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HEALTH PROMOTION BOARD LAUNCHES NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

Get Active, Aim for 150 Minutes a Week, Anytime, Anywhere, to be Healthy

1 Aiming for 150 minutes of physical activity per week can provide substantial health benefits for adults and older adults. However, it is important to note that even some physical activity is better than none, and more is better than some. These are the latest recommendations of the Health Promotion Board's (HPB) National Physical Activity (PA) Guidelines. The guidelines have been developed with the counsel of the National Physical Activity Consensus Group, which comprises both local and international experts in the fields of health promotion and physical activity.

2 Health benefits of regular physical activity include a 20 - 50% reduced risk of premature death, incidence of coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression, stroke, high blood pressure, colon cancer and breast cancer, to name just a few.

Total Physical Activity

3 The HPB PA Guidelines provide clear physical activity recommendations for three groups of people: i) 19-49 years old, ii) 50 years and above, iii) individuals who are seeking to prevent weight gain and obesity. Previous guidelines for those 19 years and above advocate 30 minutes of physical activity per day, for five or more days in a week.¹ The HPB PA Guidelines now recommend a total holistic approach to physical activity advocating physical activity "anytime, anywhere".

¹ Children and youth aged 18 and below are encouraged to engage in 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity every day, on five or more days a week.

4 The HPB PA Guidelines promote a culture of active living including lifestyle, aerobic and strength activities which can be done at home, at work, during commuting and during leisure time. To achieve substantial health benefits, the minimum physical activity session should be at least 10 minutes. The 10-minute sessions can be accumulated throughout the week to achieve 150 minutes of moderate intensity, or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity a week. (One minute of vigorous intensity physical activity = about two minutes of moderate intensity physical activity).

5 A moderate intensity aerobic activity causes a noticeable increase in breathing and heart rate. For instance, adults should still be able to talk but do not have enough breath to sing while engaging in brisk walking at low-impact aerobics at 5-7 km/h, or dancing, etc. A vigorous intensity aerobic activity causes a large increase in breathing and heart rate. For instance, adults should still be able to say a few words but are not out of breath while engaging in jogging, swimming, etc. (Please refer to Annex 1 for details and examples of moderate- and vigorous- aerobic physical activity.)

6 Lifestyle activities such as washing the car, mopping the floor, or taking the stairs, will also count towards the 150 minutes weekly goal. Even for those with hectic work schedules, being physically active can be achieved anytime, anywhere – at home, at work, during commuting and during leisure time.

7 Aside from the weekly goal of 150 minutes of lifestyle activity and aerobic activity, for additional health benefits, strength activities must be done on two or more days a week. Strength activities include muscle-, bone- and joint-strengthening activities (such as lifestyle strength training activities - washing the car, mopping the floor, taking the stairs and carrying groceries) and some mind body exercises (Tai Chi, Health Qigong, Yoga, Pilates). Strength activities should involve major muscle groups. (Please refer to Annex 1 for details.)

8 HPB recommends that beginners should gradually work towards meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines, including proper warm up and cool down of five – 10 minutes. Lastly, individuals with limitations, disabilities, or with chronic conditions should follow their doctor's advice on the volume and types of physical activities that are best for them.

9 Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, HPB said: “According to the recent National Health Survey, 40% of Singapore residents do not exercise enough and do not meet the minimum physical activity guidelines for good health.

10 “By 2020, we target to have at least 70% of Singapore residents meet the physical activity guidelines. This will put Singapore in the top quartile of OECD countries.”

11 “A commonly cited reason for not exercising is the lack of time. We can help overcome this by building physical activity into our daily routine. To enable Singapore residents to exercise anytime and anywhere, HPB has developed modular exercise routines, such as The Quick 6 Strength Exercises which can be done at their convenience. We have also made it convenient to exercise by working with partners to enhance our physical environments to encourage physical activity, for example, staircases at MRT stations are dressed to attract commuters to use the stairs. To make it even easier, HPB has developed the Fitness Tracker application to help track one’s fitness levels. All these collective efforts will enable Singapore residents to achieve at least 150 minutes of physical activity to gain health benefits,” elaborated Mr Ang.

Conducive Environments for Active Lifestyle

12 To create environments that are conducive for physical activity, HPB is working closely with the National Parks Board (NP) to display signage in several parks and a park connector, showing information related to a safe and effective briskwalking session. Distance markers will also make it easy and convenient for briskwalkers to complete their 2 km fitness assessment route at various parks.

13 Health promoting MRT stations throughout Singapore will have strategically placed stickers to encourage commuters to take the stairs instead of the lifts or escalators. Commuters can also view snippets of the new Great Singapore Workout on the iView smart screens at SMRT stations islandwide. Boon Lay MRT station is the first health promoting MRT station.

14 A total of nine shopping mall chains have also been designated as Health Promoting Malls that provide healthy lifestyle activities for mall shoppers and residents in their vicinity. The Malls have pledged on-going commitment to introduce more activities that can support an active lifestyle for shoppers. Activities at the malls include mall walks and community aerobics.

Pervasive Physical Activity Programmes

15 Physical Activity programmes will be pervasive in the community to ensure that healthy living is an easy option. To date, in partnership with the People's Association (PA), there are a total of 586 Brisk Walking Clubs with more than 90,000 members; and 103 Health Qigong Interest Groups with more than 6,500 members. These were set up to promote healthy lifestyle among residents while forging bonds and making friends through common interests. Brisk walking and health qigong clubs are currently available throughout Singapore.

16 HPB is also working closely with the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) to launch a Workout Series @ Workplaces programme, aimed at encouraging sports participation among women working adults in the corporate environment. The programme, which brings total fitness to the doorsteps of corporate Singapore, is specifically targeted to facilitate the demands of maintaining a healthy and sporty lifestyle, and to incorporate a sporting culture at the work place. HPB will also be working with the SSC to champion the Vision 2030 goal, which is presently at the public feedback phase, to explore how the true value of sport can help develop the physical and mental well being of individuals and the community at large.

Fitness Tracking

17 To enable individuals to easily assess their own health and fitness levels and make physical activity a daily lifestyle choice, HPB has developed a fitness tracking mobile phone application to provide immediate fitness results after a short run or brisk walk.

18 The "Fitness Tracker" application computes the Aerobic Fitness Score (AFS), which is an indicator of one's fitness level based on a 2.4 km run or 2.0 km walk. The AFS categorization is based on evidence from international studies and the joint research by HPB and the Republic Polytechnic to validate the 2.0 km brisk walk assessment. The Fitness Tracker will provide personalised safe and effective physical activity advice for the individual to improve his/her fitness level.

19 Another user-friendly feature of the application is the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q). PAR-Q is also available on the Fitness Tracker for participants to review their health status and it will help determine if they need to consult a medical doctor for additional advice, before embarking on any exercise programme.

Newly set up Physical Activity Centre of Excellence (PACE)

20 HPB has now set up the Physical Activity Centre of Excellence (PACE) to strengthen the efforts to reduce Singapore's physical inactivity. PACE will spearhead research and partnerships to build an eco-system that promotes physical activity.

21 The Physical Activity Centre of Excellence will be a thought leader, national and regional expert in the domain of physical activity, as well as innovate to make physical activity seamless and convenient. Through continuing education and training, PACE will educate and empower fitness and allied health professionals and the community. There will be programmes to drive the proliferation of physical activity in the people, public and private sectors.

22 The HPB PA Guidelines can be downloaded from www.hpb.gov.sg from 22 August 2011.

Issued by Health Promotion Board

Enclosures:

Annex 1 – National Physical Activity Guidelines for 19-49 years old, and for 50 years old and above (Key highlights from Summary Guide)

Annex 2 – Parks / Park Connector where distance markers can be found

Annex 3 - Health Promoting Malls

Annex 4 - Health Promoting Mall Recipients

Ways to accumulate 150mins of Physical Activity

<p>Domain Type</p>	<p>Occupational/ Home</p>	<p>Active Transport (Commuting)</p>	<p>Leisure Time Physical Activity (Exercise, recreation & sports)</p>
<p>Lifestyle Intermittent light or moderate intensity activity</p>			
<p>Aerobic Moderate or vigorous intensity for ≥10 mins at a time</p>			
<p>Strength Moderate to vigorous intensity using 0 to 10 scale</p>			

Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults (19-49 years old)

Lifestyle Activity (every day)

Over a prolonged period of time, lifestyle physical activities may be useful to counter the small energy imbalance responsible for obesity in most adults.

Recommendations include:

- Taking the stairs regularly
- Walking to run errands instead of driving or riding
- Alighting one or more MRT / bus stops earlier, or parking further away than usual to walk to a destination
- Breaking up sedentary periods lasting longer than 90 minutes with 5 to 10 minutes of standing, moving around or doing some physical activity

Aerobic Activity (spread throughout the week)

To acquire substantial health benefits, adults need to accumulate 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week. Individuals can combine vigorous-intensity and moderate-intensity activities, with 1 minute of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity being equivalent to two minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity.

Aerobic activity should be performed for at least 10 minutes per session. Combinations of moderate-intensity and vigorous-intensity aerobic activities can be performed to meet this recommendation.

For adults, a moderate-intensity aerobic activity causes a noticeable increase in breathing and heart rate. For instance, adults should still be able to talk but not have enough breath to sing while engaging in brisk walking 5-7 km/h, dancing, low impact aerobics, leisurely bike riding, snorkelling, playing doubles tennis or table tennis, etc.

For adults, a vigorous-intensity aerobic activity causes a large increase in breathing and heart rate.

For instance, adults should still be able to say a few words but are not out of breath while engaging in jogging, step aerobics, swimming laps, fast bike riding, playing soccer, volleyball, basketball, netball or badminton, etc.

Strength Activity (two or more days per week)

Strength activities provide additional health benefits. These include muscle-, bone- and joint-strengthening activities (e.g. hand-held weights, resistance bands, callisthenics, strength-training equipment, dragon boating, and rock climbing wall) and lifestyle strength training activities e.g. taking the stairs and carrying groceries) and some mind body exercises (e.g. Qigong, Tai Chi, yoga and Pilates).

Some examples of lifestyle strength training activities are taking the stairs, mopping the floor, washing the car and carrying groceries.

Strength activities should involve major muscle groups: legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults (50+ years old)

Lifestyle Activity (everyday)

Over a prolonged period of time, lifestyle physical activities may be useful to counter the small energy imbalance responsible for obesity in older adults.

Recommendations include:

- Taking the stairs regularly
- Walking to run errands instead of driving or riding
- Alighting one or more MRT/bus stops earlier, or parking further away than usual to walk to a destination
- Breaking up sedentary periods lasting longer than 90 minutes with 5 to 10 minutes of standing, moving around or doing some physical activity

Aerobic Activity (spread throughout the week)

To acquire substantial health benefits, adults need to accumulate 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week. Individuals can combine vigorous-intensity and moderate-intensity activities, with 1 minute of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity being equivalent to 2 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity.

Aerobic activity should be performed for at least 10 minutes per session. Combinations of moderate-intensity and vigorous-intensity aerobic activities can be performed to meet this recommendation.

Strength Activity (two or more days per week)

Strength activities provide additional health benefits. These include muscle-, bone- and joint-strengthening activities (e.g. hand-held weights, resistance bands, callisthenics, strength-training equipment, dragon boating, and rock climbing walls) and some mind body exercises (e.g. Qigong, Tai Chi, yoga and Pilates).

Strength activities should involve major muscle groups: legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms.

Balance

In addition, balance ability may become a concern for some older adults as they age. Balance is maintained or improved by regularly following the physical activity guidelines for older adults.

For older adults, a moderate-intensity aerobic activity causes a noticeable increase in breathing and heart rate eliciting a relative intensity rating of 5-6. For instance, older adults should still be able to talk but do not have enough breath to sing while engaging in brisk walking, ballroom dancing, low impact aerobics, leisurely bike riding, playing golf or table tennis, table tennis, gardening or doing housework, etc.*

For older adults, a vigorous-intensity aerobic activity causes heavy breathing and increase in heart rate eliciting a relative intensity rating of 7-8. For instance, older adults should still be able to say a few words but are not out of breath while engaging in brisk walking up hills, jogging, step aerobics, swimming, playing badminton, etc.*

**Relative intensity is rated on a scale of 0 to 10, where sitting is 0 and the highest level of effort possible is 10. A moderate-intensity activity is a 5 or 6 and vigorous-intensity activity is a 7 or 8.*

Physical Activity Guidelines for the Prevention of Weight Gain and Obesity (Adults and Older Adults)

Individuals who are overweight* should aim to reduce their weight and prevent obesity. There is strong evidence that regular physical activity reduces the risk of weight gain and is most effective when combined with a balanced diet.

Engaging in regular physical activity can provide substantial health benefits regardless of an individual's BMI classification (normal, overweight or obese). Regardless of BMI classification, physically active/fit individuals are more likely to live longer, and lead healthier lives than inactive/unfit individuals.

Physical Activity Guidelines

Initially, individuals should accumulate 150 to 250 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, while not exceeding caloric intake requirements. If necessary, individuals should adjust their aerobic activity and caloric intake to a point where it is individually effective for achieving a healthy body weight.

Some individuals may need to accumulate more than 250 minutes of aerobic activity per week to prevent weight gain. Individuals should progress gradually when increasing the volume of aerobic activity.

Increasing daily lifestyle activities expends more calories and may aid in the prevention of weight gain.

Muscle-strengthening exercises may promote loss of total body fat and mitigate intra-abdominal fat increase over time.

Adults and older adults should aim to reduce body weight at an optimal rate of 0.5 -1 kg per week to achieve an initial weight loss goal of up to 10% from baseline.

A deficit of 500 kcal per day below the estimated calorie requirement should result in a weight loss of about 0.5 kg per week.

**The WHO defines overweight as body mass index (BMI) of 25-29.9*

Points of Caution

- Individuals who are planning to become more physically active than they are now should review the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q) before they start.
- Each aerobic and strength exercise session should include 5 to 10 minutes each of warm-up and cool-down segments and flexibility exercises can be an integral part of one's weekly physical activity routine and may include mind body exercises.
- Individuals with limitations, disabilities or with chronic conditions should follow their doctor's advice on the volume and types of physical activities that are best for them.
- Older adults who are concerned about the risk of falling should follow their doctor's advice for participating in physical activities programmes.
- Older adults should be aware of their relative intensity effort (on a scale of 1 to 10) during physical activity.
- Beginners should gradually work towards meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines.

Parks / Park Connector where distance markers can be found

- Bedok Reservoir Park
- Jurong Central Park
- East Coast Park
- Pasir Ris Park
- Tiong Bahru Park
- Yishun Park
- Sengkang Riverside Park
- Changi Boardwalk
- Bukit Panjang Park Connector
- Telok Blangah Hill Park

Health Promoting Mall

The Health Promoting Mall concept is the first of its kind in the world to leverage on creating supportive environments for healthy activities. The concept was conceived as shopping malls are close to the hearts of many Singapore residents' daily life where they can do their banking, have their meals, buy their groceries, etc. Promoting healthy lifestyles and activities in a shopping mall environment makes it easier for public participation, and keeps health awareness at the top of consumers' minds.

HPMs provide a variety of services, products and activities such as mall walks, quit smoking counselling in the pharmacies, lower-calorie meals in the food courts and restaurants and personalised tours to meet the shopping needs of customers in the supermarkets.

Category	Overview of Criteria
Physical Activity	Mall providing spaces for physical activity programs or educational/awareness events
Nutrition	Mall F&B / supermarket tenants encouraging or providing healthier food options to patrons; availability of nursing rooms
Communicable Disease Education	Mall ensures there are functional soap dispensers in mall toilets and feature communicable disease educational materials
Mental Wellbeing	Mall provides spaces for roadshows and events; as well as act as dissemination point of educational and awareness materials
Tobacco	Mall enforces smoking in public policies and promote smoking cessation through a host of infrastructure and services
Others	Mall offering basic safety features such as first aid kits, AEDs; and general health promoting features such as facilitating health screenings and HPB roving lightboxes

Health Promoting Mall Award Recipients

- AsiaMalls Management Pte Ltd
- Capitaland Retail Management
- City Developments Ltd
- NTUC Club
- Frasers Centrepoint
- Housing and Development Board
- Starmall Property Management Pte Ltd
- Mapletree or Vivocity
- UOL Property Investments Pte Ltd