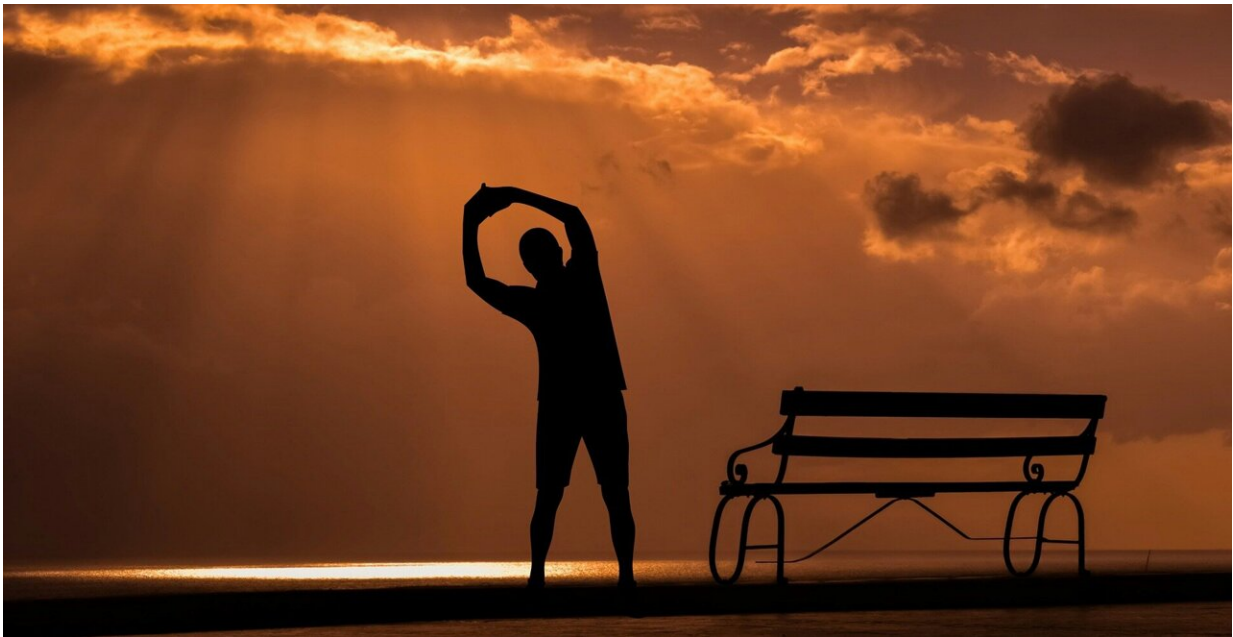


Finding the optimal range for physical activity- and diet-related habits

November 18 2021, by David Bradley



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Physical activity and diet are inextricably linked to health and life expectancy. The subtleties of the connections emerge from scientific research regularly and new messages for public health do change from time to time as a result. New work published in the *International Journal of Behavioural and Healthcare Research* has investigated the potential of an optimal range for physical activity- and diet-related habits. This cut-off point could be used to determine the effectiveness of fitness and

lifestyle programs in clinical and healthcare settings.

Nadja Walter of the Institute of Sport Psychology and Physical Education at Leipzig University, Germany, explains that developing good activity and dietary habits is important to health and wellbeing. Clinicians and healthcare workers hoping to advise people in this regard often use the Self-Report Habit Index (SRHI). Unfortunately, [current practice](#) does not embed a pre-defined cut-off value and so there is no way to measure how effective that index is when a health program is in place.

In attempting to define such a cut-off, Walter has discovered that SHRI scores and optimal levels are different for [physical activity](#) as opposed to dietary habits. "The present study is among the first to systematically investigate the strength of daily or weekly physical activity and diet habits using the SRHI, and to calculate an optimal range," Walter writes. The findings could be used practically in intervention studies aimed at helping people develop healthy eating and activity habits. "Against this background, discussions of frequency and physical activity habits should be pursued further," she adds.

She adds that the optimal ranges she has defined might also be used in behavior-change programs other than those concerned with physical activity and diet, such as reducing unhealthy behavior such as smoking, alcohol consumption, [drug use](#), and addressing eating disorders.

More information: Nadja Walter, Determining habits in physical activity and diet, *International Journal of Behavioural and Healthcare Research* (2021). [DOI: 10.1504/IJBHR.2021.118789](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJBHR.2021.118789)

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