

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a blue zip-up hoodie and carrying a black backpack, is smiling warmly at the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a brick wall. A purple rectangular bar is positioned on the left side of the image, and a purple rectangular bar is at the bottom right corner.

# Activity level for adults

## Insight: Activity levels for adults

Our latest Active Lives Adult Survey shows activity levels across England were on course for a record high before the pandemic hit.

However, the spring lockdown led to unprecedented disruption and reductions in activity levels between mid-March and mid-May.

The number of adults classed as active fell by 7.1% or 3.0 million during this period, whilst the number of inactive adults grew by 7.4% or 3.4m adults.

There was also an impact on mental wellbeing. In the initial phase of the pandemic, it was the short-term markers of happiness and anxiety which changed:

- People's happiness score fell by 0.2, to 6.9 out of 10 in mid-March to mid-May
- People's anxiety increased by 0.5, to 3.9 out of 10 over the same period.

The figures also starkly illustrate major challenges facing groups who have long found it hardest to be active:

- Disabled people
- The over 70s
- People with long-term health conditions
- People from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups.



## Recommended levels of physical activity for adults

According to the UK's Chief Medical Officer, people can gain a range of physical and mental health benefits and reduce the risk of many non-communicable diseases by doing the following:

- Taking part in 150 mins per week of moderate intensity activity (such as a brisk walk) or 75 mins of vigorous intensity activity (such as high intensity interval training). This is equal to 21 mins per day.
- Moving regularly throughout the day, especially if they sit for work – take regular breaks to spend time on their feet or use a standing desk or deskriser
- Doing something that builds strength twice a week – this could include carrying shopping, lifting weights, body weight exercises (such as push-ups), gardening, simple balances or yoga
- Please note there is separate guidance for disabled people, pregnant women and women after childbirth.

For more detailed information and useful infographics, see the [UK Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines](#).

