

World Bank classification: High Income
Total population: 10 452 326
Median age (years): 40.7
Gross Domestic Produc (GDP) per capita (€): 46 170
GDP for health (%): 6.9
GDP for education (%): 6.3
GDP for sports (%): 1.3
Population, male (%): 50.3
Population, female (%): 49.7
Life expectancy, males (years): 81.4
Life expectancy, females (years): 84.8

Source: *Eurostat* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00205/default/ table?lang=en&category=t_demo.t_demo_mor



National recommendations on physical activity for health

Target groups included

YES	Children (< 5 years)	YES	During pregnancy
YES	Children and adolescents (5–17 years)	YES	During breastfeeding
YES	Adults (18–64 years)	YES	People with disability
YES	Older adults (≥ 65 years)	YES	People with chronic diseases
YES	Frail and very elderly adults (≥ 85 years)	YES	Post partum; postmenopause

 $Link to national \, recommendations: https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/publikationer-och-material/publikationsarkiv/r/riktlinjer-for-fysisk-aktivitet-och-stillasittande/Note: The Swedish \, recommendations for children are for 0-5 years and 6-17 years.$

Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

Sectors with surveillance systems



Health

YES



Education

YES



Sports

YES



Transport

YES

NATIONAL SURVEY OF LIVING CONDITIONS

Other

YES

Prevalence of physical activity

Physical activity indicators



National government coordination mechanism and leadership on the promotion of physical activity

The Public Health Agency of Sweden is the national coordinating institution for physical activity. In this capacity, it leads efforts to promote HEPA across the country. One key initiative is the Swedish Working Group on HEPA, established in 2017. This working group has significantly enhanced national awareness, coordination and development of HEPA initiatives.

Sweden has several other coordination mechanisms for promoting physical activity and sustainable development. These include the National Cycling Council, led by the Swedish Transport Administration, which focuses on improving cycling infrastructure, and the Network for Coordinating the Outdoor Recreation Policy, led by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, which promotes outdoor recreational activities. Another important mechanism is the Council for Sustainable Cities, a cooperation forum that implements the Government's policy for sustainable urban development.

 $https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-2021248-med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021-248/med-instruktion-for_sfs-2021$



SUCCESS STORY

Establishment of the working group on HEPA increased awareness about HEPA among and between sectors and led to collaboration and synergies. A report on how different sectors can increase physical activity and reduce sedentary time was published in October 2021, and a joint report with the Swedish Work Environment Authority was published in 2023. Measures to reduce ill health in working life have usually involved reducing acute risks and health-threatening stress. As more and more jobs become sedentary, initiatives have been developed on jobs with prolonged sitting. Regardless of whether the work involves standing, sitting still or physical effort, variations in movement are important.

https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/publikationer-och-material/publikationsarkiv/s/sa-kan-verksamheter-bidra-till-okad-fysisk-aktivitet-och-minskat-stillasittande/; https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/contentassets/548d7afd71144092aa031824459fd6fa/skapa-rorelse-belasta-ratt-arbetslivet.pdf

Funding for the promotion of physical activity for health

Funding allocated specifically to physical activity promotion by sector



National policies or action plans for the promotion of physical activity for health

National policy highlights

Swedish Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour

The Guidelines for physical activity and sedentary behaviour, developed by the Public Health Agency of Sweden, are based on the 2020 WHO guidelines. They outline a comprehensive approach to improving public health to ensure that all individuals, regardless of age or functional ability, have access to safe, enjoyable, suitable opportunities for physical activity. They also address sedentary behaviour, barriers to physical activity and excessive sedentary behaviour in various contexts – physical, social, cultural and socio-economic. By involving Government agencies, stakeholders and academics in adaptation and implementation, the strategy promotes coordination among many sectors and levels of society. This integrated approach is designed to enhance health outcomes, foster equal participation in physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour in all population groups.

https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/content assets/106a679e1f6047eca88262bfdcbeb145/riktlinjer-fysisk-aktivitet-stillasittande.pdf

Strategy 2025 for Swedish Sport

The aim of the Strategy is to transform national sports by broadening participation beyond traditional youth and elite levels to promote a model that includes everyone throughout their lives ("from triangle to rectangle"). The strategy emphasizes core values such as joy, health and community, lowering barriers to participation and adapting to diverse lifestyles. The objectives include fostering a welcoming sports environment, enhancing the development of sports associations and ensuring that sports contribute positively to social health and cohesion. The strategy involves all 72 specialist sports federations in Sweden, each tasked with implementing these goals to make sports accessible and appealing throughout life.

https://www.rf.se/RFarbetarmed/Strategi2025/



Centre for Sports and Outdoor Facilities (Center för idrotts- och friluftsanläggningar)

In 2023, the Centre made notable progress in its mission to enhance sports and outdoor environments across Sweden. It is a national knowledge platform to promote public health through the development of inclusive, accessible facilities for physical activity. This year, the Centre launched a digital knowledge platform, issued a comprehensive report to the Government and attended both national and international conferences. These initiatives provide insights and support to policy-makers and practitioners for creating environments to encourage physical activity and improve health outcomes. By fostering broad understanding and application of best practices, the Centre ensures that facilities are designed to meet diverse needs and support lifelong engagement in physical activity.

https://centrumforidrottsforskning.se/ar-2023-center-idrotts-och-friluftsanlaggningar-cifa

National policies or action plans for the promotion of physical activity for health



- National Public Health Policy https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2018/04/prop.-201718249
- 2 Education Act http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/ skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800 Link to curricula for preschool: https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=4049 Link to curricula for compulsory school, preschool class and school-age education: https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/styrdokument/2018/cruclulum-for-the-compulsory-school-preschool-plass-and-school-age-education:

Init to curricula for upper secondary school: https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/ styrdokument/2013/curriculum-for-the-upper-secondary-school?id=2975 Link to the syllabus for physical education and sports in compulsory schooling: https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/ styrdokument/2024/curriculum-for-compulsory-school-preschool-class-and-school-age-educare---lar??

- 3 Regulation on Government Grants for Sports Activities https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/forordning-19991177-om-statsbidrag-till_sfs-1999-1177
- 4 Strategy 2025 for Swedish Sport
- Flanning and Building Act (2010; original version, 1987) https://www.boverket.se/en/start/building-in-sweden/swedish-market/laws-and-regulations/national-regulations/nbl-nbt/
- 6 Guidelines for schools and preschools: architecture and outdoor environment https://www.boverket.se/sv/samhallsplanering/arkitektur-och-gestaltad-livsmiljo/arbetssatt/ skolors-miljo/
- 7 National guidelines for green structure planning https://www.boverket.se/sv/PBL-kunskapsbanken/teman/gronplan
- 8 National Guidelines for Prevention and Treatment of Unhealthy Lifestyle Habits (Tobacco, Alcohol, Physical Activity, Diet) https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/nationella-riktlinjer/2018-6-24.pdf

9 Transport Policy Goals

https://www.government.se/government-policy/transport-and-infrastructure/ https://www regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/transporter-och-infrastruktur/mal-for-transporter-ochinfrastruktur/

- The Outdoor Recreation Policy (and the Right of Public Access) (2012)
- 11 Student Health https://www.skolverket.se/regler-och-ansvar/forandringar-inom-skolomradet/elevhalsoarbetet-starks-i-skollanen
- 12 Swedish Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/contentassets/106a679e1f6047eca88262bfdcbeb145/riktlinjerfysisk-aktivitet-stillasittande.pdf
- 13 Centre for Sports and Outdoor Facilities https://centrumforidrottsforskning.se/ar-2023-center-idrotts-och-friluftsanlaggningar-cifa
- 14 Health First! Guidance to Health-promoting Spatial Planning https://www.boverket.se/sv/samhallsplanering/stadsutveckling/halsa-forst/
- 15 General Advice from the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning http://www.boverket.se/sv/pbl-kunskapsbanken/regler-om-byggande/krav-pa-byggandsverk-tomter-mm/krav-pa-tomter/friyta-for-lek-och-utevistelse-for-forskolor-och-skolor/ General advice (2015:1): https://rinfo.boverket.se/FRI/PDF/BFS2015-1-FRI-pdf Make room for children and young peoplel https://www.boverket.se/globalassets/publikationer/dokument/2015/gor-plats-for-barn-och-unga-bokversion.pdf
- 16 Guidelines on Green Planning (2021–2022) https://www.naturvardsverket.se/vagledning-och-stod/samhallsplanering/gronplanering/
- 17 Act on Imprisonment (Swedish Code of Statutes 2010:610) https://www.kriminalvarden.se/qlobalassets/om/oss/lagar/fangelselagen-engelska.pdf

Sectors involved in the design of the policy or action plan



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Health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Sports	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Urban planning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Transport	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17

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Policy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

Target groups included

General population	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Children < 5 years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Children and adolescents (5–17 years		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Adults	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Older adults (≥ 65 years)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Frail/elderly (≥ 85 years)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
People with disability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
People with chronic diseases	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17



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16

17

SUCCESS STORY

1

Pregnant women

Ethnic minorities

Deprived of liberty

Unemployed people

Migrants

Breastfeeding women

Low socio-economic groups

The National Guidelines for Prevention and Treatment of Unhealthy Lifestyle Habits, introduced in 2011, have led to a steady increase in the number of patients receiving physical activity counselling in primary health care. The guidelines are designed to address major health risks, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes, by promoting healthier lifestyle choices. The guidelines were updated in 2018 and will be further revised in 2024. They focus on enhancing preventive care and supporting effective lifestyle changes. Consistent monitoring and annual reporting improve public health and advance health equity through targeted interventions.

10

https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2023-12-8879.pdf

5

Sports clubs for health

The WHO Guidelines on Sports Clubs for Health have not been directly implemented in Sweden; however, the approach of the Swedish Sports Confederation is aligned with the Guidelines by promoting holistic participation in sports. Participation includes lifelong engagement and addressing the needs of various demographics, particularly the elderly. After a significant decrease in participation of youth in sports during the COVID-19 wpandemic, strong collaboration with local authorities and State funding have led to a recovery, with record levels of participation in 2023.

https://www.rf.se/nyhetsarkiv/nyheter/2024-04-12-barn--och-ungdomsidrotten-aterhamtar-sig



Increasing access to exercise facilities for socially disadvantaged groups

Several targeted initiatives address this issue. The Sport in Segregated Areas programme, part of the Government's long-term reform, builds and supports sports associations in underserved areas, fostering social cohesion and health. Schools are provided with digital resources to enhance daily physical activity, particularly for students with disabilities, and special schools offer more extensive programmes. Policies such as the Outdoor Recreation Policy and requirements for road and street design ensure access to recreational spaces. Additionally, funding is provided for sports activities for newly arrived immigrants and asylum seekers, facilitating their integration and promoting their health.

https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/nationella-riktlinjer/2021-3-7328.pdf; https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/departementsserien-och-promemorior/2016/07/langsiktigt-reformprogram-for-minskad-segregation-ar-2017-2025/; Digital Materials of the National Agency of Education: https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/inspiration-och-stod-i-arbetet/mer-rorelse-i-skolan; Outdoor Recreation Policy and Right of Public Access: https://data.riksdagen.se/fil/CBAD1962-6F3C-47CB-A26B-CF3DFD241297; Requirements for Road and Street Design: https://bransch.trafikverket.se/for-dig-i-branschen/vag/Utformning-av-vagar-och-gator-vagar-och-gators-utformning-vgu/; Sports for Newly Arrived Immigrants: https://www.f.se/ff-arbetar-med/trygg-och-inkluderande-idrott/idrott-for-nyanland-

Counselling on physical activity and exercise prescription

The National Board of Health and Welfare provides guidelines for preventing and treating unhealthy lifestyle habits in risk groups such as adults with specific risks, children, adolescents and pregnant women. The guidelines include counselling and support for behavioural change, including Physical Activity on Prescription (FaR®). FaR® can be prescribed by licensed health-care personnel for preventive and therapeutic purposes for children aged ≥ 6 years. Implementation varies by region, some having local FaR® receptions in collaboration with schools.

https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/nationella-riktlinjer/2018-6-24.pdf; http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/sok/?q=publikationer+2016-11-4 (and the context of th

Health professionals who are trained in health-enhancing physical activity

				53		HEALTH THERAPISTS, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS
	Medical doctors	Physiotherapists	Nurses	Nutritionists/ dieticians	Psychologists	Other health professionals
	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Undergraduate	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Postgraduate	_	_	_	_	_	_
	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	

SUCCESS STORY



The Swedish Physical Activity on Prescription model has been implemented in other European Member States within the project European Physical Activity on Prescription, funded by the European Union Health Programme (2014–2020). The objectives were to promote good health and prevent noncommunicable diseases through country-specific programmes for physical activity on prescription in health services.

https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/the-public-health-agency-of-sweden/living-conditions-and-lifestyle/physical-activity/eupap-a-european-model-for-physical-activity-on-prescription/

Physical education in schools

Primary	Average	Secondary	Average
schools	per week	schools	per week
	1.7 Mandatory		1.3 Mandatory

Compulsory school (grades 1–9, ages 6–16 years): 1.7 h/week. Children with learning disabilities: 2.1-2.9 h/week. Schools for Sami children: grades 1–6: 1.4 h/week, grades 7–9: 1.7h/week. Upper secondary school (ages 16-19 years): Physical education for health course 1: 100 h, mandatory in all programmes (1.3 h/week); course 2: optional, 100 h. Schools can schedule teaching hours flexibly and may increase the time for physical education for health by reallocating up to 20% of hours from other subjects, excluding mathematics, Swedish and English.

HEPA in training of physical education teachers

YES	Part of undergraduate studies	Mandatory	YES	Part of postgraduate studies	Mandatory

Promotion of physical activity in schools

	During school breaks	YES	After school
YES	During lessons	YES	Active travel to and from school

National travel survey

Walking and cycling for all travel purposes (commuting, shopping, leisure, work)

Per person per day O Walking







Infrastructure for leisure-time physical activity

The enhancement of infrastructure for leisure-time physical activity was initiated by the Swedish Board for Public Health (Folkhälsoinstitutet) between 2006 and 2008, resulting in guidelines for improving environments such as bicycle lanes and walking paths, with a focus on children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Subsequently, national agencies developed additional guidelines to create health-promoting environments and support outdoor recreation. These initiatives include the development of green spaces, accessible nature reserves, and safe cycling plans. In 2018, a Strategy for Living Cities and a Policy for Sustainable Urban Development were adopted, aligning with these initiatives. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is currently leading a project (2022–2028) to improve and expand the country's hiking and mountain trails, including the King's Trail.

https://www.government.se/information-material/2019/01/policy-for-designed-living-environment/; https://www.naturvardsverket.se/amnesomraden/friluftsliv/planera-forfriluftsliv/; https://www.naturvardsverket.se/agledning-och-stod/friluftsliv/tillgangliga-natur--och-kulturomraden/

SUCCESS STORY

Sweden's outdoor recreation policy, guided by 10 national objectives, has increased the importance of outdoor activities, leading to increased local, regional and national activities, such as physical planning, nature protection, accessibility measures and education to promote outdoor recreation for groups like children and new arrivals. Nature is considered vital for physical activity and public health, prompting initiatives to ensure that natural environments remain accessible. The policy includes surveys of outdoor recreation habits and collaboration among agencies to support public health through access to nature by physical planning and forest management.

https://www.naturvardsverket.se/en/topics/the-right-of-public-access/; https://www.naturvardsverket.se/en/topics/outdoor-recreation/ten-objectives-for-outdoor-recreation-policy/

Promotion of physical activity in the workplace



National guidance or programme to promote active travel to work (e.g. walking, cycling)

YES



National guidance or programme to promote physical activity at the workplace

YES

Sweden's National Cycling Strategy, launched in 2016, is designed to increase safe cycling and promote sustainable transport throughout the country, contributing to a better quality of life and improved public health. The strategy has five action areas: enhancing the role of cycling in community planning, addressing diverse groups of cyclists, improving infrastructure to ensure that it is functional and user-friendly, promoting cycling safety, and encouraging research and innovation. It also promotes active travel to work as part of long-term sustainable transport.

 $https://bransch.trafikverket.se/contentassets/1da5bb2b8cb64f7996653cc4dfad2694/2017/bilaga_7_nat_cykelstrategi_f_okad_o_saker_cykling.pdf$

In Sweden, employers can offer tax-free physical activity and wellness benefits to their employees, provided that the activities are "of simpler kind and less value". The benefits include activities such as gymnastics, strength training and team sports. Employers can offer a "nature benefit", whereby they directly provide or pay for the activity, or a "health-care grant", whereby employees receive a set amount to spend on physical activity. All employees must receive the same benefits equally. Many employers, including Government and private sectors, allow staff to practise physical activity during regular working hours, usually for 1 h/week, to promote a healthier workforce and improve overall work performance.

Sweden participated in the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work campaign, Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load (2020–2022), with inspections of sedentary work, including in offices and the transport sector. A new European Union working group is developing guidelines to help inspectors address prolonged standing and sitting in the workplace to prevent circulatory diseases.

https://mynak.se/?s=friska+arbetsplatser+belastar+r%C3%A4tt; https://www.skatteverket.se/privat/skatter/arbeteochinkomst/formaner/personalvardmotionochfriskvard.4.7459477810df5bccdd4800014540.html



Community interventions for older adults



National guidance or programme for community interventions to promote physical activity in older adults

YES

Several initiatives promote physical activity and prevent falls among older adults.

Education to prevent falls:

A Case for the Team, launched in 2017, is designed to increase knowledge and promote systematic, team-based fall prevention strategies among health-care and social service personnel who work with older adults. In 2021, two complementary training programmes were introduced by the National Board of Health and Welfare: one for senior executives and managers in systematic fall prevention practices, and another promoting healthy living habits among the elderly, with an emphasis on physical activity.

Information campaign:

In 2023, the National Board of Health and Welfare began a project to inform municipal and regional decision-makers about fall prevention, including the role of nutritious food. The campaign will end in 2024.

Sports for the elderly:

Since 2020, the Swedish Government has funded a sports movement to encourage participation of people aged ≥ 65 in sports and an active lifestyle to reduce loneliness among seniors.

Transport safety:

The Swedish Transport Administration maintains roads and prevents accidents, including falls due to poor road conditions.

https://utbildning.socialstyrelsen.se/interna/learn/course/external/view/elearning/299/ett-fallpreventivt-arbetssatt-stod-for-inforande; https://utbildning.socialstyrelsen.se/interna/learn/course/external/view/elearning/300/ett-gott-liv-halsosamma-levnadsvanor-for-aldre; https://www.rf.se/RFarbetarmed/Aktuellaprojekt/idrottforaldre; https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/vaglag-1971948_sfs-1971-948

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