

# UK physical activity guidelines: Draft review and recommendations for Older Adults (aged 65+ years)

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# Current CMO 2011 Recommendations

- 1.** Older adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits, including maintenance of good physical and cognitive function. Some physical activity is better than none, and more physical activity provides greater health benefits.
- 2.** Older adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more – one way to approach this is to do 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week.
- 3.** For those who are already regularly active at moderate intensity, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity.
- 4.** Older adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.
- 5.** Older adults at risk of falls should incorporate physical activity to improve balance and co-ordination on at least two days a week.
- 6.** All older adults should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

*Individual physical and mental capabilities should be considered when interpreting the guidelines.*

# Does the scientific evidence continue to support the current Physical Activity Guidelines for older adults?

- **Guideline 1:** Evidence continues to support a dose response to PA. Strong evidence emerging on the benefits of light activity to health, particularly in those who are currently inactive or frailer/disabled.
- **Guideline 2:** Evidence continues to support 'be active daily' and 150 mins MVPA accumulated per week. Emerging evidence to support 'steps' recommendations as a way to reach MVPA that could be used to support implementation messages. Emerging evidence that 10 min bouts not essential but we need more evidence before we remove the 10 min minimum bout.
- **Guideline 3:** Weak evidence for 75 min vigorous activity in place of 150 mins for those who are active.

# Does the scientific evidence continue to support the current Physical Activity Guidelines for older adults?

- **Guidelines 4 and 5:** Strong evidence for strength guideline remains. Balance is important for those over 65 irrespective of falls risk. Most evidence for health exists from multimodal activities that have both strength and balance as key fitness components. Flexibility and movements to increase range of movement should be part of these multimodal activities as the majority of the evidence based interventions included flexibility in the cool down element of the intervention.
- **Guideline 6:** Covered in SB EWG. Engaging in regular sit to stands for frailer older people may improve physical function and be more achievable than meeting current guidelines as a start point to being more active.

# What were the key issues for the EWG consideration?

- Do we need a separate OA Guideline? YES
- Bouts – Does MVPA need to be in minimum 10 min bouts?
  - Yes for the moment, but emerging evidence that it can be less
- Steps
  - >7000 steps per day. Walk and rest a minute may help transition to meeting guidelines
- Light activity
  - Health benefits to those who are currently inactive or frail/disabled. Particularly to encourage transition to meeting the guidelines
- Strength/balance guideline
  - Merge and consider ‘multimodal’ activities that improve strength and balance
- Importance of flexibility
  - Important to include within ‘multimodal’ activities to improve strength and balance but no separate guideline
- Weight management with PA in older age
  - Meeting the guidelines will help in weight management, though most evidence in adults not OA

# What were the key issues for the EWG consideration?

- Evidence for HIIT on health outcomes in older adults?
  - Currently little evidence, more research needed
- Does PA have preventative mental health benefits?
  - onset of cognitive decline, anxiety disorders and symptoms, reduces the risk of experiencing depression and improves wellbeing
- PA and prevention of dementia / Alzheimer's Disease?
  - Strong evidence for reduced risk of developing dementia/AD with greater amounts of PA
- Does PA delay progression of Parkinson's Disease?
  - strong evidence that increasing physical activity has a significant impact on cognition and physical function
- PA and sleep in OA?
  - There is strong evidence that habitual MVPA improves sleep outcomes in adults of all ages
- Risks vs harm - Benefits outweigh risks – build up gradually
- Applicable to those with disability? YES
- Will proposed changes affect adoption for insufficiently active OA? YES +ve

# Draft Recommendations for CMOs Adult Physical activity guidelines

- **Recommendation 1:** The UK physical activity guidelines for older adults should start with a statement that PA is good for you and the more you do the better. They should continue to recommend a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week. *Further statements should make it clear that this volume of activity can be accumulated in different ways and a mixture of moderate, vigorous and high intensity activities (where appropriate) will provide similar health benefit.*
- **Recommendation 2:** *The guidelines should acknowledge that increasing volume and frequency of light activities and reducing sedentary behaviour are a place to start for the frailer or disabled older adult and contribute both towards health.* There is a risk that this approach might persuade inactive or insufficiently active older people that they are doing enough so this must be carefully managed in the guidelines. Suggestions of strategies for increasing PA should be presented.

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- **Recommendation 3:** *The UK physical activity guidelines should indicate that while optimal health benefits are likely to be derived from meeting the guidelines, they should continue to recognise the value of PA below (as well as above) the moderate intensity and 150 minute thresholds. This is particularly the case for older adults for whom moderate-intensity physical activity might not be a feasible option.*
- **Recommendation 4** (next slide!):
- **Recommendation 5:** The UK physical activity Guidelines should indicate that regular PA can contribute to weight maintenance including weight loss and the prevention of weight gain.



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- **Recommendation 4:** The UK physical activity guidelines should continue to recommend resistance training for major muscle groups on at least 2 days per week *but should expand this recommendation to include high intensity activity, impact exercise, balance training and flexibility.*
- Further statements should include specific examples of resistance, balance and flexibility training and other relevant activities. These examples should reflect key principles of progression, volume, intensity, frequency, multi joint, multi modal (e.g. bodyweight, free weights, resistance machines, elastic bands etc.) and prescriptions for strength/balance training for different starting levels of experience and activity. Other examples from everyday living to develop or maintain strength should also be presented.