

Physically active at every age

General principles and suggestions for the promotion of sport and physical activity

Federal Office of Sport FOSPO

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Introduction

Our society is continually developing and changing. So too is sport. In recent years, this process of change has led among other things to the creation of the Federal Office of Sport (FOSPO) and has prompted the Federal Council to draft a concept for a sports policy in Switzerland. One of the key developments has been the move away from promoting purely sport to promoting both sport and other forms of physical activity. This is reflected by the fact that "General promotion of sport and physical activity" is one of the four strategic business areas of FOSPO. This term will also be used in the new legislation to promote sport due to come into force in 2011. This brochure focuses on the view of individuals in the different life stages.

Sporting and physical activity behaviour is greatly dependent on age: a young child has a different radius of activity and different needs than an adolescent. Likewise, the options open to people following retirement are different from the ones available to those who are still working. This brochure summarizes the current state of knowledge about the promotion of sport and physical activity for all ages. A first section gives a short overview of key terms and general principles. The second part describes physical activity across the various stages of life, sets out the ideal state towards which we should be working, and discusses suitable measures to adopt. It is aimed at all organizations and institutions involved in the promotion of sport and physical activity.

This brochure is the result of a wide-ranging consultation process involving various units within FOSPO. It is based on the principles set out in the planned "National Programme on Nutrition and Physical Activity" and supports the strategic goals of FOSPO with respect to the general promotion of sport and physical activity.

It is thought to be used within FOSPO, for example for the development of action plans and checklists for municipalities. Furthermore it addresses experts involved in the promotion of sport and physical activity.

The measures set out in this brochure concern all levels of the public sector as well as private actors. They are formulated in broad terms and are offered as suggestions, the approaches listed are not necessarily exhaustive. Every organization that wishes to promote sport and physical activity must individually decide what the most important challenges are and accordingly identify the measures it should take. This brochure is intended to provide a helpful point of reference and a tool for this task.

The theory and terminology underlying this booklet is based on:

Federal Office of Sport, Federal Office of Public Health, Health Promotion Switzerland, Network HEPA Switzerland (2006). Health-Enhancing Physical Activity. Base Document for Switzerland. Magglingen: Federal Office of Sport.

The following publications and documents contain detailed data or reviews of other sources:

Cavill, N., Kahlmeier, S. and Racioppi, F. Eds. (2006). Physical Activity and Health: from Evidence to Action. The Solid Facts. Copenhagen: WHO Europe.

Federal Statistical Office, Federal Office for Spatial Development (2007). Mobilität in der Schweiz. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2005 zum Verkehrsverhalten [Mobility in Switzerland. Results from the Microcensus on travel behaviour 2005. Report in German and French; summary in English]. Neuchâtel: Federal Statistical Office.

Lamprecht, M., Fischer, A. and Stamm, H. (2008). Sport Schweiz 2008. Grundlagenbericht [Sport in Switzerland. Base report]. Magglingen, Bern, Luzern: Federal Office of Sport, Swiss Olympic, Swiss Council for Accident Prevention, Swiss Accident Insurance Fund.

Lamprecht, M. and Stamm, H. (2006). Statsanté. Résultats des statistiques suisses de la santé. Activité physique, sport et santé. Faits et tendances se dégageant des Enquêtes suisses sur la santé de 1992, 1997 et 2002 [Statsanté. Results of the Swiss health statistics. Physical activity, sport and health. Facts and trends from the Swiss Health Surveys 1992, 1997 and 2002. Report in French and German]. Neuchâtel: Federal Statistical Office.

Lamprecht M. and Stamm H. (2002). Sport zwischen Kultur, Kult und Kommerz [Sport between culture, cult and commercialisation]. Zürich: Seismo-Verlag.

Sauter D. (2005). Mobilität von Kindern und Jugendlichen. Vergleichende Auswertung der Mikrozensus zum Verkehrsverhalten 1994 und 2000 [Mobility of children and adolescents. A comparative analysis of the Microcensuses on travel behaviour 1994 and 2000. Report in German; executive summary in English]. Zürich: Urban Mobility Research.

1 General principles

1.1 Why promote sport and physical activity?

Sport and physical activity can contribute a great deal to quality of life: they are conducive to enjoyment and fun, recreation and destressing, variety and satisfaction, concentration and relaxation.

The arguments for promoting sport and physical activity can be seen from two perspectives: those of the individual and those of the wider community.

For the **individual**, sport and physical activity have many beneficial effects – physically, mentally and socially. The motives for being active may vary widely from individual to individual.

An active population is also of benefit to **society as a whole**. If municipalities, cantons and the Confederation, along with schools, companies and health insurers, promote sport and physical activity, then it is because they recognise the benefits they bring.

Health and well-being

Sport and physical activity contribute to an individual's sense of well-being, keep the body fit and afford protection against various illnesses.

The public expects a beneficial impact on the whole population from the promotion of sport and physical activity, and a consequent reduction in costs for example. If everyone in Switzerland were to get enough exercise, around CHF 2.4 billion in health spending would be saved annually.

Fitness and coping with everyday life

Personal fitness is important for living an independent life, getting qualifications, pursuing a career, enjoying leisure time, maintaining relationships and successfully coping with everyday life. Children and adolescents enjoy making progress in sport, while older people remain independent for longer thanks to regular physical activity.

Society and the economy are dependent on fit and independent individuals who can fulfil their responsibilities and master the challenges encountered in everyday life.

Belonging to a community and creating networks

We live in a world in which we grow up to find our place and take on our share of responsibility. In the community we experience support, we build a strong identity and we forge relationships. Sport and physical activity can help us integrate in the community in two ways: a certain degree of independence and mobility is vital for participating in society, and sport and physical activity can help us create or improve these. Moreover, if carried out regularly under good guidance – in informal and/or formal groups – sport and physical activity enable individuals to make and maintain personal contacts, and consequently to participate in a community experience.

We depend on individuals being anchored in their lives and environment, and consequently finding their place in society. With the structure provided by rules and regular training groups, sport and sports clubs have the potential to help the individual do just that.

Community spirit

Working for others can engender gratitude, affirmation and the feeling of being useful. Working to achieve common goals and taking on responsibility – through a voluntary commitment in sport organisations – brings personal fulfilment.

Communities, charities, cultural and political organizations are dependent on people who have learned to devote themselves to working on their behalf for the sake of others. Committed people thus create social capital, the very basis of community living. There are for example many opportunities to experience leadership of groups – of teams, clubs and associations – in the realm of sport and physical activity. This experience can then also be of benefit in other social arenas.

1.2 Key terms

Physical activity

There are various definitions of physical activity. It can be understood as an umbrella term encompassing sport, health-enhancing physical activity and other forms of physical activity. *Figure 1* shows how these three aspects interrelate. Physical activity can be defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in an expenditure of energy above the at-rest level. In this document, as a rule physical activity will be used in the sense of health-enhancing physical activity (see below).

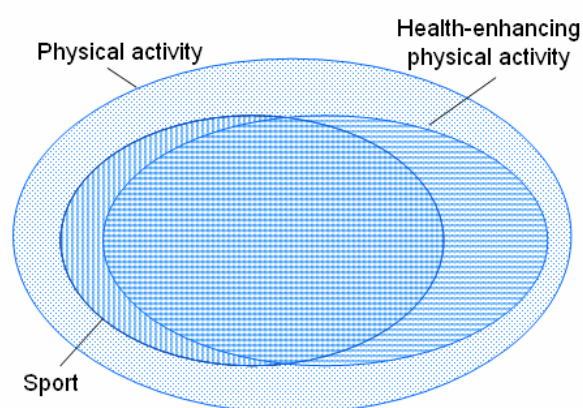


Figure 1.
Relationship between physical activity, sport and health-enhancing physical activity.

Sport

It is not easy to define sport. Our perceptions of sport have varied widely depending on the times and cultural context in which we lived.

According to the representative survey *Sport Schweiz 2000* (cf. Lamprecht and Stamm, 2002), Swiss citizens associate the following with sport:

- physical activity, health, enjoyment and fun (mentioned by around three-quarters of those questioned);
- good body feeling, camaraderie, fitness, training and games (around half those questioned);
- effort, self-discipline, performance, relaxation or experiences (around a third of those questioned).

The findings of this "taking the pulse" survey are borne out by modern definitions of the term (see box). Today we are aware of how varied and complex the world of sport is, and we define the term much more broadly than in the past. Traditionally sport was defined primarily in terms of performance goals, training, competition, social norms and rules, and the club was seen as the place where sport was performed.

Current definition of sport

Sport is characterized by:

A wide variety of forms of physical activity, games and sports, in which

- everyone, regardless of their sex, age, social or ethnic origin, can participate
- at different locations,
- alone or with others,
- to improve their physical, mental and social well-being, and
- improve their physical and mental performance.

Author: Prof. C. Wopp, University of Osnabrück

Health-enhancing physical activity

- Health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) is any form of exercise that improves health and has a minimum of undesirable side effects.
- To derive a health benefit, adults should be physically active for at least half an hour every day at a moderate intensity that is at least equivalent to brisk walking. More intensive activities (endurance training or regular strength training) bring additional benefits.
- Adolescents should be active for one hour per day and younger children even more. As part of or in addition to these minimum times, children and adolescents should perform activities that build strong bones, stimulate the cardiovascular system, strengthen the muscles, maintain flexibility and improve agility several times a week.

There is no clear cross-over point between sporting and non-sporting physical activities, they represent points on a continuum stretching between two poles. The same applies to health-enhancing and non-health-enhancing physical activity. *Figure 2* illustrates where the various types of physical activity can be placed along this continuum. The basic structure of the diagram was worked out during a retreat at the Swiss Federal Institute of Sport Magglingen.

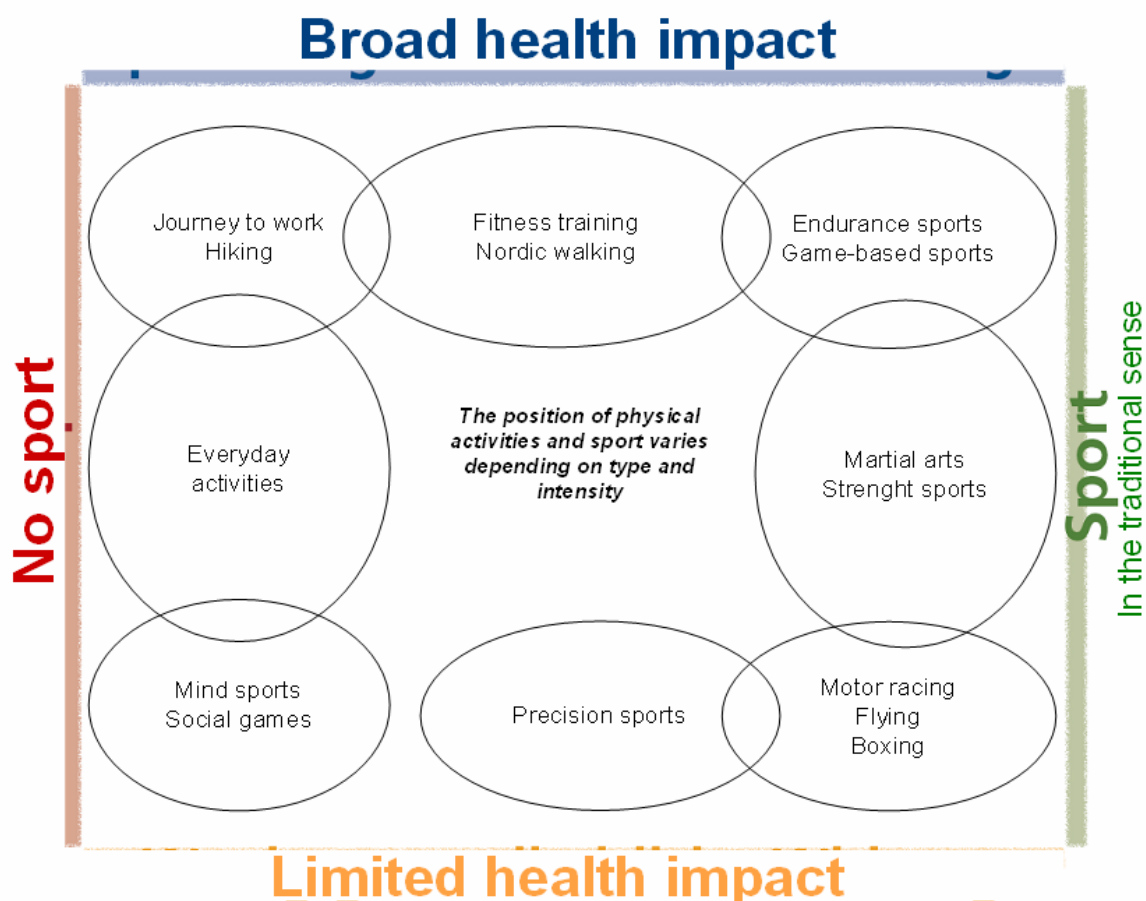


Figure 2. Different forms of physical activities with reference to the health and sport dimensions.

Different motivation

A broad, comprehensive interpretation of sport and physical activity is essential. Sport does not simply mean sport engaged in at a club, and physical activity is more than just climbing stairs or cycling to work. We are active either alone or together with others – with the family, with friends, in spontaneous or organized groups. We are active in a number of contexts (*domains*), and for a wide variety of reasons. These include sport and physical activity:

- **As a recreational activity:** at a club or as an independent activity.
- **At work or in education:** activities at the workplace or at school
- **For transportation purposes:** getting to work or school, shopping and other day-to-day activities
- **In the domestic environment:** working in the garden, doing housework, looking after children

Our **motives** for sport and physical activity can also vary. If the swiss residents are active, then they wish (with decreasing importance):

- to do something for their health
- to have fun
- to relax, distress
- to feel fit and trained
- to meet friends
- to experience their body
- to experience unique situations and personal limits
- to look better
- to work towards a personal goal
- to compete with others.

1.3 Life stages

People pass through different stages of life, and different social frames of reference apply at each stage. Their motives for engaging in sport and physical activity as well as their individual inclinations can also vary during the various stages. It is therefore helpful to provide a range of different options to cater to people at the different stages of their life. The structure of the present document is based on these life stages.

This brochure uses a simplified breakdown of life stages based primarily on physical development and on whether a person is of working age or not or in education. The stages and age groups should be understood as a broad framework; they may vary in individual cases as a result of different lifestyles (e.g. the child-rearing stage). In addition, the individual life stages can be broken down further (e.g. the stage following retirement).

- **Young children (0 to 4 years old)**
- **Children (4 to 12 years old)**
- **Adolescents (12 to 18 years old)**
- **Young adults (18 to 30 years old)**
- **Working-age adults**
- **Retirement-age adults**

1.4 Settings

The "settings" approach has proved useful in the field of health promotion. This approach emphasizes the importance of the conditions and environments in which people live, learn, work and spend their leisure time. Focussing on settings enables good access to target groups, optimum use of resources and the coordination of measures and activities.

Different settings may be important during the various life stages. The following settings have been found to be significant in relation to sport and physical activity:

- **Family**
- **Educational establishments (kindergartens, schools)**
- **Sport and youth organisations**
- **Community**
- **Workplace**
- **Medical environment (general practice)**

1.5 Factors influencing sport and physical activity behaviour

Our behaviour in relation to sport and physical activity is influenced by a number of factors (determinants). Some of these factors, such as genetic make-up, age, sex, cultural background or disabilities for example, are ones which we **cannot directly modify**.

Others can be influenced through appropriate measures in such a way as to induce a change in behaviour so that we become more active or do more sport.

The **modifiable** factors (cf. *Figure 3*) include:

Personal factors

- Attitudes and values (e.g. motivation, self-confidence, perceived obstacles)
- Positive expectations (e.g. feeling better by doing sport/being active, maintaining social contacts, getting close to nature)
- Skills and abilities (e.g. cycling, skills associated with a particular sport)

Social environment

- Family circle (family or close support persons such as foster parents and carers)
- Extended social circle (e.g. friends, colleagues, managers, peer group)
- Structured offers (e.g. provided by crèches, kindergartens/schools, employers, associations or commercial providers)

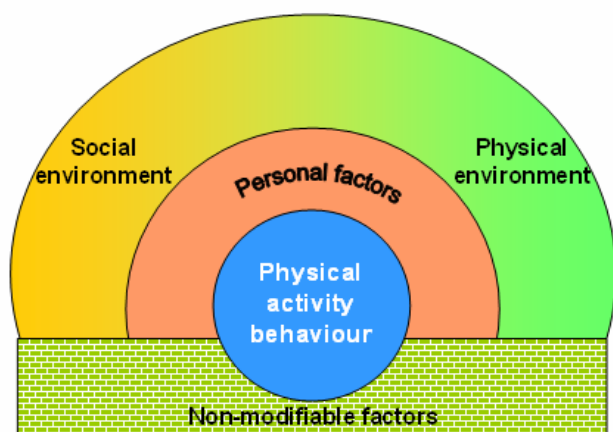


Figure 3.

Factors influencing sport and physical activity behaviour (determinants). Behaviour is influenced by factors that cannot be changed (e. g. gender, age, cultural background). And also by factors that can be changed. These include personal factors and factors in the social and physical environment.

Physical environment

A wide variety of sport facilities and other activity spaces should be available within the immediate and wider environment, such as:

- The immediate residential environment (e.g. flat, housing development, garden, communal areas)
- Playgrounds
- Sports facilities (e.g. sports halls, swimming pools, tennis courts)
- Green spaces (e.g. parks, squares, pathways)
- Natural spaces (e.g. fields, woods, rivers, mountains)
- Public buildings (e.g. school buildings, offices etc.)
- Footpath/cycle path networks for sport and physical activity as a recreational activity or to get from A to B in everyday life.

Short distances to everyday destinations such as schools or shops as well as mixed land use (housing, work places, services) support physical activity. Well accessible parks and sports facilities encourage sport and physical activity.

Walkable and cycle-friendly roads and a well designed public space are important as well.

The three determinants – personal factors, social environment and physical environment – are not accorded equal prominence during the different life stages. For instance, in the case of small children it is the family and the residential environment that have the most impact on physical activity. It is only later that other factors such as courses offered by clubs, the design of the wider built environment, and the attitudes and motivation of the individual come into play.

Figure 4 shows the importance of the determinants during the various life stages. This weighting is based on expert opinions and – as far as possible – on existing scientific evidence.

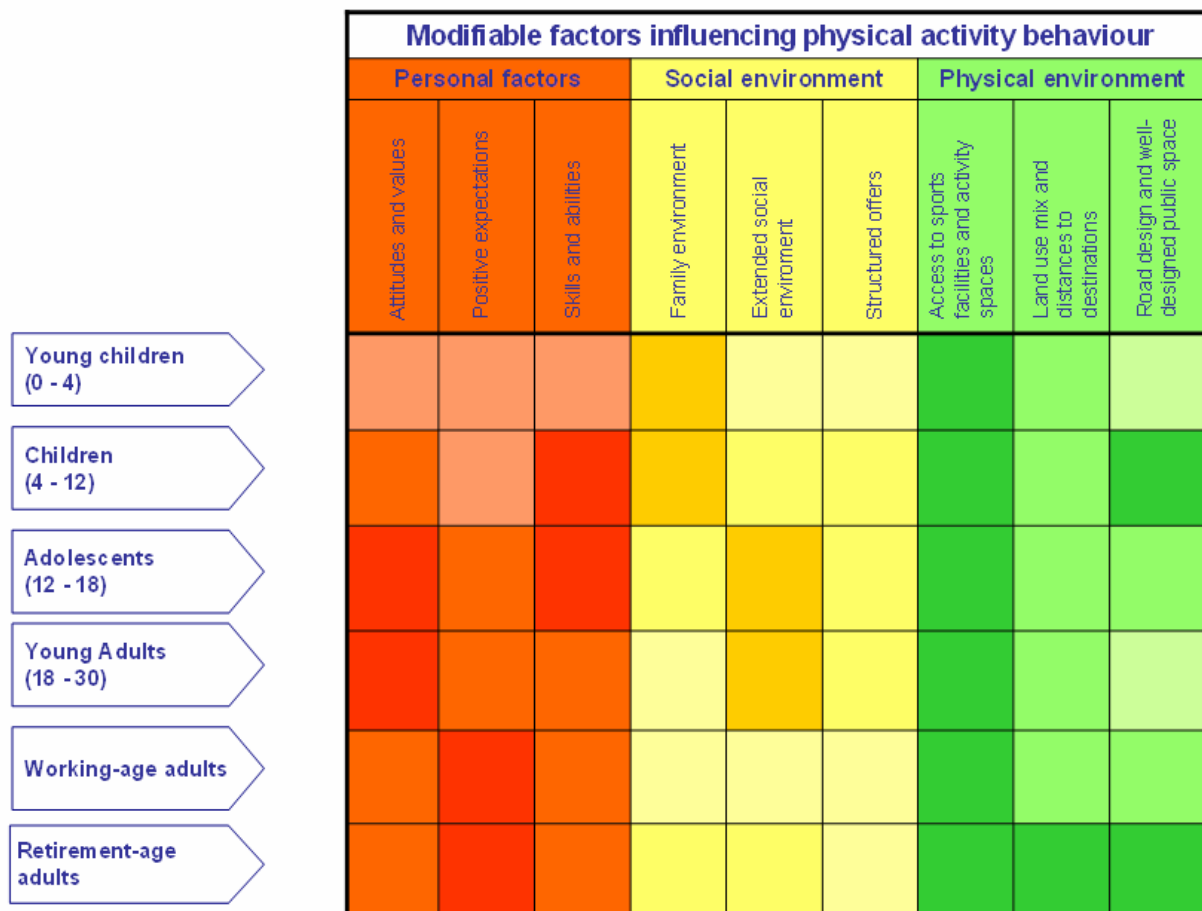


Figure 4. Importance of factors influencing sport and physical activity behaviour during the various life stages.: The darker the shade of the colour, the more important the respective factors (This weighting is based on expert opinions and – as far as possible – on existing scientific evidence).

1.6 Measures to promote sport and physical activity

Measures to promote sport and physical activity must aim to influence the **modifiable factors** in order to improve sport and physical activity behaviour.

Two approaches are possible:

- With respect to personal factors – **target the individual** – in order to change attitudes and motivation or improve skills
- With respect to the social or physical environment – **target the conditions**

The long-term promotion of sport and physical activity always requires action on both levels, the individual and the conditions. Ideally, the measures and activities should be combined and coordinated with each other.

In addition, it may be helpful or necessary to tailor the measures for promoting sport and physical activity to groups with specific **non-modifiable factors**, e.g. by means of age or sex-specific programmes, initiatives targeting people with disabilities (see box) or measures that take into account the cultural background or the economic situation of the target group.

Disability is no obstacle

Physical activity is a basic need – also for children and adults with a disability. Disabled individuals come to know themselves and their environment through movement. They discover their abilities and their limits, and can actively change them. Sporting abilities and skills are often decisive for acceptance in a group and can contribute greatly to a positive self-image. People having a physical or mental disability may be limited in a wide variety of ways in relation to range of movement, hearing, seeing, communicating, learning, thinking or behaviour. It is therefore all the more important to give them the opportunity to extend their individual repertoire of activity in line with their own special needs.

For a communal experience of sport, for instance in a village sports club, the empathetic commitment of group leaders, organizers, children and parents is vital. The targeted use of aids and special methods also plays an important role. Most types of sport can also be learned by individuals with disabilities if small adjustments are made to the rules and/or the materials used: For instance volleyball becomes sitting volleyball, or handball is adapted to become *Rafroball* or *Torbball*.

The associations for disabled sport and self-help groups can provide valuable support in the form of counselling, coaching and training. And it is equally important that people with and without disabilities are ready to make an additional effort. Integration must be desired by everyone involved – and this also includes the right to non-integration.

Authors: Stefan Häusermann and Helena Bigler, experts for sports with people with disabilities

According to the Base Document entitled *Health-Enhancing Physical Activity*, the multitude of ways of promoting sport and physical activity can be broken down into four main groups:

For example:

Structured activities	Sports in clubs and senior citizens associations (training, tournaments, competitions), mandatory and voluntary PE in schools, courses and holidays offered by commercial organisations
Events and campaigns	bike to work campaigns, recreational sports events (city runs, cross country skiing events)
Counselling and support	For individuals or groups through family doctors, virtual services, personal trainers
Activity-friendly environments	Creation of playing fields and sports halls, cycle paths and hiking trails, traffic-calmed zones

One measure aimed at promoting sport and physical activity may have an impact on more than one determinant, i.e. it could modify several factors at the same time (see *Figure 5*). Two examples:

- A youth sports course can have an impact on the social environment (peer group) and on the personal factors of an adolescent (e.g. self-confidence, attitudes and values, motivation).
- New traffic-calmed zones or play areas in residential districts which change the physical environment can also enrich the social environment by enabling new contacts to be made or skills to be improved.

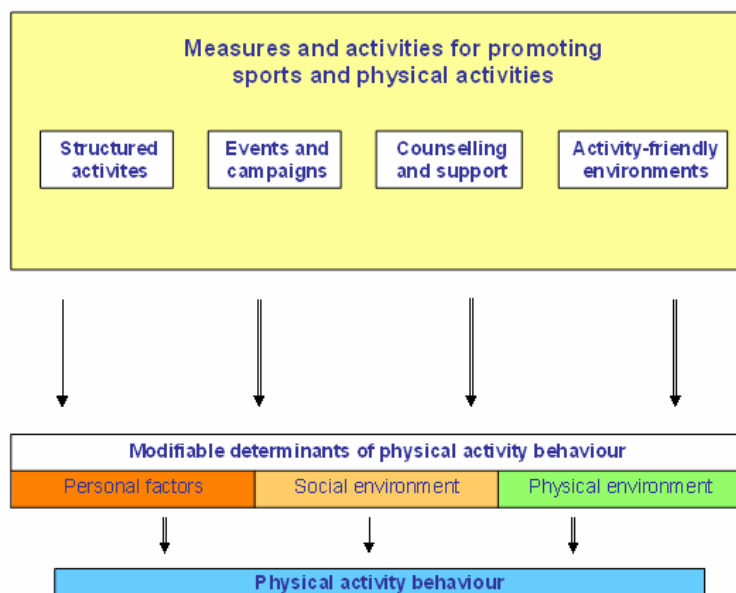


Figure 5. Measures to promote sport and physical activity. One measure can have an impact on multiple factors.

The actors involved in promoting sport and physical activity can play different roles and can perform different activities, all of which are important:

- **Preparing** measures (initiate, plan, coordinate)
- **Training** actors
- **Implementing** measures
- **Supporting** others (with expertise and experience, financially, in communications, with materials or other non-monetary assistance, labour etc.)

Framework: Example of Youth+Sports (Y+S)

Political level	The Federal Y+S programme has its basis in legislation (Federal law on the promotion of sport and physical education)
Measures	Y+S instructors are trained and then instruct at camps and on courses. The goals and content of Y+S are communicated and implemented in clubs and associations, schools, municipalities and cantons.
Determinants	The aims of Y+S are for children and adolescents to experience sport and physical activity positively, learn new skills and be integrated in a sporting community.
Behaviour	The intention is to help children and adolescents become or remain physically active.
Knowledge	The implementation of Y+S is regularly monitored at various levels and appropriate adjustments are made.
Societal context	The public perception of children's lack of exercise is favourable for expanding the programme for 10 to 20 year olds to encompass 5 to 10 year olds as well.

2 Sport and physical activity for all ages

This section looks at how the promotion of sport and physical activity can be implemented during the various life stages. As only a limited amount of differentiated data is available, the description of the life stages and the possible approaches to promoting sport and physical activity are primarily based on the experience and observations of experts.

The **descriptions of the life stages** set out the options for sport and physical activity which are used by many in an age group. There will however always be people who are not able to or do not want to avail themselves of these opportunities, or only to a limited extent, or those who are physically active in some other way.

The most important **determinants for good physical activity behaviour** during a life stage are then listed. The **tables showing approaches and actors** indicate how these could be improved in each case. The approaches listed are not necessarily exhaustive. It is only possible to formulate them in very broad terms within the scope of the present overview. The division of measures for promoting sport and physical activity into four groups is explained on page 12.

As a starting point, possible actors are assigned to approaches. A distinction is drawn between two major groups here: public-sector institutions and private actors. For the purposes of illustration, the footnotes to the tables contain concrete examples of actors. Many of the suggestions are already being implemented in practice. These measures should be continued or adapted. Other approaches still have to be developed.

The actors often work at different levels (Confederation, canton, municipality in the case of political institutions; national, regional, local in the case of private actors). They can be involved in the preparation of measures, in training actors, implementation or support. The possible roles of the actors are set out on page 12 f.

2.1 Overview of life stages

The following statements summarize the main focus for the promotion of sport and physical activity in relation to the various life stages.

Principle

All segments of the population are encouraged to engage in physical activity or sport on a daily basis. Plenty of opportunities for physical activity exist, and suitable facilities and infrastructures are available.

Young children (0 to 4 years old)

Parental figures provide as unrestricted an environment for play and physical activity as possible.

Children (4 to 12 years old)

Daily physical activity and sport are as much a part of children's lives as playing and learning. A broad range of offers is available to all children.

Adolescents (12 to 18 years old)

Educational establishments support sport and physical activity behaviour. Active leisure behaviour, particularly sport, and human-powered mobility are promoted.

Young adults (18 to 30 years old)

A wide variety of opportunities for sport and physical activity are available to boost or maintain fitness in order to achieve personal goals.

Working-age adults

Offers and opportunities for sports and physical activity are a counterbalance to daily life focussing on well-being, social contacts and health.

Retirement-age adults

Regular physical activity and sport help older people remain independent, ward off incapacitation, boost well-being and foster social contacts.



2.2 Young children (0 to 4 years old)

Parental figures provide as unrestricted an environment for play and physical activity as possible.

Movement and child development

Movement is often a means of expression for young children. Infants explore their environment when kicking, touching, gripping and crawling. First they explore their immediate vicinity. They then extend their radius, take their first steps, learn to run, to hop, to climb, to play on a swing etc. By the age of six, development of the basic motor skills has already been completed to some extent. This is why a wide range of physical activity is vital during the early years of life.

Physical activity and experiencing success

To begin with, adults control the area available for physical activity. Their attitude to physical activity has an impact on the child from an early stage – ideally the child will be given the freedom to move around to some smaller or greater extent, and will be stimulated and encouraged. Much also depends on whether the home and the residential environment help or hinder the child to experience physical activity.

Playgrounds for small children and the immediate residential environment should allow for small-scale independent exploration, tests of courage and contact to neighbours' children. It is important that young children are able to be creative and play independently without too restrictive a level of supervision.

In playgroups and crèches young children learn to play activity games appropriate to their age and are given the opportunity to try out a wide range of movements (under supervision). In this way children extend their repertoire of movement.

Physical activity with parents

There are many ways for a child to be physically active within the family. Playing games together, going for walks or hikes are bonding experiences. In addition, parents and older siblings act as role models for an active life.

Data on physical activity behaviour

As yet, no data on the physical activity behaviour of young children is available in Switzerland.

Determinants for good physical activity behaviour of young children

Young children (0 to 4 years old)	
Personal factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is in the nature of young children to be open to movement challenges. They have motor skills appropriate to their age and their individual state of development.
Social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to parents and other close individuals that the child is developing well and is able to enjoy regular and varied physical activity. Adults show understanding for the child's need to be active – even if it is irritating on occasion. Opportunities such as parent&child exercise groups are provided for children from the age of around 3. Sufficient opportunities are provided early enough for children with special needs.
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young children can use their basic motor skills in the home in a variety of ways. Children from about the age of 3 can play outside in the immediate vicinity of the home without unduly restrictive supervision. Sufficient stimulation for physical activity is provided. Care facilities are set up to cater for a wide range of physical activities.

Approaches and actors

Young children (0 to 4 years old): Parental figures provide as unrestricted an environment for play and physical activity as possible.

Possible approaches for promoting sport and physical activity	Possible actors				Public-sector institutions			Private actors							
					Sector			Sector							
	Sport and physical activity	Health	Education	Other sectors ^{a)}	Confederation	Cantons	Municipalities	Family	Sports clubs & associations ^{b)}	Commercial providers ^{c)}	Interest groups ^{c)}	Other ^{d)}	National	Regional	Local
Structured activities															
Promote parent&child exercise classes and other age-appropriate options							S	X	X	X		X	P,T		I
Incorporate physical activity in daily life							S			X	X	X	P,T		I
Ensure provision for groups with special needs		X			S		S	X			X		P,T		I
Campaigns and events															
Raise awareness and provide information among specific population groups	X	X		X	S					X	X	X	P,I		
Counselling and support															
Establish counselling structures for parents (medical & paramedical system)	X	X			S	S,I	S,I				X	X	P,T		I
Establish access to families also from "low physical activity" population groups	X	X		X	S	P	I				X	X			I
Activity-friendly environments															
Design of private home environment								X			X				P,T,I
Design housing environment as activity space	X			X	S	T	P,I				X	X			I
Make public playgrounds and green spaces available	X			X	S	T	P,I				X	X			I

P=Preparation (initiate, plan, coordinate); T=Training; I=Implementation; S=Support (with expertise, non-monetary help, labour, financial assistance, communication)

X=Already involved; X=possible involvement

a) e.g. transport, housing development planning, social integration

b) e.g. crèches, gyms

c) e.g. Pro Juventute

d) e.g. parent/teacher associations, residents associations, churches

2.3 Children (4 to 12 years old)

Daily physical activity and sport are as much a part of children's lives as playing and learning. A broad range of offers is available to all children.

Learning through play

Through playing with others, children learn important behavioural lessons. Together they decide on whether to play games such as tag, hide-and-seek or skipping, and perhaps even agree on the rules. Games and the rules of games are often passed down from older children to younger ones.

Children like to take on movement challenges appropriate to their age. They are proud of their achievements – e.g. when climbing or balancing, and later on bikes, skis, ice-skates or inline skates. The radius of activity of children is also expanded as a result. They travel in groups to go swimming, to the local playground, to the football pitch or ice rink.

Most younger children in this age group still appear to use the time and space for activity spontaneously, while "gentle pressure" may be required for older children.

Kindergarten and school

Starting school introduces longer periods of sitting and inactivity. This also applies – to a lesser extent – to starting kindergarten. Consequently, physical activity in the classroom, before and after lessons and during leisure time, is important. PE lessons, which are known to be the most popular school subject, have the potential to communicate basic techniques and helpful tips. Children want to experience progress of which they can be proud. PE lessons are important for the physical, mental, cognitive and social development of children. They support the development of their personality and help them acquire skills and abilities. Ideally, the school and the playground are places where children can congregate and play, during breaks, after school or at the weekend. The route to school on foot or by bike offers opportunities for experiences and making contacts.

Sports club

Sport can teach important values (e.g. fair play) as well as personal and social competences.

When children join a sports club, the choice of sport does not (yet) usually constitute a considered decision based on personal abilities or preferences, but tends to depend on role models such as classmates or parents. Children often switch to a sport they have chosen themselves around the age of 11 or 12. It is therefore important to introduce children to a wide variety of activity types at an early learning age, without (initially) training them specifically in one type of sport.

Experience with performance expectations

If a child does not perform well, they can experience the first negative aspects of performance expectations, either at school, in a club or while playing.

Data on physical activity behaviour

Even if no precise figures are available, scientific data relating to obesity in children provides sufficient indication that a lack of activity in children can become a health problem.

Most children move around under their own power on the way to school or during their leisure time. Switzerland rates relatively highly in international comparisons in this respect. There are however clear differences between the regions. It is also noticeable that fewer children are cycling to school now than was the case a few years ago.

Determinants for good physical activity behaviour of children

Children (4 to 12 years old)	
Personal factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children have motor skills and abilities appropriate to their age and their individual condition. The urge to be active and the enjoyment of physical activity are preserved. Good self-confidence is established through appropriate movement challenges.
Social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The family enables, encourages and supports a wide range of physical activity experiences. Compulsory PE lessons are delivered and are of a high quality. Physical activity before and after school as well as during the school day is important to educational establishments. Schools offer opportunities for daily physical activity in collaboration with clubs. Child-specific supervised offers are available.
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children can use their basic motor skills in the home in a variety of ways. Children have access to activity-friendly facilities and spaces, as well as to suitable sports facilities. Flexible premises and materials that favour age-specific activities are available to children. Children can independently reach kindergarten, school, local playgrounds or green spaces and friends in the area. Housing development and transport infrastructures favour pedestrians and cyclists.

Approaches and actors

Children (4 to 12 years old): Daily physical activity and sport are as much a part of children's lives as playing and learning. A broad range of options is available to all children.

Possible actors	Public-sector institutions						Private actors						
	Sector				Level		Sector					National	
Possible approaches for promoting sport and physical activity	Sport and physical activity	Health	Education	Other sectors ^{a)}	Confederation	Cantons	Municipalities	Family	Sports clubs & associations	Commercial providers ^{b)}	Interest groups ^{c)}		Other ^{d)}
	Structured activities												
Implement and optimize compulsory PE lessons	X		X		S	P,T	I						
Facilitate additional physical activity time (school, kindergarten, extra-curricular sport)	X		X		S	P,T	I		X			X	
Offer children's activities in sports clubs (incl. competitions)	X				S	P,T	I		X			X	
Support youth groups working in the field of sport and physical activity	X				S	P,T					X	X	
Improve cooperation between schools and sports clubs	X		X		S	P,T	I		X				
Provide cycling proficiency training to ensure human-powered mobility	X	X	X	X	S,P		S		X		X	X	
Ensure provision for groups with special needs	X	X	X		S		S		X		X		P,T
Campaigns and events													
Raise awareness and provide information among "low physical activity" population groups	X	X	X	X	S,P						X	X	
Organise family-friendly sport and physical activity events	X	X	X		S,P		S,I		X	X	X	X	
Organise issue-oriented events or projects	X	X	X			T,S	P,I						
Promote awareness of human-powered mobility	X	X	X	X	P,S	P,S,I	S,I				X	X	P
Counselling and support													
Establish access to families also from "low physical activity" population groups	X	X	X	X	S	P	I				X	X	
Activity-friendly environments													
Design housing environment as activity space for younger and older children	X	X		X	S,T		P,I	X			X	X	
Offer as unrestricted access to sports facilities as possible	X		X	X	S,T		P,I		X		X	X	
Ensure safe and attractive routes to key destinations (school and others)	X	X	X	X	S	T	P,I				X	X	
Design infrastructure of school premises to be activity-friendly			X	X		S,T	P,I					X	

P=Preparation (initiate, plan, coordinate); T=Training; I=Implementation; S=Support (with expertise, non-monetary help, labour, financial assistance, communication)

X=Already involved; X=possible involvement

a) e.g. transport, housing development planning, social integration

b) e.g. gyms, club training centres, private enterprises (sponsors)

c) e.g. Pro Velo, Pro Juventute, Plusport

d) e.g. parent/teacher associations, residents associations, churches

2.4 Adolescents (12 to 18 years old)

Educational establishments support sport and physical activity behaviour. Active leisure behaviour, particularly sport, and human-powered mobility are promoted.

Sport and physical activity with peer group

For many adolescents sporting activities form an important element of their recreational pursuits. Sport and physical activity offer a way of building self-confidence, and consequently strength for successful development.

Adolescents need friends to whom they can talk, against whom they can measure themselves, and from whom they receive recognition. Being together with like-minded others of the same age is important, and adolescents usually consciously seek this out. Sporting activities can provide an excellent framework for this. Active groups of adolescents (usually boys) often roam around the streets, the school playground or places such as skating rinks for example. Adolescents therefore require suitable spaces in the public arena.

PE lessons

Compulsory PE lessons and extra-curricular sport lay the foundation for the (subsequent) independent pursuit of sports. Adolescents should be introduced to a wide variety of sports and all sporting facilities in the vicinity. Ideally, insights and tips on health and the responsible treatment of one's own body should be given. The law stipulates that all adolescents should be reached through compulsory PE at school or vocational training establishments. Unfortunately, this is not being fully implemented at present. In addition, PE lessons are unable to reach youngsters who quit formal education at an early age.

Sports clubs

Sports clubs can help adolescents achieve personal success and affirmation. Nine out of ten 12 year olds participate in Y+S youth sport sessions. This figure drops to just five out of ten when it comes to 16 year olds. Many youngsters have found a suitable type of sport and want to make clear progress in it. A club also offers them the opportunity to meet their peers regularly. If secondary schools or vocational training take up too much time, or if the sporting performance is not of a high enough standard, in some cases adolescents will be forced to leave a training team. At this point there is often no advice available

for starting afresh so that they can become active in the club sports scene again. Courses offered by sports clubs are often focussed on high-performance training groups. However, many adolescents want a balance in the club between serious training, fun, variety and being with their peers.

Data on physical activity behaviour

More is known about the extent of sport and physical activity behaviour in relation to adolescents than to children. Adolescents are much more active than the average population, with young men being more active than young women. Adolescents with inadequate access to sport who are particularly prone to inactivity should be specifically identified and specific measures should be developed for them. As they grow older, adolescents get around less and less on foot. However, it should be mentioned that older adolescents are the population group that cycles most often.

Determinants for good physical activity behaviour of adolescents

Adolescents (12 to 18 years old)	
Personal factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescents are motivated. • They are open to trying out a wide variety of new things. • They have built up a healthy degree of self-confidence. • They are aware of age and sex-specific options. • Specific skills are further differentiated or acquired.
Social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compulsory PE lessons are delivered and are of a high quality. • School, teachers (or employers) support the adolescent. • Friends and family recognise the skills and abilities of adolescents and motivate them. • Local age and sex-specific offers are available. • Instructors and coaches foster and encourage.
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to suitable sports facilities and other activity spaces is ensured for all groups of adolescents. • Adolescents have access to suitable sports materials. • Housing development and transport infrastructures favour pedestrians and cyclists.

Approaches and actors

Adolescents (12 to 18 years old): Educational establishments support sport and physical activity behaviour. Active leisure behaviour, particularly sport, and human-powered mobility are promoted.

Possible actors	Public-sector institutions						Private actors									
	Sector				Level			Sector					Level			
	Sport and physical activity	Health	Education	Other sectors ^{a)}	Confederation	Cantons	Municipalities	Family	Sports clubs & association	Commercial providers ^{b)}	Interest groups ^{c)}	Other ^{d)}	Employers	National	Regional	Local
Possible approaches for promoting sport and physical activity																
Structured activities																
Implement and optimize compulsory PE lessons (incl. during vocational training)	X		X		S	P,T	I									
Support extra-curricular sports, school sports camps and sport weeks	X		X		S	P,T,I	I		X		X				I	I
Offer youth' activities in sports clubs (inkl. competitions), reduce drop-out rate	X		X		S	P,T	S		X							I
Improve cooperation between schools and clubs	X		X		S	P,T	I		X						T	I
Support sport and physical activity within community youth work	X		X		S		S,I		X	X	X	X				I
Ensure long-term provision from commercial providers										X			X			I
Ensure provision for groups with special needs	X	X	X		S		S		X		X			P,T		I
Campaigns and events																
Organise competitive events									X	X					P,I	I
Raise awareness and provide information among "low physical activity" population groups	X	X	X	X		S,P				X	X	X		P,I		
Organise issue-oriented events or projects	X	X	X			T,S	P,I					X				
Promote awareness of self-powered mobility	X	X	X	X	P,S	P,S,I	S,I			X	X	X	X	P,I		
Counselling and support																
Establish access to families also from "low physical activity" population groups	X	X		X	S	P	I				X		X			I
Establish the provision of information and advice via school	X	X	X		S	P,S,T	I									
Activity-friendly environments																
Provide space and facilities for a wide range of encounters and physical activity	X	X		X		S,T	I				X	X				
Offer as unrestricted access to sports facilities as possible	X		X	X		S,T	P,I		X		X	X				I
Ensure safe and attractive routes to key destinations (school and others)	X	X	X	X	S	T	P,I				X	X	X			I

P=Preparation (initiate, plan, coordinate); T=Training; I=Implementation; S=Support (with expertise, non-monetary help, labour, financial assistance, communication)

X=Already involved; X=possible involvement

a) e.g. transport, spatial planning, housing development planning

b) e.g. gyms, club training centres, private enterprises (sponsors)

c) e.g. Pro Velo, Pro Juventute, procap

d) e.g. youth clubs, churches

2.5 Young adults (18 to 30 years old)

A wide variety of opportunities for sport and physical activity are available to boost or maintain fitness in order to achieve personal goals.

A phase of changes

After leaving school or vocational training, many young adults are faced with going on to study, starting to work, or sometimes even starting their own family. This life stage is characterized by the sometimes difficult transition into the world of work, by acquiring additional qualifications, and by periods spent abroad. Also the motives for sport and physical activity and the preferred sporting activities can shift in this life stage.

Wide range of options

As a rule young adults still have a lot of free time and – with the aid of their first income – avail themselves of a variety of sporting and other recreational offers. Many young adults try out a number of different things in the rapidly expanding market of events, sports club holidays or outdoor adventures offered. This age group is therefore specifically targeted by the leisure and sports equipment industry and by commercial providers. This is also the age group in which sports trends are born that are later picked up by other age groups.

Successes and comparisons through participation in competitive sports allows young adults to be proud of their personal achievements.

Sport and physical activity are often also popular because of the communal aspect and associated socializing. Getting to know people of the same age and establishing relationships is particularly important for this age group.

Young adults begin to bike, climb, skate or snowboard in self-chosen groups. Regular strength training in the gym or self-designed endurance training often starts during this stage of life. The foundations for the independent pursuit of a particular sport were often laid during an earlier stage – in sport at school or in sports clubs.

Sports clubs

Unfortunately, experience has shown that only the successful continue in the high-performance groups of sports clubs. By contrast, team sports in clubs remain popular because they are played together with people of the same age. However, clubs often do not have teams that require only a low level of commitment. People

leave clubs usually because they are moving to a new educational establishment, job or home.

Young adults who are involved in training children and adolescents at sports clubs ensure the succession of instructors. Voluntary work in a club is most attractive when it can be done in teams and with people of the same age, and is associated with acquiring competencies and recognition.

Data on physical activity behaviour

Despite a wide range of provision for this age group, already more than half of young adults are not sufficiently physically active. There are also differences between the physical activity behaviour of men and women in this group, but they are not as marked as among adolescents.

Even if young adults can often be observed participating in sport in public, this group – together with working-age adults – is the group characterized by the lowest level of human-powered mobility.

Determinants for good physical activity behaviour of young adults

Young adults (18 to 30 years old)	
Personal factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young adults are motivated. • They are open to trying out a wide variety of new things. • They have built up good self-confidence. • Young adults are aware of age and sex-specific options. • Specific skills are further differentiated or acquired.
Social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational establishments and employers support young adults. • Friends recognize skills and abilities and motivate one another. • Local age and sex-specific provision is available. • Instructors and coaches foster and encourage. • Clubs offer low-barrier options.
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young adults have access to suitable sports facilities and to other activity spaces. • Housing development and transport infrastructures favour pedestrians and cyclists.

Approaches and actors

Young adults (18 to 30 years old): A wide variety of opportunities for sport and physical activity are available to boost or maintain fitness in order to achieve personal goals.

Possible approaches for promoting sport and physical activity	Possible actors				Public-sector institutions			Private actors								
	Sector				Level			Sector					Level			
	Sport and physical activity	Health	Education	Other sectors ^{a)}	Confederation	Cantons	Municipalities	Family	Sports clubs & association	Commercial providers ^{b)}	Interest groups ^{c)}	Other ^{d)}	Employers	National	Regional	Local
Structured activities																
Develop club offers towards lifetime-sports	X				S				X						P,T	I
Ensure offers from commercial providers										X					T	P,I
Realise offers in educational institutions (vocational schools and universities)	X		X			S,P,T,I										
Provide sporting and active holidays										X					I	
Provide easily available competitive opportunities									X	X		X	X		P,I	P,I
Ensure provision for groups with special needs	X	X	X		S		S		X		X			P,T		I
Campaigns and events																
Support self-powered modes of travel to work	X	X		X	S						X		X	P,S	S	I
Run events with potential to mobilize wide range of participants	X	X		X	S	S	S		X	X	X	X		P,T	I	
Promote tourism linked to physical activity				X	S		S			X	X		X	P,S		I
Counselling and support																
Establish and offer age-appropriate advice and training provision	X	X			S					X		X	X			I
Organize activity-friendly workplace environments and processes													X			I
Activity-friendly environments																
Offer as unrestricted access to sports facilities as possible	X			X	S,T		P,I		X		X	X				I
Close gaps in sport and recreational mobility infrastructure	X	X		X	S	P	I			X	X	X		P	I	I
Ensure safe and attractive routes to key destinations	X	X		X	S	T	P,I				X	X	X			I
Optimize infrastructure at the workplace	X	X		X	S	T					X		X	S		P,I

P=Preparation (initiate, plan, coordinate); T=Training; I=Implementation; S=Support (with expertise, non-monetary help, labour, financial assistance, communication)

X=Already involved; X=possible involvement

a) e.g. transport, spatial planning, housing development planning

b) e.g. gyms, club training centres, tourism sector, private trainers and consultants

c) e.g. Pro Velo, Swiss Tourist Agency, Plusport

d) e.g. youth clubs

2.6 Working-age adults

Offers and opportunities for sport and physical activity are a counter-balance to daily life focussing on well-being, social contacts and health.

Lifestyles can be very different once people are working. Nevertheless, for many adults this stage of life is characterized by comparable conditions and trends to some extent.

New life experiences

Many adults now have less free time, either because of commencing work, pursuing a career, establishing a partnership or starting a family. Lack of time is also the most frequent reason for inactivity cited. Many adults reduce their level of sporting activity or give it up entirely. If they do continue with a sport, then often with a different emphasis.

Child-rearing stage

For adults with children, child-rearing often results in limiting their own physical activities. On the other hand, physical activity represents a very good way of spending time and sharing leisure activities with children, for instance going for walks, visiting the playground, going to the swimming pool, ski-ing or cycling. Many parents also accompany their children to sports clubs and perform a support or instructional role there.

As soon as children are independent and are leading their own lives, new opportunities for sport and physical activity often arise for parents. They again have more time available for themselves.

Maintaining fitness

Rather than competition and risk, many working adults see clubs as a way of enhancing social contacts and providing variety. As an alternative to competitive sports in clubs, many in this age group practise sports individually or with colleagues, often availing themselves of commercial offers.

What is important for adults is to maintain fitness – both for ensuring success in their careers and for self-affirmation. Training (jogging, cycling, fitness training etc.) enables them to experience their own individual level of fitness. Accessible

gyms with flexible opening hours, events and competitions provide opportunities for individual training based on personal fitness.

Data on physical activity behaviour

More than half of working adults are insufficiently active. The effects of inactivity are usually not readily perceptible (yet).

A welcome trend is emerging for women in this age group. Until just a few years ago they were much less active than men, but the gap is now closing. Although an upwards trend is discernible in relation to sporting activities, everyday physical activity continues to decline. Particularly men in this age group are less likely to get around on foot or by bike than other segments of the population.

Determinants for good physical activity behaviour of working-age adults

Working-age adults	
Personal factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults are motivated. • Physical and mental capacities allow active sport and physical activity behaviour. • Working-age adults take their responsibilities seriously. • They are aware of and can make use of the various exercise options available to them.
Social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and friends provide motivation for physical activity on a daily basis. Support facilities for children enable child-rearers to engage in physical activity. • The health care system motivates and points out existing opportunities. • Employers and community foster sport and physical activity. • Opportunities to engage in sport and physical activity appropriate to age are available.
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every adult has access to suitable sports facilities and to other activity spaces. • Housing development and transport infrastructures favour pedestrians and cyclists.

Approaches and actors

Working-age adults: Offers and opportunities for sports and physical activity are a counterbalance to daily life focussing on well-being, social contacts and health.

Possible approaches for promoting sport and physical activity	Possible actors				Public-sector institutions			Private actors								
					Sector			Sector								
	Sport and physical activity	Health	Education	Other sectors ^{a)}	Confederation	Cantons	Municipalities	Family	Sports clubs & association	Commercial providers ^{b)}	Interest groups ^{c)}	Other ^{d)}	Employers	National	Regional	Local
Structured activities																
Encourage sports clubs and other organizations to make age-appropriate provision	X	X			S				X	X	X		X		P,T	I
Ensure long-term provision from commercial providers										X						I
Promote widely accessible and long-term courses	X				S				X	X	X	X	X			
Provide sporting and active holidays										X			X		I	
Ensure provision for groups with special needs	X	X	X		S		S		X		X			P,T		I
Campaigns and events																
Support self-powered modes of travel to work	X	X		X	S						X		X	P,S	S	I
Run events with potential to mobilize wide range of participants	X	X		X	S	S	S		X	X	X	X		P,T	I	
Promote tourism linked to physical activity				X	S		S			X	X		X	P,S		I
Counselling and support																
Establish and offer age-appropriate advice and training provision	X	X			S					X		X	X			I
Offer counselling through primary health care	X	X			S,P					X	X	X		T	T	I
Organize activity-friendly workplace environments and processes													X			I
Activity-friendly environments																
Offer as unrestricted access to sports facilities as possible	X			X	S,T		P,I		X		X	X				I
Close gaps in sport and recreational mobility infrastructure	X	X		X	S	P	P,I			X	X	X				I
Ensure safe and attractive routes to key destinations	X	X		X	S	P	P,I				X	X	X	P	I	I
Optimize infrastructure at the workplace				X	S	T					X		X			P,I

P=Preparation (initiate, plan, coordinate); T=Training; I=Implementation; S=Support (with expertise, non-monetary help, labour, financial assistance, communication)

X=Already involved; X=possible involvement

a) e.g. transport, spatial planning, housing development planning

b) e.g. gyms, club training centres, private trainers and consultants

c) e.g. Pro Velo, Swiss Tourist Agency, Heart Foundation

d) e.g. sportaktiv Zurich, medical associations

2.7 Retirement-age adults

Regular physical activity and sport help older people remain independent, ward off incapacitation, boost well-being and foster social contacts.

At this stage of life, too, the motives and opportunities for being physically active can vary widely. The following description seeks to illustrate how important motives for sport and physical activity can shift as we get older.

Specific approaches with a therapeutic focus are required for those whose independence is increasingly restricted with age. In the box "Physical activity and sport at an advanced age – a contradiction?" a specialist outlines the importance of physical activity during this life stage.

Fulfilling dreams

Retiring from work allows many people to do the things they always wanted to do, but couldn't because they had no time. In particular, experiences in nature such as hill-walking, long-distance walks or cycle trips and nordic ski-ing in organized or self-organized groups are popular. This age group values travel and excursions combined with physical activity and with culture.

Adult education classes, church groups and health centres often offer a wider range of opportunities than sports clubs. The latter are usually only focussed on sport. With appropriate offers, also sports clubs can remain or become attractive for this age group.

Seeking out and maintaining contacts

Older people often experience great changes in their social networks. Children move away, partnerships can dissolve, friends die. Nowadays every older person has to repeatedly make and retain new social networks. These are a vital element of quality of life. Individuals can find like-minded people during sporting activities. Consequently, age-appropriate activities that offer a certain duration of the experience are popular as they enable older people to make and maintain contacts.

Sometimes grandparents help their grandchildren during their first steps in a particular sport (ski-ing, swimming, cycling etc.). It may be worthwhile for clubs to have teams of instructors in this age group who can guide children towards sport and physical activity.

Preserving independence

The motives for sport and physical activity are increasingly focussed on health and maintaining an independent lifestyle. Physically active individuals are independent for longer and usually only require care at a later age, and also for a shorter time. Even at an advanced age physical activity is beneficial, especially exercises that incorporate an element of strength training.

Data on physical activity behaviour

More than two-thirds of this age group are insufficiently active. Strength training, which is particularly important for this age group, is practised only by a very small percentage.

The number of older people who get around on foot exceeds the average. In fact, the importance of walking actually increases with age.

Determinants for good physical activity behaviour of retirement-age adults

Retirement-age adults	
Personal factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement-age adults are motivated. • Their physical and mental capacities allow active physical activity behaviour. • They are aware of and can make use of the various activity options available to them, in particular also with respect to independent mobility. • They take their responsibilities seriously.
Social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and friends enable and motivate physical activity on a daily basis. • The health care system motivates and points out existing opportunities. • The community facilitates physical activity. • Opportunities to engage in sport and physical activity appropriate to age are available.
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults have access to suitable sports facilities and to other activity spaces. • Housing development and transport infrastructures as well as the residential environment of older people are safe and attractive and foster mobility on foot.

Approaches and actors

Retirement-age adults: Regular physical activity and sport help older people remain independent, ward off incapacitation, boost well-being and foster social contacts.

Possible approaches for promoting sport and physical activity	Possible actors						Private actors								
	Public-sector institutions				Level		Sector					Level			
	Sport and physical activity	Health	Education	Other sectors ^{a)}	Confederation	Cantons	Municipalities	Family	Sports clubs & associations ^{b)}	Commercial providers ^{c)}	Interest groups ^{c)}	Other ^{d)}	National	Regional	Local
Structured activities															
Encourage sports clubs to make age-appropriate provision	X				S	T	I		X		X	X			I
Ensure age-appropriate provision from commercial providers					S					X	X	X			I
Ensure widely accessible provision	X	X			S					X	X	X	T	T	I
Organize hikes, active holidays										X	X	X		I	I
Establish generally accessible training programmes in homes for the elderly		X				S	I				X	X		P,T	I
Ensure provision for groups with special needs		X					S				X		P,T		I
Campaigns and events															
Run age-appropriate events with potential to mobilize wide range of participants	X	X		X	S	S	S		X	X	X	X	P,T	I	
Run public events to promote health and physical activity		X					S		X		X	X			P,I
Promote tourism linked to physical activity				X	S		S			X	X			P,S	I
Counselling and support															
Establish and offer age-appropriate advice and training provision	X	X			S					X	X	X			I
Offer counselling through primary health care	X	X			S,P					X	X	X	T	T	I
Address physical activity during extramural nursing care		X									X		T	T	I
Activity-friendly environments															
Ensure access to sports facilities (e.g. swimming pools)	X						S,I			X	X	X			I
Ensure safe and attractive routes to key destinations	X	X		X	S	P	P,I				X	X	P	I	I
Design public spaces to be safe and suitable for all ages		X		X			P,T	I			X	X			I
Plan residential areas for seniors within short walking distances of services		X		X			P,T	I	X		X	X			

P=Preparation (initiate, plan, coordinate); T=Training; I=Implementation; S=Support (with expertise, non-monetary help, labour, financial assistance, communication)

X=Already involved; X=possible involvement

a) e.g. transport, spatial planning, housing development planning

b) e.g. gyms, club training centres, tourism sector

c) e.g. Pro Senectute, Swiss Pedestrian Association, Swiss Arthritis Society

d) e.g. churches, seniors organizations, health insurers

Physical activity and sport at an advanced age – a contradiction?

At any age there are arguments to avoid sports and regular physical activity. Many elderly people feel healthy and think that they do not need regular physical activity; others suffer from pain or impairments and are afraid of making everything worse by doing sports. It is often forgotten, that even at an old age, the cardiovascular as well as the muscular system can be trained. Moreover, regular physical activity in daily life can help to postpone illnesses, improve quality of life and foster independence. A study with frail residents of a retirement home (average age about 87 years) demonstrated impressively: After a ten week strength training programme individuals had improved their strength by an average of 100%.

It is possible to train strength and aerobic capacity until old age. But it is important to know and to accept that for the elderly it takes longer to achieve training effects than for their younger counterparts. However, since older citizens often start at a lower level, the relative improvements may be remarkable for both strength and endurance training. And another point is very important: Every elderly person should have a medical examination and counselling by his or her physician to find out which type of physical activity can be recommended and which duration, frequency and intensity are most appropriate.

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