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ESTONIAN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACTION PLAN 2024 REPORT

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The following organisations were responsible for planning and implementing activities in

- 1) Estonian Academic Sports Federation
- 2) Estonian Olympic Committee
- 3) Estonian Paralympic Committee
- 4) Estonian Swimming Federation
- 5) Ministry of Education and Research
- 6) Ministry of Culture
- 7) Competence Centre for Physical Activity
- 8) Foundation Think Tank Praxis
- 9) Estonian National Social Insurance Board
- 10) Ministry of Social Affairs
- 11) Estonian Foundation of Sports Education and Information
- 12) University of Tartu Move Lab
- 13) National Institute for Health Development
- 14) Labour Inspectorate
- 15) UT Institute of Education Centre for Innovation in Education

In addition, the following contributed to the implementation of the activities: Foresight Centre, Estonian Physical Education Association, Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities, Estonian Human Resource Management Association PARE, Eesti Rahvusringhääling, Eesti Uuringukeskus OÜ, Special Olympics Estonia, local governments, county sports unions, Ministry of Finance, regional recreational sports centres, sports federations, sports centres, Tallinn University, Health and Welfare Information Systems Centre, Health Board, Estonian Health Insurance Fund, county-level health promoters from educational institutions, employers in the Health Promoting Workplaces Network, general education schools and event organisers.

When using the data presented in this report, please refer to the publication.

Recommended reference:

Estonian Ministry of Culture, Competence Centre for Physical Activity. *Estonian Physical Activity Action Plan. 2024 Report.* Tallinn, 2025

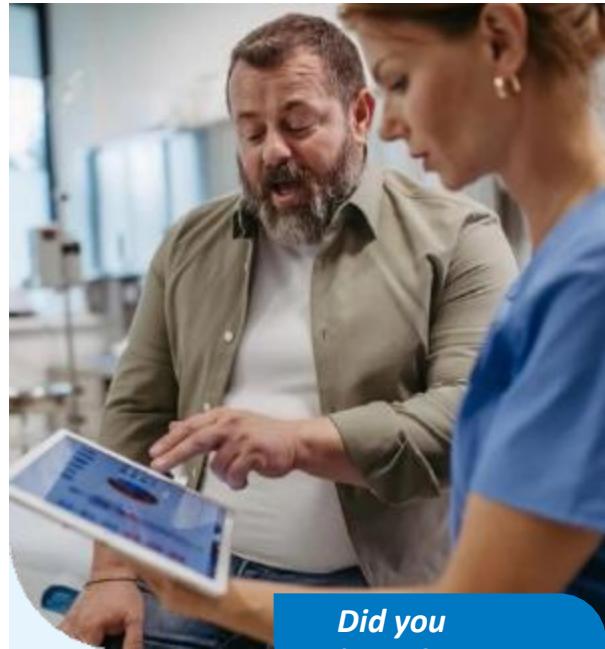
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The physical activity of Estonians is low, which directly affects their health and quality of life. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that adults engage in at least 2.5–5 hours of moderate-intensity or 1.25–2.5 hours of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week. Children and adolescents are recommended to engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. In addition, it is recommended that children and adolescents perform activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least three times per week, and adults at least twice per week.

Studies show that the majority of Estonians do not reach the recommended levels of physical activity:

- only 45% of adults engage in physical activity more than once a week¹;
- among 15-year-olds, only 37% are physically active at least five days a week²;
- among people aged 55 and older, only 19% are physically active more than two days a week³.

The Estonian Physical Activity Action Plan was developed with the aim of improving the physical activity of the population and promoting healthy lifestyles. The preparation of the action plan was led by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Education and Research, with the involvement of different partners. The action plan is based on research-based measures and cross-sectoral collaboration. This report provides an overview of the state of play of the action plan, future directions and specific steps that support the increase of physical activity among the Estonian population.



Did you know?

DEVELOPMENT AND PILOTING OF AN EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION INTERVENTION

The aim of the project is to develop and pilot an exercise prescription intervention that:

- increases physical activity and reduces sedentary behaviour among patients with health risks or specific diagnoses;
- improves patients' health indicators;
- in the longer term, helps curb the growth of health care costs.

The project has a duration of 38 months and a budget of €1,060,780.

The project is funded by the European Union Cohesion Policy for the period 2021–2027 under the measure 'Enhancing the Innovation Capacity of the Public Sector'.



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACTION

The development of Estonia's cross-sectoral Physical Activity Action Plan began in the autumn of 2022, led by the Ministry of Culture, with the aim of improving the mental and physical health of the population. Improving the mental and physical health of the population is a national priority, also highlighted in the long-term strategy *Estonia 2035*. Through the promotion of an active lifestyle, the goal is to increase the number of healthy life years.

The Physical Activity Action Plan is based on the national sports policy document *Sport 2030*, which sets the goal that by 2030 at least two-thirds of the Estonian population will engage in physical activity and sports on a regular basis. Since effective promotion of physical activity among the population is only possible through contributions from multiple policy sectors, the Ministry of Culture was joined from the very beginning of the action plan development by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research, along with their key partners.

Physical activity concept and action plan

The Physical Activity Action Plan is based on the [Physical Activity Concept](#)⁴, completed in April 2021, which mapped the main challenges and potential solutions in the field.

The concept highlighted issues such as:

- fragmentation across sectors and limited collaboration;
- standardised activities that do not take less active target groups into account;
- infrastructure that is inaccessible to people with special needs.

The main solutions included:

The establishment of the **Competence Centre for Physical Activity**⁵,

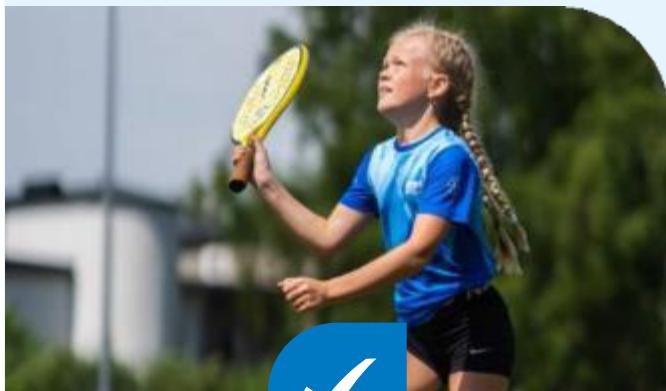
which began operating as a foundation in October 2022. The Competence Centre is tasked with co-ordinating sectoral activities and collaboration, initiating and supporting research-based development and intervention programmes, and promoting the adoption of international best practices in Estonia.



The Competence Centre for Physical Activity has been operating for two years.

Transforming physical education into **movement education**⁶,

to support lifelong physical activity habits, with a focus on increasing students' enjoyment of movement and introducing new teaching methods.



As of 1 September 2024, the implementation of the new movement education syllabus began in grades 1, 4, 7 and 10 of all general education schools. The updated syllabus has three main objectives: to support the development of students' positive attitudes toward movement, to provide diverse and accessible skills for engaging in physical activity, and to help students make choices that support both physical and mental health throughout life. A key focus is also on developing physical abilities. More information is available on the movement education website: www.liikumisopetus.ee.

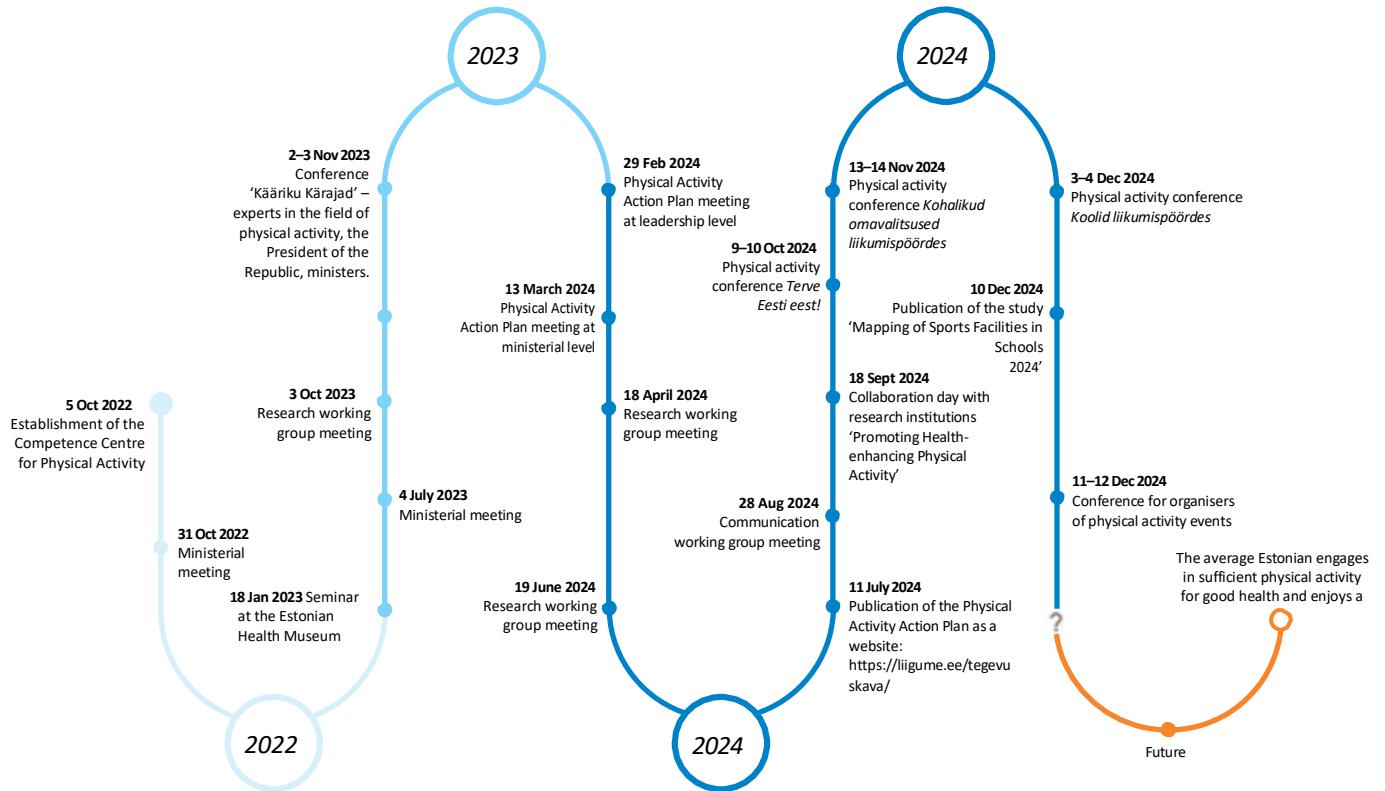
Creating an environment that encourages movement,

including the renovation of infrastructure and the improvement of opportunities for physical activity in schools, workplaces and public spaces.



There is a strong need for further development in this area, for example, to enable physical activity for people with special needs by improving accessibility in public spaces, adapting sports infrastructure and creating tailored physical activity programmes that take different age groups into account.

Physical Activity Action Plan



Preparation of the Physical Activity Action Plan

Regular meetings, seminars and partner involvement were at the heart of setting up the Physical Activity Action Plan. Joint seminars helped define the objectives and priorities of the planned actions. In addition, several workshops were held, involving both sectoral experts and research institutions.

The action plan development process culminated in July 2024 when the completed document was published on the website <https://liigume.ee/tegevuskava>. The action plan provides an overview of the steps planned to promote physical activity at all stages of life. The website makes the action plan accessible to everyone, allowing interested parties to explore implemented activities, future plans and monitoring data. This digital solution helps maintain transparency and keep the action plan continuously up to date, while providing opportunities for engagement for different partners and stakeholders.

Cross-cutting action

The aim of the action plan is to make physical activity an integral part of everyday life by promoting movement across different areas of life, such as health care, education, workplaces, transport and leisure. To support this objective, **research** and **communication working groups** have been established, focusing on mapping challenges in the field, developing data-driven solutions and enhancing the action plan by shaping new directions. The working groups focus both on identifying effective methods for promoting physical activity habits and on raising awareness to engage different target groups and ensure the sustainability of physical activity promotion. Although the network of partners is considerably broader, the steering group responsible for the initial development and implementation of the action plan included representatives from the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Competence Centre for Physical Activity, the National Institute for Health Development, and University of Tartu Move Lab.

Future of the Action

The action plan is a rolling document that is regularly updated based on needs and new research. Quarterly monitoring and annual updates ensure the continuity and effectiveness of actions. Its main goal is to make physical activity a natural and everyday part of life, helping everyone achieve the recommended level of physical activity for good health and thereby increase the number of healthy life years.

In the future, solutions are envisioned in collaboration with the following sectors and partners, including local governments, the education system and employers. The action plan is increasingly linked to the areas of government of the **Ministry of the Interior** and the **Ministry of Defence**, as strengthening physical and mental resilience helps ensure better societal preparedness for crisis situations. The mapping of potential directions began in the autumn of 2024.

The state of physical activity and main challenges among the Estonian population have already been thoroughly mapped and research-based data for increasing physical activity are available. Therefore, the next step should be to develop and implement clear, concrete and sustainable solutions based on the results of existing studies. The following sections of the report address the current state of physical activity, the objectives of the action plan and possible solutions, and provide an overview of specific actions and achievements to date.



Did you know?

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION PROGRAMME 'SCHOOLS IN MOTION'

Schools in Motion is an educational innovation programme developed in co-operation between the University of Tartu Move Lab and Estonian schools, aimed at creating a movement-friendly school culture in Estonia. In 2024, a total of 209 schools had joined the programme and satisfaction with movement opportunities was higher in participating schools compared to others (on a 5-point scale, 3.54 vs 3.47 in grade 4, respectively).

In 2024, two kick-off seminars were held for schools that had joined the network, eight trainings on active lessons were provided for subject and class teachers, a focus group study was conducted to develop physical activity opportunities at upper secondary level and an annual conference was held. In 2024, the Schools in Motion programme was approved by the Prevention Research Council of the National Institute for Health Development as an evidence-based intervention. More information is available on the website www.liikumakutsuvkool.ee.



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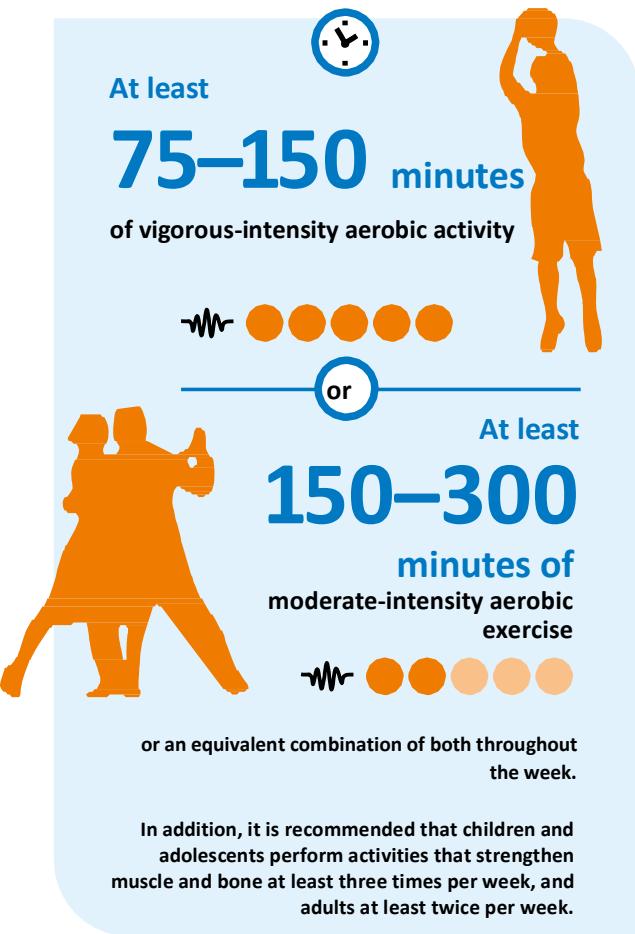
STATE OF PLAY

Description of the physical activity situation

According to recent studies, the physical activity situation in Estonia remains concerning as the majority of the population does not meet the recommended levels of physical activity needed to maintain good health.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that children and adolescents engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. For adults, the recommendation is at least 2.5–5 hours of moderate-intensity or 1.25–2.5 hours of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week.

According to the [2022 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\) study](#)⁷ conducted in Estonia, only 16% of 11–15-year-olds met the WHO recommendation for daily physical activity.



The Estonian Adult Health Behaviour Survey (AHBS)⁸ is a cross-sectional, population-based survey conducted every two years among Estonians aged 16 to 64. According to the AHBS, 45.2% of people in the 16–64 age group engage in regular physical activity (two or more times per week). Based on research from the past decade, the strategy document *Fundamentals of Estonian Sports Policy until 2030* states: 'Currently, one in three Estonians engages in physical activity. The goal is to reach the level of the Nordic countries in terms of physical activity and participation, which means engaging at least two-thirds of the population in physical activity and sports.' This indicator – engaging in recreational sport at least twice a week for a minimum of 30 minutes – is used to assess the regularity of physical activity among the population in the implementation of the actions of the strategy document *Fundamentals of Estonian Sports Policy until 2030*.



Based on scientific literature, physical inactivity is associated with 15 health conditions¹²:

- 6 types of cancer: oesophageal, colorectal, breast, cervical, kidney and bladder cancer
- 4 cardiovascular diseases: coronary heart disease, hypertension, heart attack and intracerebral haemorrhage
- 2 musculoskeletal conditions/injuries: low back pain and bone fracture
- 3 other conditions: depression, dementia, type 2 diabetes and kidney failure
- In addition, premature (< 75 years) cause-specific mortality and overall



An overview of the implementation of the Fundamentals of Estonian Sports Policy until 2030 is carried out annually.

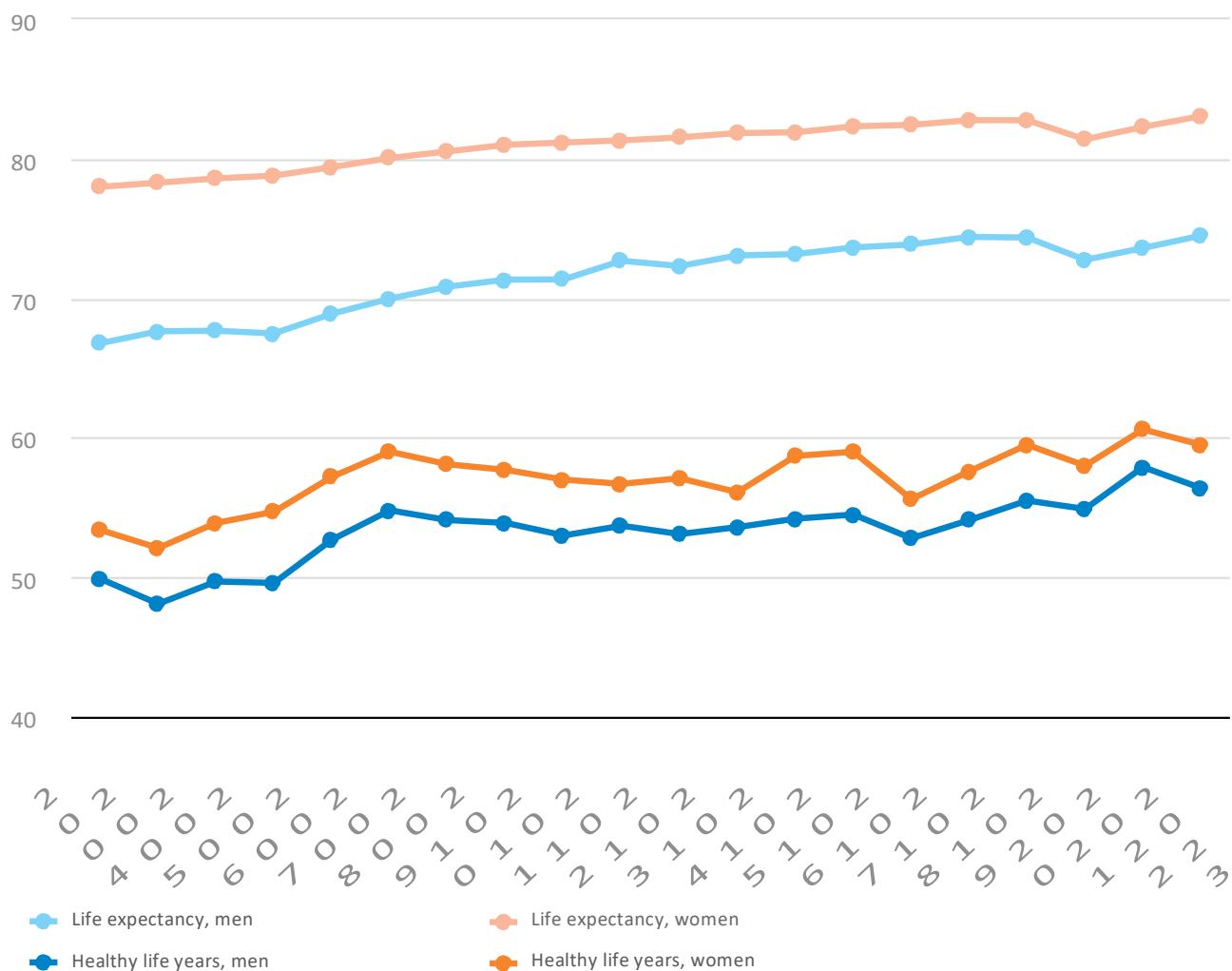
The report provides an

- *organised sports activities,*
- *the number of participants,*
- *activities related to sports policy.*

Health risks associated with low physical activity

Low physical activity increases the risk of health problems. According to Statistics Estonia⁹, as of 2023, men can expect to live only 56.4 healthy years from birth and women 59.5 healthy years, meaning that the average Estonian spends nearly **20 years of life with health problems**. The Estonian Human Development Report¹⁰ emphasises that low physical activity is directly linked to both mental and physical health problems, also affecting the number of healthy life years. The report also highlights that physical activity influences people's psychosocial well-being – more active people generally experience better mood and higher quality of life. In addition, it has been shown that a lack of physical activity leads to an increased burden of disease, including a higher prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders. According to WHO, moderate and regular physical activity can prevent up to 30% of depression cases and contribute to improvements in mental well-being.

Life expectancy and healthy life years, 2004–2023



According to the population-based mental health study conducted by the Estonian National Institute for Health Development and the University of Tartu between 2020 and 2022, more than one in four Estonians (28%) are at risk of depression and one in five (20%) are at risk of an anxiety disorder. Young adults are particularly vulnerable: among 15–24-year-olds, the risk of depression and anxiety disorders is up to twice as high as in the general population.

The increase in childhood obesity is concerning (1, 2). In the first grade, one in four students (28%) has excess weight, of whom 12% are obese. By fourth grade, one in three students (35%) has excess weight, with 14% classified as obese. In seventh grade, 29% of students have excess weight and 11% are obese.

Unfortunately, this problem extends into adulthood. According to the Estonian Adult Health Behaviour Survey (AHBS), more than half of Estonians aged 16–64 are overweight based on their body mass index (BMI 25.0–29.9 kg/m²) or obese (BMI ≥ 30.0 kg/m²) (3). Healthy eating habits play an important role in managing excess weight. Evidence also shows that physical activity significantly reduces health risks associated with being overweight or obese.

Estonian Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative for the Academic Year 2021/2022

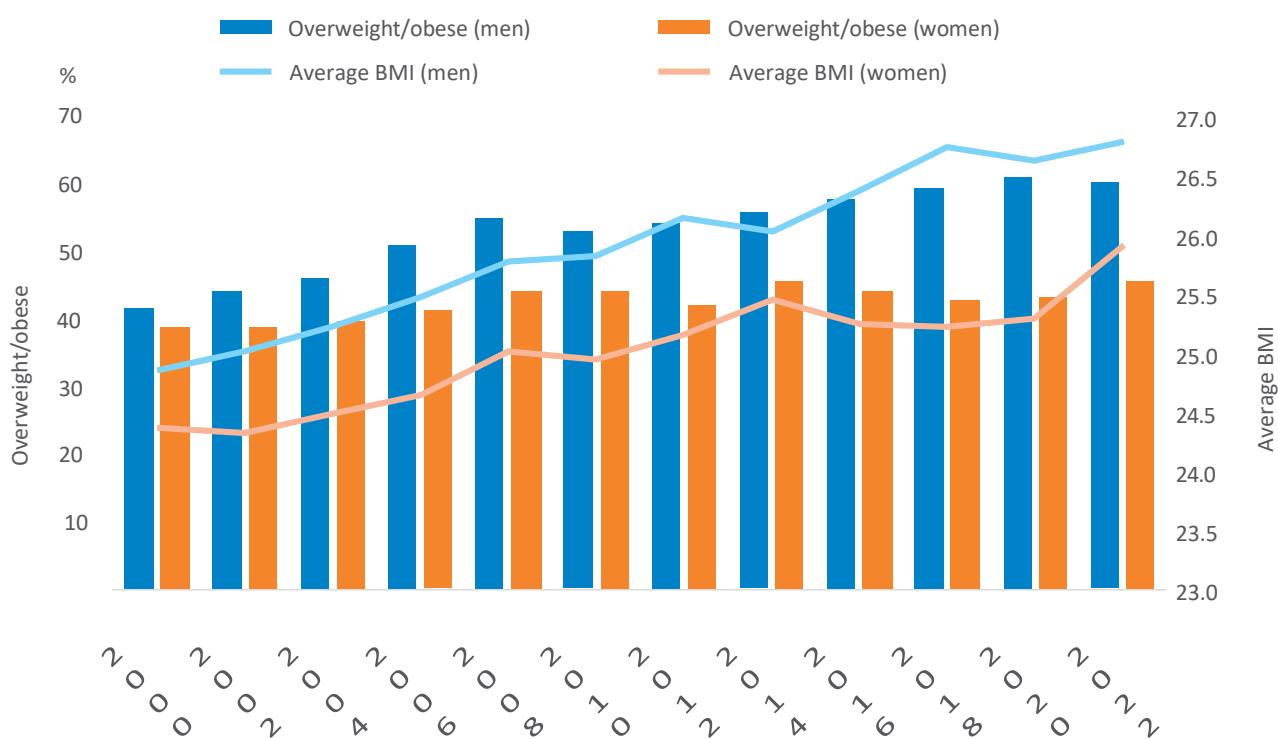
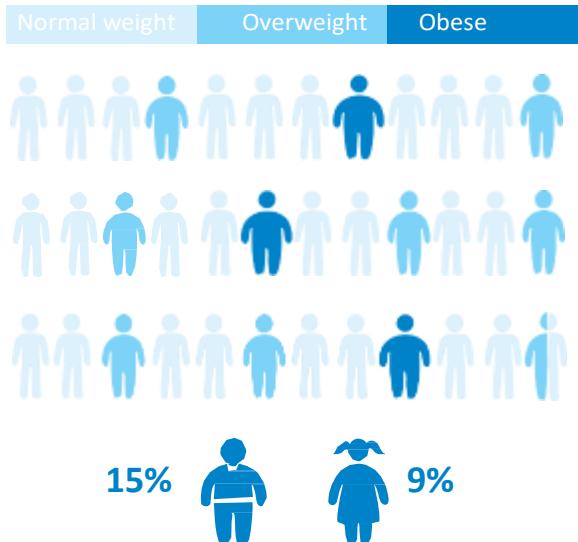
COSI – WHO Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative



The study included 17,969 students from grades 1, 4 and 7 across 203 schools.

The proportion of overweight students is increasing year by year

- i Excess body weight = overweight + obese**
- In first grade, **one in four students (28%)** has excess weight. **One in eight students (12%)** is obese.
- In the fourth grade, **one in three students (35%)** has excess weight. **One in seven students (14%)** is obese.
- In seventh grade, **29% of students** have excess body weight. **One in nine students (11%)** is obese.
- Regardless of age, obesity is more common among boys than girls: **one in seven boys and one in eleven girls are obese.**



Proportion of overweight or obese persons and average body mass index by sex among Estonians aged 16–64.
Source: AHBS, National Institute for Health Development



3

VISION FOR THE FUTURE – GOALS AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS

We have set a bold and ambitious goal with our Physical Activity Action Plan: to become the most physically active country in Europe by 2035. As a small and flexible country, Estonia has the advantage of quickly implementing research-based measures, community-based initiatives and cross-sectoral co-operation to make physical activity an integral part of everyday life.

*European Health Interview Survey (EHIS)*¹³ collects data on the health status, health behaviours and use of health care services among European Union citizens to support the monitoring of health policies, promote social inclusion, reduce health inequalities and encourage healthy ageing.

The survey includes citizens aged 15 and older and is conducted at the national level. The first health survey in Estonia was carried out in 1996, with subsequent waves in 2006, 2014 and 2019. The 2019 survey was part of the third wave of EHIS, conducted in all EU Member States using a standardised methodology.

According to the most recent survey, physical activity among Estonians is below the European Union average. For example, the proportion of people engaging in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week in Estonia is approximately 5% lower than the EU average.

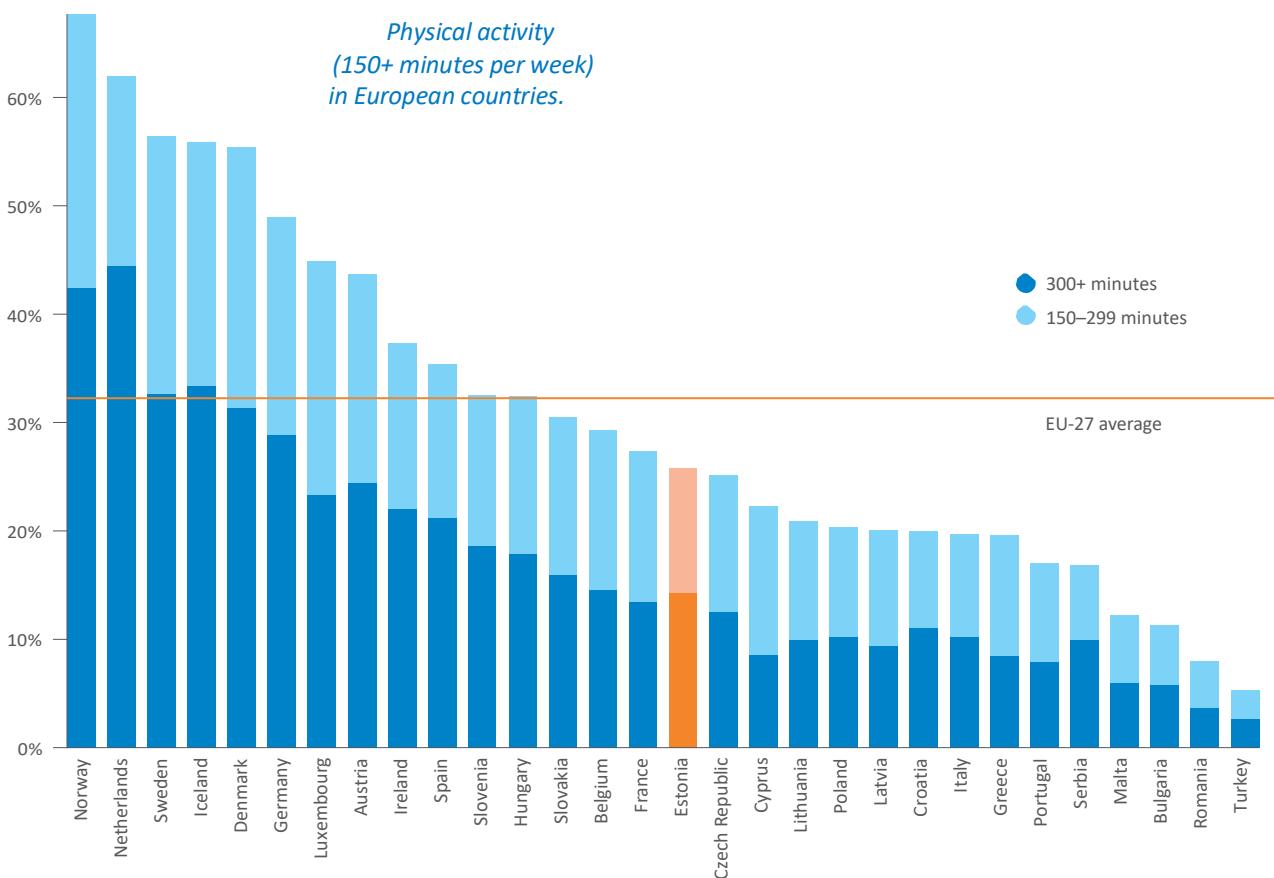
Similarly, everyday physical activity, such as walking and cycling, as well as aerobic sports and muscle-strengthening exercises, are less common in Estonia compared to other European countries. To increase the physical activity of the population, we need to focus not only on different sectors but also on promoting a variety of forms of movement.

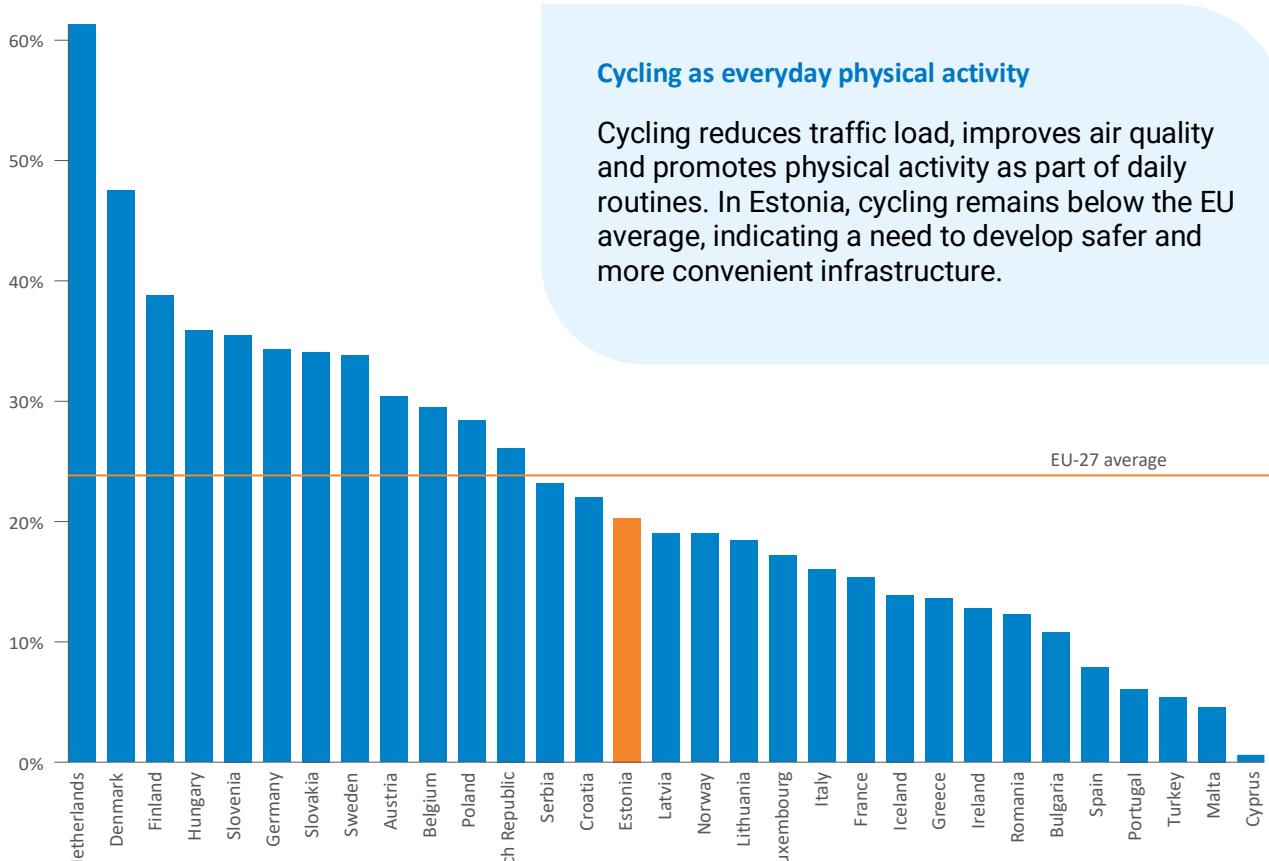
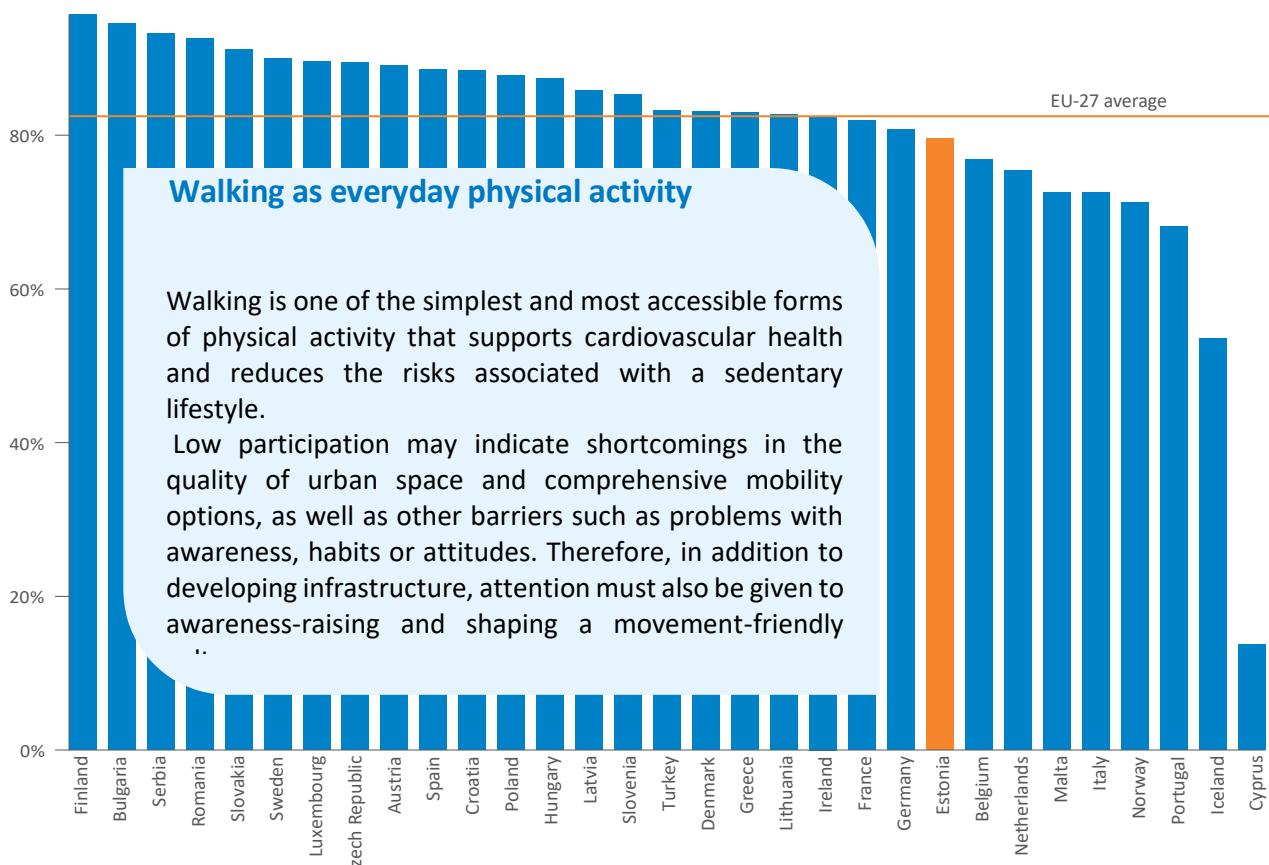


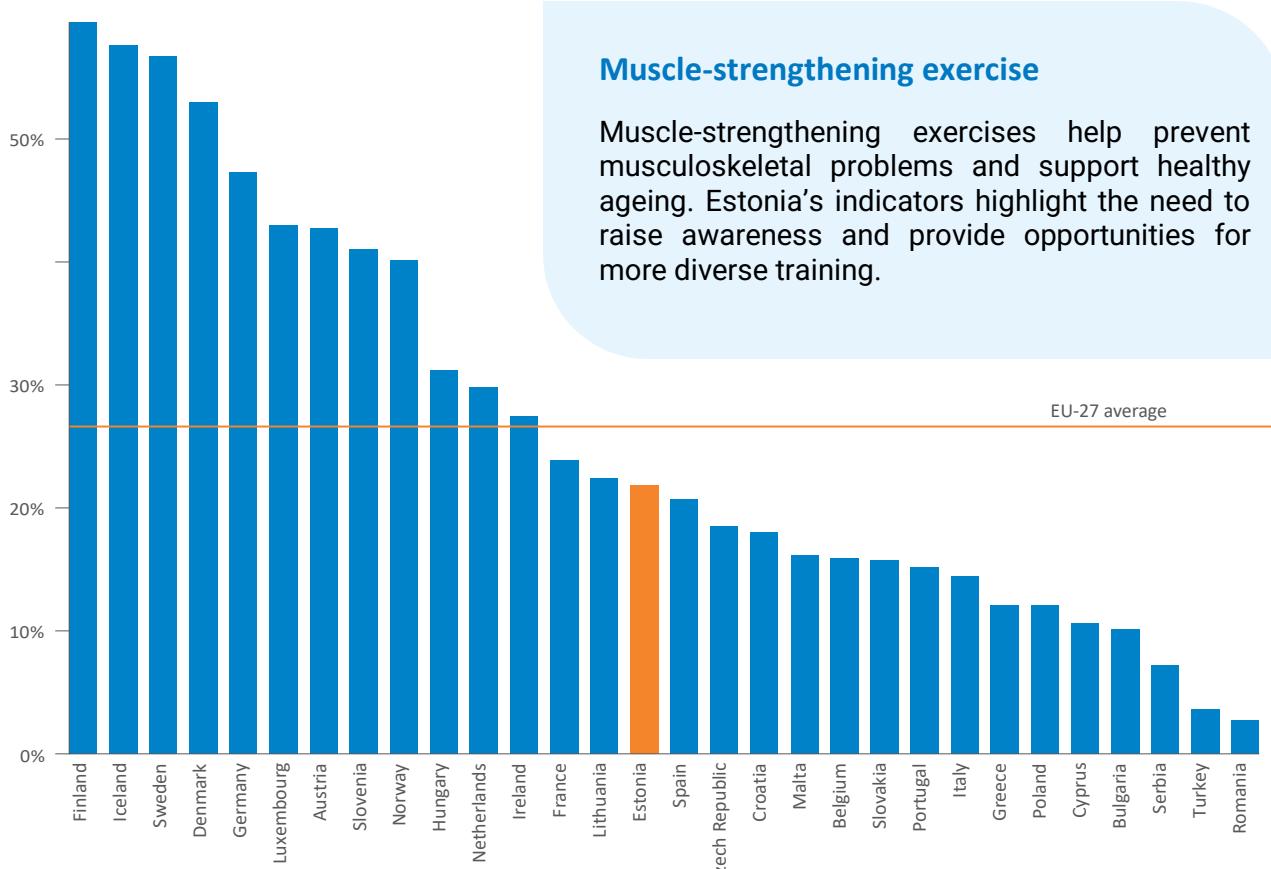
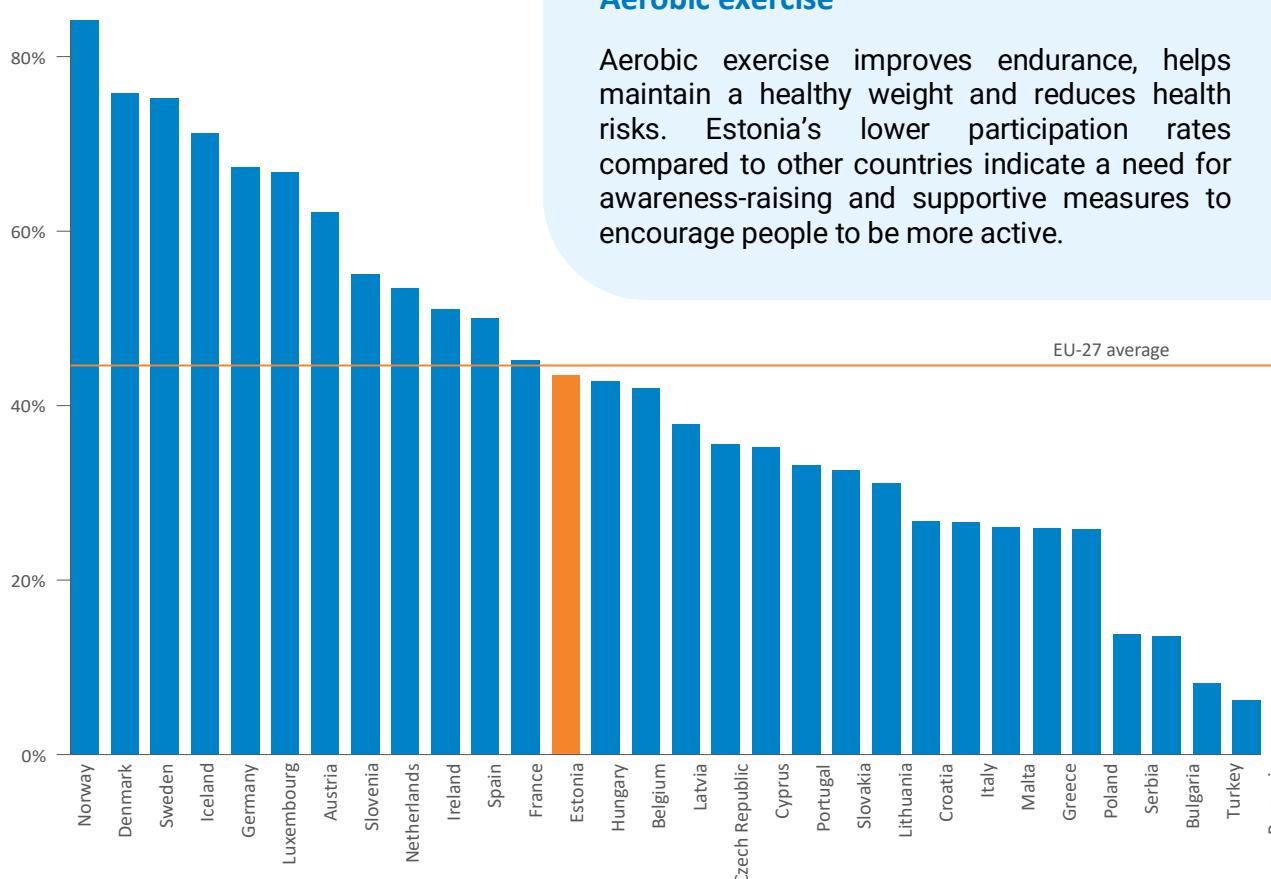
Did you know?

YOUTH IN SPORTS

[According to the 2024 data from the Estonian Sports Register¹⁴](#), 55% of Estonian children and adolescents aged 5–19 participate in organised sports, with the difference in participation between boys and girls decreasing over the years. Currently, boys account for 57.6% and girls for 42.4% of organised sports participants.









Did you know?

SURVEY ON SPORTS AND EXERCISE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In 2024, the Ministry of Culture launched a pilot study on sports and physical activity among people with disabilities to test how nationwide data could be collected in the future on the physical activity levels of people with disabilities. The pilot study is carried out in three municipalities with different locations and population sizes, involving people aged 18 or over with disabilities. As of the end of 2024, the pilot study was still in progress.

The study will be conducted in 2025. In the longer term, the results of the pilot study will enable the development of a monitoring instrument for assessing physical activity, provide reliable and research-based input for policy-making and support more effective co-operation with local governments and local sports federations in identifying the barriers to physical activity among people with disabilities.

The comparative data outlined above highlight the need for targeted measures focused on improving physical activity habits and developing health policies to increase the physical activity of Estonians and progress toward the goal of becoming the **most physically active country in Europe**.

Creation of system-level solutions

Promoting physical activity requires a more research-based and co-ordinated approach than before, one that takes greater account of our rapidly changing world. A systemic cross-sectoral approach is needed to ensure that the importance of physical activity is considered in all policy-making. More effort than ever before must be made to ensure that society understands the seriousness of the problem of physical inactivity and takes decisive action to find the best possible solutions. To this end, a concrete action plan has been developed and practical measures have been initiated. In addition, research and communication working groups meet regularly to provide research-based guidance for both upcoming measures and policy-making.



Research-based approach

When promoting physical activity, it is important to have up-to-date data and a high-quality monitoring system. Different research institutions should be open to sharing their research results. When planning broader actions, they should first be tested on a smaller scale to ensure that the impact is positive.

Cross-sectoral co-operation

The physical activity of the population directly affects the health care, education and defence sectors. Through economic impact, it is also linked to all other sectors. Promoting physical activity cannot be achieved by a single sector alone – a holistic approach is required. To maintain a common direction, share best practices and avoid duplication of efforts, it is essential that different stakeholders work closely together. This allows resources to be pooled and enables greater impact.

Active environment

The environment surrounding people should provide opportunities for everyone to engage in suitable forms of physical activity. It is important that existing infrastructure is used as efficiently as possible. In addition to infrastructure, an active environment should be supported through legislation and different programmes. The latter primarily target kindergartens and schools, but also workplaces.

High awareness

The formation of physical activity habits begins at an early age, making it important for parents as well as kindergarten and school staff to be able to positively influence behaviour patterns. To ensure that these habits are sustained, in addition to raising general awareness, outreach efforts play a key role in showing people how to take care of their health.



Did you know?

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TOYBOX INTERVENTION IN KINDERGARTENS

The National Institute for Health Development has adapted ToyBox to Estonian conditions and is piloting and evaluating this research-based intervention. The ToyBox intervention is a kindergarten-based, family-involved intervention aimed at shaping healthy eating and physical activity habits in children aged 3 to 7. In the 2024/2025 academic year, the intervention is offered in co-operation with the Estonian Health Insurance Fund, with 31 kindergartens participating, comprising a total of 47 groups, with at least one institution participating from each county. In addition, county-level health promoters from educational institutions are also involved to support both previously and newly joined kindergartens in their regions.



4

TARGET GROUPS – ENGAGING PEOPLE THROUGHOUT LIFE

Children and youth

Providing children with diverse and effective movement education influences the formation of their movement habits in the long term. Kindergartens and schools play a key role in shaping a kindergarten and school culture that supports physical activity, enabling and motivating children to be active and fostering a positive attitude toward an active lifestyle. However, movement education lessons and sports activities as part of hobby education alone are not enough.

More effort needs to be put into measures that generate lasting interest in physical activity among children. This includes diversifying the programmes offered by schools and kindergartens, as well as involving parents and the community. Developing children's movement habits is an investment in their health and well-being for life.



Adults and working-age

After leaving the education system and entering working life, people often put their own health on the back burner. Although health problems caused by low physical activity may not be apparent at a young age, the damage can, in fact, be irreversible. Therefore, it is important to maintain an active lifestyle during adulthood and to model this behaviour for those close to you.

Elderly

Although the elderly are the least physically active, physical activity is perhaps most important at this stage of life. Sufficient physical activity reduces the risk of non-communicable diseases and helps keep the mind sharp. Unfortunately, most initiatives promoting physical activity tend to target younger generations. Solutions must be found to create suitable conditions for the elderly and to engage them effectively.



People with disabilities

Nearly 10% of Estonians have at least a moderate disability. In addition, a large number of people experience temporary partial limitations in mobility due to injuries. Physical activity is equally important for everyone, thus suitable conditions must be created also for those whose mobility is restricted due to a variety of reasons.



5

ACTION PLAN – OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Estonian Physical Activity Action Plan aligns with the four main directions of the WHO Global Action Plan, focusing on creating active societies, environments, people and systems. This strategic framework helps ensure that the promotion of physical activity is systematic and sustainable, encompassing education, urban planning, health care and workplaces.

WHO objectives¹⁵, aiming to reduce global physical inactivity by 15% by 2030.

1

ACTIVE SOCIETY

Awareness is raised to make physical activity a natural part of daily life. Public campaigns, educational programmes and employer initiatives are implemented to promote the development of movement habits.

2

ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Opportunities for physical activity are developed through public spaces and transport infrastructure. The focus is on expanding cycle tracks, jogging trails and public sports facilities.

3

ACTIVE PEOPLE

Support is provided to different target groups, including children, the elderly and people with special needs, to ensure that everyone has access to and opportunities for regular physical activity.

4

ACTIVE SYSTEMS

National and local policies are strengthened to integrate the promotion of physical activity into the health care and education systems, as well as the workplace.



ACTIVITIES – PROGRAMMES, INITIATIVES AND MODELS FOR CO-OPERATION

The Physical Activity Action Plan was developed in 2023, during which different meetings and engagement events were held and work was also carried out online. The action plan brings together pilot projects, campaigns and research covering a variety of fields, as well as potential changes related to legislation.

Currently, the action plan lists a total of 56 activities: 37 are in progress, 7 have been completed and 12 have not yet started. Of these, 25 are ongoing activities (without a fixed start or end date) and 31 are project-based activities.

ACTIVITY	LEADER	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
<u>Raising awareness of regular physical activity and healthy lifestyles¹⁶</u>	CCPA	In progress
<u>Involving public broadcasting and ensuring consistent coverage of physical activity topics across different media programmes¹⁷</u>	CCPA	In progress
<u>Development and piloting of an exercise prescription intervention¹⁸</u>	MoC	In progress
<u>Consolidating information for parents on the Tark Vanem (Smart Parent) website¹⁹</u>	TAI	In progress
<u>ToyBox-intervention²⁰</u>	TAI	In progress
<u>Introduction of movement and sports mornings for young children²¹</u>	CCPA	In progress
<u>Amendment of the Early Childhood Education Act²²</u>	MER	In progress
<u>Continued development of the Schools in Motion programme²³</u>	UT Move Lab	In progress
<u>Development and implementation of physical activity-related training courses for teachers and instructors²⁴</u>	UT Institute of Education Centre for Innovation in Education	In progress
<u>Continued development of the 'Sport koolis' (Sport at School) initiative²⁵</u>	EOC	In progress
<u>Continued development and implementation of movement education²⁶</u>	MER	In progress
<u>Development of a health promotion programme for higher education institutions and vocational schools²⁷</u>	EASF	In progress
<u>Supporting child care institution employees in promoting physical activity²⁸</u>	MoSA	In progress
<u>Updating the legal framework so that learning and growing environments better promote balanced nutrition and physical activity²⁹</u>	MoSA	In progress
<u>Development and implementation of a system for monitoring the physical abilities of children and adolescents in schools³⁰</u>	MER	In progress
<u>Ensuring the sustainability of teaching basic swimming³¹</u>	Estonian Swimming Federation	In progress
<u>Revising the principles for allocating youth sports support to sports federations so that early-age achievements carry less weight in determining funding amounts³²</u>	MoC	In progress
<u>Changing local-level sports funding to encourage broader participation alongside competitive sports³³</u>	MoC	In progress

ACTIVITY	LEADER	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
<u>Creating access to previously closed sports facilities through digital identification</u> ³⁴	CCPA	In progress
<u>Designing family-centred activities and services aimed at physically inactive people</u> ³⁵	CCPA	In progress
<u>Promotion of outdoor and playground sports</u> ³⁶	CCPA	In progress
<u>Awarding the 'Health Promoting Workplace' label</u> ³⁷	TAI	In progress
<u>Promotion of activities that support physical activity among the elderly</u> ³⁸	CCPA	In progress
<u>Implementation of the recommendations of the Accessibility Task Force in the field of sport</u> ³⁹	MoC	In progress
<u>Training of specialists supporting the physical activity of people with special needs, in co-operation with universities</u> ⁴⁰	EPC	In progress
<u>Supporting the activities of local governments and organisations with the aim of making activities that promote physical activity more carefully planned and regular</u> ⁴¹	CCPA	In progress
<u>Training of local government sports managers and community coaches</u> ⁴²	CCPA	In progress
<u>Development of networks of county public health specialists and health promoters of educational institutions (incl refresher training)</u> ⁴³	TAI	In progress
<u>Advising organisations and assessing the effectiveness/efficiency of activities</u> ⁴⁴	CCPA	In progress
<u>Mapping of best physical activity-promoting practices</u> ⁴⁵	CCPA	In progress
<u>Creating a school environment that promotes physical activity</u> ⁴⁶	MER	In progress
<u>Conducting population-based health behaviour surveys</u> ⁴⁷	TAI	In progress
<u>Survey on sports and exercise opportunities for people with disabilities</u> ⁴⁸	To be determined	In progress
<u>Study on physical activity and nutrition interventions in schools and preschool child care institutions</u> ⁴⁹	Praxis	In progress
<u>Analysis of the development of skills, habits and attitudes that support the physical activity and mental well-being of students in the second stage of study</u> ⁵⁰	CCPA	In progress
<u>Regular monitoring, refinement and updating of the action plan</u> ⁵¹	MoC	In progress
<u>Management of the research work plan</u> ⁵²	CCPA	In progress

ACTIVITY	LEADER	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS
<u>Survey on the mapping of sporting conditions in schools⁵³</u>	Estonian Foundation of Sports Education and Information	Completed
<u>Implementation of the 'Be Active Year' and integration of best practices⁵⁴</u>	CCPA	Completed
<u>Increasing the flexibility of the support for labour costs of coaches to ensure multi-sport trainings are also encouraged⁵⁵</u>	MoC	Completed
<u>Creation of the 'Physical activity in the workplace' webpage⁵⁶</u>	TI	Completed
<u>Development of state-supported regional recreational sports centre services⁵⁷</u>	MoC	Completed
<u>Determining the cost of physical inactivity and excess weight in Estonia⁵⁸</u>	TAI	Completed
<u>Conducting the school sports survey⁵⁹</u>	MoC	Completed
<u>Designing the health indicators in the Health Portal to be more human-centred⁶⁰</u>	MoSA	Not started
<u>Implementation of outdoor breaks and opening of physical activity facilities outside school hours⁶¹</u>	MER	Not started
<u>Making training recommendations available in outdoor gyms and other similar exercise facilities⁶²</u>	CCPA	Not started
<u>Promoting the benefits of healthy lifestyles in the workplace⁶³</u>	MoC	Not started
<u>Raising awareness among social workers about the importance of physical activity⁶⁴</u>	ENSIB	Not started
<u>Adding sports aids to the list of technical aids under the Social Welfare Act⁶⁵</u>	EPC	Not started
<u>Increasing the availability of sports aids in sports centres⁶⁶</u>	EPC	Not started
<u>Making proposals regarding the National Spatial Plan 2050⁶⁷</u>	MoC	Not started
<u>Conducting an additional analysis for the study on the economic footprint of low physical activity and excess weight⁶⁸</u>	To be determined	Not started
<u>Survey on the mapping of sporting conditions in kindergartens⁶⁹</u>	TAI	Not started
<u>Behavioural and intervention study of inactive people: factors promoting and hindering everyday physical activity from a behavioural awareness perspective⁷⁰</u>	To be determined	Not started
<u>Determination of the physical activity of the elderly and the factors that promote and hinder it⁷¹</u>	To be determined	Not started

DEVELOPMENTS IN 2023 AND 2024

Completed activities:

Conducting the school sports survey

A school sports survey carried out by the Ministry of Culture in 2023 revealed that approximately 25,000 students (15% of general education school students) participate annually in interschool sports competitions. The survey identified the main motivators and barriers to participation. It was found that children who are more active than average tend to participate in competitions and that they often gain competition experience outside of school sports as well. From the schools' perspective, the most common barrier to participation is lack of financial resources. On a positive note, participation in competitions does not significantly interfere with academic learning.

See the survey summary: [School Sports Survey 2023](#)⁷²

Implementation of the 'Be Active Year' and integration of best practices, CCPA (2023)

The year 2023 was declared the 'Be Active Year' by the Ministry of Culture and it was led by the Competence Centre for Physical Activity. The aim was to draw attention to physical activity and movement culture, raise awareness and implement best practices. Each month focused on different forms of physical activity, engaging more than 10,000 people in open training sessions, workshops and campaigns. In addition, a foundation was laid for a sustainable co-operation network.

One of the systemic follow-up actions of the 'Be Active Year' was the renewal of the qualification and training system for physical activity coaches. In 2024, the Competence Centre for Physical Activity, in co-operation with Tallinn University and

the University of Tartu, updated the physical activity coach curriculum and relaunched training for coaches. The preparation of the coach curriculum was based on the concept of physical literacy, which helps to understand and improve people's relationship with physical activity. Just like reading and writing, physical literacy can be acquired through learning and practice, and it is a key factor in fostering an active lifestyle.

The role of a physical activity coach is to act as a community trainer and motivational supporter who helps people develop physical, psychological and social competencies through enjoyable and diverse physical activities. Unlike traditional sports coaches, whose focus is often on achieving high-performance results, physical activity coaches prioritise promoting overall physical and mental well-being. By providing positive experiences, they help cultivate regular physical activity habits, thereby improving the quality of life of community members and supporting the health care system.

The qualification for physical activity coaches is awarded by the Estonian Olympic Committee and the training is conducted by the Competence Centre for Physical Activity. The training is open to physical activity enthusiasts, hobbyists interested in self-improvement, movement education teachers as well as coaches of other sports who want to help people find a positive and lasting connection with physical activity.

*Read more: [EOC Yearbook 2024](#)⁷³
Physical activity coach qualification: <https://liiume.ee/liikumisharrastuse-treenerikutse/>*

Creation of the 'Physical activity in the workplace' webpage, Labour

The webpage 'Physical activity in the workplace' was launched to provide practical advice and guidance on how to increase physical activity at work. The page includes materials for both employers and employees, including recommendations for movement breaks,

reducing sitting time and increasing overall activity during the working day.

Read more: Physical activity in the workplace⁷⁴ and Labour Inspectorate webpage⁷⁵

Survey on the mapping of sporting conditions in schools

The final report of the survey was completed at the end of 2024. The report provides an overview of sports facilities in basic and upper secondary schools, school environments that support physical activity, sports equipment, extracurricular sports activities in school clubs, sports opportunities depending on participation in the Schools in Motion programme, as well as challenges and training needs related to the transition to the new movement education curriculum.

The report is available here: [Mapping of sporting conditions in schools⁷⁶](#)



Did you know?

After the survey on sporting facilities in schools, the Ministry of Education and Research allocated **€3 million** for the first time to implement movement education in general education schools and purchase modern equipment that develops movement and sports skills. The goal is to provide students with diverse and practical learning experiences that improve educational outcomes and support young people's mental and physical well-being.



Did you know?

RITA+ APPLIED RESEARCH

In 2024, within the RITA+ programme, funding was approved for a research project prepared collaboratively by the Competence Centre for Physical Activity, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Education and Research. The project focuses on developing skills, habits and attitudes that support physical activity and mental well-being among students in grades 4 to 6.

The RITA+ applied research is carried out from 2025 to 2027. The total project budget is up to €571,429, including VAT. The duration of the study is up to 24 months.

Increasing the flexibility of the support for labour costs of coaches to ensure multi-sport trainings are also encouraged (autumn 2024)

Multi-sport training helps keep young people engaged in sports for longer. The amended regulation allows sports clubs to offer a variety of sports on a regular basis, for example, by adding a coach for a second sport alongside the main sport in order to diversify training. The updated regulation of a minister was approved in the autumn of 2024.

The regulation is available here: [Riigi Teataja⁷⁷](#)

Development of state-supported regional recreational sports centre services, MoC (2024)

Through the support measure for the further development of regional recreational sports centres, as well as the support measure for the construction of utility and service buildings, 27 different centres have received funding. In 2024, an analysis and recommendations were prepared for the development of a nationwide network of recreational sports centres, which will serve as input for planning the next funding periods. The measure for further development of the centres will continue until 2026, and planning for the next period is scheduled to begin this autumn.

Read more: [Regional recreational sports centres⁷⁸](#)

Determining the cost of physical inactivity and excess weight in Estonia, TAI (2024)

According to a report prepared by the National Institute for Health Development in 2024, the annual economic cost associated with physical inactivity in Estonia is €28.7 million, while the total cost associated with excess weight is as high as €124.7 million per year. The study analysed direct health care costs, indirect costs related to incapacity for work and premature mortality, and provided an overview of the health and economic impacts.

The report is available here: [Determining the cost of physical inactivity and excess weight in Estonia⁷⁹](#)



Did you know?

PROMOTION OF OUTDOOR AND PLAYGROUND SPORTS

In 2024, the Competence Centre for Physical Activity launched a pilot project to promote outdoor and playground sports. As part of the project, ball boxes filled with a variety of sports equipment were installed at public sports grounds, allowing children, youth and families to use them for active recreation outdoors.

From 13 June to 30 August 2024, the City of Tallinn opened 38 municipal school stadiums for free use by residents. Across Estonia, 88 *ball boxes*⁸⁰ were installed on stadiums and playgrounds.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCPA – Competence Centre for Physical Activity

MoC – Ministry of Culture

TAI – National Institute for Health Development

MER – Ministry of Education and Research

EOC – Estonian Olympic Committee

EASF – Estonian Academic Sports Federation

MoSA – Ministry of Social Affairs

EPC – Estonian Paralympic Committee

LI – Labour Inspectorate

ENSIB – Estonian National Social Insurance Board

Ministry of Culture
Competence Centre for Physical Activity

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