National recommendations on physical activity for health

TARGET GROUPS INCLUDED

- Children (< 5 years)
- Children and adolescents (5–17 years)
- Adults (18–64 years)
- Older adults (≥ 65 years)
- Frail and very elderly adults (≥ 85 years)
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women
- People with disabilities
- People with chronic diseases

The recommendations were implemented in 2015 and are based on WHO recommendations (2010).

SUCCESS STORY

The Polygon for Physical Activity of School-Aged Children (the Polygon) was developed as an aid to conducting physical education classes in elementary schools in Croatia that do not have sports halls. By using the Polygon, all schools get the opportunity to conduct physical education classes and can use the Polygon to encourage their students to be physically active every day.
Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

SECTORS WITH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

- Health
- Education
- Sports
- Transport

Estimated prevalence of sufficient physical activity levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-65 years</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levels of physical activity among adolescents were assessed in the Health Behaviour of School-aged Children survey in 2017/2018; data for adults aged 15-65+ were collected through the European Health Interview Survey in 2019.

National government coordination mechanism and leadership in the promotion of physical activity

The Croatian Institute of Public Health coordinates the national health promotion programme, Healthy Living, established in 2015.

https://zdravlje.gov.hr/programi-i-projekti/nacionalni-programi-projekti-i-strategije/zivjeti-zdravo/2471

https://zivjetizdravo.eu/
Funding for the promotion of physical activity for health

FUNDING FOR THE PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR HEALTH

Health: Yes
Education: 
Sports: Yes
Environment: 
Urban planning: 
Transport: 

Policy response

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

1 NATIONAL HEALTH CARE STRATEGY 2012-2020
2 NATIONAL PROGRAMME “HEALTHY LIVING”
3 ACTION PLAN FOR PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES 2020-2026
4 NATIONAL SPORTS PROGRAM 2019-2026
5 SPORTS ACT
6 THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2030

TOTAL NUMBER OF POLICIES: 6

SECTORS INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN OF THE POLICY/ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POPULATION GROUPS TARGETED BY EACH POLICY

General population ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Children < 5 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Children and adolescents (5–17) ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Adults ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Older adults (≥ 65) ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Frail/elderly (≥ 85) ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
People with disabilities ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
People with chronic diseases ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Pregnant women ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Breastfeeding women ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Low socio-economic groups ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Ethnic minorities ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Deprived of liberty ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Migrants ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Unemployed people ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
3 Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2020–2026. This comprehensive action plan to promote healthier behaviours and prevention of diseases at population level actively targets high-risk groups and individuals. It seeks to significantly reduce the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases and premature mortality and includes specific objectives, such as the reduction of physical inactivity by at least 10% by 2026.

4 National Sports Programme 2019–2026. The National Sports Programme seeks to encourage the implementation of health-oriented physical activity programmes into the lives of all Croatians regardless of age, ethnicity and level of fitness. Its aim is to incentivize the population to exercise more regularly and increase the number of beneficiaries of free-of-charge physical activity programmes for children and young people. Implementation is carried out through educational campaigns, programmes and promotional activities that provide the conditions for recreational sport activities in people’s daily life activities. It involves collaboration and working in partnership among regional, national and local governing bodies.

6 The National Development Strategy 2030. The National Development Strategy to 2030 seeks to strengthen the implementation of activities under the national health promotion programme, Healthy Living. It will support the implementation of projects or programmes that promote and increase physical activity among children in kindergartens and schools. This includes investing in the construction of infrastructure for sports in primary and secondary schools. Actions to promote physical activity among the general population include improving the availability of sports and recreational infrastructure and providing training for professional sports and development staff through entrepreneurship programmes in the field of sports and recreation.

Counselling on physical activity and exercise prescription

The Counselling Centre for Nutrition and Physical Activity is part of the Croatian Institute of Public Health. It provides counselling services on nutrition and physical activity for all interested adults who want to adopt healthy living habits. Counselling services are offered by a team of experts, including a doctor, a nutritionist, a kinesiologist, a psychologist and a sanitary engineer.

SUCCESS STORY

Motivated by the Healthy Living programme, a multidisciplinary collaboration was established among eight schools of the University of Zagreb (School of Medicine, School of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, School of Kinesiology, School of Architecture, School of Design, School of Agriculture, School of Engineering and the Arts Academy). This initiative aims to create recommendations for building city playgrounds that will be more attractive to children and families. Participating students also learn about the role of physical activity in enhancing health. As a result, the project has been chosen for the Rector’s award for socially useful work.
Physical education in schools

A 10-minute exercise programme is implemented daily in elementary schools from 1st to 4th grade. It consists of general preparatory exercises lasting a total of 10 minutes between initiation and re-sitting at the desk. The exercise takes place in the classroom and can be practised both during school breaks and during lessons, although it is recommended that it be done at the beginning of the day as an awakening-up exercise or after the first half of the day’s work. The main goal is to create healthy habits and encourage children to exercise on a regular basis.

To encourage the adoption of regular physical activity during children’s leisure time after school, the Croatian Institute of Public Health, in collaboration with county public health institutes, initiated and implemented two activities, Walking towards Health and Volunteers in Parks, in all 21 Croatian counties. Infrastructure interventions were made within these activities. In cooperation with local communities, 21 parks and walking trails were adapted with new equipment and marked with motivating public health messages.

Promotion of physical activity in the workplace

There is no specific guidance to promote active travel to work or physical activity at the workplace. The Health-friendly Company campaign of the Healthy Living national health promotion programme, however, awards the Health-friendly Company title to companies that invest in and support healthy lifestyles among their employees.

Community-based interventions for older adults

There is national guidance or programme for community-based interventions to promote physical activity in older adults.
National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

The Croatian Institute of Public Health implemented the comprehensive health promotion project Healthy Living at national level in 2016. The goal of the project is to improve the health of the entire population through various activities that aim to inform, educate and raise awareness among the citizens of all age groups on positive aspects of healthy lifestyles.

MEDIA USED IN NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Television</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th>Social media</th>
<th>Public events</th>
<th>Public figures</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUCCESS STORY

The **Croatian Walking Festival**, organized by the Croatian Walking Association, the Lika-Senj County Tourist Board and Lika travel d.o.o, is held every year on the first weekend in September in Gospić and Otočac. Three routes in each city are used. The organizers provide official T-shirts, water, fruit and transport between the two cities as part of registration fees. The event encourages leisure walking across some of the most beautiful landscapes in the country.