

SPAIN

COUNTRY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2024

World Bank classification: High income
Total population: 47 432 893
Median age (years): 45.1
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (€): 24 810
GDP for health (%): 6.9
GDP for education (%): 4.4
GDP for sports (%): 1.2
Population, male (%): 49
Population, female (%): 51
Life expectancy, males (years): 80.5
Life expectancy, females (years): 85.9

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



Photo: © Jose Melendro

► 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.sanidad.gob.es/areas/promocionPrevencion/actividadFisica/recomendaciones.htm>
<https://www.sanidad.gob.es/areas/promocionPrevencion/actividadFisica/recomendaciones.htm>



SUCCESS STORY

Each of the 17 autonomous communities in Spain has developed a plan for prescribing HEPA.

Andalucía: <https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/organismos/transparencia/planificacion-evaluacion-estadistica/planes/detalle/459424.html>;
Madrid: <https://www.comunidad.madrid/transparencia/informacion-institucional/planes-programas/programa-prescripcion-actividad-fisica-y-ejercicio-fisico>;
Valencia: <https://presidencia.gva.es/es/web/deporte/en-moviment>

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► Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

Sectors with surveillance systems



Health

YES



Education

YES



Sports

YES



Transport

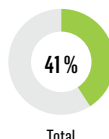
NO

► Prevalence of physical activity

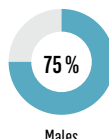
Physical activity indicators

6–9 years

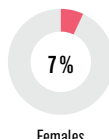
ALADINO study, 2019; https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/nutricion/detalle/aladino_2023.htm



Total



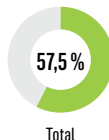
Males



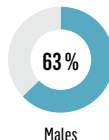
Females

≥ 15 years

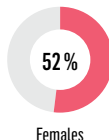
ALADINO study, 2019; https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/nutricion/detalle/aladino_2023.htm



Total



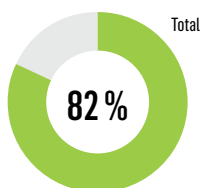
Males



Females

15–24 years

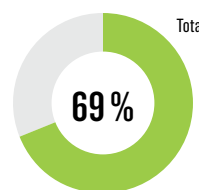
ALADINO study, 2019; https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/nutricion/detalle/aladino_2023.htm



Total

35–44 years

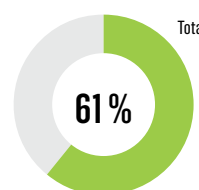
ALADINO study, 2019; https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/nutricion/detalle/aladino_2023.htm



Total

45–54 years

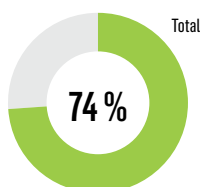
ALADINO study, 2019; https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/nutricion/detalle/aladino_2023.htm



Total

25–34 years

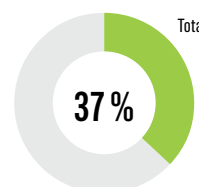
ALADINO study, 2019; https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/nutricion/detalle/aladino_2023.htm



Total

≥ 55 years

ALADINO study, 2019; https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/nutricion/detalle/aladino_2023.htm



Total

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

The High Council of Sports coordinates the Healthy Habits working group of the Autonomous Communities, established in 2021. This group was created to coordinate actions for HEPA policies and to distribute Next Generation Funds. Biannual meetings have been held to share good practices in HEPA programmes. The heads of sports of the Autonomous Communities are represented.

► Funding for the promotion of physical activity for health

Funding allocated specifically to physical activity promotion by sector



Health

YES



Education

—



Sports

—



Environment

—



Urban planning

—



Transport

—

SUCCESS STORY

The Physical Activity and Physical Exercise Prescription Programme was approved of Health Department and Department of Sports of the Community of Madrid. It is financed with Next Generation EU funds through the Higher Council of Sports and aims to promote health through physical activity and exercise in an innovative way. This is achieved by implementing a coordinated system between the health and sports sectors in the region, allowing health-care services to prescribe physical activity and, when appropriate, refer individuals to municipal sports programmes through an organized, standardized process.

<https://www.comunidad.madrid/transparencia/informacion-institucional/planes-programas/programa-prescripcion-actividad-fisica-y-ejercicio-fisico>



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

National policy highlights

National Strategy for the Promotion of Sport against Sedentary Lifestyles and Physical Inactivity

The Strategy uses a multi-faceted approach to increase physical activity in various sectors. It includes interventions in schools to increase physical activity among children and youth and health measures to combat sedentary lifestyles and their associated health risks. The strategy also emphasizes the importance of sustainable development in creating environments conducive to physical activity, in both urban and rural settings. Workplace initiatives foster active lifestyles among employees, and social inclusion is ensured by equitable access to sports and physical activities for all, particularly marginalized groups.

Spanish Strategy for Nutrition, Physical Activity and Prevention of Obesity

The aim of the strategy is to combat obesity in a comprehensive approach that includes health protection, prevention and promotion throughout the life cycle. The strategy includes measures for children and adolescents and also for vulnerable socio-economic groups. It encourages creation of supportive environments to encourage healthy eating and regular physical activity. To ensure long-term effectiveness, the strategy includes robust mechanisms for follow-up, monitoring and evaluation, with voluntary agreements and periodic adjustments based on ongoing assessments. Supported by WHO, it has broad participation by institutions and international bodies to address obesity in families, communities, schools, businesses and health systems.

https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/docs/documentos/nutricion/NAOS_Strategy.pdf

The Physical Activity and Physical Exercise Prescription Programme

The Physical Activity and Exercise Prescription Programme was approved by all Spanish autonomous communities. It is funded by the EU's Next Generation funds through the Consejo Superior de Deportes, to promote health through innovative physical activity. The programme integrates health-care and sports sectors, allowing health-care services to prescribe physical activity and refer individuals to municipal sports programmes, such as Active Physical Exercise Units. The programme is based on training health personnel in prescribing physical activity and exercise, training physical activity and sport professionals in the benefits of physical activity in people with different pathologies, implementing these programmes in a certain number of municipalities and including a digital tool that allows referral of health personnel to sports personnel and implementation of programmes designed by professionals in the sports sector.

<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2022/07/18/pdfs/BOE-A-2022-11933.pdf>

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



- 1 National Strategy for the Promotion of Sport against Sedentary Lifestyles and Physical Inactivity
In preparation by the Government
- 2 Spanish Strategy for Nutrition, Physical Activity and Prevention of Obesity
https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/docs/documentos/nutricion/NAOS_Strategy.pdf
- 3 Physical Activity and Physical Exercise Prescription Programme
<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2022/07/18/pdfs/BOE-A-2022-11933.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
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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

The WHO Guidelines for Sports Club for Health Programmes have not been implemented, primarily because Spanish sports clubs prioritize competitive sports over health promotion. Although these clubs foster good health habits among athletes, their focus on competition has limited adoption of guidelines centred on health. For the Guidelines to be implemented, the focus of sports clubs might have to be shifted towards integrating health promotion into their programmes more effectively.

► Increasing access to exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups

Currently, there is no comprehensive national policy for increasing access to exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups. The responsibility for such initiatives is delegated mainly to Autonomous Communities and municipalities. The central Government provides support by funding awareness campaigns and subsidizing relevant projects. Successful examples, such as JACTIVA and the Bono Deporte Xunta de Galicia (Sports Bonus of Galicia), promote physical activity among disadvantaged populations. Similar programmes would enhance access and engagement in physical exercise in different social groups.



<https://grupoeypaf.unizar.es> <https://www.bonodeporte.gal/es/merchant>

► Counselling on physical activity and exercise prescription

Spain's exercise prescription system tailors a unified strategy to each Autonomous Community and for the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, in a collaboration between the health and sports sectors. The system includes digital tools for efficient communication and referrals; exercise programmes for inactive individuals and those with health conditions; training for health professionals and physical and sports educators; handling of health referrals by local sports structures; active physical exercise units; and promoting accessible, resilient, effective health and sports systems for all citizens.

<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2022/07/18/pdfs/BOE-A-2022-11933.pdf>

► Physical education in schools

Primary schools	Average per week	Secondary schools	Average per week
	2.5 2 Mandatory		3 Mandatory

Primary education, 6–12 years: 2 h minimum per week; secondary education 12–16 years: 3 h minimum week in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades and 2 h minimum week in 4th grade; baccalaureate, 16–18 years: 2 h in 1st year and optional in 2nd year. Schools can offer health-related electives.

HEPA in training of physical education teachers

YES	Part of undergraduate studies	YES	Part of postgraduate studies
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► Promotion of physical activity in schools

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

SUCCESS STORY

The Xunta de Galicia launched the Sports Bonus programme to support the expenses of children's sports activities, building on the XOGADE programme, which promotes physical activity among Galician schoolchildren.

<https://xogade.xunta.gal/es>; https://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/docs/documentos/nutricion/premios/2023/6_Xunta_de_Galicia_como_referente.pdf



► National travel survey

The Spanish Network of Healthy Cities is a group of cities in the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces that adhere to the principles and activities of the WHO Healthy Cities programme to achieve stable collaboration in activities to promote healthier cities.

A healthy city is one in which the government is committed to putting health at the top of its social, economic and political agendas. It promotes a human approach to social development by prioritizing investment in people to improve equity and inclusion through greater citizen empowerment.

<https://recs.es/presentacion-recs/>

► Promotion of physical activity in the workplace

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

YES

In 2013, Spain launched a project, Healthy Companies, inspired by the work of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion and in response to the interest of the National Institute for Safety and Health at Work and the Xunta de Galicia in recognizing the work of companies in improving the health and well-being of their workers.

<https://www.insst.es/documents/d/portal-insst/plan-de-accion-2023-2024-esst-2023-2027>; <https://www.insst.es/documents/94886/4545430/Red+Espa%C3%B1ola+de+Empresas+Saludables.+Promoci%C3%B3n+de+la+Salud+en+el+Trabajo.+10+a%C3%B1os+2013-2023.pdf/dbcbaa1a-cc8a-ac94-cb73-31320af62817?t=1683547049541>

National guidance or programme to promote physical activity at the workplace

NO

Private companies are increasingly adopting active workplace plans, although no national guidelines have been issued. While such plans often include aspects such as nutrition, psychology and sustainable mobility, they lack a focus on promoting physical activity. Each company develops its own approach to encouraging physical activity at work.

► Community interventions for older adults



SUCCESS STORY

The Vivifrail project is an internationally recognized programme to promote physical exercise to prevent frailty and falls among the elderly. Used by over 5000 health professionals, it has assisted more than 15 000 individuals. Vivifrail is integrated into the European Union Health Promotion and Quality of Life Strategy and has been endorsed by Spain's Ministry of Health and regional entities. It has also attracted interest from WHO for implementation in countries with ageing populations.

<https://vivifrail.com/es/inicio/>

► National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

ACTIVATE: Health is trained is a Spanish Government initiative to combat sedentary lifestyles and promote physical activity. Funded by European Union Next Generation Funds, it encourages individuals to stop making excuses and commit themselves to a healthier lifestyle. Regular exercise is crucial for preventing and treating health conditions and improves mental health.

<https://www.csd.gob.es/es/el-csd-lanza-la-campana-activate-la-salud-se-entrena-para-combatir-el-sedentarismo>

Media used in national campaigns



Television

YES



Radio

YES



Newspapers

YES



Social media

YES



Public events

YES



Public figures

NO

Acknowledgments

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