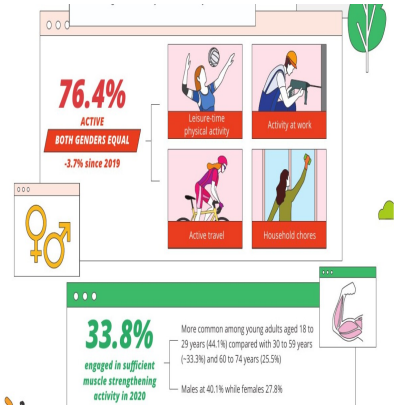


Singapore physical activity guidelines: the strength target two in three adults miss

Description

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Singaporeâ??s physical activity guidelines ask adults for two things each week: 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, and muscle-strengthening work on at least two days. The second is the one most people miss. In 2020, 76.4 per cent of Singaporeans aged 18 to 74 met the activity guideline, but only 33.8 per cent did enough muscle strengthening.

Those figures come from Sport Singaporeâ??s guidebook to the Singapore Physical Activity Guidelines (SPAG), published in July 2022 and drawn up by a committee led by representatives from Sport Singapore and the Health Promotion Board, using the World Health Organizationâ??s guidelines as the base.

The strength gap by age and sex

The shortfall grows with age. Sufficient muscle strengthening was reported by 44.1 per cent of adults aged 18 to 29, around a third of those aged 30 to 59 and 25.5 per cent of those aged 60 to 74. Men were at 40.1 per cent and women at 27.8 per cent.

The overall activity figure also slipped. The share of adults meeting the guideline was 80 per cent in 2019 and 76 per cent in 2020, with the oldest group, aged 60 to 74, falling furthest, from 79 to 72 per cent. That 76.4 per cent counts all activity, including work, active travel and household chores, not just exercise.

SINGAPORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR ADULTS (18 - 64 YEARS)

Adults are encouraged to engage in physical activity not only through recreation and leisure, but also when in different settings - at home (household chores), as a form of transportation (cycling, brisk walking, jogging), or in occupational and community settings.

MOVE MORE & THRIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS

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GET MOVING & MIX IT UP

Limit the amount of time spent being sedentary, particularly recreational screen time, by ***engaging in activity of any intensity***.

Aim for at least ***150 to*** of moderate-intens activity per w

*Every minute of vigorous-in generally be considered as t of moderate-intensi

150-300 minutes

GET STRONGER

Strengthen muscles, bones, and joints through activities, at moderate- or vigorous-intensity, ***at least 2 days per week***.

For those over 50 years, include ***multi-component physical activity that emphasizes strength and functional balance at least 3 days of the week*** at a moderate or greater intensity.

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TIPS

Incorporate active travel into your daily routine, such as heading out to purchase your food and groceries personally and rely less on food deliveries.

Start with some light-intensity activity as opposed to being inactive.

Work out your muscle groups through different activities such as jogging, swimming, and playing a racquet sport.

Start with small changes like taking the stairs instead of the lift, as better beats perfect.

Being active can be enjoyable - try a new sport or explore one of the many local parks.

The Singapore Physical Activity Guidelines for adults aged 18 to 64, released by Sport Singapore in June 2022. Infographic: Sport Singapore

What the guidelines ask of adults aged 18 to 64

- Aerobic: 150 to 300 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity, spread across the week to cut the risk of injury and fatigue
- Vigorous swap: one minute of vigorous activity counts as almost two minutes of moderate activity
- Strength: moderate or vigorous muscle-strengthening work on at least two days a week, targeting the major muscle groups, with 8 to 12 repetitions a set as a general rule
- Over 50: multicomponent activity that stresses strength and functional balance on at least three days a week
- Sitting: break up long sedentary spells with light activity, and cut recreational screen time

The guidebook files weight training, pilates and tai chi under muscle strengthening, and puts cycling, kayaking, circuit training, racquet sports and swimming in the multicomponent middle, between aerobic work and strength.

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How to judge moderate intensity

SPAG uses a talk test rather than heart-rate zones. At light intensity you can talk in full sentences and sing. At moderate intensity you can talk in phrases or short sentences but cannot sing. At vigorous intensity you have difficulty talking.

What changed from the 2011 guidelines

The first guidelines, released in 2011, set a single 150-minute target, counted only bouts of 10 minutes or more, and told adults to break up sitting spells of 90 minutes or longer with 5 to 10 minutes of activity. The current version replaces the single number with the 150 to 300 minute range, drops the minimum bout length so every minute counts, removes the fixed sitting timings and, for the first time, sets an intensity for strength work.

For people aged 65 and above, the aerobic range is the same, with moderate activity encouraged daily. Strength work stays at two or more days a week, and balance and functional training are now each recommended on at least three days a week, which the 2011 version did not specify. Adults with chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes or hypertension are covered by the same recommendations, and the guidebook advises seeing a health professional if unsure how to begin; our guide to exercising with diabetes covers the blood sugar checks.

SINGAPORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR OLDER ADULTS (65 YEARS & ABOVE)

Older adults should engage in regular physical activity to improve overall wellbeing, enhance functional capacity, and prevent falls.

MOVE STRONG & BE BALAN

RECOMMENDATIONS

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RETAIN STRENGTH

Engage in muscle strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week, at moderate or greater intensity, to keep muscles, bones, and joints strong.

Include ***multi-component physical activity that emphasizes strength and functional balance at least 3 days of the week*** at a moderate-intensity or greater.

HIT 150 - 300

Aim for at least ***150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity per week.***

*Every minute of vigorous-intensity activity can generally be considered as two minutes' worth of moderate-intensity activity.

150-300 minutes

KEEP MOVING

Limit the amount of time spent being sedentary, particularly recreational screen time, by ***engaging in activity of any intensity.***

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TIPS

- Incorporate simple strength training exercises such as resistance band exercises when watching your favourite shows.
- Engage in varied multi-component physical activity at home or in a structured group setting, which can combine aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and balance training into a session.
- Walk or play sports with your family and friends; this is a great way to be active while spending quality time with your loved ones.
- Play and try different sports with friends at publicly available sport facilities.
- Make use of the outdoor fitness equipment around your community spaces or your built environment as you brisk walk around your neighbourhood.

The Singapore Physical Activity Guidelines for older adults aged 65 and above, released by Sport Singapore in June 2022. Infographic: Sport Singapore

For a public pool or gym to start the strength days, our breakdown of ActiveSG swim, gym and court rates has the current prices.

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