

MOVING MORE IS GOOD FOR OUR MENTAL HEALTH

SO, WHAT'S STOPPING US?

KEY POINTS

NORTHERN IRELAND

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.

More than one third of UK adults (36%) do not meet the recommendations set out by the World Health Organisation.

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.

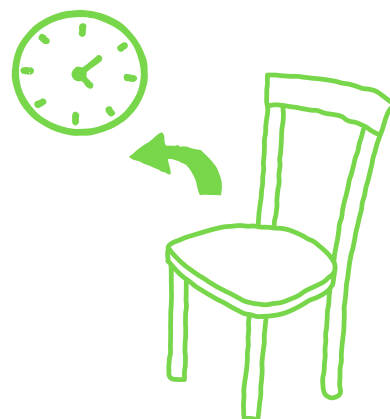


Awareness of the benefits of physical activity is high, with **83% of adults in Northern Ireland** acknowledging its importance for mental health and overall wellbeing.

More than half (52%) of adults in Northern Ireland feel that their mental health and wellbeing can be improved through physical activity.

Over a third (38%) of adults in Northern Ireland find it challenging to allocate time for physical activity. Additionally, **a quarter of individuals (25%)** 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 (39%).



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WEEK
13-19 MAY 2024

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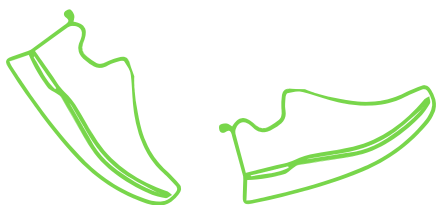
In our survey, more than one third of adults in Northern Ireland **(34%) report feeling too tired or fatigued** to engage in physical activity.

Among different age groups, adults aged 25-34 are the most affected, with **45% citing lack of energy / tiredness** as a barrier.



More than one in five people (21%) in Northern Ireland say that stress in their daily life is preventing them from moving more. This rises to almost **one in three (30%) 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 – 28% v 18% of general population.

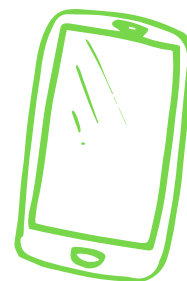
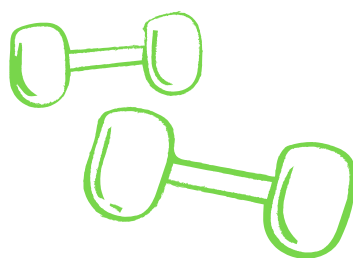


One in six people (17%) said that a long-term condition or disability prevented them from doing more physical activity. This rises to **more than one quarter of respondents aged 50-64 (28%)**.



The weather is a common barrier to movement for people across Northern Ireland with **more than one third (37%)** saying this prevents them from doing more physical activity in a typical week.

Around one in six survey respondents **(17%) 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 997 adults in Northern Ireland and the data was weighted to be nationally representative. The survey took place between the 12 – 21 March 2024.