

Physical Exercise Guide:

Introduction to Physical Exercise Activities in Hämeenlinna and the Finnish Exercise Culture





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Physical exercise is part of culture

In Finland, all kinds of people do physical exercise activities, because exercise brings health benefits. Fitness exercise is an important form of exercise in Finland. Fitness exercise is not the same as competitive sports. People of all ages practise fitness exercise. For example, stay-at-home mothers often take time out in the evening without the children to go to an exercise group or jogging, while the father takes care of the children.

Physical exercise is for all ages

It is recommended in Finland that children should have two hours of physical exercise activities a day. This way, the child's bones and the whole child develop well, and the child will not become obese. Physical exercise is particularly important, if the child usually prefers to sit at the computer or watch TV.

Physical exercise activities bring an important counterbalance for people who are working. Versatile physical activity, such as Nordic walking, strengthens the back and neck muscles, relaxes and relieves stress.

Many older people also do physical exercise throughout their lives. Studies indicate that appropriate physical exercise is important for old people. Exercise forms suitable for older people – aquarobics, chairobics or yoga, for example – will maintain fitness levels and enhance mood.

Men and women

Physical exercise activity groups are often open to both men and women. However, many aerobics groups are still only attended by women. Some physical exercise activity groups are organised separately for men and women. Gyms are usually open to all, but in Hämeenlinna there are also many gyms for women only. The changing rooms and shower and sauna facilities are always separate for men and women. You can find more information online.

Exercise clothes are comfortable and safe

It is important that exercise clothing allows for easy movement. Many forms do not require expensive sports clothing. For example, a T-shirt and loose trousers are excellent for aerobics or the gym. But ice hockey, boxing or roller skating, for example, require protection to make practising safe.

You should not wear jewellery when doing exercise, as it can get caught with clothing or equipment and be dangerous to you or others.



Follow timetables!

Finns are strict about times. Timetables are important in Finland. If an exercise group starts at six, it will start at six o'clock precisely. Unless mentioned otherwise, participants should be wearing exercise clothing and ready to start at six and not a quarter past.

In Finland, waiting for your own turn is important. Interrupting or talking when someone else is talking is considered rude. Those used to different kind of interaction may feel that such communication is abrupt or cold, but it is not intended as such.

Equality and taking initiative go hand in hand

In Finland, equality is important everywhere, including physical exercise. People are treated as equally as possible, and leisure time activities do not usually involve mentioning one's occupation or other background. People from different social backgrounds mix in the same pastime groups and participate in the same physical exercise associations.

Taking initiative is also part of equality. Finns think that everyone has the right and duty to ask questions. This also applies to physical exercise activity and exercise groups: you can and must always ask if you are unsure of anything.

Personal space and eye contact

It is often considered polite to leave other people alone in Finland. For example, it is typical not to greet everyone you meet on the jogging path or in exercise groups. Names are not normally used when addressing others. That is why a newcomer to an exercise group should have the courage to approach others, if he or she wants to get to know them.

Finnish people expect more personal space in physical interaction than almost anywhere else in the world. Finns are used to wide open spaces and can experience that it is oppressive if another person comes too close. Eye contact is considered a sign of trustworthiness. Men and women also make eye contact with each other.

Swimming pools in Hämeenlinna and Lammi

Hämeenlinna has two swimming pools: Hämeenlinna Swimming Pool and Lammi Swimming Pool. **Hämeenlinna Swimming Pool** is located near Hämeenlinna city centre at Uimarintie 2. Telephone (03) 621 2428.

Hämeenlinna Swimming Pool has

- a diving pool (depth: 4.0 m)
- a training pool (depth: 0.3–0.9 m)
- a children’s paddling pool (depth: 0.2 m)
- a water slide
- a cold water pool (depth: 1.3 m)
- a 25-metre short course pool (depth: 1.2–2.0 m)
- a 25-metre multi-activity pool with a warm-up/water aerobics end (depth: 1.2–1.4 m) and an “amusement end” with whirls and showers (depth: 1.0–1.4 m).

The swimming pool also features a gym. The gym is reserved for groups at designated times. The gym also has separate times for men and women. Find out more about Hämeenlinna Swimming Pool at: <http://www.hmliikuntahallit.fi/uimahallit/hameenlinnan-uimahalli>

Lammi Swimming Pool is located in central Lammi at Lamminraitti 37. Telephone 040 455 7045.

Lammi Swimming Pool has

- a 25-metre short course pool (depth: 1.2–2.0m)
- a therapy pool
- children’s paddling pool

In connection with the pool, there is a well-equipped gym, and you can purchase access cards allowing you to use the gym when the pool is closed. Find out more about Lammi Swimming Pool at: <http://www.hmliikuntahallit.fi/uimahallit/lammin-uimahalli>

Code of conduct in the swimming pool

In order that everyone would feel safe and comfortable at the swimming pool, you must follow the following rules:

1. Wash before going to the pool. Remove make-up carefully. In order not to transfer loose hairs into the pool, wet your hair carefully or wear a swimming cap.
2. Put on your swimwear only after the sauna and washing yourself. You must not wear swimwear in the sauna, because it collects sweat and dirt in the sauna which transfers to the pool even after showering.
3. Always wear swimwear in the pool area. Shorts are not allowed, because they collect dirt. Shorts are often worn for other purposes than swimming, and the dirt collected in them will transfer directly to the pool.
4. Please follow the code of conduct provided for the swimming pool and pool areas.
5. Smoking and chewing tobacco in the swimming pool are prohibited.
6. Use of alcohol or other intoxicants or being under their influence are prohibited.
7. Glass bottles or other glass objects must not be brought to the wash and pool areas. They can break and cause cuts or wounds.
8. Exercise particular caution when jumping from diving boards or platforms.
9. Running and distractive behaviour are prohibited.
10. Parents are responsible for their children in the swimming pool. Children must not be left unaccompanied in the swimming pool.
11. If the staff deems it appropriate, anyone acting in a distractive manner can be removed from the swimming pool premises.
12. If you have a contagious disease, avoid going to the swimming pool.
13. When you leave the swimming pool, remember to return the locker key to the reception. Also return any rental towels, swimwear and swimming caps.
14. The fee entitles to a stay of 1 hour and 30 minutes in the pool, gym and wash areas.



Opening hours of the swimming pools

Hämeenlinna Swimming Pool:

- Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday open 6:00 am–8:30 pm
- Tuesday open 8:00 am–8:30 pm
- Saturday and Sunday open 11:00 am–5:00 pm

Lammi Swimming Pool:

- Tuesday and Thursday open 6:00 am–8:00 pm
- Wednesday and Friday open 1:00 pm–8:00 pm
- Saturday open 10:00 am–5:00 pm

The Lammi Swimming Pool gym is available at other times with an access card.

Both pools are closed in summer as well as on some public holidays. Please check the opening times for these periods online or by telephone. Last admissions one hour before closing time, swimming time until 30 minutes before closing time.

The signs at the swimming pool include:



Female changing room, showers and sauna:



This sign next to the sauna door indicates that entry with swimwear is not allowed. The exception are those having on their swimwear the sign displayed in the image.



This sign is a reminder that a parking disc must be used when parking in the swimming pool parking area:



Outdoor nature activities in Finland

Walking and jogging on jogging paths or in the forest and skiing in winter are popular in Finland. Jogging paths and ski tracks are open for everyone. Using signed exercise paths and ski tracks in winter is safe: they are sign-posted and often lit.

Dogs must be kept on a leash and always away from ski tracks, since they break up the track and can cause dangerous situations.

When you move in the forest, you can also pick berries or mushrooms. Learn to identify mushrooms to avoid picking rare poisonous ones. Finnish forests have very few predators that you need to be aware of, and the viper is the only venomous snake.

Public beaches are also open to the public in summer. Parents should take care of their children and monitor their behaviour on the beach just like anywhere else. Children must not be left unaccompanied on the beach.

Common playgrounds and play parks are intended for everyone. School and nursery playgrounds and fields can be used in the evenings and at weekends. Children are the parents' responsibility, so parents must supervise their children on playgrounds and fields. The playfields of apartment buildings and terraced houses are only intended for residents.

Everyman's right means that everyone can move freely in nature, even if he or she does not own the land. However, you may not cause disturbance or damage to others or enter someone's private grounds, such as a garden or a shore of a holiday cottage.

Everyman's right in brief

You may:

- walk, ski or cycle. You may not enter private gardens or any fields or plantations that can be easily damaged;
- camp relatively freely in the countryside, as long as you do not get too close to private houses or gardens;
- pick wild berries, mushroom and flowers;
- fish using a rod and line, and ice fish
- boat, swim and wash in watercourses and walk on ice

You may not:

- fell or damage growing trees, collect dried or felled wood, twigs, moss etc. from someone else's property. For example, you may not get a Christmas tree from a forest without permission.
- light a fire on someone else's property without a compelling reason;
- disturb domestic peace by, for example, camping too close to houses or making noise;
- litter the environment;
- drive a motor vehicle off road without the landowner's permission;
- disturb reindeer or game;
- fish or hunt without the relevant permits.

Source: <http://www.ymparisto.fi>



Organised physical activity in Finland and in Hämeenlinna

You need a permit for fishing. You can get information on fishing permits from the city's information point, Kastelli, or your own town's service point.

Rowing boats and canoes on lake shores are someone's property. You may not use them without permission. Canoes can be hired from the Vanajaveden Vesikot association, if you become a member, and from elsewhere. If you get your own rowing boat, you may row it where you want, and you can reserve a mooring space for your boat at the Kastelli service point.

The city has ten dedicated places for washing rugs, free and open to everyone. Look up the places at: <http://www.hameenlinna.fi/Asuminen-ja-ymparisto/Matonpesupaikat/>

Washing cars at areas designated for washing rugs or on beaches is forbidden.

The main principle behind the Finnish physical exercise activity system is that the municipality (= for example Hämeenlinna) builds and maintains the premises and areas for physical exercise activities but it is the associations and other organisations that organise the activities.

The City of Hämeenlinna, however, organises physical exercise activity for special needs groups such as the elderly and the disabled. The City of Hämeenlinna also organises some physical health activities that are open to everyone, including public skating events at the indoor ice rink as well as exercise games for the whole family. There is normally a charge for attending these groups. For more information on groups and how to enrol online, go to: <http://www.hmlliiikuntahallit.fi/liikunnanohjaus/liikuntaryhmat>

Sport organisations provide guided physical exercise activities indoors and out. They reserve the premises and operate independently, and they normally charge a fee, because they have to pay rent for the premises and wages for the instructors.

Sport organisations also do lots of voluntary work, organising various events to collect money. Many parents are actively involved with the operations of children's sport organisations. Parents often organise joint transport for their children to sporting events and competitions. Often parents also get to know other people and make friends through their children's hobbies.

Guided exercise groups begin in autumn and finish in spring

Exercise groups are organised by sport organisations, in other words associations, the city's suburban community centres, the Vanajavesi Adult Education Centre and various private companies. Usually, enrolment to exercise groups always takes place in autumn, but you can enquire whether there is any room for a newcomer in winter. You will find plenty of information online about different sport groups by searching for the sport followed by 'Hämeenlinna': for example, badminton Hämeenlinna.

The Vanajavesi Adult Education Centre (VOP) organises dance and exercise courses for children, young people and adults at different schools, the swimming hall and Verkatehdas Arts & Congress Center in Hämeenlinna from September to April. Their programme will be delivered to every household in August, and enrolment to the courses takes place in advance before the courses start. You can enrol at www.vop.fi. The annual price for one exercise course is approximately 60–80 euros. A discount is available for unemployed persons.

Find out more about Vanajavesi Adult Education Centre's dance and exercise courses (in Finnish, English and Russian) with enrolment instructions (in Finnish, English, Russian, Farsi, Thai, Polish and Arabic) at: www.vopsomeka.fi

The suburban community centres in Katuma and Nummi-Jukola arrange floorball, chairobics and other groups. The Idänpää Residents' House at Harakkamäki 2 B 11 also

organises guided physical exercise activities. Read and ask for more details at: <http://www.hameenlinna.fi/Asuminen-ja-ymparisto/Lahiotyo/Lahiokeskukset2/>

You must normally supply your own exercise equipment, but some are also available for loan

A sports club, the city or an other organiser will arrange the guided training, but the you must bring suitable clothes and, normally, the equipment with you to the course. You do not always need to buy new equipment. You can find cheap bats and rackets, skates and other equipment at flea markets. Some clubs recycle their own equipment, and some also loan equipment to participants. It is always worth asking!

The suburban community centres provide Nordic walking poles for loan free of charge. You can also enquire about borrowing baseball equipment, footballs and different aerobics equipment at the centres. The Eastern Suburban Community Centre is in Katuma at Kanervatie 1 and the Western Suburban Community Centre in Nummi-Jukola at Sammontie 4.

Hämeenlinna City Library (Lukiokatu 2), Jukola Library (Eeronkuja 5) and Tuomela Library (Tuomelankatu 20) have Nordic walking poles, pedometers and hand weights for loan free of charge. You can also ask your own library's service point to order the equipment for you. More details at: <https://hameenlinna.verkkokirjasto.fi/web/arena/paakirjasto>



Hämeenlinna's Settlementti., Arvi Kariston katu 9, will provide Nordic walking poles, balls and different aerobics equipment for loan from the start of 2013. Find out more at: <http://www.hmlsettlementti.net/>

Organisations can reserve the city's exercise halls for a fee

The City of Hämeenlinna owns various exercise halls that it rents out to sports clubs and organisations. The venues must be pre-booked and will incur a rental fee. The venues can be booked in autumn for the whole winter. Reservations for school exercise halls must be made the previous spring for the following winter. However, there may occasionally be free time slots left in the winter. More details at: <http://www.hmlliikuntahallit.fi/salit-kuntosalit>

When organisations reserve a venue, they are responsible for its condition and any damages. Whoever has been given the key should make sure that the lights and taps are turned off and the doors locked upon departure.



Outdoor exercise is free

Outdoor exercise can be practised on exercise tracks, illuminated fitness paths, ski tracks, outdoor ice rinks and beaches. Most of the city's outdoor activity areas are open to everyone and free. Public campfire sites, sitting and resting places, jetties and duckboards have been constructed in outdoor activity areas. These are available for everyone. Respect others who use the place, give room to others and pick up your litter.

The city's land areas also have jetties owned by private individuals and some associations as well as campfire sites. These are usually marked as private property ("Yksityisalue"). Public access to such sites is not allowed.

Find out more about exercise routes at:

<http://www.hameenlinna.fi/ulkoilu-ja-virkistys>

Find out more about outdoor fields:

<http://www.hameenlinna.fi/leikkipaikat-ja-pienkentat>

The city's large outdoor courts and ice rinks are partly open to everyone and partly reservable by sports associations for their own use.

Find out more about large courts at

<http://www.hmlliikuntahallit.fi/ulkokentat>

More information and advice on the city's outdoor activity areas

There is plenty of information on the city's outdoor activity areas available online. In addition to the direct links above, look up the city's hobbies and recreation pages at: <http://www.hameenlinna.fi/Liikunta-ja-ulkoilu/>

Personal advice and various brochures are available in central Hämeenlinna at the city service point, **Kastelli, Raatihuoneenkatu 1, Hämeenlinna, tel. (03) 621 3370**. Advice and information outside the city centre can be obtained from local service centres located in libraries:

Hauho service point

Punnamäentie 18, 14700 Hauho
Tel. (03) 621 2039

Kalvola Library service point

Hollaajantie 3, 14500 Iittala
Tel. (03) 6211

Lammi Library joint service point

Linjatie 4, 16900 Lammi
Tel. (03) 621 3641

Renko Library service point

Rengonraitti 7, 14300 Renko
Tel. (03) 6211

Tuulos Library service point

Pannujärventie 10, 14820 Tuulos
Tel. (03) 6211

The service points also have a computer for public use. If needed, you can ask for guidance on how to use it.

You can also ask about exercise activities at:

Kulttuuriolohuone (The Cultural Living Room),
Multicultural work
ARX House, 1st floor, Keinusaarentie 1,
13200 Hämeenlinna.
tel. (03) 621 2560
Immigrant Info Service point Kastelli,
Raatihuoneenkatu 11,
13100 Hämeenlinna.
tel. 03 621 2557



HÄMEENLINNA
Hyvä arki asuu Hämeenlinnassa

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