



Trinity College Dublin  
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## ▶ EXERCISE PRESCRIPTION FOR THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF DISEASE



# Scoring the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ)

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## Introduction

There are both long and short forms of the IPAQ. This documents will help you to interpret the results you get on the short form IPAQ. Results may help you track an individuals progress over time or compare results with public physical activity recommendations.

Firstly it is important to note that there is no international consensus on a correct method of describing physical activity levels derived from self-report questionnaires or surveys. This can be problematic when trying to compare between different methods. The scoring method described in this document is recommended for use with the IPAQ. A more comprehensive guide on scoring the IPAQ is available at [www.ipaq.ki.se](http://www.ipaq.ki.se) (click the “IPAQ scoring protocol” tab on the left). At the site you will also find an excel file which automatically calculates the results of the IPAQ. All you need to do is to download the file and use the dropdown menus in the answer panels to complete the questionnaire. The result will appear on the second sheet entitled “Report”. Alternatively read below directions on how to manually score the IPAQ.

Note: The IPAQ is suitable for adults between 15 and 69 years of age and is primarily used for population surveillance of physical activity levels.

It will take time to score the IPAQ. Give yourself time to do this exercise.

## Scoring the IPAQ

### Background

There are two forms of output from scoring the IPAQ. Results can be reported in categories (low activity levels, moderate activity levels or high activity levels) or as a continuous variable (MET minutes a week). MET minutes represent the amount of energy expended carrying out physical activity.

A MET is a multiple of your estimated resting energy expenditure. One MET is what you expend when you are at rest. Therefore 2 METS is twice what you expend at rest. To get a continuous variable score from the IPAQ (MET minutes a week) we will consider walking to be 3.3 METS, moderate physical activity to be 4 METS and vigorous physical activity to be 8 METS.

## Physical activity categories:

Scoring a **HIGH** level of physical activity on the IPAQ means your physical activity levels equate to approximately one hour of activity per day or more at least a moderate intensity activity level.

Those who score **HIGH** on the IPAQ engage in

- Vigorous intensity activity on at least 3 days achieving a minimum total physical activity of at least 1500 MET minutes a week

OR

- 7 or more days of any combination of walking, moderate intensity or vigorous intensity activities achieving a minimum total physical activity of at least 3000 MET minutes a week.

Scoring a **MODERATE** level of physical activity on the IPAQ means you are doing some activity more than likely equivalent to half an hour of at least moderate intensity physical activity on most days.

Those who score **MODERATE** on the IPAQ engage in

- 3 or more days of vigorous intensity activity and/or walking of at least 30 minutes per day

OR

- 5 or more days of moderate intensity activity and/or walking of at least 30 minutes per day

OR

- 5 or more days of any combination of walking, moderate intensity or vigorous intensity activities achieving a minimum total physical activity of at least 600 MET minutes a week.

Scoring a **LOW** level of physical activity on the IPAQ means that you are not meeting any of the criteria for either MODERATE or HIGH levels of physical activity.

## Calculating results

TIPS: Remember that bouts of activity lasting less than 10 minutes duration are not counted

Convert all activity to minutes before calculating MET minutes. Doing the math in hours will give you incorrect results.

It is recommended that activity bouts of greater than 3 hours are truncated. That is to say that a bout cannot be longer than 3 hours (180 minutes). This means that in each category a maximum of 21 hours of activity are permitted a week (3 hours X 7 days)

To calculate MET minutes a week multiply the MET value given (remember walking = 3.3, moderate activity = 4, vigorous activity = 8) by the minutes the activity was carried out and again by the number of days that that activity was undertaken. For example if someone reports walking for 30 minutes 5 days a week then the total MET minutes for that activity are  $3.3 \times 30 \times 5 = 495$  Met minutes a week.

You can add the MET minutes achieved in each category (walking, moderate activity and vigorous activity) to get total MET minutes of physical activity a week.

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