

EVERY  
JOURNEY  
NEEDS A  
→ FIRST  
← STEP



## European Pain Federation EFIC® 'On the Move'

*If physical activity was a drug it would be classed as a wonder drug*

(Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Chair of the Academy of Royal Medical Colleges, 2015)

### Why do we care? The importance of physical activity in preventing chronic pain

- Physical activity's well known health benefits include a reduced risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and improved mental health.
- What is less well known is that greater levels of physical activity and exercise are also associated with a lower risk of developing chronic pain.
- Chronic pain is defined as pain on a daily basis for 12 weeks. It is a significant health issue affecting between **12-30% Europeans** (23% of Belgians).
- The cost to the economy is enormous in terms of healthcare costs and lost productivity (2.2% of GDP in Germany, 2.8% in Ireland and 1.7% in the Netherlands).<sup>1</sup>
- There is also a significant personal cost in terms of physical disability, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance and poor quality of life.<sup>2</sup>

### Established benefits of physical activity

Research has established that undertaking the recommended levels of physical activity:

- Reduces a person's chance of developing low back pain by 40%.<sup>3</sup>
- Reduces a person's chance of developing osteoarthritis by 50% (e.g. hip and knees).<sup>4</sup>
- Increased frequency, duration, and intensity of exercise are associated with less chronic pain when age, education, and smoking are taken into account.<sup>5</sup>
- Reduces the chance amongst 20-64 year olds of developing chronic pain by 10-12% compared with those who don't exercise.<sup>5</sup>
- In older women it reduces the chance of developing chronic pain by 21-38% compared with those who are not exercising.<sup>5</sup>
- Older people who exercise more regularly, for longer and at a higher intensity are less likely to develop chronic pain.
- People in working age who exercise 3-5 times a week are also less likely to develop chronic pain.<sup>5</sup>



## What is this about? EFIC on the Move Campaign

The European Pain Federation EFIC<sup>®</sup> is launching an 'On the Move' campaign to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity in the prevention of chronic pain. EFIC is a multidisciplinary professional organisation representing more than 20.000 European healthcare professionals involved in pain research and pain management.

## What is our call to Action?

- All healthcare professionals should advise patients on the importance of physical activity and the role that physical activity plays in the prevention of chronic pain. This requires knowledge, motivation, empowerment (using language that patients understand), a physical environment that facilitates change and a plan that helps them to persevere.
- Policy makers should support this approach with policy interventions that encourage pain prevention through physical activity and raise awareness of this issue among the general public.
- Policy makers also have a role to play in urban planning, securing green spaces (parks, sports facilities in schools, green spaces) that allow the population to develop healthy life style skills.

## How can you help?

- The World Health Organisation recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity a week (which can be, for instance, 10.000 step a day) – do you reach this target?
- Post a picture of your stepcounter on social media with the hashtags

**#EFIConthemove #painprevention #stayactivetopreventpain**

- Tag a friend/colleague and ask him/her to take up the challenge and continue the chain!
- Our campaign will take the approach “doing what one preaches” so our community at the European Pain Federation will do the same! Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and stay up to date with our campaign and all our activities!
- Here are some tips that can help you stay active:



- > take the stairs rather than the elevator
- > go to work on foot/bike rather than by car/public transport
- > make sure to stand up once per hour (set an alarm to help)
- > think creatively, for instance you could get stationary bicycle desks for your office

For more information please contact us at [secretary@efic.org](mailto:secretary@efic.org)

Or visit <https://www.europeanpainfederation.eu/>



<sup>1</sup> Raftery MN1, Ryan P, Normand C, Murphy AW, de la Harpe D, McGuire BE. The economic cost of chronic noncancer pain in Ireland: results from the PRIME study, part 2. J Pain. 2012 Feb;13(2):139-45

<sup>2</sup> Geneen et al 2017. Physical activity and exercise for chronic pain in adults: an overview of Cochrane Reviews. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2017, Issue 4

<sup>3</sup> WHO (2013) Priority diseases and reasons for inclusion: low back pain. [http://www.who.int/medicines/areas/priority\\_medicines/ch6\\_24LBP.pdf](http://www.who.int/medicines/areas/priority_medicines/ch6_24LBP.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Woolf AD, Pfleger B (2003) Burden of major musculoskeletal conditions. Bulletin of the World Health Organisation 2003, 81(9):646-656

<sup>5</sup> Landmark T, Romundstad P, Borchgrevink PC, Kaasa S, Dale O. Associations between recreational exercise and chronic pain in the general population: Evidence from the HUNT 3 study. Pain 2011; 152; 2241-2247