

Physical activity guidelines for

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (5–18 YEARS)

1. All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.
2. Vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week.
3. All children and young people should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

Individual physical and mental capabilities should be considered when interpreting the guidelines.

Examples of physical activity that meet the guidelines

Moderate intensity physical activities will cause children to get warmer and breathe harder and their hearts to beat faster, but they should still be able to carry on a conversation. Examples include:

- Bike riding
- Playground activities

Vigorous intensity physical activities will cause children to get warmer and breathe much harder and their hearts to beat rapidly, making it more difficult to carry on a conversation. Examples include:

- Fast running
- Sports such as swimming or football

Physical activities that strengthen muscle and bone involve using body weight or working against a resistance. Examples include:

- Swinging on playground equipment
- Hopping and skipping
- Sports such as gymnastics or tennis

Minimising sedentary behaviour may include:

- Reducing time spent watching TV, using the computer or playing video games
- Breaking up sedentary time such as swapping a long bus or car journey for walking part of the way

What are the benefits of being active for at least 60 minutes each day?

- Improves cardiovascular health
- Maintains a healthy weight
- Improves bone health
- Improves self-confidence
- Develops new social skills

For further information: *Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity for health from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers* (2011)