

Appendix 2. Overview of harmonization criteria used for physical activity, resembling the Saltin-Grimby physical activity scales<sup>1</sup>. Occupational physical activity categories roughly indicate: mainly sitting work (sedentary), work that mainly involves standing or walking, without lifting or carrying (low level), work that involves carrying light objects or walking stairs (moderate level), and physically demanding work involving frequent carrying or lifting heavy loads (high level). For leisure-time physical activity the categories roughly indicate: almost no regular physical activity, spending most leisure time sitting (sedentary), occasionally engaging in leisure-time activities such as slow walking or household activities (low level), engaging in activities such as brisk walking or dancing (moderate level), regular engagement in activities such as jogging or cycling (high level)

Reference	Study name	Assessment	Leisure-time physical activity		Occupational physical activity	
			Original variable	Harmonized	Original variable	Harmonized
Clays, 2014 <sup>2</sup>	BELFIT study	Occupational physical activity was assessed with a specific questionnaire, asking about attitudes, movement and postures in a regular working day. Leisure-time physical activity was assessed with the Minnesota Leisure Time Physical Activity Questionnaires. Results from both questionnaires were expressed in caloric expenditure.	Leisure-time physical activity in kcal accumulated in the last 12 months, calculated into MET-hrs/week. Using quartiles to categorise continuous variable into sedentary, low, moderate and high	Sedentary Mean (SD): 2.3 (2.3), range: [0.0 6.7]	Occupational physical activity in kcal/working hour	White collar occupations were determined as sedentary, tertiles were taken from remaining occupations to categorise low, moderate and high occupational physical activity.
				Low Mean (SD): 11.6 (3.2), range: [6.8 17.5]		
				Moderate Mean (SD): 25.1 (4.7), range: [17.5 34.6]		
				High Mean (SD): 60.3 (25.2), range: [34.6 186.9]		
Saidj, 2013 <sup>3</sup>	Health 2006 (H2006)	Physical activity (at work and during leisure-time) assessed with two items from the questionnaire developed by Saltin & Grimby <sup>27</sup> was analysed for the purpose of this meta-analysis. This is in contrast to the PAS2	Mainly sedentary	Sedentary	Mainly sedentary	Sedentary
			Some low to moderate physical activity – e.g., walking/biking at least 4 hours per week	Low	Some standing, walking (e.g., kitchen, light industrial work, teaching – no heavy lifting)	Low
			Sports and exercise or equivalent heavy	Moderate	Mainly walking, stairclimbing, some lifting	Moderate

		questionnaire that was reported on in the Saidj et al. (2013) paper.	gardening etc. at least 3 times per week			
			Competitive sports/long distance running/athletics several times per week	High	Strenuous physical work	High
Sjørl, 2003 <sup>4</sup>	MONICA Denmark	Occupational and leisure-time physical activity were assessed using single questions with four outcome categories.	Sedentary: almost completely inactive, e.g., reading, watching TV, going to movie.	Sedentary	Sedentary: predominantly sedentary: e.g., desk worker, watch-maker, seated assembly-line worker (light goods).	Sedentary
			Moderate active: some physical activity during at least 4h per week, e.g., walking, bicycling, or skiing, gardening.	Low	Moderate active: mainly sitting or standing, some walking, e.g., cashier, general office worker, light tool and machinery worker, foreman.	Low
			Highly active: Regular activity at least 3h a week, e.g., heavy gardening, running, calisthenics, tennis etc.	Moderate	Highly active: walking, some handling of material, e.g., post-man waiter, construction worker, heavy tool and machinery worker.	Moderate
			Sports: Regular hard physical training for competition in running events, soccer, European handball, etc. several times a week.	High	Heavy manual work: e.g., lumberjack, dockworker, stone mason and farm worker, ditch digger.	High
Krause, 2017 <sup>5</sup>	KIHD study	Occupational physical activity was assessed with interviews in which participants were asked about their activities during a regular workday. Leisure-time physical activity was assessed using the	Total leisure-time physical activity (MET-hrs/year), with a 7d recall. Using quartiles to categorise continuous	Sedentary Mean (SD): 7.3 (3.9), range: [0.0 13.4]	Relative aerobic workload defined as %VO <sub>2</sub> max. Using quartiles to categorise continuous variable into	Sedentary Mean (SD): 18.2 (2.4), range: [9.9 21.6]
				Low		Low

		Minnesota Leisure Time Physical Activity Questionnaire.	variable into sedentary, low, moderate and high	Mean (SD): 19.2 (3.4), range: [13.4 25.2]	sedentary, low, moderate and high	Mean (SD): 24.7 (1.8), range: [21.7 28.0]
				Moderate Mean (SD): 33.0 (4.8), range: [25.2 41.7]		Moderate Mean (SD): 32.4 (2.8), range: [28.0 37.5]
				High Mean (SD): 71.4 (36.6), range: [41.7 472.7]		High Mean (SD): 49.4 (12.3), range: [37.0 119.0]
Pulsford, 2015 <sup>6</sup>	Whitehall II study	Leisure-time physical activity was assessed using the Minnesota Leisure Time Physical Activity Questionnaire. Occupational physical activity was obtained from job classification.	Mild, moderate and vigorous physical activity (MET-hrs/wk). Using quartiles to categorise continuous variable into sedentary, low, moderate and high	Sedentary Mean (SD): 14.4 (5.1), range: [0.0 21.5]	Professional / intermediate / non-manual skilled	Sedentary
					-	Low
					Manual skilled / semi-skilled / unskilled	Moderate
					-	High
				Low Mean (SD): 26.6 (2.9), range: [21.5 31.6]		
Moderate Mean (SD): 37.7 (3.7), range: [31.6 44.7]						
High Mean (SD): 60.3 (14.5),						

				range: [44.7 146.2]		
Eaton, 1995 <sup>7</sup>	IIHDS study	Participants were interviewed regarding their occupational and leisure-time physical activity, with answer options into four outcome categories.	Almost no daily physical activity	Sedentary	Sit or drive	Sedentary
			Low-to-moderate but not daily physical activity	Low	Stand (including all the teachers)	Low
			Light intensity daily physical activity such as a daily walk of 3 km	Low	Walk (postmen, jail wardens and many more)	Moderate
			Moderate-to-heavy daily physical exertion (swimming, gardening, etc.)	Moderate	Manual labour	High
Autenrieth, 2011 <sup>8</sup>	MONICA/KORA Augsburg	The MOSPA questionnaire was used to assess different domains of physical activity, asking participants to report the time usually spent on being physically active during work, transportation (walking or biking), household and/or leisure time, during a normal week over the past year. Based upon the subjects' indications, metabolic equivalents (METs, expressed in minutes per week) were calculated by means of a standardized program derived from the Compendium of Physical Activities and provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For the present analysis, METs were only used for leisure-time physical activity. Occupational physical activity was graded on a four point scale based on participants' self-report.	Total leisure-time physical activity (MET-mins/wk). Using quartiles to categorise continuous variable into sedentary, low, moderate and high	Sedentary Mean (SD): 2.6 (2.4), range: [0.0 6.7]	No noteworthy occupational physical activity	Sedentary
					Low occupational physical activity	Low
					Moderate occupational physical activity	Moderate
					Heavy occupational physical activity	High
			Low Mean (SD): 12.0 (3.2), range: [6.7 18.0]			
			Moderate Mean (SD): 26.9 (5.5), range: [18.0 38.2]			
			High Mean (SD): 75.3 (46.1),			

				range: [38.2 490.0]		
Rosengren, 1997 <sup>9</sup>	Primary Prevention Study	Occupational and leisure-time physical activity was graded on a four point scale	Mainly sedentary (e.g., reading or watching television)	Sedentary	Mainly sedentary	Sedentary
			Moderate activity (e.g., walking, riding a bicycle, light garden work at least 4 hours per week)	Low	Predominantly walking on one level but no heavy lifting	Low
			Regular exercise (e.g., running, swimming, tennis, heavy gardening at least 2 to 3 hours per week)	Moderate	Mainly walking, including climbing stairs, or walking uphill or lifting heavy objects	Moderate
			Athletic training or participation in competitive sports regularly and several times per week	High	Heavy physical labour	High
Richard, 2015 <sup>10*</sup>	NHANES study	IPAQ questionnaire to assess physical activity. Single item question to assess occupational physical activity (in the 2005-2006 wave). Classification scheme according to profession and using Ainsworth tables <sup>1</sup> to assess occupational physical activity (only in the 2007-2008, 2009-2010 and 2011 and 2012 wave)	Leisure-time physical activity items were used to assess METs. Using quartiles to categorise continuous variable into sedentary, low, moderate and high	Sedentary	Professions were expressed in MET according to Ainsworth tables <sup>1</sup> . Using quartiles to categorise continuous variable into sedentary, low, moderate and high (in the 2007-2008, 2009- 2010 and 2011 and 2012 wave)	Sedentary Mean (SD): 1.7 (0.1), range: [1.5 1.8]
				Low		Low Mean (SD): 2.2 (0.2), range: [2.0 2.5]
				Moderate		Moderate Mean (SD): 2.5 (0.0), range: [2.5 2.6]
				High		High Mean (SD): 3.4 (0.6), range: [2.7 4.3]
Moe, 2013 <sup>11</sup>	HUNT study		None	Sedentary	Mostly sedentary work	Sedentary

		Occupational and leisure-time physical activity were assessed using questions (one question for leisure-time physical activity and two for occupational physical activity) with four outcome categories	Less than 1 hour	Low	Much walking at work	Low
			1-2 hours	Moderate	Much walking or lifting at work	Moderate
			3 hours or more	High	Heavy physical work	High
Franzon, 2015 <sup>12</sup>	ULSAM study	Occupational and leisure-time physical activity were assessed with a single question with four outcome categories	Sedentary	Sedentary	Chiefly sedentary	Sedentary
			Moderate	Low	Mostly standing or walking	Low
			Regular	Moderate	Heavy lifting (>10kg)	Moderate
			Athletic	High	Physically demanding work	High
Huerta, 2016 <sup>13</sup>	EPIC Spain study	EPIC-PAQ questionnaire was used to assess occupational and leisure-time physical activity. Occupational physical activity was classified into four categories, leisure-time physical activity was MET-hrs/week and then categorised into four outcome categories using WHO cut-off values	<7,5 MET-hrs/week	Sedentary	-	Sedentary
			7,5-15 MET-hrs/week	Low	Sedentary	Low
			15-30 MET-hrs/week	Moderate	-	Moderate
			>=30 MET-hrs/week	High	Non-sedentary	High
Johnsen, 2016 <sup>14</sup>	WOLF study	Both occupational and leisure-time physical activity were measured with few questions, categorising participants in four physical activity categories	Never exercise	Sedentary	Very, very light	Sedentary
			Very little exercise. Take occasional walks.	Low	Very light / Quite light	Low
			Exercise now and then	Moderate	Somewhat strenuous / Strenuous	Moderate
			Exercise regularly	High	Very strenuous / Very, very strenuous	High
Bahls, 2018 <sup>15</sup>	SHIP-START1 study	Baecke questionnaire with 16 questions from different domains of physical activity, expressing physical activity in arbitrary units, was used	Arbitrary leisure-time physical activity units with values ranging from 1 to 5. Using quartiles to categorise continuous	Sedentary Mean (SD): 2.1 (0.2), range: [1.1 2.4]	Arbitrary occupational physical activity units with values ranging from 1 to 5. Using quartiles to categorise continuous variable into	Sedentary Mean (SD): 1.8 (0.2), range: [1.0 2.1]
				Low		Low

			variable into sedentary, low, moderate and high	Mean (SD): 2.6 (0.1), range: [2.5 2.7]	sedentary, low, moderate and high	Mean (SD): 2.5 (0.1), range: [2.3 2.7]
				Moderate Mean (SD): 3.0 (0.1), range: [2.9 3.1]		Moderate Mean (SD): 3.1 (0.2), range: [2.9 3.4]
				High Mean (SD): 3.5 (0.3), range: [3.3 4.6]		High Mean (SD): 3.9 (0.3), range: [3.6 4.9]
Bahls, 2018 <sup>15</sup>	CARLA study	Baecke questionnaire with 16 questions from different domains of physical activity, expressing physical activity in arbitrary units, was used	Arbitrary leisure-time physical activity units with values ranging from 1 to 5. Using quartiles to categorise continuous variable into sedentary, low, moderate and high	Sedentary Mean (SD): 2.0 (0.2), range: [1.3 2.3]	Arbitrary occupational physical activity units with values ranging from 1 to 5. Using quartiles to categorise continuous variable into sedentary, low, moderate and high	Sedentary Mean (SD): 1.8 (0.2), range: [1.3 2.0]
				Low Mean (SD): 2.5 (0.1), range: [2.4 2.6]		Low Mean (SD): 2.3 (0.1), range: [2.1 2.5]
				Moderate Mean (SD): 2.9 (0.1), range: [2.7 3.1]		Moderate Mean (SD): 2.9 (0.2), range: [2.6 3.3]
				High Mean (SD): 3.5 (0.3), range: [3.3 4.6]		High Mean (SD): 3.7 (0.3), range: [3.4 4.5]
			-	Sedentary	Mostly sitting	Sedentary

Wanner, 2014 <sup>16</sup>	The Swiss MONICA study	Single questions were used to assess occupational (4 outcome categories) and leisure-time physical activity (3 outcome categories)	Light intensity physical activity, mostly sedentary	Low	Mostly standing and walking frequently, but not lifting or carrying heavy objects	Low
			Frequent walking/cycling; other frequent activities (e.g., gardening)	Moderate	Often having to take stairs and carrying light objects	Moderate
			Regular vigorous physical activity	High	A lot of physical effort and frequently carrying heavy objects	High
Wanner, 2014 <sup>16</sup>	NRP 1A study	Single questions were used to assess occupational (4 outcome categories) and leisure-time physical activity (3 outcome categories). Those without work were excluded from the OPA assessment	-	Sedentary	Sedentary (taking stairs of <5 floors or walking <800m per day)	Sedentary
			Sedentary	Low	-	Low
			Medium (walking, cycling, gardening, dancing, gymnastics, table tennis, badminton, skiing)	Moderate	Medium (taking stairs of 5 to 20 floors or walking 800m to 3km per day at work)	Moderate
Petersen, 2012 <sup>17</sup>	Danish National Health Interview Surveys	Occupational physical activity was estimated from the self-administrated questionnaire by the question: "Which description most precisely covers your level of physical activity at work?" Participants were asked to state their typical level of physical activity in leisure time during the last 12 months	sedentary activities (reading, TV-watching or other sedentary activities)	Sedentary	Mainly sedentary work	Sedentary
			low physical activity (walking, bicycling or other light intensity activities for a minimum of four hours a week)	Low	Work that require quite a bit of standing or walking activities	Low
			moderate physical activity (exercise, endurance training or	Moderate	Standing and walking most of the time with	Moderate



			heavy gardening for at least four hours a week)		quite a bit of carrying or lifting heavy burdens	
			vigorous physical activity (strenuous activities usually involving competition or endurance training performed regularly or several times a week)	High	Work that requires vigorous or strenuous physical activity	High
Dalene, 2021 <sup>18</sup>	Norwegian study	Occupational and leisure-time physical activity was assessed by the <i>Saltin-Grimby Physical Activity Level Scale</i>	Reading, watching television, or engaging in sedentary activities	Sedentary	Mostly sedentary work (e.g., desk work, work including assembling of minor parts)	Sedentary
			At least 4 hours a week walking, bicycling, or engaging in other types of physical activity	Low	Work characterized by some walking (e.g., light industrial work, non-sedentary office work, inspection and the like)	Low
			At least 4 hours a week exercising to keep fit and participating in recreational athletics	Moderate	Work characterized by walking and lifting (e.g., mail delivery and construction work)	Moderate
			Regular, vigorous training or participating in competitive sports several times a week	High	Work characterized by heavy manual labour (for example, work including digging and shovelling)	High
Holtermann, 2012 <sup>19</sup>	Copenhagen City Heart Study	A single question with four categories was used for self-reporting leisure-time and occupational physical activity. For occupational physical activity 'Which description most precisely covers your pattern of physical	Being almost entirely sedentary (e.g., reading, watching television or movies, engaging in light intensity physical activity such as walking or biking <2 h/week)	Sedentary	Predominantly sedentary work	Sedentary

		activity at work? For leisure time physical activity: 'Which description most precisely covers your pattern of physical activity during leisure time?	Engaging in light intensity physical activity for 2-4 h/week.	Low	Sedentary or standing, sometimes walking work	Low
			Engaging in light intensity physical activity for more than 4 h/week or more vigorous activity for 2-4 h/week (e.g., brisk walking, fast biking, heavy gardening, sports that cause perspiration or exhaustion).	Moderate	Walking, sometimes lifting work	Moderate
			Engaging in highly vigorous physical activity for more than 4 h/week or regular heavy exercise or competitive sports several times per week.	High	Heavy manual work	High
Holtermann, 2021 <sup>20</sup>	Copenhagen General Population Study	Participants self-reported their occupational and leisure time physical activity, from an earlier used questionnaire. Occupational physical activity was quantitated using the following question: Which description most precisely covers your pattern of physical activity at work? Leisure time physical activity was quantitated by the following question: Which description most precisely covers your pattern of physical activity at leisure time?	You are mainly sedentary, e.g., you read, watch television, go to the cinema. In general, you spend most of your leisure time performing sedentary tasks.	Sedentary	Predominantly sedentary work	Sedentary
			You go for a walk, use your bicycle a little or perform activity for at least 4 hours per week, e.g., light gardening, leisure-time building activity, table tennis and bowling.	Low	Sedentary or standing, sometimes walking work	Low
			You are an active athlete, run, play tennis or badminton for at least 3	Moderate	Walking, sometimes lifting work	Moderate

			hours/week. If you frequently perform heavy gardening, you also belong to this group.			
			You take part in competitive sports, swim, play European football, handball or run long distances regularly several times per week.	High	Heavy manual work	High
Holtermann, 2009 <sup>21</sup>	Copenhagen male study	Occupational physical activity at work was estimated by the question: "Which description most precisely covers your pattern of physical activity at work?" To assess leisure-time physical activity the following question was asked "Which description most precisely covers your pattern of physical activity at leisure time?" Both questions had four answer options of which the highest two were combined.	-	Sedentary	-	Sedentary
			You are mainly sedentary, for example, you read, watch television, go to the cinema. In general you spend most of your leisure time performing sedentary tasks	Low	You are mainly sedentary and do not walk much around at your workplace, e.g., desk work, and work including assembling of minor parts	Low
			You go for a walk, use your bicycle a little or perform activity for at least 4 hours per week, for example, light gardening, leisure-time building activity, table tennis and bowling	Moderate	You walk around quite a bit at your workplace but do <b>not</b> have to carry heavy items, e.g., light industrial work, non-sedentary office work, inspection and the like	Moderate
			You are an active athlete, run, play tennis or badminton for at least 3 hours/week. If you frequently perform heavy gardening, you also belong to this group. You take part in competitive sports, swim, play European football,	High	Most of the time you walk, and you often have to walk up stairs and lift various items. Examples include mail delivery and construction work. You do heavy physical work. You carry heavy burdens and carry out physically	High

			handball or run long distances regularly several times per week		strenuous work, e.g., work including digging and shovelling	
<p><sup>1</sup>Ainsworth et al. 2011 Compendium of Physical Activities: a second update of codes and MET values. <i>Med Sci Sports Exerc.</i> 2011; 43(8):1575-81. MET = Metabolic equivalent of task</p> <p>* Although a reference is made to the paper by Richard and colleagues (which is the only paper we identified on the topic using NHANES data), different measurement waves were included for our meta-analysis. Measurements of the following waves were used in which all dependent and confounding variables were assessed: 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009-2010, and 2011-2012. For outcomes the 2015 follow-up measurements were used.</p>						

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