

The UK Time Use Survey (2002) highlighted the amount of time people spent being sedentary such as using the Internet or a computer, reading, listening to music and watching television or videos:

- Men and women aged 65 years and over, spend approximately 3.75 hours a day on sedentary activities, over 75% of this time was spent watching television or videos.

## Case studies

### Tommy - 72 Year old man

*To encourage exercise we should be saying don't use the lift, use the stairs; don't use the bus or car, walk; don't park right near the shops, walk part of the way; don't get off the bus at the right stop; get off a stop earlier.*

### Edna - 77 Year old woman

*I lost the feeling of well-being, was generally lethargic and had bouts of severe depression. Visits to my GP began to get quite frequent. I have always been a swimmer so on the days I do not walk I swim. The difference in my physical and mental health now is unbelievable.*

## Summary

**TO CHAMPION THE CAUSE OF PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WITH OLDER PEOPLE OF ALL INTERESTS, ABILITIES AND AGES.**

In later life physical activity has an important role to play in the maintenance of functional ability and in the prevention of disability, immobility and isolation. However, current evidence indicates that physical inactivity in later life is a major public health burden. The NCAA is looking to address this and highlight these issues to Government departments, key agencies and stakeholders.

What does the NCAA intend to do?

- Provide a single coherent voice on physical activity and older people.
- Engage with older people and National & Regional Agencies to influence strategy, programming and policy.
- Raise public awareness of the benefits of physical activity.
- Build capacity, partnership and understanding among member organisations through the exchange of information, best practice and joined up partnerships.
- Ensure that older people are equal stakeholders, making a valuable contribution to society through active ageing.

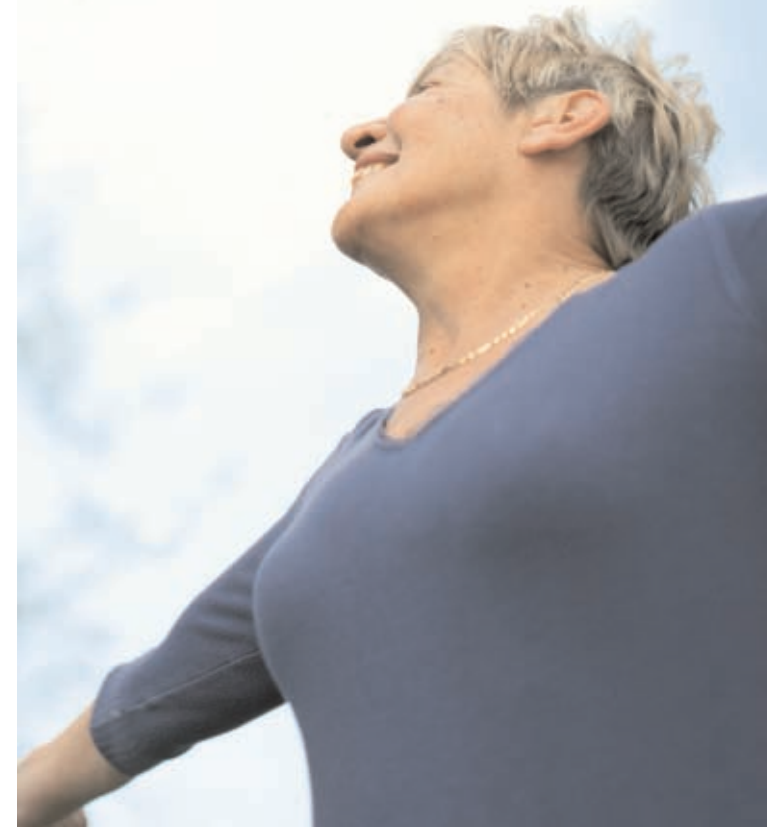


A copy of this document with full references, is available from the CCPR website; [www.ccpr.org.uk](http://www.ccpr.org.uk)

For further information please contact Richard Norman; [rnorman@ccpr.org.uk](mailto:rnorman@ccpr.org.uk); CCPR, Francis House, Francis Street, London, SW1P 1DE; Telephone 020 7854 8500

All photographs are Copyright © 2004-05 Age Concern

**NCAA**  
NATIONAL COALITION FOR ACTIVE AGEING



## THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR ACTIVE AGEING

The National Coalition for Active Ageing has been established to bring together key agencies and stakeholders to act as a collective voice and champion the cause of promoting physical activity with older people of all interests, abilities and ages.

This document intends to provide you with an overview of the work of the National Coalition for Active Ageing and important information surrounding the need to promote physical activity in older people.

**T**oday, the growth of the ageing population is a reality. This provides us with two challenges; that older people are a valuable resource who can make an important contribution towards society, but also that ageing will make increasing social and economic demands.

Currently, every 3 minutes someone has an osteoporosis related bone fracture at a cost of £5 million per day to the NHS and Government. The accumulative health costs of inactivity including coronary heart disease, stroke treatment, obesity, and diabetes exceeds £9 billion per year. This is in addition to the £6.5 billion per year spent on mental health and the £8.5 billion cost to industry of lost working days.

*'There is overwhelming evidence of the importance of physical activity for the older person, including the immediate and long-term physiological, psychological and social benefits, for certain conditions directly associated with old age, but most importantly in assisting older people to maintain their independence in old age.'*

**British Heart Foundation**  
**Active for Later Life Resource 2004**

## Recommended Levels of Physical Activity for Health

Current Government guidelines suggest that adults should accumulate at least 30 minutes of a moderately intense activity on five or more days of the week. The Chief Medical Officer endorses this recommendation for older adults and in addition recommends specific activities that promote coordination, balance and strength.



However, there is little or action by Government to promote physical activity for older adults. Addressing this is of paramount importance in our ageing society.

## General Trends

According to findings from the 2003 Health Survey for England, 81% of men and 87% of women aged 55 years and over do not reach the recommended levels of physical activity to benefit health.

There is also a sharp decline in levels of activity with increased age.

The Percentage of men achieving the recommended levels of physical activity reduces from 32% at 55 - 64 years of age, to 9% of those aged 75 and above.

The 2000 Health Survey for England found that 86% of women and 78% of men who were residents of care homes were classified as inactive.

Functional capacity declines with age. Strength, endurance capacity, bone density, and flexibility are lost at approximately 10% per decade and muscle power even faster at 30%. This loss impacts upon an older person's ability to maintain independence:



- Approximately 1 in 4 women and 1 in 14 men aged 50 years and over did not have the strength and power in their leg muscles to climb the stairs without needing assistance.
- 20% of women and 14% of men aged 50 years and over do not have the flexibility to wash their hair comfortably.

Participation rates in sport, games and physical activities (excluding walking) consistently decreases with age after 16 years of age. This decrease occurs across all socio-economic groups, although it occurs earlier and more suddenly amongst women, people with a disability and Black and Ethnic Minorities.

- The lowest levels of activity were found in the Bangladeshi community, 85% of men and 92% of women aged over 55 years reported less than one 30 minute session of moderate or vigorous activity per week.

## Active Living

Traditional sports and exercise activities do not play a large part in the overall activity levels of people aged 50 years and above.

Participation in sporting activities of an intensity likely to produce a health benefit declines with age:

- 18% of men and 20% of women aged 50 to 54 participate in sports and exercise activities at least once a week compared to 9% of men and 4% of women aged 80 years and over.
- Few men or women aged 50 years and over participate in sports and exercise more than once or twice a week and only 3% of men and 2% of women participate at least five times a week at an intensity likely to produce a health benefit.



While physical activity is now used as a generic umbrella term, it is often used to describe more specific forms of activity more closely identified with active living eg walking to the shops, cycling to work or climbing the stairs.

Evidence suggests that activities such as walking and cycling are popular among older people. The NCAA is working to promote this form of active living.

## Travel Patterns and Sedentary Behaviour

The proportion of trips walked decreases with age until people reach their 50's when it starts to increase again:

- In 2002, people aged over 70 made 28% of their trips on foot, compared with only 18% of people in their 40's.