

A generation of couch potatoes

1. Questionnaire: How active are you?

1. How often do you walk more than a kilometre?
 - Every day
 - Once a week
 - Once or twice a month
 - Very rarely
 - Never!
2. When was the last time you took any form of physical exercise? (swimming, running, dancing)
 - Yesterday
 - Last week
 - Last month
 - A long time ago
 - I can't remember
3. Tick any of the following activities if you do them regularly:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cycling• Watching TV• Playing team games (football, rugby)• Watching team games• Playing computer games• Surfing the net	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walking in the countryside• Listening to music in your room• Playing outside/in the garden/in the street• Going to a gym• Texting your friends
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2. Your health

- Can you calculate the number of hours you spend on the activities per day or per week?
- Which of the activities in the questionnaire might be good for your heart?
- Which activities can be called sedentary?
- Give other examples of sedentary activities.

3. Reading

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Lots of teenagers have posters of their sports heroes on their bedroom wall. But do they follow the healthy examples set by these athletes? British parents are worried that young people are not as fit and healthy as in the past. Why is this?

According to the British Heart Foundation, 13 to 15 year olds are spending too much time doing sedentary activities such as watching TV or playing computer games. A special report describes a generation of couch potatoes, young people sitting around at home, growing up in their bedrooms, travelling by car and in serious danger of heart disease as they get older. Is this their fault? Are young people lazy?

Many parents don't allow their children to play outside or walk to school by themselves. "I ring my Dad on my mobile and he picks me up from the station. It's 10 minutes walk from home but he thinks it is dangerous", says 14 year old Carrie. Some teenagers blame their over protective parents for making them unfit. It is certainly becoming more difficult to encourage young people to have an active life and protect their hearts. In recent years schools have spent less time on sports. "My Mum did lots of hockey and netball at school but we didn't have time for that this year because we had so many exams to prepare", says Ben 16.

- How does your lifestyle compare to British teenagers?
- Are they more active than you?

4. Talk about lifestyles in your country

How does your lifestyle compare to your grandparents' lives? Has anything changed?

Discuss these topics:

- transport
- diet
- home
- life
- spare time activities
- physical activities

5. Do a fitness survey

Make a survey for your class to measure fitness levels. Ask questions using:

How often ...?

When was the last time ...?

6. Fitness campaign

Think of 4 ways to encourage young people in your town/area to improve their fitness.

How can you encourage a more active lifestyle at home and at school?

Use expressions such as;

- 'I think we should ...
- It might be a good idea to ...
- Why don't we ...

7. Discussion: Attitudes towards lifestyles and healthy living

Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

1. Young people are naturally fit and healthy and don't need much exercise
 2. Eating fast food is OK if you don't eat it every day
 3. Older people always say negative things about teenagers' habits
 4. Sport is good fun
 5. Teenagers don't have enough time to do sports because they have too much homework
 6. Schools should make all students do at least 2 hours of PE a week
- Can you add 2 statements?
 - Do your friends agree with you?