

RECREATION & HEALTH FACT SHEET



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



On the individual scale:

Benefits:

✓ Cardiovascular Health

Regular physical activity, such as aerobic exercises (e.g., brisk walking, jogging, cycling), strengthens the heart and improves circulation. This can help lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease, and enhance overall cardiovascular health.

✓ Weight Management & Metabolism

Engaging in physical activity helps with weight management by burning calories and increasing metabolism. Combining regular exercise with a balanced diet can contribute to weight management, reducing the risk of obesity-related conditions such as diabetes.

✓ Mental Health

Physical activity has a positive impact on mental well-being. It can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, alleviate stress, and improve mood by triggering the release of endorphins, which are natural mood lifters.

✓ Improved Immune System

Regular moderate exercise has been linked to a stronger immune system. It can enhance the production of immune cells and promote better circulation, helping the body defend against illnesses and infections.

✓ Bone and Joint Health

Weight-bearing exercises, including walking, running, and strength training, help maintain and improve bone density. This is particularly important for adults, as it can reduce the risk of osteoporosis and fractures associated with bone density loss.

Citations:

Dunstan, D. W., Dogra, S., Carter, S. E., & Owen, N. (2021).

Thyfault, J. P., & Bergouignan, A. (2020).

Ekkekakis, P. (Ed.). (2023).

Chastin, S. F. et al. (2021).

Eckstrom, E., Neukam, S., Kalin, L., & Wright, J. (2020).

On the community scale:

Benefits:

✓ Reduced Healthcare Costs

A physically active community is likely to experience lower healthcare costs over time. Regular physical activity helps prevent chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, leading to reduced medical expenses and a healthier population.

✓ Increased Work Productivity

Physically active adults often demonstrate increased productivity and efficiency in the workplace. Regular exercise has been linked to improved cognitive function, focus, and overall work performance, contributing to a more productive workforce.

✓ Community Well-Being

Physical activity fosters social connections within a community. Group activities, fitness classes, and community sports events provide opportunities for residents to interact, build relationships, and create a sense of camaraderie, contributing to overall community well-being.

✓ Economic Activity

A physically active community can experience positive economic effects. Healthy individuals are generally more productive and may require fewer sick days, contributing to a more robust and economically active community. Additionally, the fitness and wellness industry can stimulate economic growth.

✓ Environmental

Active transportation options, such as walking or cycling, reduce reliance on motorized vehicles, leading to decreased air pollution and a smaller carbon footprint. Promoting physical activity through accessible parks and recreational areas encourages a more sustainable and environmentally friendly community.

Citations:

Warburton, Darren E.R., Bredin, Shannon S.D. (2017).

Grimani, A., Aboagye, E., & Kwak, L. (2019).

Gyasi et al. (2021).

Wu, S., Cohen, D., Shi, Y., Pearson, M., & Sturm, R. (2011).

Smith, M., Hosking et al. (2017).