

# State of the Nation: A Spotlight on Decreasing Inactivity

Adults in the UK are recommended to take part in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise per week. Although there has been a 0.6% increase since November 2018<sup>1</sup> in the proportion of adults in England who are meeting the guidelines, many people are not active enough. This factsheet outlines the current state of the nation and factors influencing the activity levels of the adult UK population.

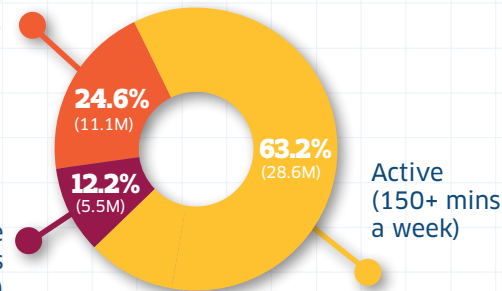
## Levels of activity

11.1 million adults do less than 30 minutes of activity per week

Inactive (Less than 30 mins a week)

The proportion of adults who are inactive has decreased by 0.5% since November 2018

Fairly active (30-149 mins a week)



Activity levels of adults in England November 2018-2019<sup>1</sup>

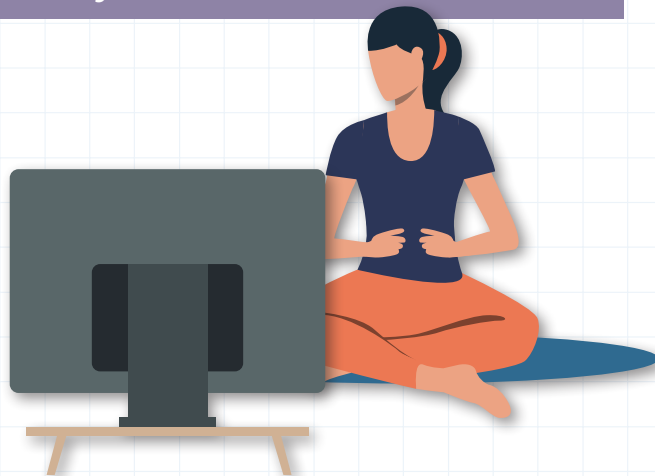
## Sedentary behaviour

### Sitting

Average person in the UK spends 78 days per year sitting<sup>2</sup>

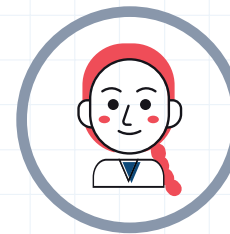
### Watching TV

Average UK adult spends almost 30 hours a week watching TV (64 days per year)<sup>2</sup>

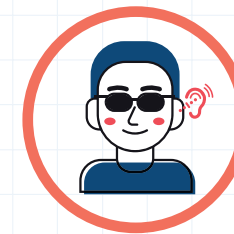


## Populations who are inactive

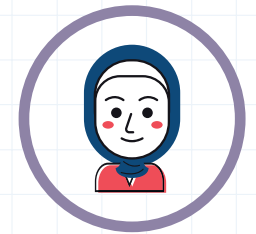
Certain groups are less likely to be active than others. These groups include<sup>1</sup>:



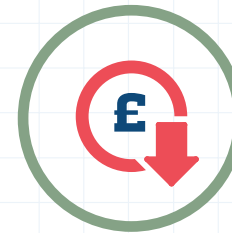
25% of women vs 24% of men are inactive



40% of people with a disability and/or long-term health condition are inactive compared to 21% without



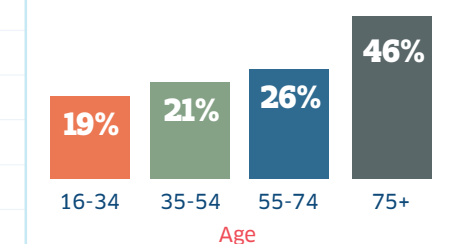
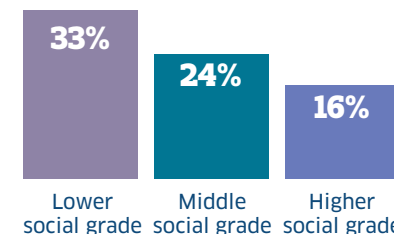
33% of Asian and 30% of Black ethnic groups are inactive vs 20% of Mixed and 23% of White British ethnic groups



Inactivity declines with social grade



Inactivity levels increase with age



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## Why tackle physical inactivity?

Physical inactivity is the fourth largest cause of global mortality<sup>3</sup> and contributes to one in six deaths<sup>2</sup>. It also places a significant financial burden on the NHS. Becoming more active can have a positive impact on a number of factors:

### Physical health



Regular exercise has a positive impact on health:

- Reduces risk of coronary heart disease and stroke by 35%<sup>2</sup>
- Reduces risk of early death by 30%<sup>2</sup>
- People who receive coaching are more likely to rate their physical health as good and have a healthy BMI<sup>5</sup>

### Mental health



Regular activity has a positive impact on mental health and well-being:

- Improves mood and sleep<sup>5</sup>
- Helps to manage stress and anxiety<sup>5</sup>
- People who receive coaching are more likely to rate their mental health as good<sup>4</sup>

### Energy levels



Physical activity boosts energy levels<sup>6</sup>:

- Increases productivity at work
- Decreases sickness absence

## How can coaches reduce physical inactivity?

There are a number of ways that coaches can encourage adults to be more active and decrease sedentary behaviours.

### Encourage people to be active together



#### Group exercise:

- Increases commitment<sup>7</sup>
- Helps to form habits
- Reduces stress compared to exercising alone<sup>7</sup>

### Inspire others to coach too



People who coach<sup>9</sup>:

- Are more likely to be active

### Provide role models



Inspire people to think they can be active too<sup>7</sup>:

- Provide role models
- Share relatable stories

### Signpost to digital tools



Apps and online tools<sup>10</sup>:

- Provide ideas for workouts
- Help track activity

### Remove barriers to coached sessions



Ways to encourage coached sessions<sup>8</sup>:

- Reduce cost of sessions
- Provide sessions at a range of times
- Emphasise fun

### Promote activity in daily routine



Ways to increase activity in daily routine<sup>10</sup>:

- Use the stairs
- Walk or cycle rather than using the car
- Stand up more (eg during the TV adverts)
- Move about (eg while the kettle boils)

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Sport England. (2020) Active lives adult survey November 2018-2019  
<sup>2</sup> British Heart Foundation. (2017). Physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour report 2017  
<sup>3</sup> British Heart Foundation. (2014) Economic costs of physical inactivity: Evidence briefing  
<sup>4</sup> UK Coaching. (2020) Coaching in the UK: Participant survey  
<sup>5</sup> Mind. (2019) Physical activity and your mental health

<sup>6</sup> Public Health England. (2014) Everybody active every day: An evidence-based approach to physical activity

<sup>7</sup> Women in Sport. (2015) What sways women to play sport?

<sup>8</sup> UK Coaching. (2017) Coaching in the UK: Participant survey

<sup>9</sup> UK Coaching. (2020) Coaching in the UK: Coach survey

<sup>10</sup> We are undefeatable. (2019) Ways to move: <https://weareundefeatable.co.uk/ways-to-move>