

MOVING MORE IS GOOD FOR OUR MENTAL HEALTH

SO, WHAT'S STOPPING US?

KEY POINTS SCOTLAND

The evidence of the benefits of movement to both physical and mental health is well documented. However, despite its apparent simplicity, for many people the advice "move more for your mental health" is easier said than done. According to the Scottish Health Survey 2022, more than one third of adults in Scotland (35%) do not meet the guidelines for moderate or vigorous physical activity.ⁱ

The Mental Health Foundation recently undertook a mixed methodology study across the UK and spoke to a range of people, to help us develop a more detailed understanding of the barriers to physical activity for people more at risk of poor mental health.

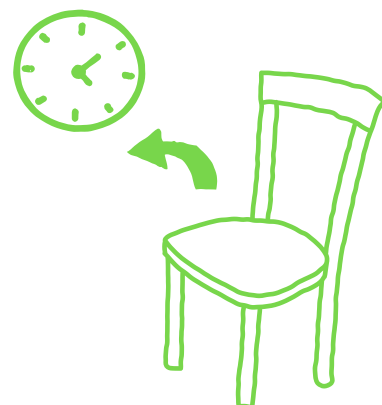


Awareness of the benefits of physical activity is high, with **83% of adults in Scotland** acknowledging its importance for mental health and overall wellbeing.

Almost half (47%) of adults in Scotland feel that their mental health and wellbeing can be improved through physical activity.

One third (33%) of adults in Scotland find it challenging to allocate time for physical activity. Additionally, **one in five individuals (20%)** report being too busy to exercise in a typical week.

Notably, young adults aged **18-24 are most likely to identify time constraints** as a barrier to exercising (37%).



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WEEK
13-19 MAY 2024

i. The Scottish Health Survey 2022 published Dec 2023 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2022-volume-1-main-report/pages/13/>

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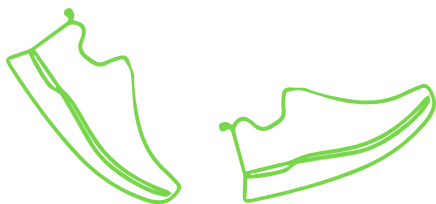
In our survey, **29% report feeling too tired or fatigued** to engage in physical activity.

Among different age groups, young adults aged 18-24 are the most affected, with **34% citing lack of energy / tiredness** as a barrier.



One in six people (16%) in Scotland say that stress in their daily life is preventing them from moving more. This rises to **one in four (25%) of young people** aged 18-24.

Young people aged **18-24 were more likely to say that anxiety prevents them** from being more physically active – 21% v 14% of general population in Scotland.

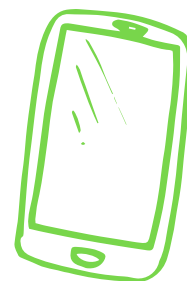
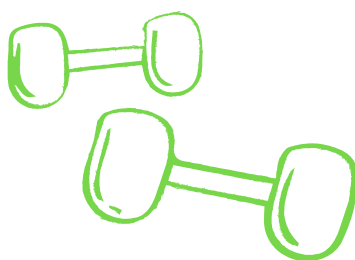


One in five people (21%) said that a long-term condition or disability prevented them from doing more physical activity. This rises to **more than one third of respondents aged 65 or over (37%)**.



Weather is a common barrier to physical activity for people across Scotland, with **nearly a third (30%)** stating that it prevents them from engaging in more movement during a typical week.

Around one in seven survey respondents (**13%**) said that **high costs** stopped them from moving more.



Other people found that **body image and cultural barriers** stopped them from doing physical activity.

This Mental Health Awareness Week, the Mental Health Foundation is encouraging people to find #MomentsForMovement in their daily lives as we all try to move more for our mental health.

This data was collected by Opinium Research on behalf of the Mental Health Foundation. The research sample was 972 adults in Scotland and the data was weighted to be nationally representative. The survey took place between the 12 – 21 March 2024.