

LATVIA

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2021

Total population: 1.89 m

Median age: 43.7 years

GDP per capita: 12 130 €

Life expectancy, males: 70.9 years

Life expectancy, females: 80.1 years

Sources: Eurostat (2020/2021)



National recommendations on physical activity for health

TARGET GROUPS INCLUDED

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children (< 5 years) | <input type="checkbox"/> Frail and very elderly adults (≥ 85 years) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children and adolescents (5–17 years) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnant and breastfeeding women |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults (18–64 years) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People with disabilities |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Older adults (≥ 65 years) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People with chronic diseases |

The recommendations are based on [WHO recommendations](#) (2010), [Physical activity guidelines for Americans](#) (2008) and [United Kingdom physical activity guidelines](#) and were implemented in 2014.

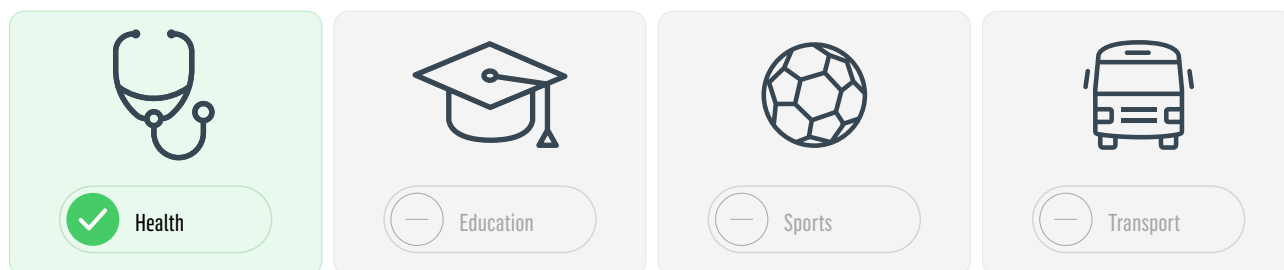
LATVIA

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2021

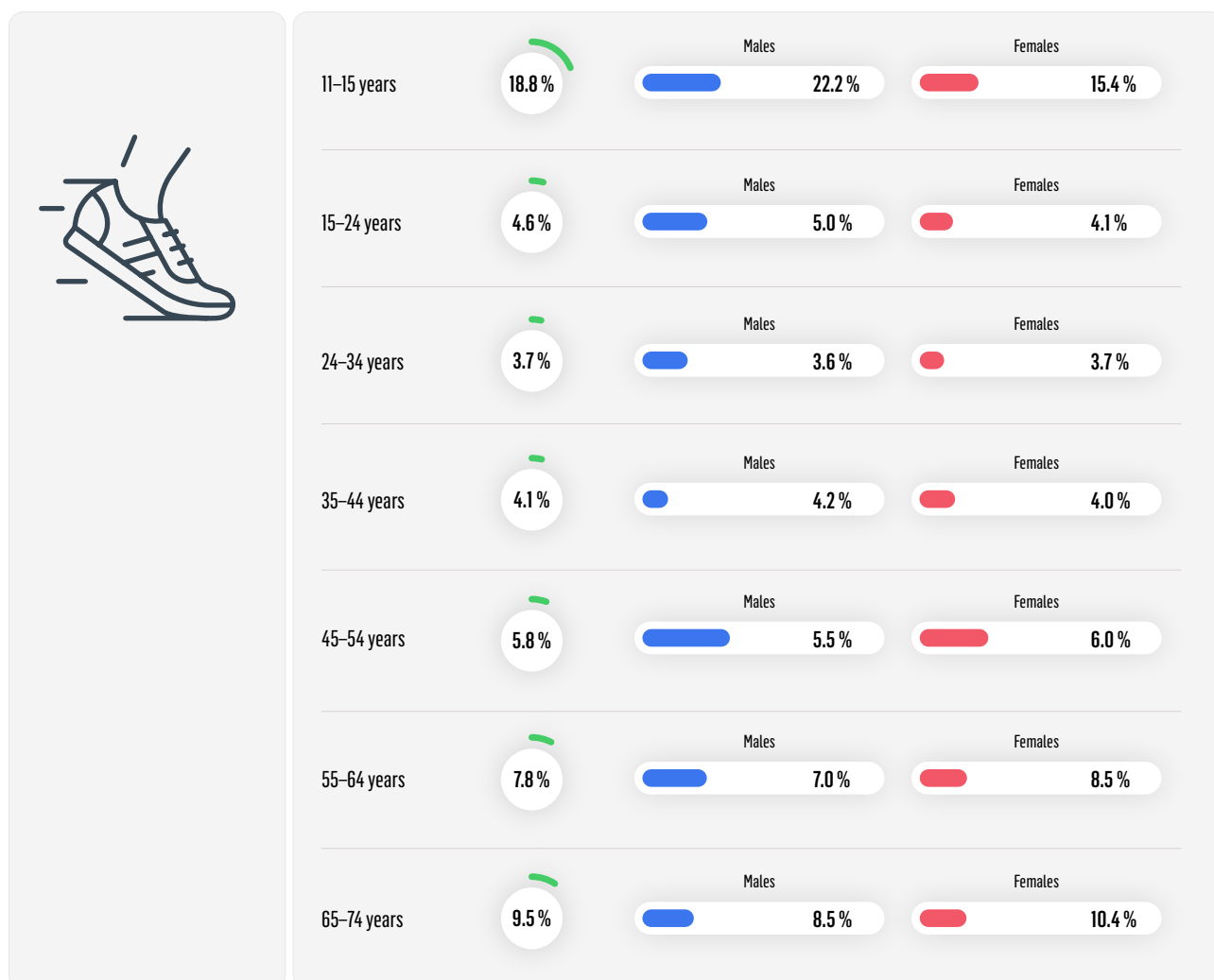


Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

SECTORS WITH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS



Estimated prevalence of sufficient physical activity levels



Levels of physical activity among children and adolescents were assessed from the [Health Behaviour of School-aged Children \(HBSC\)](#) survey in 2017–2018; data for adults and older adults were collected in the Health Behaviour of the Latvian adult population study in 2018.

LATVIA

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2021



Funding for the promotion of physical activity for health

FUNDING FOR THE PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR HEALTH

 <p>Health</p> <p>✓ Yes</p>	 <p>Education</p> <p>✓ Yes</p>	 <p>Sports</p> <p>✓ Yes</p>	 <p>Environment</p> <p>✓ Yes</p>	 <p>Urban planning</p> <p>✓ Yes</p>	 <p>Transport</p> <p>✓ Yes</p>
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Policy response



NATIONAL POLICIES OR ACTION PLANS FOR THE PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR HEALTH

- 1 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDELINES 2014–2020
- 2 SPORTS POLICY GUIDELINES 2014–2020

TOTAL NUMBER OF POLICIES

2



SECTORS INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN OF THE POLICY/ACTION PLAN

	1	2
Health	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓
Sports	✓	✓
Environment	○	○
Urban planning	○	○
Transport	○	○

POPULATION GROUPS TARGETED BY EACH POLICY



	1	2
General population	✓	✓
People with disabilities	✓	○



Children < 5	People with chronic diseases	Ethnic minorities
Children and adolescents (5–17)	Pregnant women	Deprived of liberty
Adults	Breastfeeding women	Migrants
Older adults (> 65)	Low socio-economic groups	Unemployed people
Frail/elderly (> 85)		

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

1 Public health guidelines 2014–2020. The aim is to increase the healthy life years of people by 3 years and to reduce health inequalities through a health promotion approach and the principle of “Health in all,” which involves a number of governmental entities and the private and public sectors. It seeks to increase physical activity or participation in sports at least once or twice weekly and raise awareness of the need for physical activity. It is directed at children and young people, including those with disabilities, in schools and higher education institutions.

2 Sports policy guidelines 2014–2020. The guidelines provide a plan to increase the engagement of children, young people and those with disabilities in sports and physical activities. It also supports sports activities (marathons, rollerblading, Nordic walking, cycling and team sport competitions) that promote health and social integration. It includes information and education campaigns to promote health through sports.

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2021



Sports clubs for health

Sports clubs in Latvia regularly organize campaigns to promote health-enhancing sports activities by providing free access to fitness centers and the health-enhancing sector for 2–3 days.

Increasing access to exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups

The [National Healthy Municipalities Network](#) supports local governments in local health promotion and exchange of good practices, experience and ideas for health-promoting environments.

The [health promotion guidelines](#) for local governments under the Ministry of Health include promoting physical activity through recreational activities and encouraging municipalities to invest in enhancing the physical environment to promote physical activity among various population groups, including people at risk of social exclusion.



SUCCESS STORY

The Ministry of Welfare in partnership with SUSTENTO, the Latvian entity that represents people with disabilities, published Guidelines for environmental accessibility of buildings, premises and public outdoor spaces, which provides recommendations for planning, designing and building sites that are comfortable, safe and provide equal access for everyone, including people with disabilities.

Counselling on physical activity and exercise prescription

"[Exercise prescription in general practice](#)" has been implemented in primary health care since 2014. Launched by the State Sports Medicine Centre, its aim is to promote the role of physical activity in the prevention of noncommunicable diseases. Physical activity guidelines have been published for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, overweight, cancer, pulmonary diseases, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and sarcopenia, as well as for healthy individuals and special population groups (the elderly, pregnant woman, children).

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE TRAINED IN HEALTH-ENHANCING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

	Medical doctors	Physiotherapists	Nurses	Nutritionists/ dieticians	Psychologists	Other health professionals*
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Undergraduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Postgraduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory

*Sports medicine physicians

LATVIA

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FACTSHEET 2021



Physical education in schools

PRIMARY SCHOOLS:

HOURS PER WEEK



2

Mandatory

SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

HOURS PER WEEK



3

Mandatory

Physical activity and health (e.g. health effects, determinants, effective interventions) is a mandatory component of the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum of physical education teachers. During accreditation, the State Education Quality Service is responsible for evaluating the quality of school programmes and lessons.

PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS



During breaks



During lessons



After school



Travel to and from school

The National Centre for Education has created [materials for teachers](#) to implement school breaks during lessons. The aims of the recommendations are to improve children's health and posture, reduce inactivity, break up long periods of sitting, raise awareness of the meaning of physical activity and accustom children to regular physical activity. Regular dynamic breaks last for 2–3 min.

Every primary and secondary school in the country has “pulciņš”, which are educational programmes or purposeful, voluntary and State-funded groups. Pulciņš are offered after school lessons and cover a wide range of activities such as art, music (choir), sports and dance, from which each child can choose freely according to their interests. The aim is to support individual educational needs and wishes regardless of age and education.

SUCCESS STORY

The aim of the [National Health-promoting Schools Network](#) is to unite schools that consider health promotion as one of the goals of the educational institution. It gives participating schools the opportunity to share experiences and gain new ideas on health promotion in educational institutions and health-promoting activities in daily work and study and to promote the health of children and employees. The programme is coordinated by the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control of the Ministry of Health.



National travel survey

The [European Health Interview Survey](#) was first conducted in Latvia in 2008 by the Central Statistical Bureau. The survey collects self-reported information on active transport, use of medical services, use of medicines and other health-related issues in the Latvian population, such as active travel.



WALKING

PERSON PER DAY



> 10 min

for 57.0 % of people



CYCLING

PERSON PER DAY



> 10 min

for 6.0 % of people

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Promotion of physical activity in the workplace

The National health guidelines 2021–2027 include a plan to develop a national healthy workplaces network. Currently, information on health promotion at work is provided online, administered by the State labour inspection.



SUCCESS STORY

Employees (civil servants) of the Riga municipality participate in an annual summer sports competition, including a volleyball tournament and a variety of sports, such as rock-climbing, stand-up paddle boarding, boarding, rowing and relay walking.

► <http://www.aprinkis.lv/index.php/sabiedriba/pasvaldibas/9638-foto-pasvaldibu-darbinieki-saulkrastos-noskaidro-pierigas-sportiskako-novadu>
► <https://www.fta.lv/it/2020/teams?tid=8>

Community-based interventions for older adults



NATIONAL GUIDANCE OR PROGRAMME
FOR COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTIONS
TO PROMOTE **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**
IN OLDER ADULTS



Yes

Municipalities have voluntary programmes. The Ministry of Health published "Health promotion guidelines for local governments", which included suggestions for promoting physical activity through recreational activities and guidance for municipalities in investing in the creation of physical activity-enhancing environments for various population groups, including older adults.

National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

Two national awareness-raising campaigns are conducted each year by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health.

MEDIA USED IN NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS



Television



Yes



Radio



Yes



Newspapers



Yes



Social media



Yes



Public events



Yes



Public figures



Yes



Other



Yes

SUCCESS STORY

The aim of the **"Move-nation" ("Kustinācija") campaign**, run by the Ministry of Health in 2019, was to promote daily physical activity through various educational activities. For example, an educational programme for kindergartens and schools was implemented throughout Latvia to promote physical activity from an early age. It included a tour of "movement ambassadors" or "custodians" to inspire representatives of companies, associations, municipalities and individuals to move more.

