Other organisations who provide physical activity opportunities for older athletes.

The GAA Social Initiative:

The GAA Social Initiative aims to get older men more involved and active through GAA clubs. Participating clubs organise events and activities for older men in their community.

The initiative is not solely orientated around GAA activities and is not exclusive to GAA members. Activities include, walking, dancing and age appropriate games/sport.

For information on clubs participating in the GAA Social Initiative, contact Colin Regan on +353 (0)1 836 3222

Local Sports Partnerships:

There is a network of Local Sports Partnerships in Ireland which promote participation in sport at a local level. They deliver a variety of events for target groups, including older people. For information on how to contact your Local Sports Partnership, contact the Irish Sports Council on +353 (0)1 8608800 or visit www.irishsportscouncil.ie/Participation

Leisure Centres:

Many Leisure Centres are now offering exercise classes for older adults including dance, keep fit, bowls and aqua aerobics.

In particular, exercise in the water reduces the risk of muscle or joint injury and can provide a better range of motion for the individual. For information, contact your local Leisure Centre

Northern Ireland Health Trusts:

Health Trusts in Northern Ireland work with local communities to provide advice and a number of physical activity training opportunities for older adults. For more information contact your local Health Trust or visit the Trusts page on www.hscni.net

Get Ireland Active:

Get Ireland Active promotes physical activity in Ireland including a variety of physical activities which are offered for older adults.

Under the events section of the Get Ireland Active website, information is provided and updated regularly informing users of the upcoming events in their locality. For more information on Get Ireland Active go to www.getirelandactive.ie

Age NI

AgeNI provides advice to older adults in Northern Ireland on how to improve general well being and how to stay/become physically active. Their website lists popular classes for keeping fit in local areas. For further information contact +44 (0)808 808 7575 or see the website at www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland

Active Retirement Ireland

Active Retirement Ireland is a national network that enables older adults to enjoy a full and active life. Local groups offer a wide variety of activities such as indoor and outdoor activities. For information on clubs in your area contact +353 (0)1 873 3836

If you have any questions or would like more information about the topics in this brochure please contact the Special Olympics Ireland Sports Department

Tel +353 (0)1 869 1641 Email sports@specialolympics.ie

WWW.SPECIALOLYMPICS.IE



A Guide to Physical Activity for Older Adults

Opportunities available to older athletes outside of the Special Olympics programme

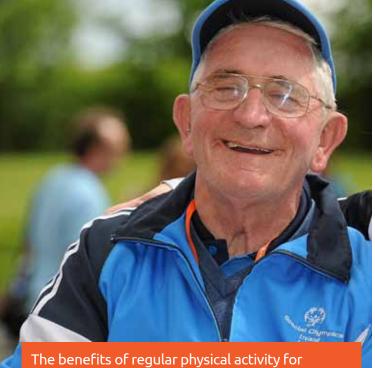


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The benefits of regular physical activity for improving and maintaining health and wellbeing are well established for people of all ages, gender and abilities. Recent census data (2011) shows that Ireland's population is aging. The population in Special Olympics is no different.

Special Olympics sports programmes are open to any person with an intellectual disability from 6 years of age. Many adults continue to participate in these sports programmes into older adulthood, but for others, there comes a time when they no longer wish to participate in competitive sport. When this happens, we must ensure that older adults with intellectual disabilities are provided with the information to continue to make positive health choices and to continue to live a physically active life after competitive sport.

This guide is not an exhaustive list but aims to provide athletes and clubs with information on some of the different options available to maintain active lifestyles when an athlete chooses to no longer have an involvement in Special Olympics.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

The National Guidelines on Physical Activity for Ireland recommend the following:

Aerobic Exercise: At least 30 minutes a day of moderate intensity activity on 5 days a week or 150

minutes per week. Shorter bouts of exercise can be accumulated towards the

guidelines.

Muscle strengthening exercises: Weight training or body resistance exercises performed on 2 days per week.

Flexibility exercises: Activities such as stretching or yoga performed on 2 days per week.

Balance: Older adults with poor balance have a higher risk of falls and subsequent injury.

For anyone with poor balance, exercises focused on improving balance should be

included on at least 3 days of the week.

WHAT ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES ARE AVAILABLE FOR OLDER ATHLETES?

	ТҮРЕ	WHAT IS AVAILABLE
	Multi-Activity	Go for Life is an initiative by Age and Opportunity, which promotes greater participation in physical activity by older people. In addition, the programme offers training for individuals to become Physical Activity Leaders who then run physical activity sessions for their peers. For information, contact Age and Opportunity Ireland on +353 (0)1 8057709 or go to www.ageandopportunity.ie
	Walking	In the Republic of Ireland, walking routes in many towns and cities, known as Slí na Sláinte have been developed by the Irish Heart Foundation. These are designed to encourage people to walk more frequently and to enjoy the benefits of a healthier lifestyle. For information, contact the Irish Heart Foundation on 01 6685001 or go to www.irishheart.ie/sli In Northern Ireland, Highway to Health is an initiative by Chest, Heart and Stroke Northern Ireland. Walking routes have been developed in many towns and cities to encourage people to be more active. For information, contact Chest, Heart and Stroke Northern Ireland on +44 (0)28 9032 0184 or go to www.nichs.org.uk
	Lawn Bowls	Lawn bowls is a game very similar to Special Olympics bocce. The aim of the game is to get your ball as close as possible to the jack (white ball). For information visit Irish Lawn Bowls at www.irishlawnbowls.ie or the Northern Ireland Bowls Association at www.nibabowls.co.uk
	Yoga	Yoga is a great way for Older Adults to exercise in a relaxed and calming environment. It helps increase muscle tone/strength, improve flexibility, balance and mood. For information, contact the Irish Yoga Association at www.iya.ie or the Yoga Fellowship of Northern Ireland at info@yfni.co.uk