

## FACTORS OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

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**Abstract.** Living a healthy lifestyle is a panacea to quality of life. As many people live healthy lifestyles, the national development is positively affected. This paper examined the role of active lifestyles in healthy living and national development. It first examined the concept of lifestyle in relation to health. Healthy lifestyle is viewed as life choices fundamentally driven by health consciousness. An active lifestyle has physical activity and diet at its core, interacting with other healthy lifestyle choices.

**Keywords:** healthy Lifestyle, physical activity, exercise, cardiovascular disease, national development

### INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle is obviously a term from words of *life* and *style*, the style someone lives his or her life. *Lifestyle* is a way of living based on identifiable patterns of behaviour which are determined by the interplay between an individual's personal characteristics and social interactions, socioeconomic and environmental living conditions (Paulik, Boka, Kertesz, Balogh, & Nagymajtenyi, 2010). It is a complex behavioural strategies, routines, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms assumed by individuals or community to score as convenient in a social context (Dima-Cozma, Gavrilută, Mitrea, & Cojocaru, 2014). These explanations imply that lifestyle is a generic concept that could mean several things to different people at different times. For example, regular physical activity, homosexuality, vegetarianism, asceticism, polygamy, gluttony, Rastafarianism, and many others, qualify as lifestyles. Therefore, in reality, there is no such thing as optimal lifestyle (Lyon, & Langille, 2000), but an act of contemporary health culture (Pakholok, 2013).

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The concept of lifestyle as applied to health, evolved from health behaviour, which also evolved from action (Green, & Kreuter, 1991). Long time ago it was believed that people's health status was largely a product of their actions. It was not long before it became clear that addressing individual actions was not very effective at improving health status and that targeting behaviour, which is an action that occurs persistently, was a better way of addressing health. The taxonomies of health behaviour was then developed and promoted in order to enhance individual and community health status (Paulik et al., 2010; Salvador-Carulla et al., 2013).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The basis for all active lifestyles is movement or physical activity. We are told

and aware that individuals' basic necessities for survival are air, water, food, and shelter. However, we have forgotten to add one more important thing - movement. Right from the womb or conception, our greatest concern about life is movement; movement as evidence of life and movement as a source of life. At conception towards gestation, the movement of the foetus is of great concern to us, at birth on the delivery bed, our number one concern is movement of the new born. Throughout life we are required to keep moving, not only to show that we are alive, but also to ensure that we stay alive- healthy. Thus, as soon as a person stops moving, people would start digging a grave for their burial, life comes to a dead end. We believe quite a number of lives have been buried because they stopped moving.

Movement through physical activity is very important, and such importance has been articulated for thousands of years to date. For instance, the UN agencies and other organisations have developed hoarse voices from advocating for physical activity and exercise (WHO, 2018; 2003). Trying to justify the importance of physical activity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is almost as mundane as justifying the importance of breathing. To begin with, the African Union Executive Council has set aside the last Friday of every February as Africa Healthy Lifestyle Day. The theme for 2010 was *Food, Fun and Fitness: Health is Wealth*. The adoption of the day is based on the framework of the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2003) strategy for prevention and control of non-communicable (NCDs), which aims at addressing the fact that Africa is not only plagued with the scourge of preventable communicable diseases, but also with NCDs. The evidence is that most of which are preventable through healthy lifestyle practices (Mielke, da Silva, Kolbe-Alexander, Brown, 2018).

Although physical exercise may be used in general terms to mean physical activity, it is used here to refer to physical activity that is deliberately and purposely engaged in primarily for its benefits, with emphasis on health. Exercising must be professionally planned and implemented with specific guidelines in order to derive health benefits and avoid injuries. The purpose of exercise is physical fitness whose components are cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility and optimum body weight or balanced body composition. Each of these components can be addressed by specific exercise regimens. For example, cardiovascular endurance is improved mainly through aerobic activities (aerobic dance) performed at certain intensity over a certain period of time. Besides, flexibility is improved only through stretching exercises performed in a certain manner. To maintain a desirable body weight requires a combination of exercise and diet. Generally, level of physical activity (low, moderate or high) is a combination of the three forms of physical activity described in terms of work, leisure time activity and exercise. Figure 1 illustrates different levels of active living.

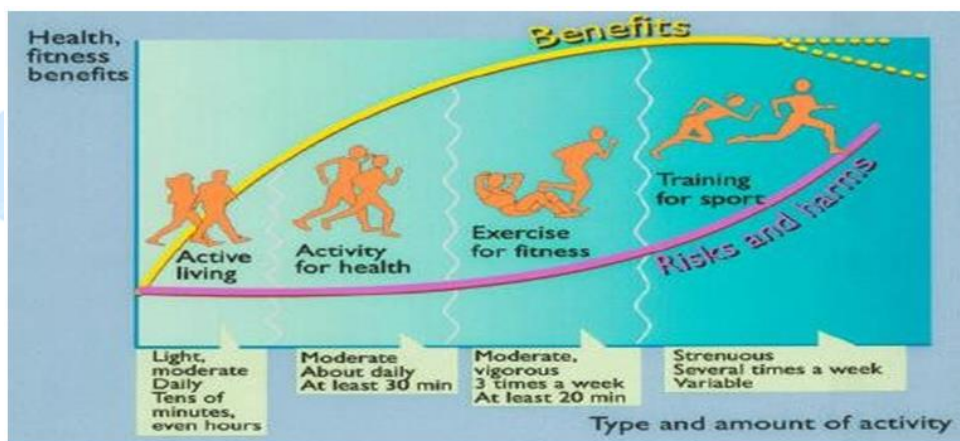


Figure 1: Levels of physical activity

## CONCLUSION

As we indicated earlier, for those of us who know, the benefits of physical activity are really not in dispute, but for the sake of refreshing our memories, the benefits of physical activity are listed below. Regular physical activity;

1. Reduces the risk of dying prematurely, because it is the core for the functioning of the wholebody its organs.
2. Reduces the risk of dying from heart diseases including stroke, heart attack, atherosclerosis, and many others, which are responsible for one-third of all deaths globally.
3. Reduces the risk of developing and managing heart diseases, colon cancer and type 2 diabetes.
4. Helps to prevent/reduce hypertension, which affects one-fifth of the world's adult population, and increasing in the both children and young adults in developing nations, including Ghana.
5. Helps control weight and lower the risk of becoming obese, obesity being the underlying risk factor for many chronic illnesses.

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