



The key messages for each theme of the European Public Health WEEK 2019 are based on evidence and resources shared by a variety of sources, including:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe
- The European Commission (e.g. through the State of Health in the EU – Companion report 2017)
- EUPHA Sections, EUPHA members and EUPHANxt
- Experts from the Council of Occupational Therapists for European Countries (COTEC), World Federation of Physical Therapy – European Region (WCPT), Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) and Euro Youth Mental Health (EYMH).

Unless stated otherwise, messages refer to all 53 Member States of the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Please refer to the [media toolkit](#) for guidance on how to best use the key messages.

Monday 13 May - Becoming, being and remaining physically active

Motto of the day: “I like to move it, move it.”

Key messages

1. Physical activity is very easy if you make walking to work, cycling or taking the stairs a deliberate part of your daily routine.
2. Physical activity and participation in sports have been proven to be beneficial for mental health, depression, and social inclusion.
3. Being physically active in younger years and continuing in later years contributes to healthy ageing.
4. It helps older people to achieve better quality of life, independence, maintenance of mobility, better performance in daily tasks, better cognitive function, better mood, lower risk for frailty, and lower mortality.

5. Health, education, sports, urban planning and transport sectors, as well as the workplace, community groups and the media benefit directly from investing in the physical activity of their customers, workers and students.
6. Employees who are physically active are healthier, happier, and less likely to take sick days. By promoting physical activity and active travel, employers can improve staff wellbeing, increase work attendance and decrease job stress.

Other facts and figures

- 1 in 3 adults in Europe is not sufficiently active.
- Physical inactivity is one of the leading risk factors for overweight, obesity and noncommunicable diseases and chronic conditions. In 46 countries of the European Region, over half the population is overweight or obese.
- WHO recommends that adults (including older adults) undertake at least 150 min of moderate-intensity or 75 min of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity or an equivalent combination each week.
- Based on research in European Union countries, overweight affects up to 70% and obesity affects up to 30% of adults. Many children are also overweight or obese.
- 46% of people in the European Union report never exercising or playing sports.
- Specific populations should especially be targeted for physical activity interventions, such as people with disabilities, adolescent girls, women, people with overweight or obesity, people of low-socioeconomic status and migrants.
- Reducing physical inactivity in Europe would lead to substantial improvements in health, the environment, individual quality of life, social participation and resilience.
- To protect children and younger people it is important to reduce marketing and advertisement of alcohol and high fat, sugar and salt foods, particularly at sport clubs and sport events.
- Parents can be role models for their children by demonstrating active behaviours, encouraging them to be physically active.

Physical activity in older populations

- As people age, they become more vulnerable to disease and disability. However, much of this burden can be reduced or prevented by adequately addressing specific risk factors, from preventing falls and social exclusion to promoting better long-term care.
- Promoting healthy ageing also means rethinking the role that the elderly play in our society, such as by actively participating in the social, economic and cultural life.
- The health benefits of physical activity are well recognised. They include reducing risks for NCDs, depression and stress reactions and possibly delaying the effects of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.