

**Physical Education  
Teach Yourself Series  
Topic 15: Relationships between  
Physical Activity, Health and Society (Unit 2)**

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# Physical Activity, Sport, Health and Society

Physical activity, which is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure and produces progressive health benefits, can come in many forms ranging from organised sport, fitness exercises, household chores, games and play, active transport, lifestyle pursuits and any activity undertaken while at work. Regular participation in physical activity can also provide many physiological, psychological and social benefits including: improved cardiovascular health; improved strength, flexibility and endurance; improved body composition; enhanced mental health; greater opportunities for social interaction and reduced risk of ill-health. On the other hand, excess levels of inactivity or sedentary behaviour can contribute to poor health. Inactivity, sedentary behaviour and physical activity levels are all influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Parents, peers, socioeconomic status, age, gender, time, level of education, motivation and accessibility are just some of the factors that can have a positive or negative impact on our activity levels.

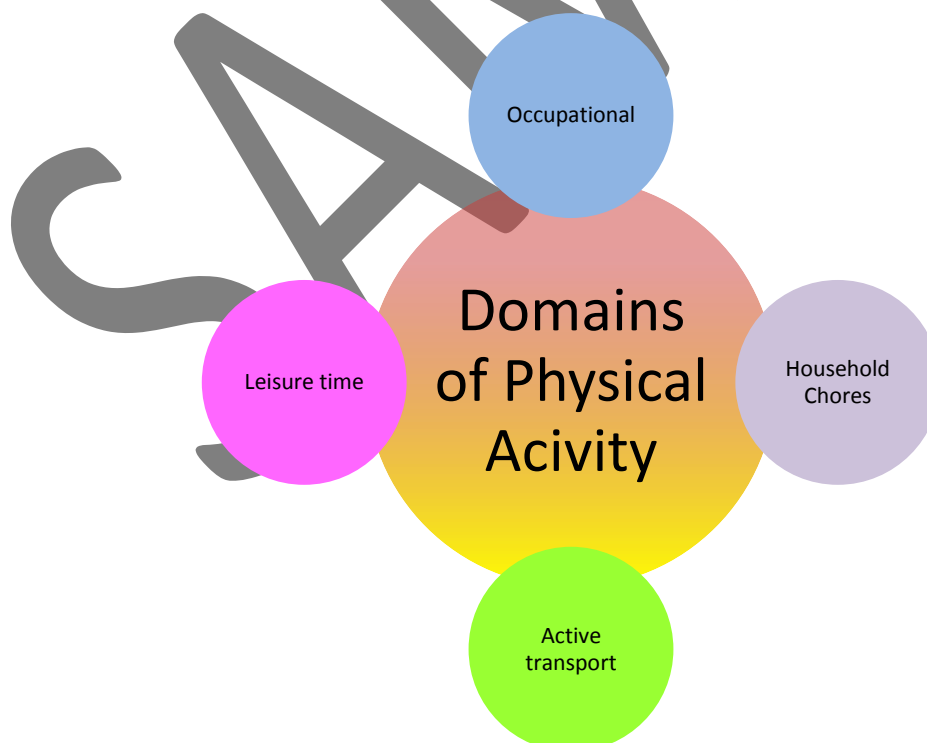
## *As it appears in Unit 3*

### *Concepts of physical activity, physical inactivity and sedentary behavior*

As mentioned in the introduction, physical activity can be classified in many different ways and the level of participation of an individual or population, in physical activity, can be influenced by a number of factors. The classifications and factors will be discussed further throughout this document.

## **Physical Activity**

**There are four domains of physical activity:**



**Occupational or workplace physical activity:** refers to incidental physical activity performed while completing your duties at work e.g. builders lifting timber when constructing the frame of a house.

**Household chores:** activity undertaken while maintaining the home e.g. cleaning and gardening.

**Active transport:** refers to physical activity accumulated while transporting one's self from place to place e.g. riding a bike to work or walking to shops.

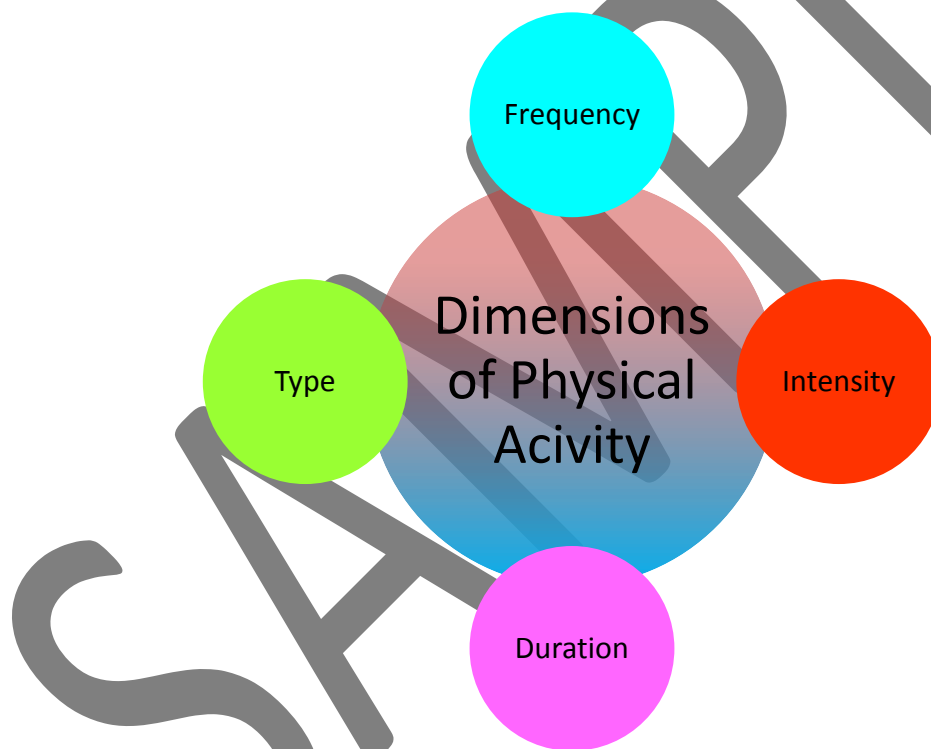
**Leisure time/Recreation:** incidental activity undertaken during leisure time e.g. walking the dog or throwing a frisbee at the park.

**Play:** engaging in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose e.g. playing on the monkey bars.

**Games:** is a more competitive form of play that incorporates rules e.g. 40/40 Home base or competitive sport.

**Sport:** an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others to win, for entertainment and for enjoyment e.g. cricket, tennis and athletic events.

**There are four main dimensions of physical activity:**



**Frequency:** refers to number of times physical activity is undertaken e.g. 5 days per week

**Intensity:** the work rate or effort required to perform the movement e.g. light, 7 METS or 95% max HR

**Time/Duration:** the amount of time taken to perform the activity e.g. 60 minutes

**Type:** the type of activity undertaken e.g. walk, aerobics class or chopping wood.

## ***Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour***

Physical inactivity, which is not participating in sufficient physical activity, is recognised as an independent risk factor for a number of health conditions. Sedentary behavior refers to any waking activity characterised by an energy expenditure  $\leq 1.5$  metabolic equivalents and a sitting or reclining posture. In general this **means** that any time a person is sitting or lying down, they are engaging in sedentary behaviour.

## ***The Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines***

### **Australian Physical Activity Guidelines in Early Childhood (0-5 years):**

- Early childhood is defined as between 0 – 5 years of age.
- Physical activity should be encouraged in children aged 0 – 1 in the form of floor play.

### **Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Early Childhood (0-5 years):**

- 1 – 5 year olds should be exposed to electronic media for no more than one hour per day.
- All those in early childhood should not be sedentary, restrained or inactive for more than one hour at a time (with the exception of sleeping).
- 0 – 1 year olds should not spend any time watching TV or using electronic media.
- Children aged between 1–5 should be engaged in at least 3 hours of physical activity spread across the day.

### **Australian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children (5–12 years) and Young People (13-17 years):**

Frequency – Everyday

Intensity – Moderate to Vigorous

Duration – Accumulate at least 60 minutes

Type – Active across a range of domains, include weight bearing and aerobic activity.

- Do activities that strengthen muscle and bone on at least 3 days each week.

### **Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children (5–12 years) and Young People (13-17 years):**

- Children and youth should not spend more than two hours a day using electronic media for entertainment.
- Minimise the time spent being sedentary every day.
- Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.
- There are some activities, like reading, doing school work, working on a computer, or travelling, that may need to be done while you are sitting. The key is to find a healthy balance, and to look for opportunities to stand up and move whenever you can. Also engage in regular vigorous activity for extra fitness.



## Solutions to Review Questions

1. Answer: B

*Explanation:*

Direct observation is an objective measure as it is carried out by a qualified observer. The other methods are subjective as they are less accurate, open to interpretation and subject to social desirability bias.

2. Answer: B

*Explanation:*

Family and the influence parental and sibling physical activity levels and family support fall within the Social Environment component of the Social Ecological Model.

3. Answer: D

*Explanation:*

Environmental change e.g. constructing bike lanes targets a large population of people not just one individual.

4.

Individual	knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, perceived barriers, motivation, enjoyment, abilities, disabilities or injuries, level of education, self-efficacy, socioeconomic status.
Social	family, such as the influence of parental and sibling physical activity levels and family support, spouse or partner, peers, schools, workplaces, community organisations and professionals such as doctors, teachers and coaches.
Physical	natural factors such as weather or geography, availability and access to facilities such as parks, playgrounds, sporting grounds, gymnasiums, walking or cycling tracks, density of houses, public transport.
Policy	urban planning policies, active transport policies, education policies such as mandating time for physical education classes, health policies, environmental policies, workplace policies and funding policies

5.

- Enlisting social support e.g. walking with friends
- Contracting e.g. writing an exercise plan that includes goals and deadlines
- Assessing motivational readiness e.g. undertaking activities when you are ready to do so
- Tailoring e.g. making sure the physical activity suits the individual
- Reminder systems e.g. notes in diary, alarm on phone, leaving runners by the front door.
- Gradual programming e.g. step by step approach to improving to fitness to avoid injury
- Identifying opportunities to be active e.g. walking to the shops instead of driving
- Matching processes of change with motivational readiness e.g. using cognitive or behavioural strategies based on the needs of the individual.

6. **School** e.g. compulsory interschool sport for all students and house competitions.

**Work** e.g. walking meetings and flexible work hours

**Community** e.g. fun runs, educational seminars etc.

SAMPLE