Success story

“On the move” is a Government action programme initiated in 2010 to establish a physically active culture in Finnish comprehensive schools. The schools and municipalities that participate in the programme make their own plans to increase physical activity during the school day. Active breaks and before and after school activities are key elements. The programme is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture and coordinated by the National Board of Education and LIKES Research Centre for Sport and Health Sciences. www.liikkuvakoulu.fi/en

FINLAND
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
FACTSHEET 2018

Median age
42.5 YEARS

GDP per capita
34 800 €

% of GDP for health: 7.2
% of GDP for education: 6.1
% of GDP for sports: 0.5

Population MALE 49.3%
Population FEMALE 50.7%

Life expectancy, MALES 78.6 YEARS
Life expectancy, FEMALES 84.4 YEARS

Sources: Eurostat (2018)
MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE

National recommendations on physical activity for health

TARGET GROUPS INCLUDED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children (&lt;5 years)</th>
<th>Children and adolescents (5-17 years)</th>
<th>Adults (18-64 years)</th>
<th>Older adults (≥ 65 years)</th>
<th>Frail and very elderly adults (≥ 85 years)</th>
<th>Pregnant and breastfeeding women</th>
<th>People with disabilities</th>
<th>People with chronic diseases</th>
<th>Others Postmenopausal women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The national recommendations are based on the physical activity guidelines of the US Department of Health and Human Services (2008).

Level of physical activity

ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of physical activity</th>
<th>ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older adults</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14–15 years</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16–17 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–64 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 65 years</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The levels of physical activity of children and adolescents are assessed against the WHO-recommended 60 min of moderate-intensity physical activity per day. For adults, the cut-off used was 150 min of moderate-intensity, 75 min of vigorous physical activity or a combination of the two.

Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

SECTORS WITH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

Several systems are in place for monitoring the physical activity of various age groups in Finland. These include the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey, the School Health Promotion study, the National FinSote Survey, the Finnish School-aged Physical Activity Study and “Move!” The questionnaire from the National FinHealth Study is used to measure physical activity in adults. The overall participation rate is 70%. Additionally, a Finnish instrument for measuring weekly duration of moderate and vigorous physical activity is used, which includes a questionnaire and measurements with accelerometers.
POLICY RESPONSE

Funding allocated specifically to physical activity promotion by sector

The promotion of physical activity in Finland is coordinated by the Steering Group for Health-enhancing Physical Activity, which comprises representatives from several ministries, research institutions, municipalities and organizations for both health and sports.

“The Strength in old age” health exercise programme for older adults promotes the autonomy and quality of life of adults aged > 75 years with decreased functional capacity but who live independently. The programme provides counselling on exercise, guided strength and balance exercises and opportunities for daily and outdoor exercise. It is implemented by municipalities, supported by the Age Institute.

“On the move” is the national strategy for physical activity promotion and the key policy for health-enhancing physical activity promotion in Finland. [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/69943].

National policies by sector

Sectors that are involved in each of the national policies or action plans to promote physical activity

The Finnish Transport Agency organizes the national mobility management project, of which active, sustainable travel is an important component. Several communities have set cycling to work challenges.

“Star club” is a quality assurance programme for improving sports clubs in Finland. It gives a star symbol to sports clubs that deliver high-quality physical activity programmes according to set criteria. It covers all sports associations in Finland, comprising those for children, adolescents, adults and elite sport. The guiding principles of “Sports clubs for health” are those of the quality assessment to which national and regional associations, including sports clubs, are committed. Auditing is conducted, and real-time data are made available to show stakeholders which clubs meet the quality criteria; online resources give easy access to relevant tools to help sports clubs improve their practices. [https://www.olympiakomitea.fi/seuratoiminta/tahtiseurat/tahtiseurat-seurojen-laatuohjelma/]

Target groups addressed by national policies

Low socioeconomic groups
Pregnant and breastfeeding women
Ethnic minorities
People deprived of liberty
Migrants
Older people
People with disabilities
People with chronic diseases
Other
Physical activity promotion in the health sector

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE TRAINED IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH

Medical doctors
Nurses
Physiotherapists
Others

Mandatory Undergraduates
Mandatory Undergraduates
Mandatory Undergraduates

Physical activity in the workplace

The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health provides training (e.g. seminars, advanced training), tools and materials for promoting physical activity as a part of a healthy lifestyle for people of working age. The communication materials and methods are based on research, and many have been planned with stakeholders, including workers, occupational health and safety personnel and trade unions. https://www.ttl.fi/tutkimushanke/promo-at-work/.

Promotion of physical activity in the workplace

To monitor the quality of physical education, a follow-up evaluation of learning outcomes, commissioned by the National Agency for Education, was conducted by the Department of Sports Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä, most recently in 2010. Schools may provide additional physical education as part of optional lessons.

National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

Several national campaigns for various target groups are conducted to raise public awareness and provide physical activity education in Finland. These include “The adventures of Joe Finn”, “The journey to well-being”, “Stair days”, “The people’s movement: promotion campaign for walking and cycling” and “Go out with the elderly”, in 2011.