

Keep moving – Fit for life



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Motivation – The need to move

«For me exercise is a necessary part of life, just like the food you eat, the air you breathe or the love you feel – life is nothing without exercise!»

Xhevat Hasani

We all know: exercise is an important part of our lives. However, regarding exercise different people are differently motivated.

People take exercise for various reasons. Some people enjoy exercise as it gives them time with their family and friends or it gives them a chance to meet new people. Others enjoy exercise outside in the open air as it permits them to reduce their stress levels and provides a physical and emotional balance to their daily routine. Then there is another group who



enjoy physical prowess, they exercise to improve their health.

There are lots of possibilities for people to exercise in every situation in life and at any age and despite differing physical conditions. Exercise does not just mean sport but includes all types of activity, moving around in your everyday life, physical hard work, climbing stairs or even playing with the children. The decision what type of exercise we take depends on our interests, our experience and our motivation; it may also be determined by hurdles to be overcome.



Just imagine what you could do if you were able to do anything you wanted to....

Important Principles

«Exercise is recreation and it also gives me pleasure while I learn and make progress.»

Madeleine Schmutz

Exercise should combine recreation with pleasure.

It does not matter what sort of exercise you decide on, just choose something that you enjoy doing. Exercise will then quickly become part of your every day routine.

Exercise can be sport or just physical activity in your every day routine.

Integrate as many short or long periods of physical activity as possible into your daily routine.

Start slowly and be realistic about your goals.

Having a sense of achievement makes it easier for you to motivate yourself and thus to exercise regularly.

Observe safety rules for your own sake.

There are lots of low risk ways of taking exercise. Some activities like riding your bike along a busy street are potentially somewhat dangerous. That is not a reason to abstain from doing them. You can learn the practicalities, the rules and precautionary measures to take in special courses.

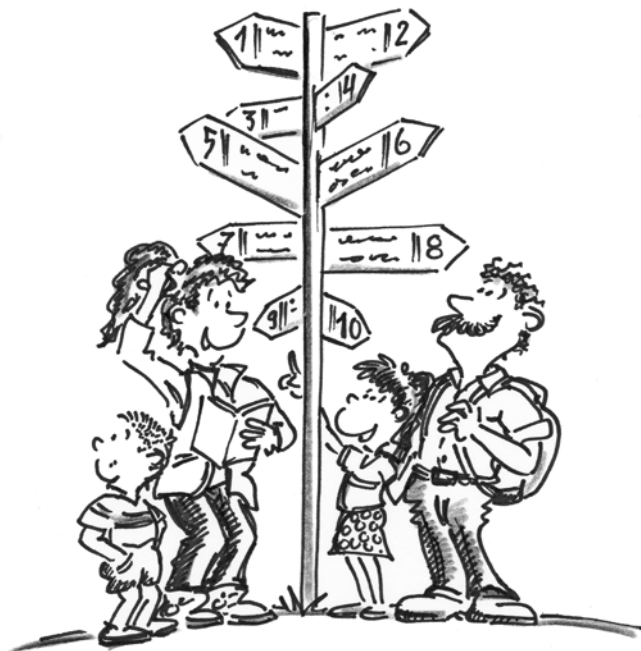


Guidelines

Choose the form of exercise you enjoy from the various possibilities available and also the one that will give you the most pleasure. Probably it will not be the same choice as your sister or your neighbour would make. That does not matter. There is no good or bad choice of exercise. It must be the right choice for you.

Look at the following list and get inspired!

- Exercise as part of your daily routine:
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Exercise as part of your daily routine

Exercise is not just playing football or taking part in a gymnastics course, it is also a part of your daily routine, for instance when you go for a ride on your bike or are actively working in the house – that is also exercise. Take exercise together with all your family. Your children need more exercise than you do – they need at least one hour a day. Children enjoy exercise and they learn things for life. Not only leisure activities with their peers are important, (e.g. in a sports club) but also incorporating exercise in their daily routine. Ensure for instance that they walk to school or, depending on their age, they can go to school by bicycle.

Suggestions for you ...

Physical activity in your daily routine

Incorporate physical activity into your daily routine. Go on foot as much as possible, for instance when you go shopping or are going to work. Be influenced by your children's pleasure in physical activity and discovering things. Use the change of seasons as a reason for different activities: playing in the park or at the playground, going for a hike or a walk, swimming,

building snowmen or just playing around at home. You can do all these things with your own children or together with other families.

Your bike as a means of transport

Use your bike as a form of transport when you go shopping or on your way to work. If you do not know how to ride a bike or you feel uncertain riding your bike along busy streets, you can take a course in cycling (e.g. courses offered are by the «Pro Velo» club) or you can ask somebody to teach you. You can often find cheap second-hand bikes at markets organised by the local branch of the bicycle club «Pro Velo». Have a look at what is on offer at the club nearest to you or check out the Internet page www.pro-velo.ch.

If you are planning a long bicycle trip, you can discover the country by using the countless number of special bicycle trails established by «Veloland Schweiz». Bicycle trails are clearly marked with red signs. Take notice of the red signs in your neighbourhood and just set off. The trails are described on the Internet page www.veloland.ch.



...and your family

«Throughout my childhood sport was a leisure activity for me – either together with my parents or in different clubs.»

Suzan Bellisan

Mother and toddler gym

Even small children need lots of exercise. Arrange their surroundings in such a way that they have room to move and explore. Another possibility to exercise together with your children is to attend a mother and toddler gym class. Most local gymnastic clubs offer gym classes for mothers or fathers with their children. For more information on what courses are available ask the health visiting services in your community.

Games afternoon

Organise a trip together with your friends and relatives. Pack a bag full of refreshments and different games and take a trip to the park, visit a lake or go into the woods. Out of doors you can play all together, things like skipping, throwing a frisbee, hide-and-seek, catch me if you can, football, volleyball, badminton or even boccia. Having fun and playing outdoors is not just something you can do during the warmer times of the year. When the snow arrives in winter you can go tobogganing, try ice-skating, building a snowman or even having a snowball fight!

Allow plenty of time for such a trip, at least a whole afternoon or even better a whole day.



Cultivating social contacts

«Doing sport in a group gives pleasure, a sense of freedom and a zest for life. When I go jogging in a group, we have great fun, we laugh and talk a lot. I find that very motivating.»

Monica Kammermann-Rodriguez

There are lots of possibilities to exercise in a group. You can spend plenty of time exercising together with friends and acquaintances when you take a trip to the park, go for a walk in the woods, visit the playground, play football together or meet up for music and dancing. Motivate each other – this will give you an incentive to exercise regularly together.

Suggestions

Walking or running in a group

Establish a routine and arrange a fixed time and place to meet up with your friends or acquaintances and go walking or running at least once a week. You can choose the Vitaparcours trail, a jogging route or a sports field in the vicinity. Start slowly; at the beginning you should just do a short lap of about 10 to 20 minutes. You should only run or walk at a pace that allows you to chat to each other without any problem and you should still have enough breath left to enjoy a laugh!





The local authority normally look after the walking and jogging routes. Do you know any of the routes in your area? If not you can ask the local council offices or the department of sport. Additionally there are also walking and jogging trails called «Helsana Trails». You can find out more about them by looking at the home page of the Swiss Athletic Association under the section «Running & Walking»:
www.swiss-athletics.ch.

You can join a group that already exists. Ask the department of sport about local running clubs or find the information on the home page of the Swiss Athletic Association under the section «Running & Walking».

Team sports

It is really quite easy to organise team sports like volleyball, basketball, handball, football or cricket. Organising a regular round of games is not an impossible task. You do not even necessarily need a sports hall. Just meet up with friends and acquaintances somewhere where there is a free public space such as in the local park or use fields, pitches or courts in your neighbourhood. Decide on a day and time and try to meet regularly. Check before you start who is interested and is able to participate regularly and find out how you can organise the equipment you need.

Meeting people

«Exercise means fun, rhythm and companionship. In other words meeting people.»

Luigi Fossati

Exercise brings people together – neither a common language nor a common background are important but doing things together. Exercise and sport are ideal ways to come into contact with other people and even to make new friendships.

Suggestions

Exercise and sport in a club

In every Swiss municipality there is a wide range of clubs for every age group. When you are training or helping with the club's social events you are not just learning a sport but also getting to know a whole new group of people. Membership of a club costs on average between CHF 50.– and CHF 200.– a year. Most of the clubs offer the possibility of attending an introductory course for free without any obligation. In this way you can try out different sports and see if you feel at ease with the group and with the





person giving the course. The easiest way is to go together with somebody who already belongs to the club and can explain exactly how everything is. In many municipalities a list of events will be published or even a brochure giving a list of all the clubs and their activities. You can get information about sports clubs, practice schedules and costs at any time either at your local authority or at the sports department of your town or village.

Courses

You can try out different sports by doing a course. There are different organisations offering courses in your vicinity: local clubs, neighbourhood meeting places, Migros Clubschool, adult education programmes etc. If you book a course one lesson or ses-

sion will cost around CHF 10.– to CHF 20.– . Normally a course comprises of 10 to 20 sessions. You can get more information on the Migros Clubschool: www.klubschule.ch, and on adult education programmes: www.up-vhs.ch. Pro Senectute offers courses specially designed for senior citizens for more information: www.pro-senectute.ch.

Dance and Music

When you dance and sing you are also getting exercise. Organise a party with music and dancing together with your friends and acquaintances or for instance join in when your local neighbourhood group or cultural society organises an event with music and dancing.

Exercise outdoors

«Exercise and sport means experiencing and enjoying nature outdoors.»

Biljana Veron

Outdoor activities are not only good for your physical well-being, but they also help your mind to relax so you feel less stressed and tense by the daily routine. Whether you go on your own or with the family – a walk across the fields or in the woods does not cost you anything and it does you good. Getting outdoors does not depend on the time of the year or what the weather is like. Do not allow yourself to be put off by cold weather, wind or snow; just put on warm clothes, protect yourself against wet weather and simply enjoy the vagaries of nature.

Suggestions

Vitaparcours

The Vitaparcours is a free way to combine walking and running (see P. 8, 20) with gymnastics and muscle training exercises. The Vitaparcours-Trails are to be found mostly in the woods, they are well signposted. Whilst you are running or walking you will come across different posts at regular intervals. Each post will give you instructions on how to do different exercises. Have a look in your neighbourhood for the blue Vitaparcours-Signs. You can get further information at your local authority or at the sports department of your town or village or via the Internet www.vitaparcours.ch. You can download instructions for the exercises and do them at home.

Hiking

Hiking provides an excellent opportunity to exercise outdoors with nature; at the same time you can chat to friends and acquaintances and also enjoy the countryside. When you go hiking, you can discover new and unknown areas. You can go hiking at any time of the year: for instance hiking through the snow is a special experience. Just be careful not to leave the marked paths.



Switzerland has a vast number of footpaths for either long hikes or short walks. There are many hiking opportunities for everyone regardless of age or experience. At the point where you start out there are signposts showing you which direction to go and telling you how long the walk is. On the way there are yellow markers to show you the direction in which you continue. You can start a hike in almost every village or town in Switzerland. Usually you will find the signposts for different routes at the railway station.

Choose a suitable route with the help of maps or guidebooks. You can either buy the maps and guide books or borrow them from the local library. Be careful when choosing your route to study the specified amount of time and the degree of difficulty. You can get further information on hiking routes at the local tourist office or via the Internet pages www.myswitzerland.com or www.tourenguide.ch.



Exercise as recuperation, relaxation and activation

«For me exercise is relaxation. Exercise can release a lot of pent-up tensions.»

Ekrem Beglerbegovic

If you find your daily routine physically and mentally very stressful then activities that help you to relax are important. Exercise does not just mean a big effort, strain and accomplishment. When you are working in the garden, playing music, doing breathing or yoga exercises you are also actively recuperating. These forms of exercise are relaxing and calming and help you to recuperate both mentally and physically. Treat yourself to a relaxing moment every day, be aware of your body and try to actively relax.

Suggestions

Breathing

Be aware of your pattern of breathing: do you breathe quickly or rather slowly? Do you breathe using your abdomen or your chest? Is your breathing laboured and superficial or calm and deep? Lie down comfortably on a bed or sofa or even on the floor, close your eyes and try to breathe in and out several times really deeply and slowly from your abdomen up to your chest. Stay awake and concentrate on your breathing. This concentration helps you to be calm and relaxed.





«When I work a lot with the computer, I need to get out over my lunch break. Exercise is then really a must for me.»

Alicia Gamboa

If you are not having enough exercise during your daily routine this can also pose a problem. If this is the case, try to find a stimulating activity that compensates for the lack of physical activity and helps you recuperate.

Suggestions

Active exercise breaks during your daily routine

Integrate short regular exercise breaks into your daily routine. Get up from your desk, do a little loosening up and walk a few steps. Use your lunch break or a spare hour in the evening to go for a brisk walk round the block.

If you are trying to get yourself active and fit any of the suggestions in other chapters of this brochure will be useful.

Physical prowess

«Sport is conscious movement with the goal of strengthening your physical and mental capacities.»

Xhevat Hasani

Exercise and sport can also mean setting yourself a sporting target, physically exerting yourself or even competing with someone. The higher the intensity of an activity, the more you feel your body and get to know your personal limits. When there is a competition, the intensity is usually higher, because you compete with another person, and your ambitions are aroused.

When you are specifically working out, it is important to first do warming up exercises to prepare yourself for the intensive activity. A period of recuperation after physical effort is equally important. Avoid getting cold, put on some warm clothes and stretch the muscles you have been using.

Suggestions

Running competitions

You can compare your skills with other participants at running competitions and discover your personal limits. Running events are a relatively cheap form of competition, you do need to train systematically, but otherwise you do not need any special preparation or particular equipment. Running competitions are organised during the whole year, either by a town or village or by private organisations. Ask the sports department of your town or village for more information or look on the Internet page www.swiss-athletics.ch.

Boxing/Martial arts

Different martial arts including boxing combine physical skills with a meditative element. Special schools or clubs will normally offer courses for these sorts of sport. To find out about available courses follow the tips on how to find courses offered by a club (see P. 10). The cost of membership in this type of club is normally higher than in a normal sports club because these clubs are not run on a voluntary basis.



Doing something for your health

«For me exercise means mental and physical health. I take exercise as it improves my mood and my relationship with my fellow human beings.»

Alicia Gamboa

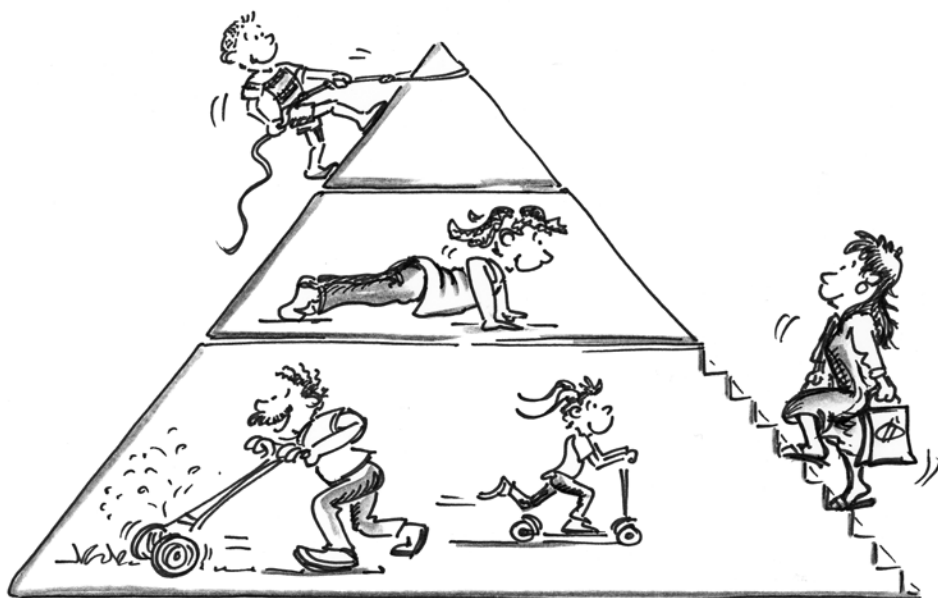
Regular exercise promotes sustainable health. The risk of circulatory and heart disease (e.g. heart attack or stroke), diabetes, backache, different forms of cancer, obesity or psychiatric disorder such as a mild form of depression can be reduced by regular physical activity. If you exercise regularly you will remain independent and capable well into old age and – after an accident or a period of sickness – you can strengthen your weakened body with specific exercises. Regular exercise can also support you if you are trying to change your life-style for instance if you are trying to lose weight or give up smoking. Practically every regular physical activity is healthy. All the suggestions which you find in this brochure – from sporting competitions to integrating short periods of activity into your daily routine – will help a lot in terms of your long-term health perspectives.

Recommendation

Look at the exercise pyramid. The first level is the most important for your health. This level shows activities that are part of your daily routine: mowing the lawn, household tasks, climbing stairs or going for a walk. Begin at level one and **incorporate at least 30 minutes of exercise into your every day routine.** This half an hour can be divided into 3×10 minutes. You can further promote good health and a sense of wellbeing when you incorporate activities from the second level such as jogging or muscle training on a regular basis. These activities train your endurance and muscle power. You reach the peak of the pyramid when you are engaged in high-performance sports and go running at least 5 hours per week.

Warning

Exercise and sport are healthy as long as you respect your own personal limitations. If you have or if you develop any physical problems or if you are worried about your state of health in any way, we recommend that you make an appointment to see an expert (general practitioner, physiotherapist etc.).



Losing weight

«Exercise is a necessity for me. I do it for myself to improve my frame of mind and because it helps me to lose weight.»

Alicia Gamboa

In order to lose weight it is important as a rule to consider your life style and particularly your eating habits and then make the necessary adjustments. You will lose extra pounds if you eat healthily and in moderate quantities. Exercise and sport can also help you to stabilise or even reduce your body weight. Even if you do not manage to lose weight through exercise it will benefit your health and well-being.

Suggestions

Make adjustments to your eating habits

To get information on how to eat healthily ask an expert, visit a counselling service or read a brochure on the subject. You can get information in different languages; for instance the Cancer League has published a brochure on nutrition. Ask your doctor about this brochure or get further information via the Internet page www.migesplus.ch.

Regular activities

All physical activity done on a regular basis burns energy and thus helps you to lose weight. Even regular exercise at the lowest level such as **going for a walk** (see P. 8), **brisk hiking** (see P. 12) or swimming will help to burn fat if you do it for long enough. Be sure to set yourself a reasonable pace so that you can exercise over a long period without any problem. The best solution is to join up with somebody else who has the same goals as you then you can motivate each other to keep it up.

If you are excessively overweight you should get some advice from your doctor.

Swimming

You can get further information about local opportunities to go swimming at your local authority or at the sports department of your town or village. You can visit the indoor or outdoor swimming pool on your own or with friends and acquaintances. If you cannot swim, join a beginner's course offered by a local club or the municipal swimming pool.



Sport during and after pregnancy

Exercise and sport are also important when you are pregnant. If your pregnancy progresses normally exercise is good for you both physically and mentally. Basically there are no limitations on the way you exercise up until the sixth month of pregnancy. However, all forms of high-performance sports or sports with a risk of falling can only be recommended with certain reservations. From the sixth month onwards strenuous activity should be avoided. You should exercise after you have given birth as soon as possible to get your circulation going and to tighten up the overstretched ligaments, tendons and muscles. You can strengthen your body with specific postnatal exercises.

Warning

Sport during pregnancy is not a substitute for specific exercises for pregnancy and birth preparation classes during which you will learn about breathing techniques and special exercises for helping pain relief during labour. You should stop doing any sport instantly and contact your doctor if any of the following symptoms occur: dizziness, shortness of breath, pain, cramps or bleeding.

Suggestions

Up until the sixth month of pregnancy

You can do anything that you enjoy up until the sixth month of pregnancy. Exercise moderately and listen to your own body.

From the sixth month of pregnancy onwards

From the sixth month of pregnancy onwards it would be better to choose activities that go easy on your joints and not those in the category of high performance sports. Choose for instance swimming (see P. 21), hiking (see P. 12) or walking (see P. 8). Avoid the types of sport where you are likely to fall or get hit (e.g. martial arts).

If you are not sure about suitable types of sport consult your obstetrician.

After you have given birth

Postnatal exercises

You can start with some light postnatal exercises just a few days after you have given birth. The exercises strengthen your pelvic floor and your abdominal and leg muscles. After a couple of weeks you should be doing the exercises daily and also going out for a walk every day.

Ask your obstetrician about exercises and where postnatal courses are being held in your area.



How do I get started?

«You can do anything if you have the courage.»

Monica Kammermann-Rodriguez

You now know exactly what you would like to do, but the next step – actually getting started – can nevertheless be difficult. Firstly you need to overcome obstacles such as lack of equipment, large expenses, lack of time, insecurity or motivation. The following suggestions may be of help.



Ask friends or family or anybody who is a member of your club if they can lend you some of the things you need. Find out if your local authority or the children's school organise sales of second-hand sports equipment or bicycles. In this way you can get your equipment cheaply at second-hand. There may be Caritas or Red Cross shops in your area where you can also buy products that are cheaper.

Suggestions

Getting equipped

Many activities do not require special equipment. Think about whether you really need anything new. When you start out, you do not need special shoes or clothing for outdoor activities such as walking, running or hiking. At the beginning a pair of casual shoes will be sufficient as long as they give support to your feet and are comfortable. When you go walking, running or hiking regularly then the purchase of appropriate running shoes or hiking boots and suitable clothing is advisable.

Save money

«Many people have to exist on a limited budget. A yearly membership fee for a fitness club is just too expensive.»

Zübeyde Demir

It is not necessary to spend lots of money just to take more exercise on a regular basis. There are lots of outdoor activities that you can do without paying an entrance fee. A yearly membership fee for a fitness institution is expensive but becoming a member of

a club is much cheaper. If you cannot manage to pay for this, ask the association, club or course if there is a possibility of a reduction. Make enquiries at your health insurance company if they will contribute to membership fees for a fitness club, though for this you will normally need extra insurance.

Plan your time

Incorporating more exercise into your daily routine does not necessarily mean that you need «more time». It is easy to include short sessions of exercise in your daily routine. Sometimes it is a lot better to include «extra time» and give yourself a break.

Create a schedule for the week that will help you with planning your time. Draw up a schedule with the days and hours and integrate the exercise sessions in your daily routine. Try to keep to your planned schedule as much as possible.



Trying things out

«For some people it is important at the start to have a familiar environment. That is the basis on which to build confidence and self-confidence.»

Madeleine Schmutz

Exercise and sport are quite foreign concepts for some people. The environment (sports association, club or swimming pool etc.) is unfamiliar. It needs a bit of courage to venture into this unknown world. Once you have managed the first step, you will try out and learn new things, make contact with new people and do something for your wellbeing, your health and your body.

Most associations, clubs or schools offer an introductory course for free without any obligation (see P. 10). Over the last few years various associations, organisations or private individuals have started to offer courses, for instance swimming, specifically aimed at the immigrant population. Ask your local authority for more information.

« Motivation comes with experience! If I feel really good and positive after taking exercise, then I will do it again.»

Madeleine Schmutz

Get motivated

Particularly when you start to exercise regularly you need to overcome your apprehensions. You can find a thousand reasons or excuses for not doing exercise today: you do not feel well, you do not have enough time, you are too tired or you just

do not feel like it. Start slowly and at the beginning do not set your goals too high. The first success will inspire and motivate you: you have achieved something, your body feels good and you enjoyed yourself.

Most people find it easier to get motivated when they join a group and meet up at the same time and exercise on the same day. Participation in the activity is thus more binding – it will be noticed when you are missing – and in the group it is more fun.

Start today – there is no better time!



Information and courses available

If you are looking for suitable courses being offered near you, ask at the offices of the local authority. You can also get information about local associations, clubs and others providing courses in free newspapers, at the local council office or from an advisory centre.

The following addresses may also be of use to you in your search for a course near where you live. The list offers a limited selection from the wide variety available

Courses being offered in your vicinity

Migros Klubschule

Courses being offered locally and contact details can be found via www.klubschule.ch or in the local telephone book.

Pro Senectute Schweiz

Lavaterstr. 60
8027 Zurich

The foundation Pro Senectute offers various options in the field of exercise for senior citizens. Further information can be obtained from your local branch of Pro Senectute, via www.pro-senectute.ch or tel. 044 283 89 89.

Verband Schweizerischer Volkshochschulen

Hallerstrasse 58
3012 Berne

Adult education centres offer various courses in the field of exercise, sport and health. You can get information about the courses being offered in your area from the local adult education centre. For more information: www.up-vhs.ch or tel. 031 302 82 09.

Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz, migesplus

Werkstrasse 18
3084 Wabern

The cantonal branches of the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) offer various courses in the field of exercise and health promotion. You can get information about the courses being offered in your area from the local branch of the Red Cross.

Further information can also be obtained via www.redcross-edu.ch or tel. 031 387 75 75. The SRC also provides information on the internet platform migesplus on multilingual information about health and exercise.

For more information: www.migesplus.ch

Sports Associations

feelok

feelok is an internet platform for young people with sections on exercise, sport and nutrition. It also has a sports club database. For more information: www.feelok.ch.

Sports offices

The internet page www.sportaemter.ch provides you with the addresses of all the Swiss sports offices. You can find the telephone number of your local sports office in the telephone book.

Sport and exercise

Schweizer Leichtathletikverband

Haus des Sports
3000 Bern

The homepage of the Swiss Athletics Association gives you information about the Helsana walking and running tracks, about local running clubs and about running competitions in Switzerland. For more information: www.swiss-athletics.ch or tel. 031 359 73 00.

Vita Parcours

Route de Chésalles 48
1723 Marly

There are over 500 Vitaparcours-Trails in Switzerland where you can train endurance, agility and strength. For more information about the trails: www.vitaparcours.ch or tel. 026 430 06 06.

Tour guide

If you consult www.tourenguide.ch you will find documentation about hiking, cycling and mountain biking in Switzerland.

Pro Velo Schweiz

Bollwerk 35
3001 Bern

Pro Velo Schweiz offers cycling courses for various age groups. In addition they organise at a local level the sale of second hand bicycles. For more information: www.pro-velo.ch or tel. 031 318 54 11.

Veloland Schweiz

The homepage www.veloland.ch provides you with information and maps for cycling tours.