

Physical activity overview

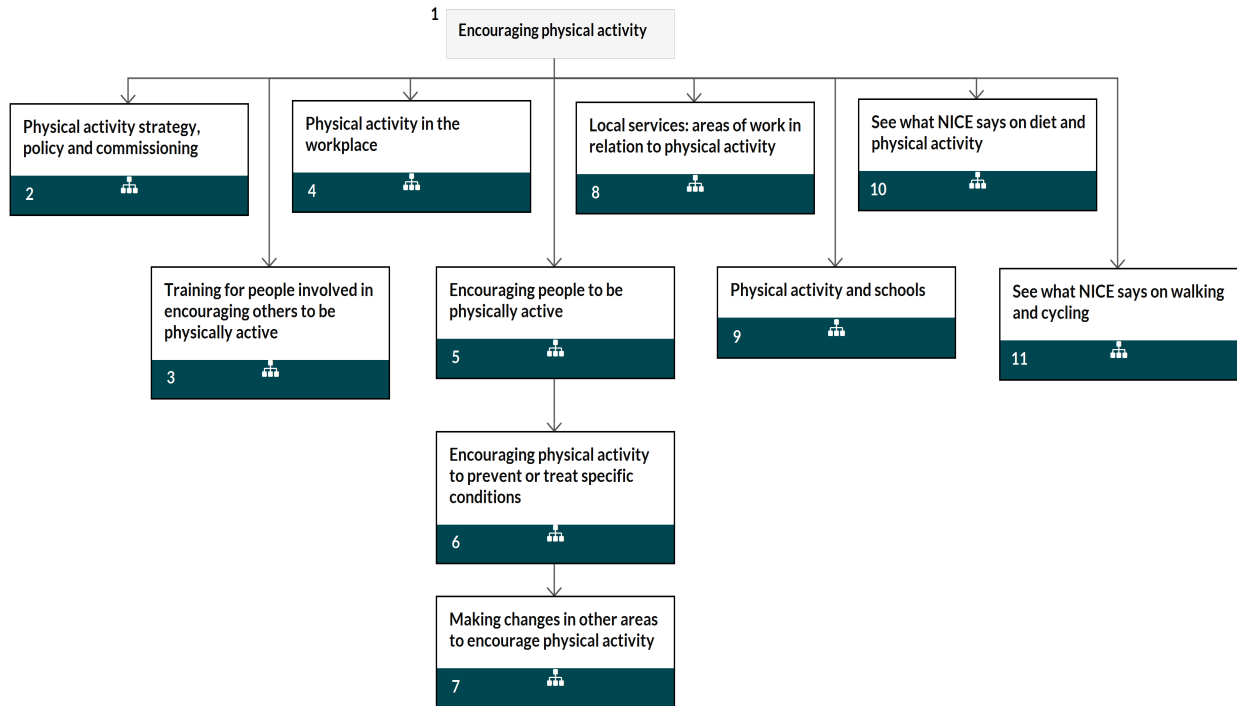
NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE says on a topic in an interactive flowchart. NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online.

They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this NICE Pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/physical-activity>

NICE Pathway last updated: 05 June 2019

This document contains a single flowchart and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



1 Encouraging physical activity

No additional information

2 Physical activity strategy, policy and commissioning

[See Physical activity / Physical activity strategy, policy and commissioning](#)

3 Training for people involved in encouraging others to be physically active

[See Physical activity / Training for people involved in encouraging others to be physically active](#)

4 Physical activity in the workplace

[See Physical activity / Physical activity in the workplace](#)

5 Encouraging people to be physically active

[See Physical activity / Encouraging people to be physically active](#)

6 Encouraging physical activity to prevent or treat specific conditions

[See Physical activity / Encouraging physical activity to prevent or treat specific conditions](#)

7 Making changes in other areas to encourage physical activity

[See Physical activity / Making changes in other areas to encourage physical activity](#)

8 Local services: areas of work in relation to physical activity

[See Physical activity / Local services: areas of work in relation to physical activity](#)

9 Physical activity and schools

[See Physical activity / Physical activity and schools](#)

10 See what NICE says on diet and physical activity

[See Diet / Lifestyle advice on diet and physical activity](#)

11 See what NICE says on walking and cycling

[See Walking and cycling](#)

Access

Access (accessibility) can mean that a particular place or destination is accessible to local residents using a mode of transport that involves physical activity. Destinations may include work, healthcare and education facilities and shops. It can also mean the ability to use a facility because, for instance, it is free or affordable, it does not require people to travel a long distance to use it and the environment and activities are suitable for those with disabilities. Examples of facilities include playgrounds, parks or open spaces and leisure, youth or community centres.

Active play

The Children's Play Council (now Play England) defines play as: '...freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child...' Active play involves physical activity.

active travel

getting from place to place by a physically active means, such as walking or cycling, non-motorised scooters or rollerblades: this can be commuting, for example to work or school; a journey to other destinations, for example between home and shops and local amenities; or walking and cycling for leisure

blue spaces

these include the sea, rivers, lakes and canals

Brief advice

verbal advice, discussion, negotiation or encouragement, with or without written or other support or follow-up; it can vary from basic advice to a more extended, individually focused discussion

campus

2 or more related buildings set together in the grounds of a defined site

Cardiovascular disease

includes coronary heart disease, stroke and peripheral arterial disease. These conditions are frequently brought about by the development of atheroma and thrombosis (blockages in the

arteries). They are also linked to conditions such as heart failure, chronic kidney disease and dementia

connectivity

the extent to which routes connect with other routes and destinations to allow an unbroken journey

contested space

a geographical space that is used for different purposes, potentially causing conflict because each type of user has differing priorities

cycling

using cycles for transport or leisure, including bikes, tricycles, tandems or hand cycles

footways

paths that run alongside a road, over which the public have a right of way on foot only (see section 329(1) of the Highways Act 1980); commonly referred to as pavements

footpaths

paths that are separate from a road, over which the public have a right of way on foot only (see section 329(1) of the Highways Act 1980).

green

green spaces include urban parks, open green areas, woods and forests, coastland and countryside, and paths and routes connecting them

Inactive

not currently meeting the Chief Medical Officer's recommendation for physical activity as outlined in 'Start active, stay active: a report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers' (Department of Health 2011)

land use mix

the variety of uses for land in an area, and the degree to which these are balanced. This can include residential, commercial, employment, recreational, and open space.

Mental wellbeing

Mental wellbeing has been defined as life satisfaction, optimism, self-esteem, mastery and feeling in control, having a purpose in life, and a sense of belonging and support. See [NHS Health Scotland Mental health improvement programme, background and policy context](#)

Moderate-intensity activity

Moderate-intensity activity increases breathing and heart rates to a level where the pulse can be felt and the person feels warmer. It might make someone sweat on a hot or humid day (or when indoors).

Moderate to vigorous physical activity

Children and young people should undertake a range of activities at this level for at least 60 minutes over the course of a day. At least twice a week this should include weight-bearing activities that produce high physical stresses to improve bone health, muscle strength and flexibility. This amount of physical activity can be achieved in a number of short, 10-minute (minimum) bouts.

Movement skills

Movement skills use skeletal muscles to achieve a physical goal. They are learnt and refined throughout life. Gross movement skills include: rolling over, sitting up, crawling, walking, running, jumping, hopping and skipping. Fine movement skills include the ability to manipulate small objects and transfer them from hand to hand, and tasks that involve hand-eye coordination.

Occupational therapy

Occupational therapy aims to enable people who have physical, mental and/or social needs, either from birth or as a result of accident, illness or ageing, to achieve as much as they can to get the most out of life.

Other factors

for example, risk factors for coronary heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes. These include high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and being overweight

pavement parking

parking part, or the whole, of a motorised vehicle on a pavement

public transport

shared modes of transport that can be used by members of the public and are not owned by any individual member; they generally have fixed routes and schedules and may include buses, coaches, trains, rapid transit systems, trams, and ferries

Read codes

Read Codes is the standard clinical terminology system used in general practice in the UK.

School travel plan

A school travel plan is a written document detailing a package of measures to improve safety and reduce car use, backed by a partnership involving the school, education and local authority transport officers, the police and the health authority. It is based on consultation with teachers, parents, pupils and governors and other local people. It must include: information about the school, a description and analysis of journeys made and the associated problems, a survey of pupils' current and preferred mode of travel, consultation findings, clearly defined targets and objectives, details of proposed measures and a timetable for implementation, clearly defined responsibilities and proposals for monitoring and review.

Sedentary

Being sedentary is not just a lack of physical activity (see 'inactive'). Sedentary behaviour involves activities that do not increase energy expenditure much above resting levels, for example, sitting, lying down, sleeping, watching TV and reading. Sedentary behaviour is an independent risk factor for chronic disease. People who achieve the recommended levels of physical activity can still be at risk if they spend too long being sedentary. (British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health 2013).

Sport

Sport is all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.

street furniture

permanent or temporary items located on footways and pedestrianised areas, including chairs, hanging baskets and planters

Structured exercise programmes

Structured exercise programmes vary in format, the mechanism of referral and content. They include components such as phase 3 and phase 4 rehabilitation activities and structured, tailored and supervised activities delivered by a specialist physical activity and exercise instructor (trained to level 4).

Traffic-calming schemes

traffic calming is a means of restricting vehicle speeds, primarily using traffic engineering measures such as speed bumps

vending boards

portable advertising boards placed on footways and in pedestrianised areas

Walking and cycling schemes

organised walks or rides

Your responsibility

Guidelines

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and

practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Technology appraisals

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, health professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients. The application of the recommendations in this interactive flowchart is at the discretion of health professionals and their individual patients and do not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to provide the funding required to enable the recommendations to be applied when individual health professionals and their patients wish to use it, in accordance with the NHS Constitution. They should do so in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Medical technologies guidance, diagnostics guidance and interventional procedures guidance

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account. However, the interactive flowchart does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the recommendations, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this interactive flowchart should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.