



GERMANY

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

FACTSHEET 2021

Total population: 83.16 m

Median age: 45.9 years

GDP per capita: 34 310 €

Life expectancy, males: 79.0 years

Life expectancy, females: 83.7 years

Sources: Eurostat (2020/2021)



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 are based on [WHO recommendations](#) (2010) and [Physical activity guidelines for Americans](#) (2008) and were implemented in 2016.



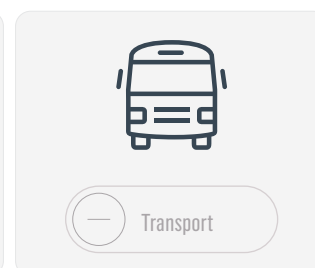
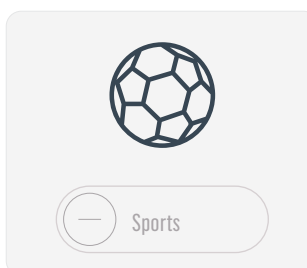
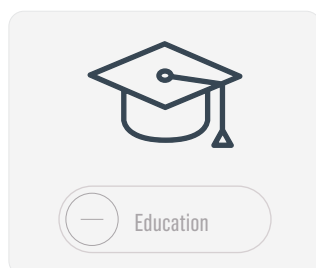
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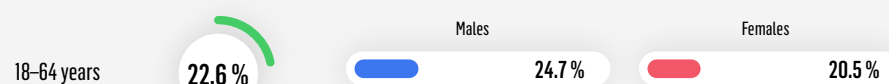
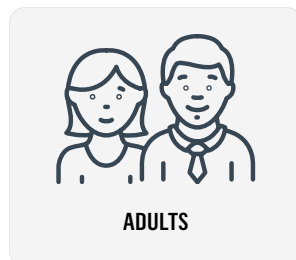
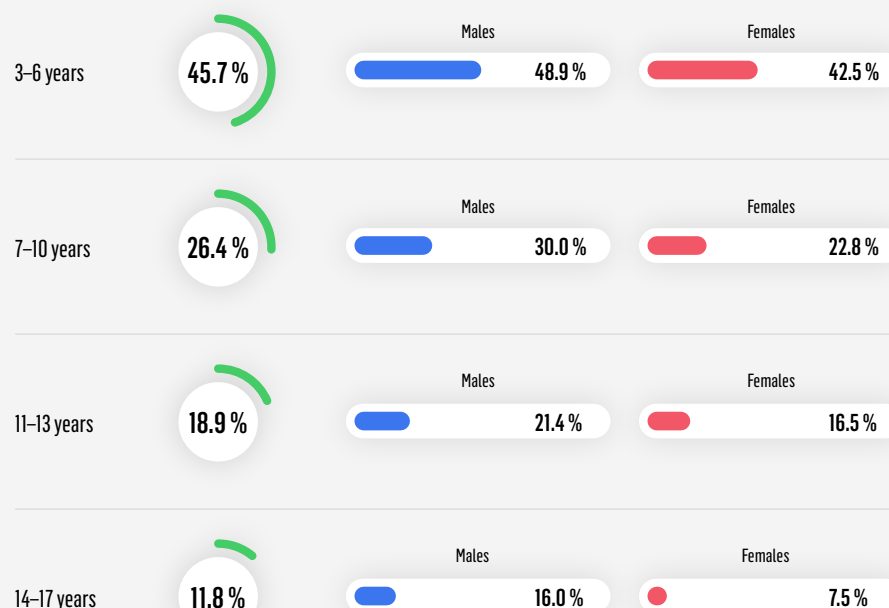
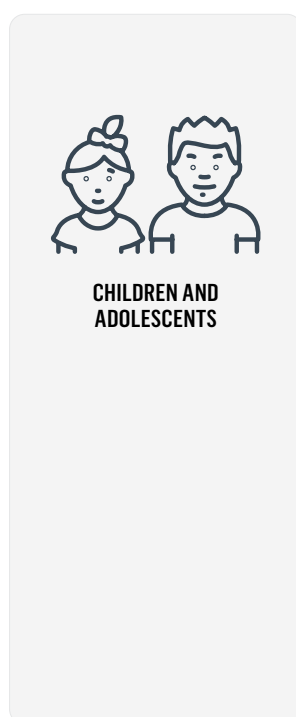
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Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

SECTORS WITH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS



Estimated prevalence of sufficient physical activity levels



Levels of physical activity among children (including those under 5 years) and adolescents were assessed in the [German Health Interview and Examination Survey for Children and Adolescents](#) 2014–2017; data for adults and older adults were collected through the [German Health Update](#) in 2014–2015.



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

The Federal Ministry of Health coordinates the National Working Group for health-enhancing physical activity promotion in daily living (Bewegungsförderung im Alltag), established in 2010. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has coordinated the National Working Group Sport for Development since 2013.

► <https://www.in-form.de> ► <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/19/091/1909150.pdf>



SUCCESS STORY

National coordination mechanisms for the National Action Plan **"IN FORM"**, Germany's initiative for healthy nutrition and more physical activity promoted: a national steering group; 16 networking units for day-care and school meals; 11 alliances for healthy lifestyles and living environments; 24 "Eat better. Move more" (Kinderleicht-Regionen), geared towards children; and the network a healthy start in life (Gesund ins Leben) for infants, mothers and families.

► <https://www.in-form.de/in-form/allgemein/> ► <https://www.in-form.de/materialien/in-form-zwischenbericht-kurzform/>

Funding for the promotion of physical activity for health

FUNDING FOR THE PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR HEALTH

						
Health	Education	Sports	Environment	Urban planning	Transport	Other*
☒ Yes	☒ Yes	☒ Yes	☒ Yes	☒ Yes	☒ Yes	☒ Yes

*Sports development cooperation

Policy response



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

- 1 PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE ACT (PRÄVENTIONSGESETZ)
- 2 NATIONAL ACTION PLAN IN FORM
- 3 NATIONAL CYCLING PLAN (NATIONALER RADVERKEHRSPLAN)
- 4 NATIONAL DEMENTIA STRATEGY (NATIONALE DEMENZSTRATEGIE)

TOTAL NUMBER OF POLICIES

4



SECTORS INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN OF THE POLICY/ACTION PLAN

	1	2	3	4
Health	☒	☒	☒	☒
Education	☒	☒	☐	☐
Sports	☒	☒	☒	☒
Environment	☒	☒	☒	☐
Urban planning	☒	☒	☒	☐
Transport	☒	☒	☒	☐

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POPULATION GROUPS TARGETED BY EACH POLICY

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

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

1 Preventive Health Care Act (Präventionsgesetz). The Act of 2015 requires that health and nursing care insurance companies invest in programmes to encourage health promotion and prevention. Next, the **National Prevention Conference** was created which consists of relevant stakeholders, health insurance companies, the Federal Government, the states (Bundesländer) and municipalities. Recommendations were adopted to improve the effectiveness and quality of current programmes on health promotion and to establish the **Prevention Guideline (Leitfaden Prävention)**, which sets the field of action and criteria to promote physical activity for statutory health insurers.

3 National Cycling Plan (Nationaler Radverkehrsplan). The aims are to promote health through cycling; provide a uniform, uninterrupted cycling infrastructure in urban and rural areas; and make Germany a country for cycling tourism. The Plan is under the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, which funded over 290 projects so far.

4 National Dementia Strategy. The aim of the Strategy is to accelerate the development of and access to cultural and sporting programmes for people with dementia. Local associations and networks with existing and new programmes to promote physical activity among people with dementia will work in partnership with national and regional government offices to provide information and expertise and ensure implementation of the programmes. A consultation will take place among stakeholders and academics to establish and extend funding for this type of programme. The programme will start receiving funds by the end of 2022.

► <https://nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/de/bund/nationaler-radverkehrsplan-nrvp-2020>

SUCCESS STORY



The **National Cycling Plan** funds the following activities: the **National Cycling Congress**, which takes place every 2 years, the German Cycling Prize and the Bicycle Climate Test. The National Cycling Congress brings together experts in the field of planning, academia, industry, public authorities and relevant associations to discuss challenges and opportunities to advance the vision of cycling. The German Cycling Prize is awarded every year to the best projects that promote cycling in the categories of infrastructure, service and communication. Similarly, the **Bicycle Climate Test** is a non-representative survey conducted every 2 years to measure the "bicycle climate", e.g., to determine changes over time and consider cycling friendliness in cities and communities. More than 230 000 people participated in the 2020 survey.

Sports clubs for health

The **German Olympic Sports Confederation (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund, DOSB)** is the non-governmental umbrella organization of German sports and one of the largest citizen movements in the country, with over 28 million memberships in over 90.000 sports clubs. One of its fields of expertise is health management and prevention. Within this field, the quality seal "Sports for Health" (Sport pro Gesundheit) was established in cooperation with the German Medical Association. All preventive health sport programs that are licenced with this quality seal must meet the core goals of health sport as well as the seal's



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own quality criteria. There are several more initiatives, for example the „Recipe for Exercise“ (Rezept für Bewegung) which was developed by the DOSB, the German Medical Association and the German Society for Sports Medicine. Another example is the “German Sports Badge” (Deutsches Sportabzeichen). Also noteworthy is a programme in cooperation with the German Cancer Aid called “Activity Against Cancer” (Bewegung gegen Krebs) that promotes health-enhancing physical activity for cancer prevention and also rehabilitation offering consultation and sport tools, modules, and games to get active.

Increasing access to exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups

The [Physical Activity Programme \(Alltags Training Programm\)](#) provides access to physical activity and sports activities close to peoples' homes. It is conducted in partnership with housing associations (which supply structural assistance) and welfare organizations (which provide networking). The exercise instructors are trained in implementing courses, and, within various municipal and federal branches of the German Red Cross, additional structures are being established in socially disadvantaged areas. The German Statutory Health Insurance Fund supports living environments, such as day-care centres, schools and municipalities to reduce socially determined and gender inequalities and to promote physical activity. The German cooperation network Equity in Health (Kooperationsverbund Gesundheitliche Chancengleichheit) supports health promotion to children, unemployed people, refugees and the elderly through physical activity in districts.

Counselling on physical activity and exercise prescription

The Federal Act to Strengthen Health Promotion and Preventive Health Care of 2015 includes counselling on physical activity and the possibility of medical prevention recommendations. Furthermore, in Germany the statutory health insurance companies include rehabilitation sports and functional training as a supplement to medical rehabilitation, and these are also prescribed by medical doctors. The [Federal Centre for Health Education \(Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung\)](#) supports statutory health insurance funds in providing health promotion and primary prevention in living environments.

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE TRAINED IN HEALTH-ENHANCING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

	 Medical doctors	 Physiotherapists	 Nurses	 Nutritionists/ dieticians	 Psychologists	 Other health professionals*
	☒ Yes	☒ Yes	☒ Yes	☐	☐	☒ Yes
Undergraduate	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☒
Postgraduate	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☒
	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory			Mandatory

*Psychotherapists

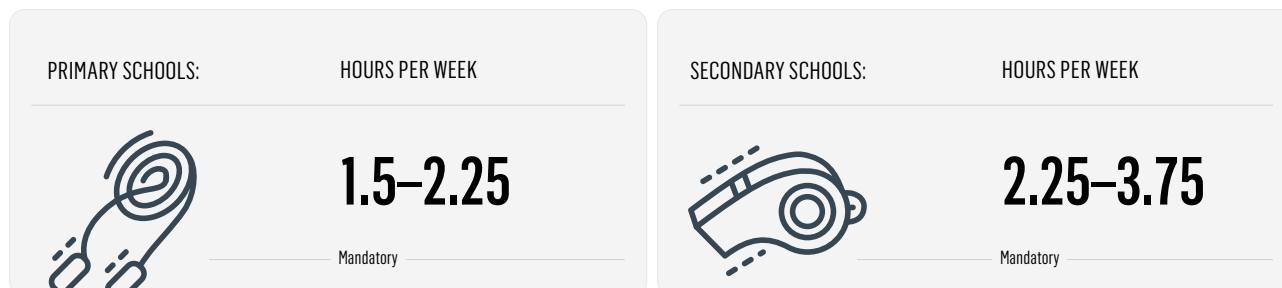


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Physical education in schools



Physical activity and its relation to health (e.g., health effects, determinants, effective interventions) is a mandatory subject in the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum of physical education teachers. The quality and content of physical education classes are evaluated regularly by State appointees.

PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS

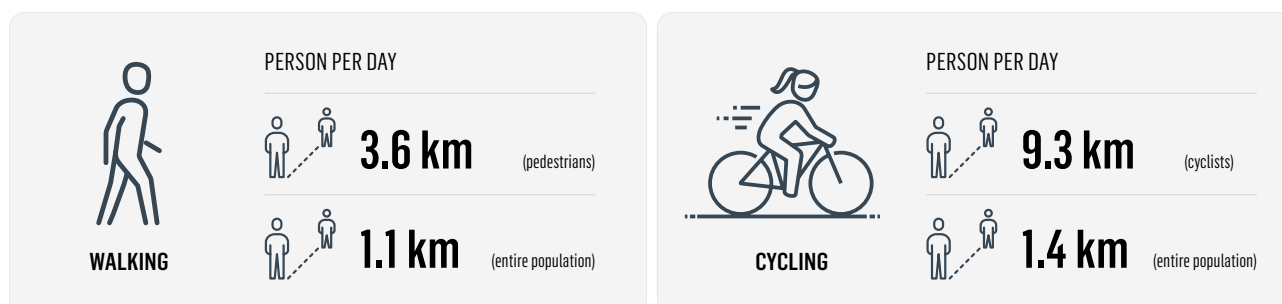


In Germany, physical education is regulated not at national but at state level. The different states use terms such as **Moving Schools (Bewegte Schule, Bewegungsfreudige Schule, Bewegungsfreundliche Schule)** to describe the objective of making schools, pupils and the learning process more movement-friendly, including active breaks every day or entire lessons held in motion. To this end, states have initiated programmes and competitions to support schools with holistic prevention strategies. One example is the **Moving School – Partner for Safety (Bewegte Schule – Partner für Sicherheit)** and the **Young Saxons on the Move** learning portal in Saxony.

The essential topics in health promotion and prevention at school are exercise, healthy nutrition, strengthening resilience and stress management as well as prevention of addiction and violence. Schools are thus encouraged to cooperate with local partners such as sports clubs, some forms of which are subsidized by the State. Sports clubs establish sports activities in the school, and pupils can use sports clubs in the afternoons, sometimes free of charge.

National travel survey

The Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure organizes two nationwide surveys on private mobility. The **Mobility in Germany study** is a national household travel survey conducted at intervals since 1976, most recently in 2002, 2008 and 2017. With the participation of regional partners, the 2017 survey included a sample of more than 150 000 households. The German Mobility Panel is an annual longitudinal survey with data since 1994. The sample comprises around 1500 households.



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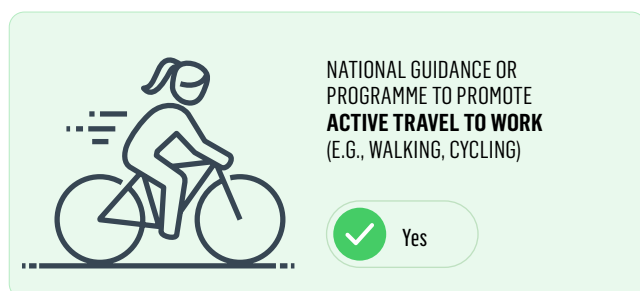


Infrastructure for leisure-time physical activity

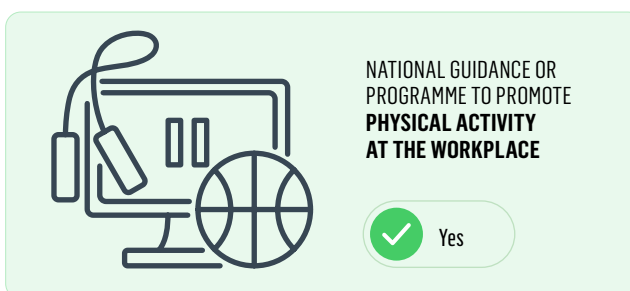
The German Olympic Sport Confederation played a key role in the creation and dissemination of the European Guidelines for Improving Infrastructures for Leisure-time Physical Activity.

The joint Federal and state government programme investment package sports facilities (Bund-Länder-Programm "Investitionspakt Sportstätten") was initiated in 2020 and the Federal programme rehabilitation of community facilities in the areas of sports, youth, and culture (Bundesprogramm Sanierung kommunaler Einrichtungen in den Bereichen Sport, Jugend und Kultur) has been operating since 2015. These programmes support redevelopment of municipal sports facilities in the country. Originally started as a "D-Netz", the German cycle network (Radnetz Deutschland) is an integral part of the measures of the Federal Government's National cycling plan. In the network, Federal and state governments are committed to common standards and high-quality cycling tourism. The network, funded with € 45 million until 2023, consists of 12 long-distance cycle routes, the "German Unity Cycle Route" and the EuroVelo route "Iron Curtain Trail". This network allows people to plan and experience a bike trip on safe, comfortable, relaxing routes by combining several thematic bike routes connecting all the regions of Germany.

Promotion of physical activity in the workplace



The National Cycling Plan includes strengthening of commuter transport.



Social Code V mandates statutory health insurance funds, in cooperation with accident insurance institutions and the authorities responsible for occupational health and safety in states, to establish and strengthen health-promoting structures.

Community-based interventions for older adults

The project "Ageing in balance" of the German Federal Centre for Health Education promotes physical activity among older adults in municipalities, communities and nursing homes. One element of this project is a toolbox for municipal interventions to promote activity, with a step-by-step guide to creating an activity-friendly environment for older adults.



SUCCESS STORY

The Federal Centre for Health Education (Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung - BZgA) is a specialist authority within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Health. Its website provides tips for games and movement for all ages. For example, the campaign "Make children strong" includes a five-part video series "**The ABC of Movement**" and cooperation with the major German sports associations, such as sport clubs, also support personal development. During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital measures to support physical activity were developed, including tips for exercise on the website and a three-part video series on exercise and physical activity in combating obesity in children and adolescents.