

HUNGARY

PREVALENCE (%) OF ADULTS REACHING THE RECOMMENDED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS, 2009

%	ADULTS (18-64 YEARS)
MALES	86.2
FEMALES	84.6
BOTH SEXES	85.4

Total population: 9 877 365

Median age: 41.3 years

Life expectancy at birth males: 72.2 years

Life expectancy at birth females: 79.1 years

GDP per capita: €9 900

GDP spent on health: 8% (1)



Monitoring and surveillance

Physical activity in adults

It is expected that a national monitoring centre will be established in Hungary under the leadership of the National Institute for Health Development. However, Hungary does not currently have a health monitoring and surveillance system that includes population-based measures of physical activity. That said, global surveillance systems are used, such as the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) (2).

The country's national recommendation and cut-off points for adults reaching the recommended levels of physical activity for health are based on WHO's *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health* (2010) (3) and the recommendations of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (4) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) (5). Hungary's national recommendations address young people as well as adults.

According to the EHIS from 2009 (6) (see Table 1), the percentages of adults (aged 18–64 years) and older adults (aged 65+ years) meeting the recommended physical activity levels for health are 85.4% and 66.2%, respectively. The study also demonstrates that older adults (men: 70.4%, women: 61.9%) are less active than adult males (86.2%) and adult females (84.6%).

Data from the 2014 Eurobarometer survey (7) show that 15% of the population exercise or play sports regularly and that 21% carried out vigorous physical activity on at least 4 of the previous 7 days.

Table 1. Prevalence (%) of adults reaching the recommended physical activity levels, 2009

%	ADULTS (18–64 YEARS)	OLDER ADULTS (65+ YEARS)
MALES	86.2	70.4
FEMALES	84.6	61.9
BOTH SEXES	85.4	66.2

Source: EHIS, 2009 (4).

The WHO Global Health Observatory (GHO) estimates from 2010 for Hungarian adults (aged 18+ years) (8) show that 79.1% meet WHO's recommended physical activity levels for health, with males being more active (81.5%) than females (77.0%).

Physical activity in children and adolescents

Hungary uses the cut-off point for children and adolescents reaching the recommended physical activity levels for health as defined in WHO's *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health* (2010) (3).

Physical activity levels in Hungarian adolescents are assessed through the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study. According to the HBSC 2009/2010 results for Hungary, adolescent boys (aged 11–15 years) are much more active than girls of the same age (see Table 2) (9). The two sets of figures presented from the HBSC study are:

- prevalence of adolescents being physically active for at least 60 minutes on 5 days per week;
- prevalence of adolescents being physically active for at least 60 minutes per day, every day.

Table 2. Prevalence (%) of adolescents reaching the recommended physical activity levels, 2009/2010

%	ADOLESCENTS (11–17 YEARS)*	ADOLESCENTS (11–17 YEARS)**
MALES	43.4	22.8
FEMALES	25.6	11.5
BOTH SEXES	34.5	17.2

Notes. * Physically active for at least 60 minutes on five days per week. ** Physically active for at least 60 minutes per day, every day.
Source: Németh & Költő, 2011 (9).

The WHO GHO 2010 estimates for Hungarian adolescents (defined as aged 11–17 years in relation to WHO data) provide similar prevalence data to the HBSC 2009/2010 study in terms of figures relating to daily physical activity, but lower prevalence is shown when taking into account the figures for physical activity carried out on 5 days per week. According to this report, 19.2% meet the recommended physical activity levels for health, with the proportion of boys meeting the recommended levels (25.6%) at almost twice that of girls (13.5%).

Box 1 provides details of a health promotion scheme operating at local level in Hungary.

Box 1. Health Promoting Offices (HPOs) in Hungary

HPOs are a new element of the Hungarian health promotion framework. They represent the first time that a health promotion and disease prevention institution has operated at subregional level among local communities in Hungary. The HPOs offer services free of charge and without the need for referral. A total of 61 HPOs are operating throughout the country; 18 of which are situated in the most disadvantaged areas. As part of the comprehensive development programme of the Hungarian public health system, the HPOs receive continuous professional assistance from the National Institute for Health Development to enable their operation and networking (10, 11).

Policy response

Major policy documents adopted by government bodies

The Hungarian Parliament passed the National Strategy in 2007 (12). It aims to improve the quality of life of the Hungarian population by developing stronger systems for sporting activities, investing in physical education (PE), including physical activity in tourism, and encouraging the population to allow time for physical activity. Ultimately, this will strengthen human capital and community cohesion. The National Sport Strategy incorporates Sports for All

values, including the need for special provision for marginalized groups (such as people with lower socioeconomic status, those with disabilities and the Roma population). These provisions are the responsibility of national and local governments, along with nongovernmental sports organizations, seeking to create a sensitive and continually evolving professional development toolkit to handle this complex task. The Strategy has been updated to allow a more specific focus on the social role of sports, regardless of age (13).

The Hungarian Leisure Sports Association has adopted a Medium-term Strategy of Hungarian Leisure Sports (14), focusing on taking an environmentally friendly attitude to incorporating physical activity into everyday activities throughout a person's life-course.

The Hungarian Government has approved a national strategy entitled Healthy Hungary 2014–2020, which has the promotion of regular physical activity among its priorities (15).

A national PE strategy is in the process of being drafted by the Ministry of Human Capacities. It is envisaged that this will include Sports for All policy themes, as well as addressing motivation factors for people who engage in only low levels of physical activity, along with those in lower socioeconomic groups. The National Standard Programme for Kindergarten Education was adopted by the Hungarian Government in 2012 (16). It includes a section on physical activity, emphasizing the importance of regular physical activity for the health and development of children.

The State Secretariat for Sports has been a member of the European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA Europe) since 2012 (17). The Hungarian School Sport Federation gained observer status in the WHO cross-sectoral HEPA working group.

Guidelines and goals

Hungary has national recommendations on physical activity for young people and adults, based on the WHO *Global recommendations on physical activity for health* (2010) (3), as well as the recommendations of the CDC and the ACSM. According to the National Sport Strategy, school-aged children are recommended to engage in 60 minutes of medium-intensity physical activity every day (12). For adults, the objectives set by the 6th Hungarian Cardiovascular Consensus Conference (18) are dynamic, aerobic, physical activities (e.g. walking 4–5 kilometres, swimming, biking, ball sports, and so on), followed by muscle strengthening (resistance training) twice per week. It was suggested that this should be carried out for 30 minutes to 1 hour, 5–7 times per week.

Table 3 presents a summary of the key measures in place to monitor and address physical activity in Hungary.

Table 3. Summary of key physical activity initiatives in Hungary

HEALTH	SPORTS	EDUCATION	TRANSPORT	MONITORING	GUIDELINES
Counselling on physical activity as part of primary health care services	Existence of a national Sports for All policy(ies)	Mandatory physical activity in primary and secondary schools	National or subnational schemes promoting active travel to school and/or workplace	Physical activity included in the national health monitoring system or separate routine survey	Existence of a national recommendation on physical activity
NO	YES	YES	YES	YES*	YES

* Hungary's Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2014–2020 is due to be implemented within the next 2 years. It will establish a national monitoring centre within the National Institution for Health Development. In the meantime, other global surveillance systems are used in Hungary, such as the HBSC study and the EHIS.

Additional information on action in key areas

Physical activity among older adults

The predecessor of the Ministry of Human Capacities has developed a National Old-age Policy Strategy (19), focusing on the need for senior citizens to engage in physical activity. Based on the strategy, different types of physical activity programmes have been launched for elderly people, such as the Partner in Age programme; the Ten Thousand Steps Programme; and the National Nordic Walking Programme (20).

Physical activity in the workplace

The Ministry of National Development has devised the Cycle to Work scheme (*Bringázz A Munkába*), active since 2007, which aims to promote cycling to work nationwide (21), and European Mobility Week (22) aims to promote the use of environmentally friendly modes of transport.

Physical activity in schools

In Hungary, daily PE became part of the program of the Government in 2010. According to Section 27 of Act CXC of 2011 on national public education, schools must organize 5 daily PE classes per week, each lasting 45 minutes (23).

After its gradual implementation, from the school year 2015/2016, all students of all grades in primary and secondary education will take part in daily PE (5 times per week, which is equal to 180 classes across the school year). To achieve the expected health gains, daily PE must fulfill several health-promoting criteria.

The Hungarian School Sport Federation set up a scheme in 2014 entitled In School Physical Activity (TE IS) as a voluntary physical activity programme. A pilot program was launched, involving 144 schools in economically disadvantaged areas. The project is due to be scaled up in 2015, involving at least 300 schools. It aims to incentivize voluntary participation in training programmes geared around a new physical education strategy and measurement system, with the main objective of creating mutually supportive communities among participating schools by using physical activity to strengthen relationships between students in extracurricular activities (24).

The National Institute for Health Development is in the process of implementing an operational programme for social renewal, comprising physical activity programmes and related health development projects for primary schools and multifunctional institutions, as well as leisure-time PE programmes in the community, outside of school. The expected outcomes include increasing the physical activity levels of students involved in the project, and improving their nutritional behaviour and consumption, mental health and health literacy, so that they become healthier.

The Ministry of Human Capacities initiated the Go for Sports campaign (*Sport Legyen a Tied*) (25) in 2015, supporting cooperation between schools and sports federations in order to promote physical activity among children.

Physical activity among marginalized groups

The Hungarian Ministry of Human Capacities has devised the National Disability Programme 2015–2025 (26), with a section dedicated to tackling barriers to sports. Here, the greatest problem is often lack of access to sporting activities for marginalized population groups. Most of the resources for disabled access to sports are prioritized for professional sports arenas and there is therefore a need for increased sports facilities, parks and playgrounds accessible to all members of each community, including disabled people and marginalized social groups.

Transport and the built environment

Tax incentives have been used to promote active transport since 1992: tax on motor vehicles and high parking fees in city centres are implemented nationwide (27).

Box 2 describes Hungary's BikeAcademy programme.

Box 2. BikeAcademy

The BikeAcademy programme comprises both theoretical and practical elements (road signs, traffic rules, cycling practices and preparation). The programme has developed continuously over the years and is now available to preschools as an optional subject. In addition, teachers can apply to attend a 30-hour training course in which they can improve both their theoretical and practical skills (28). In 2014, 103 mentors (preschool teachers) had been trained across 5 regions, as part of a pilot project.

Successful approaches

Over the years Hungary has made considerable effort to promote HEPA, both through policy programmes and direct interventions.

PE is now mandatory, requiring 5 daily PE classes per week. As of September 2015, students in all year groups in the Hungarian primary and secondary education system will receive compulsorily daily PE. Since September 2013, the new National Core Curriculum (29) regulates the content of PE lessons. Besides the traditional sports and recreational content of PE, the philosophy of the new curriculum focuses more on health objectives and on the cognitive content, enabling emotional and social development through motor activities.

Within the framework of a project funded by the European Commission's European Social Fund and the Government of Hungary, the Hungarian School Sport Federation (as part of a joint research and development project with the Cooper Institute in Texas, United States) developed a new national fitness assessment test for pupils called NETFIT (30, 31). This is now compulsorily used in all Hungarian schools. By introducing NETFIT, the Hungarian School Sport Federation will be able to provide aggregate data on the health status of the school-age population by age, gender, and according to 4 fitness profiles (body composition, aerobic fitness, musculoskeletal fitness and flexibility).

HEPA promotion is also the primary mission of the 61 Health Promoting Offices (HPOs) developed in 2013/2014. Among many health-related activities, HPOs focus in particular on the promotion of physical activity among the population aged 18+ years. The HPOs operate in subregions of Hungary, offering services free of charge and without the need for referral (11).

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