
	1–3 Mandatory		3 Mandatory

HEPA in training of physical education teachers

YES	Part of undergraduate studies	Mandatory	NO	Part of postgraduate studies
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Promotion of physical activity in schools

YES	During school breaks	YES	After school
NO	During lessons	YES	Active travel to and from school

► National travel survey

The Population and Housing censuses are the largest statistical surveys conducted in Portugal. They take place every 10 years to obtain information on the entire resident population, households and housing. They also collect information on mobility but only for commuting (home to work or home to school) and only on the main mode of travel used.

► Infrastructure for leisure-time physical activity

Although the European Guidelines for Improving Infrastructure for Leisure-time Physical Activity have not been applied systematically, programming and implementation of physical activity and leisure infrastructures are being included increasingly in public policies. For example, the National Spatial Planning Policy Programme in the territorial management system is used to define the objectives and strategic options for territorial development and the organizational model of the national territory. The Programme serves as the reference framework for other territorial programmes and plans and to guide strategies with a territorial impact.

► Promotion of physical activity in the workplace



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

YES

One of the goals proposed by the National Strategy for Active Cycling Mobility 2020–2030 is promotion of active travel to work. This is intended to contribute to the decarbonization of mobility, favouring more sustainable travel options such as cycling. It includes measures and strategic areas to maximize the health benefits to the population of removing cars from the streets, constructing cycle paths, reorganizing public spaces, relieving urban congestion and reducing noise levels and air pollution. It also maximizes benefits for health, economy, employment, environment and citizenship.

<https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/resolucao-conselho-ministros/131-2019-123666113>

► Community interventions for older adults



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

YES

In Portugal, promotion of sports for older adults is a focus in organizations such as the National Sports for All Programme. The 2023 edition supported 174 projects specifically for seniors; many other initiatives also included people >65 years. The programme includes research on sports participation, prioritizing older adults, women, girls and people with disabilities, particularly during 2024–2025. The European Week of Sport also highlights activities for this age group. Local councils are actively developing sports programmes to enhance the quality of life, health and social well-being of seniors.

<https://ipdj.gov.pt/programa-nacional-de-desporto-para-todos>; <https://www.cm-tvedras.pt/seniores/desporto-senior>; <https://www.cm-almada.pt/viver/desporto/alma-senior>

SUCCESS STORY



Viseu, the European City of Sport 2024, has implemented the Viseu Ativo programme, a multisectoral community initiative for healthy ageing of seniors with a biopsychosocial approach. Now in its 16th edition, the programme has had a significant impact, engaging over 2520 participants in 126 activity groups supported by 60 local promoters and eight strategic partners. In more than 340 classes weekly, participants enjoy diverse activities such as athletics, boccia, pilates and Tibetan yoga. The programme also includes the WHO Every Move Counts challenge, encouraging daily physical activity for all.

<https://www.cm-viseu.pt/pt/areas-servicos/desporto-atividade-fisica/programas-projetos-desportivos/atividade-senior-2/>

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► National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

The IPDJ is responsible for national coordination of the European Week of Sport on 23 and 30 September. The aim is to promote sports and, inherently, physical activity, as part of a healthier lifestyle. The initiative is targeted to all segments of the European population, regardless of their age, sex, social context or level of physical fitness. With the motto #BeActive, the goal is to encourage each citizen to be active during the Week and to remain active throughout the year.

Link: <https://beactiveportugal.ipdj.pt/>

Media used in national campaigns

						IPDJ WEBSITE; BEACTIVE PORTUGAL WEBSITE; STAKEHOLDERS WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA
Television	Radio	Newspapers	Social media	Public events	Public figures	Other
YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

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