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The association between objectively measured physical activity and longitudinal changes in body composition in adolescents; The Tromsø Study Fit Futures Cohort.

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|-------------------------------|--|
| Journal: | <i>BMJ Open</i> |
| Manuscript ID | bmjopen-2020-036991 |
| Article Type: | Original research |
| Date Submitted by the Author: | 23-Jan-2020 |
| Complete List of Authors: | Aars, Nils; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine; Nordlandssykehuset HF Beldo, Sigurd; UiT Arctic University of Norway, School of Sport Sciences Jacobsen, Bjarne; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Centre for Sami Health Research Horsch, Alexander; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Computer Science Morseth, Bente; UiT Arctic University of Norway, School of Sport Sciences; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine Emaus, Nina; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Health and Care Sciences Furberg, Anne-Sofie; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine; Universitetssykehuset Nord-Norge, Department of Microbiology and Infection Control Grimsgaard, Sameline; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine |
| Keywords: | EPIDEMIOLOGY, PUBLIC HEALTH, SPORTS MEDICINE |
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4 1 **The association between objectively measured physical activity and longitudinal**
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7 2 **changes in body composition in adolescents; The Tromsø Study Fit Futures Cohort.**
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For peer review only

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4 1 **Abstract**

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7 2 **Objectives:** Physical activity may play an important role in deterring the world-wide
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11 3 obesity epidemic. This study explored the effect of objectively measured physical
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14 4 activity on changes in body composition over two years of follow up in an adolescent
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18 5 population in Northern Norway.

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22 6 **Design:** A longitudinal study of adolescents (60.5% girls, mean age 16 at baseline)
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26 7 participating in the Fit Futures studies 1 (2010-11) and 2 (2012-13).
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30 8 **Setting:** Upper secondary high schools in neighboring municipalities of Tromsø and
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33 9 Balsfjord, northern Norway.
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37 10 **Participants:** Students participating in both studies and under the age of 18 at
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41 11 baseline, and with valid measurement of both exposure and outcomes. Physical
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44 12 activity was measured using a hip-worn accelerometer, and provided measurements
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48 13 of minutes per day spent in sedentary-, light and moderate-to-vigorous physical
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51 14 activity.
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55 15 **Primary- and secondary outcomes:** Change in objectively measured body mass index
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59 16 and waist circumference, and change in dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry measured
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1 fat mass index, lean mass index and appendicular lean mass index between baseline
2 and follow-up. Differences in measures of physical activity at baseline between sexes
3 was also compared.

4 **Results:** Boys had significantly higher physical activity volume ($p=0.01$) and spent
5 more minutes in moderate physical activity (MVPA) than girls (6.4 minutes, $p < 0.01$).

6 In multivariate regression analyses there was no significant association between
7 either measure of physical activity and changes in body composition in boys. In girls
8 there was a significant association between sedentary- and light activity and changes
9 in lean mass index ($p < 0.01$) and appendicular lean mass index ($p = 0.05$).

10 **Conclusions:** In this cohort of Norwegian adolescents, sedentary and light physical
11 activity were associated with changes in indices of lean mass in girls, but not boys.
12 Minutes spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity was not associated with
13 changes in either measure of body composition in neither boys nor girls.

14 **Strengths and limitations of this study**

- 15 • This study used objective measures of physical activity.

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4 1 • The study included objectively measured weight, height and waist
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7 2 circumference, and dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) measures of fat-
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10 3 and lean mass.
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14 4 • We were not able to fully adjust for nutrition and not for pubertal development.
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17 5 • The 431 participants with complete data from both baseline and follow-up
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20 6 represents 41% of those attending Fit Futures 1, indicating a degree of
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24 7 selection.
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1 Background

2 The potential of physical activity to prevent or treat a number of diseases has been
3 highlighted by the World Health Organization,[1] with inactivity accounting for 9% of
4 worldwide premature mortality.[2] Public health guidelines state that adolescents
5 should engage in Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA) \geq 60 minutes per
6 day,[3] but in 2011, only 50% of Norwegian 15 year olds met these
7 recommendations.[4] During adolescence there is a decline in both total physical
8 activity and MVPA,[5, 6] and many quit or reduce participation in organized sports.[7]
9 As of 2013, the prevalence of overweight and obesity (Body Mass Index (BMI) \geq 25
10 kg/m²) in Norwegians aged <20 years appear to be stabilizing at around 20% in boys
11 and 16% in girls - comparable to the Nordic countries.[8] This is lower than in the
12 United States (around 29% in boys and girls) [8], but the health effects for those
13 concerned may still be substantial over the long term.[9]
14 While physical activity has many positive health effects, its relationship with adiposity
15 is less clear and it has proven difficult to determine causality, direction and magnitude
16 of this relationship.[10] Cross-sectional research typically shows a strong negative

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4 1 association between physical activity and weight status,[11] but temporality cannot be
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7 2 ascertained using such study designs.[12] Longitudinal studies may ascertain if lower
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10 3 physical activity precedes excess weight gain, but a review found no evidence for a
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14 4 relationship between objectively measured physical activity and body fat gain in
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17 5 adolescents.[12] The lack of congruent results may in part be explained by the
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21 6 diverse and inadequate measures of both exposure and outcome used in research of
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24 7 the association between physical activity and body composition.[10, 11]
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28 8 Although many methods to measure physical activity are available, the most common
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32 9 and most feasible is self-report which commonly overestimates the total amount of
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36 10 physical activity.[13] Body composition is most commonly assessed using BMI, but
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39 11 BMI does not distinguish between fat- and muscle mass.[14] This has the potential to
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42 12 cause misclassification of overweight status and may attenuate a true association
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46 13 between physical activity and fat or muscle mass. Thus, in the current study, we
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49 14 sought to overcome these limitations by applying objective measures of both physical
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53 15 activity and specific measures of body composition. Our aim was to investigate the
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56 16 association between objectively measured physical activity and changes in five
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59 17 different measures of body composition (body mass index, waist circumference, fat

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4 1 mass index, lean mass index and appendicular lean mass index) over two years of
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7 2 follow-up in a cohort of Norwegian adolescents.
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10 11 3 12 13 14 15 4 **Methods and materials** 16

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19 5 We used data from the first and second Fit Futures cohort studies, performed in
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23 6 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, respectively. The first study invited all students (n=1,117)
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26 7 in their first year of upper secondary high school in the neighboring municipalities of
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30 8 Tromsø and Balsfjord in northern Norway, and had a participation of 93%. The study
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33 9 was repeated two years later, when the students were in their last year of upper
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37 10 secondary high school or had started as apprentices if they studied vocational
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40 11 subjects. The second study included 868 participants, giving an attendance of 77%.
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44 12 Altogether 735 adolescents attended both surveys. We excluded those aged ≥ 18
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47 13 years of age at baseline (n = 38). Some participants (n = 240) did not have valid
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51 14 measurements of physical activity at baseline, and were therefore not included in the
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54 15 study. We also excluded those with missing data on outcomes or variables included
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3 1 in the model (n = 26). Thus, 431 participants were included in the present study
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7 2 (60.3% girls).
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11 3 Students were granted leave of absence from school to attend an examination at the
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14 4 Clinical Research Unit at the University Hospital of Northern Norway in both surveys.
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18 5 The participants signed a letter of informed consent and attended a clinical
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21 6 examination where they also answered a questionnaire. Those under the age of 16
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25 7 brought a letter of consent signed by their parent or guardian.
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29 8 All measurements were performed by trained personnel. Height was measured to the
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32 9 nearest centimeter and weight to the nearest 100 gram, wearing light clothing and
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36 10 using an automatic electronic scale/stadiometer (Jenix DS 102 stadiometer, Dong
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40 11 Sahn Jenix, Seoul, Korea). Body mass index was calculated as body weight in
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43 12 kilograms/height in meters². Waist circumference was measured to the nearest 0.1
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47 13 centimeter at the height of the umbilicus. Fat and soft tissue lean mass in grams was
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50 14 estimated by whole-body dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) (GE Lunar
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54 15 Prodigy, Lunar Corporation, Madison, WI, USA). Fat mass comprises all fat, while
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57 16 soft tissue lean mass comprises all bodily tissue except fat and skeletal mass. These
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1 variables were used to calculate fat mass index (FMI, fat mass in kilograms/height in
2 meters²) and lean mass index (LMI, lean mass in kilograms/height in meters²). In
3 addition we calculated appendicular lean mass index (aLMI), which is the sum of soft
4 tissue lean mass in kilograms in all four extremities divided by height in meters².
5 Although most commonly used in studies of sarcopenia in elderly,[15] this variable is
6 arguably more specific to skeletal muscle mass than total lean mass index. The
7 ability of DXA to detect changes in appendicular lean mass in young adolescents is
8 good, and has been validated against Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).[16]
9 Physical activity was objectively measured using the ActiGraph GT3X accelerometer
10 (ActiGraph, LLC, Pensacola, USA). Participants were instructed to wear the device
11 on their right hip for seven consecutive days, and to remove it only when showering,
12 swimming or sleeping. The ActiLife software was used to initialize the accelerometer
13 and download data, which was imported into the Quality Control & Analysis Tool
14 (QCAT) for data processing. This software was developed by the research group of
15 professor Horsch in Matlab (The MathWorks, Inc., Massachusetts, USA) for
16 processing of accelerometer data. The accelerometer was set in raw data mode, with
17 a sampling frequency of 30 Hertz and with normal filtering epochs of 10 seconds.

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4 1 Data collection was initiated at 14:00 hours the first day, and concluded at 23:58 on
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7 2 the 8th day of measurement. We excluded data from the first day of measurement to
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10 3 reduce reactivity bias. The criteria for a valid measurement of physical activity was
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14 4 wear time of \geq four consecutive days, with \geq ten hours wear time per day. This has
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17 5 been demonstrated as representative of activity over a full week.[17] The triaxial
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21 6 algorithm developed by Hecht et al. was used to calculate wear time.[18] Minutes per
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24 7 day in sedentary (0 – 99 CPM), light (100 – 1951 CPM), moderate (1952 – 5723
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27 8 CPM) and vigorous (\geq 5724 CPM) physical activity was determined using the cut-offs
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31 9 developed by Freedson.[19] The device collected data in both uniaxial- and triaxial
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35 10 mode, but in the present study only the uniaxial data had been processed and
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38 11 therefore available. Studies have shown that uniaxial data recorded from the GT3X
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42 12 correlate well with uniaxial data recorded from previous ActiGraph models.[20]
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46 13 Baseline characteristics were presented as means with standard deviation (SD) or
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49 14 prevalence in percentages with number of subjects (n). Sex-specific difference in
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53 15 body composition between baseline and follow-up was tested using a paired samples
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56 16 t-test. The difference in physical activity between sexes was tested using a two-
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60 17 sample t-test, while sex differences in categories of minutes spent in MVPA was

1 tested using a chi-square test. Difference in linear trend across categories of minutes
2 spent in MVPA was tested using STATA's non-parametric test for trend, developed
3 by Cuzick.[21] Linear regression was used to determine the effect of baseline
4 physical activity on change in body composition, i.e., the change in BMI, waist
5 circumference, FMI, LMI and aLMI from the first to the second Fit Futures Study.
6 We used three different predictors of change in body composition, performing three
7 sets of analyses, with first; minutes per day spent in sedentary activity (Table 2)
8 second; minutes per day spent in light activity (Table 3) and third; minutes per day
9 spent in MVPA (Table 4). We divided the continuous variables sedentary- and light
10 activity by 30 and the continuous variable MVPA by 15 before inclusion in the
11 models, thus presenting the beta coefficient for change in outcome per 30 minutes of
12 sedentary- or light activity, or per 15 minutes of MVPA, with 95% confidence intervals
13 and a p-value. In model 1 we adjusted for the baseline measurement of the outcome.
14 In the adjusted models (models 2) we also included time between measurements
15 (mean: 730 days) and baseline values of device wear time, age in half years and
16 questionnaire data on screen time on weekdays (how many hours per weekday the
17 students spent in front of a computer or television - answers ranged from none to

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3 1 more than ten hours per weekday) and regularity of eating breakfast as an indicator
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7 2 of healthy meal patterns (answers ranging from rarely/never to every day). In the
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10 3 analyses of sedentary- and light activity we also adjusted for minutes spent in MVPA
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14 4 (models 3). In a subset of analyses (Appendix tables 1 and 2) we repeated the
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17 5 analyses performed in Table 2 and 3, adjusting also for self-reported pubertal status
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21 6 measured by either pubertal development scale (boys) or age at menarche (girls).
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24 7 These analyses included the 143 boys and 256 girls with valid data on pubertal
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28 8 status. In all the analyses, a p-value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.
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32 9 All analyses were performed sex-specific as decided a-priori, using STATA version
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36 10 14 (StataCorp. 2015. *Stata Statistical Software: Release 14*. College Station, TX:
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39 11 StataCorp LP.).
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43 12 **Patient and public involvement**

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47 13 No patients were involved in this study.
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51 14 **Results**

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55 15 Table 1 displays the participants' body composition measurements at baseline and
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59 16 follow-up, as well as physical activity measurements at baseline. Boys had a
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1 statistically significant increase in all measures of body composition. Girls had a
 2 statistically significant increase in body weight, BMI, fat mass in kg and FMI, but not
 3 in LMI and appendicular lean mass. Boys were statistically significantly more
 4 physically active than girls in some aspects, with higher mean counts per minute
 5 ($p=0.01$) and more minutes in MVPA ($p<0.01$). Time spent in sedentary- or light
 6 intensities did not differ significantly between sexes. Twenty-seven percent of boys
 7 and 17% of girls complied with the recommendations of 60 minutes per day
 8 Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA).

Table 1. Characteristics of the longitudinal cohort of the Tromsø Study; Fit Futures 2010-11 and 2012-13 [◇].

| | Boys (n = 171) | | Girls (n = 260) | |
|--|----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | FF1 | FF2 | FF1 | FF2 |
| Age (years) | 16.0 (0.4) | 18.2 (0.4) | 16.1 (0.4) | 18.1 (0.4) |
| Height (cm) | 177.1 (6.6) | 179.0 (6.5)* | 165.4 (6.6) | 166.1 (6.6)* |
| Body weight (kg) | 69.0 (12.3) | 74.3 (13.0)* | 60.8 (10.8) | 63.4 (11.6)* |
| Body mass index (BMI kg/m ²) | 22.0 (3.5) | 23.2 (3.7)* | 22.2 (3.7) | 23.0 (4.0)* |
| Waist circumference (cm) | 81.0 (10.3) | 83.9 (10.9)* | 76.7 (9.8) | 78.0 (10.8)* |
| Total Body Fat Mass (kg) | 13.3 (9.4) | 15.6 (10.4)* | 19.9 (8.3) | 21.7 (9.1)* |
| Fat Mass Index (FMI kg/m ²) | 4.2 (3.0) | 4.9 (3.2)* | 7.3 (3.0) | 7.9 (3.3)* |
| Total Body Lean Mass (kg) | 54.0 (6.5) | 56.4 (6.9)* | 38.9 (4.5) | 39.3 (4.7)* |
| Lean Mass Index (LMI kg/m ²) | 17.2 (1.6) | 17.6 (1.8)* | 14.2 (1.3) | 14.2 (1.4) |
| Appendicular Lean Mass (kg) | 25.3 (3.4) | 26.2 (3.6)* | 17.4 (2.3) | 17.4 (2.3) |
| Appendicular Lean Mass Index (aLMI kg/m ²) | 8.1 (0.9) | 8.2 (0.9)* | 6.4 (0.7) | 6.3 (0.7)* |

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|--|------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| Accelerometer variables | | | | |
| Wear time per valid day | 14.2 (1.2) | | 14.1 (1.1) | |
| Counts per minute | 362.9 (137.5) | | 334.0 (111.9) [∞] | |
| Minutes per day in different intensities | | | | |
| Sedentary (cpm 0 – 99) | 573.3 (77.3) | | 565.3 (63.2) | |
| Light (cpm 100 – 1951) | 230.5 (58.8) | | 236.2 (48.4) | |
| Moderate (cpm 1952 – 5723) | 45.8 (20.6) | | 40.2 (17.7) [∞] | |
| Vigorous (cpm ≥ 5724) | 3.7 (5.8) | | 2.9 (4.1) [∞] | |
| MVPA [#] (cpm ≥ 1952) | 49.5 (23.4) | | 43.1 (19.6) [∞] | |
| Proportion of minutes in MVPA/day | | | | |
| 0 – 29 minutes | 20.5 (35) | | 26.5 (69) | |
| 30 – 59 minutes | 52.6 (90) | | 56.2 (146) | |
| ≥ 60 minutes | 26.9 (46) | | 17.3 (45) [§] | |

1 ∎: Values are means with standard deviation (SD) or prevalence in percentages (n). BMI: body weight
 2 in kg/height in meters², FMI: fat mass in kg/height in meters², LMI: lean mass in kg/height in meters²,
 3 aLMI: appendicular lean mass in kg/height in meters². Data on physical activity in FF2 was not
 4 available.

5 *: Significantly different from baseline measurement ($p < 0.05$)

6 ∞: Significantly different from boys (mean).

7 #: MVPA: moderate to vigorous physical activity, using cut-offs suggested by Freedson.[19]

8 §: significantly different linear trend from boys ($p < 0.05$)

9 Table 2 displays the association between minutes spent in sedentary activity at
 10 baseline and changes in body composition between baseline and follow-up. There
 11 was no association between sedentary activity and changes in BMI, waist
 12 circumference and FMI in neither boys nor girls. In girls, but not in boys, there was a

- 1 significant association between minutes spent in sedentary activity at baseline and
 2 changes in both LMI ($p < 0.01$) and aLMI ($p = 0.02$). Adjustment for covariates and
 3 MVPA slightly attenuated the association with aLMI ($p = 0.05$).

Table 2. Association between minutes per day spent in sedentary activity (CPM 0 – 99) at baseline and changes in body composition#.

| | Boys (n = 171) | | | Girls (n = 260) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.02 | -0.13, 0.09 | 0.76 | -0.05 | -0.15, 0.05 | 0.33 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.17, 0.12 | 0.75 | -0.11 | -0.24, 0.03 | 0.12 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.17, 0.20 | 0.88 | -0.11 | -0.27, 0.05 | 0.16 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.17 | -0.21, 0.56 | 0.37 | -0.01 | -0.41, 0.40 | 0.96 |
| Model 2 | 0.27 | -0.24, 0.78 | 0.30 | -0.33 | -0.87, 0.20 | 0.22 |
| Model 3 | 0.42 | -0.23, 1.07 | 0.20 | -0.44 | -1.06, 0.18 | 0.17 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.10, 0.10 | 0.99 | -0.01 | -0.11, 0.08 | 0.83 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.16, 0.11 | 0.74 | -0.06 | -0.18, 0.07 | 0.36 |
| Model 3 | 0.00 | -0.17, 0.17 | 0.98 | -0.05 | -0.20, 0.09 | 0.48 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.05, 0.05 | 0.88 | -0.06 | -0.09, -0.02 | <0.01 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.06, 0.07 | 0.77 | -0.07 | -0.12, -0.02 | <0.01 |
| Model 3 | 0.02 | -0.06, 0.10 | 0.63 | -0.08 | -0.13, -0.03 | <0.01 |

| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
|---------------|------|-------------|------|-------|------------------|------|
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.03, 0.03 | 0.84 | -0.02 | -0.04, - 0.00 | 0.02 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.03, 0.04 | 0.81 | -0.03 | -0.05, - 0.01 | 0.02 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.04, 0.05 | 0.71 | -0.03 | -0.06, 0.00 | 0.05 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in sedentary activity and difference in BMI (kg/m^2), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m^2), LMI (lean mass in kg/m^2) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m^2) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in sedentary activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity ($\text{CPM} \geq 1952$).

Table 3 displays the association between minutes spent in light activity at baseline and changes in body composition between baseline and follow-up. There was no association between the exposure and either outcome in boys. In girls there was some evidence to suggest an association with change in waist circumference ($p = 0.05$), but the association was attenuated after adjustments ($p = 0.17$). Minutes spent in light physical activity was also associated with changes in LMI ($p < 0.01$ (Models 2 and 3)) and aLMI ($p = 0.04$ (Model 2) and 0.05 (Model 3)).

Table 3. Association between minutes per day spent in light activity (CPM 100 – 1951) at baseline and changes in body composition#.

| | Boys (n = 171) | | | Girls (n = 260) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.04 | -0.11, 0.18 | 0.60 | 0.05 | -0.09, 0.19 | 0.47 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.17, 0.18 | 0.93 | 0.12 | -0.04, 0.27 | 0.13 |
| Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.20, 0.17 | 0.88 | 0.11 | -0.05, 0.27 | 0.16 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.11 | -0.62, 0.40 | 0.68 | 0.54 | 0.01, 1.07 | 0.05 |
| Model 2 | -0.38 | -1.00, 0.23 | 0.22 | 0.43 | -0.19, 1.05 | 0.17 |
| Model 3 | -0.42 | -1.07, 0.23 | 0.20 | 0.44 | -0.19, 1.06 | 0.17 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.03 | -0.10, 0.16 | 0.67 | 0.02 | -0.10, 0.15 | 0.71 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.15, 0.18 | 0.87 | 0.06 | -0.09, 0.20 | 0.43 |
| Model 3 | -0.00 | -0.17, 0.17 | 0.98 | 0.05 | -0.09, 0.20 | 0.49 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.07, 0.06 | 0.84 | 0.04 | -0.01, 0.09 | 0.08 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.09, 0.06 | 0.67 | 0.08 | 0.03, 0.13 | <0.01 |
| Model 3 | -0.02 | -0.10, 0.06 | 0.63 | 0.08 | 0.03, 0.13 | <0.01 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---------|-------|----------------|------|------|-------------|------|
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.03, 0.04 | 0.87 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.04 | 0.16 |
| Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.05, 0.04 | 0.73 | 0.03 | 0.00, 0.06 | 0.04 |
| Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.05, 0.04 | 0.70 | 0.03 | -0.00, 0.06 | 0.05 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in light activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in light activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM \geq 1952).

Table 4 displays the association between minutes in MVPA at baseline and changes in body composition between baseline and follow-up. There was no association between time spent in MVPA and changes in either measure of body composition for either sex.

Table 4. Association between minutes per day spent in MVPA (CPM \geq 1952) at baseline and changes in body composition#.

| | Boys (n = 171) | | | Girls (n = 260) | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.11 | -0.07, 0.30 | 0.22 | -0.00 | -0.17, 0.16 | 0.97 |
| Model 2 | 0.08 | -0.13, 0.29 | 0.47 | 0.07 | -0.11, 0.25 | 0.47 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|-------------|------|-------|-------------|------|--|
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.25 | -0.39, 0.89 | 0.44 | -0.03 | -0.68, 0.63 | 0.94 | |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.75, 0.71 | 0.95 | 0.02 | -0.70, 0.74 | 0.96 | |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.02 | -0.15, 0.19 | 0.83 | -0.01 | -0.17, 0.14 | 0.86 | |
| Model 2 | 0.06 | -0.14, 0.25 | 0.57 | 0.05 | -0.12, 0.22 | 0.54 | |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.07 | -0.02, 0.15 | 0.11 | 0.03 | -0.03, 0.09 | 0.33 | |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.08, 0.10 | 0.86 | 0.02 | -0.04, 0.09 | 0.44 | |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.03 | -0.02, 0.08 | 0.19 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.13 | |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.05, 0.05 | 0.92 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.18 | |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 15 minutes increase in MVPA. Both models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time.

In Appendix Table 1-3, the analyses which gave the results displayed in Tables 2-4 were repeated with adjustment for pubertal development in those with complete data.

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4 1 Overall, adjustment for pubertal development had no substantial impact on an
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7 2 association between sedentary, light and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity and
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10 3 changes in body composition for either sex in complete case analyses. However, the
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14 4 association between minutes spent in sedentary activity- and light activity and
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17 5 changes in appendicular lean mass index was no longer significant for girls in Model
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21 6 3. The point estimates did not differ from those from analyses without adjustments for
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25 7 pubertal development, however.
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28 8 **Discussion**

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32 9 In this longitudinal population-based study of Norwegian adolescents there were no
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36 10 associations between objectively measured physical activity and change in BMI,
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40 11 waist circumference and FMI for either sex at two years of follow up. Both boys and
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43 12 girls had statistically significant increases in the measures of body composition
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46 13 (except lean mass index and appendicular lean mass in girls). Objectively measured
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50 14 physical activity did not predict changes in boys. In girls there was a weak
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54 15 association between minutes spent in sedentary- and light physical activity and
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57 16 changes in indices of lean mass.
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4 1 Although the magnitude of change differed, both sexes experienced increases in
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7 2 measures of body composition. In boys, FMI increased by 0.7 units, (+ 16.7%),
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10 3 whereas LMI increased by 0.4 units (+ 2.3 %) from baseline. Similar relative
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14 4 changes were observed in girls, (FMI +8.2 %) and (LMI + 0.7%), indicating that FMI
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17 5 increases more than LMI during late adolescence. We observed statistically
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21 6 significant differences in minutes spent in moderate ($p < 0.01$) and vigorous ($p =$
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24 7 0.04) intensity between boys and girls, but time spent in other intensity levels did not
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28 8 differ. Discrepancies in physical activity by sex is consistent with previous
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31 9 research.[22, 23] Differences in changes in body composition by sex are biologically
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35 10 determined during adolescence, with sex hormones resulting in fat mass accrual in
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38 11 girls and lean mass accrual in boys.[24, 25] The observation that sedentary- and light
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42 12 activity predicted changes in indices of lean mass in girls, but not boys, may be
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45 13 explained by these expected biological differences. Physical activity may have
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49 14 somewhat greater potential to influence lean mass accrual in girls than in boys during
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52 15 this period, as fat-free mass is relatively stable in girls in late adolescence whereas it
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56 16 increases up to 18 years of age in boys.[26]
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4 1 In the present study sedentary- and light activity had opposing effects on lean mass
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7 2 in girls. In a study using iso-temporal substitution models, positive prospective effects
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10 3 on fat mass was found when substituting 30 minutes of sedentary activity with MVPA,
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14 4 but not when substituted with light activity.[27] We did not use such modelling
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17 5 techniques, but it is reasonable that sedentary- and light physical activity have
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21 6 opposing effects on lean mass.[28] Sedentary- and light activity was correlated ($r = -$
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24 7 0.39), but minutes spent in different intensity levels are not directly a function of each
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28 8 other as wear time in the participants varies between individuals. Based on wear time
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31 9 inclusion criteria, the theoretical time span for wear time lies between 10 and 24
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35 10 hours. Thus, minutes spent in sedentary activity may not be deduced from the sum of
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39 11 minutes spent in other intensities and vice versa, but it is plausible that higher wear
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43 12 time results in more sedentary time. This was evident in an exploratory analyses on
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46 13 the same cohort (not included in the present study), where higher wear time was
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49 14 significantly associated with more sedentary activity and less light activity ($p < 0.01$).
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52 15 Adjusting for wear time (Models 2) did not change the associations substantially for
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56 16 sedentary activity (Table 2), but had some effect on the associations with light
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59 17 physical activity (Table 3). Because of the inverse relationship between minutes
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4 1 spent sedentary and in light activity, it is not possible to determine whether it is
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7 2 sedentary time or light activity-time that is associated with change in LMI. The
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10 3 practical consequences are nevertheless that being active increases lean mass in
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14 4 girls.

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18 5 When interpreting results, we must acknowledge the limitations of DXA in the
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21 6 estimation of lean mass, which can be affected by both biological factors and
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25 7 measurement error.[29] Because the relative increase in lean mass was small, only
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28 8 slight differences in for instance individual hydration status at the two time-points may
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32 9 influence estimates and thus the association.

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36 10 There was no associations between objectively measured physical activity and
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39 11 change in BMI, waist circumference and FMI for either sex. It may be that the
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43 12 negative effects of less physical activity have not yet had time to manifest themselves
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47 13 in a population still undergoing physiological changes as a result of natural growth,
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50 14 especially considering the relatively short follow-up. Our results are in line with a
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54 15 systematic review suggesting that objectively measured PA is not an important
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57 16 predictor of change in adiposity in children, adolescents and adults.[12] In contrast,
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4 1 another systematic review found a protective effect of physical activity on adiposity in
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7 2 adolescents.[10] There were however several methodological weaknesses in the
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10 3 included studies of this review, particularly regarding the validity of the measurement
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14 4 of both physical activity and body composition. In contrast, our study employed
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17 5 robust measures of both these exposures- and outcomes, a combination which is
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21 6 lacking in much past research on the association between the two.[10-12]
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25 7 In adolescents, physical activity is influenced by friends, family and other social
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28 8 support,[30] and is less stable than in adults.[31-33] Follow-up data on objectively
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32 9 measured physical activity was not available in the present study. Observations from
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36 10 the same cohort showed that change in self-reported physical activity between
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39 11 baseline and follow-up was a stronger predictor of change in body composition than
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42 12 self-reported baseline physical activity[34]. Other studies have suggested that
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46 13 change in activity during follow-up might obscure an association with body
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49 14 composition.[35, 36] In a subset of analyses, one of four in both the highest and
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53 15 lowest categories of MVPA at baseline reported decreased (high MVPA at baseline)
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56 16 and increased (low MVPA at baseline) self-reported physical activity at follow up,
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60 17 thus indicating that physical activity in adolescents is fluctuant. These two

1 observations, assuming that measurement of both MVPA and self-reported hours per
2 week of physical activity are representative of actual physical activity behavior at the
3 time, work in opposing directions with regard to the effect of physical activity on
4 changes in adiposity. This phenomenon is known as regression dilution bias and
5 may flatten the regression slope and cause an underestimate of the actual
6 association.[37] With an annual decline in total physical activity of 7% in adolescents,
7 researchers must consider the possibility that measured physical activity has a “best
8 before-date”. It remains questionable whether baseline measurements of a fluctuant
9 behavior such as physical activity is representative of actual habits during the period
10 of follow-up. It may be that the measurement represents current, but not future (or
11 even prior) habits.[12, 38] This has implications for longitudinal studies of the
12 relationship between physical activity and body composition.[36]

14 Strengths and limitations

15 The primary strength of this study are objective measures of both exposure and
16 outcome, and the use of tissue-specific measures of body composition. Some

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4 1 limitations have to be considered. As the Fit Futures study did not include a validated
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7 2 food frequency questionnaire or similar instrument for nutritional assessment, we
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10 3 were not able to fully adjust for the potential confounding effects of nutrition and
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14 4 changes in food habits of adolescents on changes in body composition.

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17 5 Accelerometer-measured physical activity has limitations. A hip worn accelerometer
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20 6 such as the ActiGraph GT3X is not able to correctly measure cycling and
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24 7 swimming.[39] Furthermore, accelerometers are dependent on user-compliance, and
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27 8 non-wear time therefore affects the amount of activity which is actually measured.

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31 9 Subjective judgement determines data management and analyses, e.g. the decision
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35 10 to exclude participants with wear time < 10 hours and < 4 consecutive days, is a
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38 11 trade-off between quality of data and the number of participants with valid data. We
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42 12 lacked complete data on physical activity and adjustment variables in 212
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45 13 participants, but changes in BMI, waist circumference, FMI, LMI (except in girls, $p =$
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48 14 0.04) and aLMI were not significantly different between those with- and without
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52 15 complete exposure data. Lastly, although longitudinal observational studies are
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56 16 superior to cross-sectional studies to examine causation, they are also susceptible to
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4 1 directional bias, since participants may avoid physical activity because they are
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7 2 overweight, and not be overweight because they are inactive.[40, 41]
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15 4 **Conclusion**

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19 5 Objectively measured physical activity was not significantly associated with change in
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23 6 objectively measured BMI, waist circumference or FMI after two years in this cohort
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26 7 of Norwegian adolescents. There was evidence to suggest that sedentary- and light
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30 8 activity affected indices of lean mass in girls, but not boys.
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1 Acknowledgements

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7
8 2 The authors thank the participants in the study, as well as the staff at the Clinical
9
10
11 3 Research Unit at the University Hospital of North Norway for data collection and
12
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14 4 clinical measurements. We also thank the Fit Futures Steering Committee in both
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18 5 studies.
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22 Footnotes

23 Contributors

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30 8 NAA wrote the draft of the manuscript, which was revised and edited by all authors
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34 9 several times during the process. SB produced the accelerometer variables in close
35
36
37
38 10 collaboration with AH, who wrote the software which converted raw accelerometer
39
40
41 11 data to variables. BKJ contributed to the statistical analyses, and BM specifically
42
43
44
45 12 contributed to the discussion of physical activity. NE and ASF were among the
46
47
48 13 principal investigators in FF1 and FF2 and contributed significantly to the acquisition
49
50
51 14 of data. SG formulated the research question and conceived the study. All authors
52
53
54
55 15 have substantially contributed to the study, and have read and approved the final
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58 16 manuscript.
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1
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4 1 Funding
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8 2 This particular manuscript has not received any specific funding, while the Fit Futures
9
10
11 3 surveys were funded by, *inter alia*, the Northern Norway Regional Health Authority
12
13
14 4 and UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø, the National Public Health
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18 5 Institute, Oslo, and the Troms County Council.
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22 6 Competing interests
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26 7 The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
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30 8 Consent for publication
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34 9 Not applicable
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39 10 Ethics approval
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43 11 This study was approved by The Regional Committee of Medical and Health
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46 12 Research Ethics (2014/1666/REK nord).
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50 13 Data availability statement
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- 1 The data that support the findings of this study are available from UiT – The Arctic
- 2 University of Norway. Restrictions apply to the availability of these data, which were
- 3 used under license for the current study, and are thus not publicly available.

For peer review only

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1. Association between minutes per day spent in sedentary activity (CPM 0 – 99) at baseline and changes in body composition, adjusted for puberty#.

| | Boys (n = 143) | | | Girls (n = 256) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.02 | -0.14, 0.09 | 0.70 | -0.05 | -0.15, 0.05 | 0.32 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.17, 0.13 | 0.82 | -0.10 | -0.24, 0.03 | 0.14 |
| Model 3 | 0.02 | -0.18, 0.22 | 0.85 | -0.10 | -0.26, 0.06 | 0.20 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.12 | -0.27, 0.51 | 0.55 | -0.01 | -0.42, 0.40 | 0.96 |
| Model 2 | 0.24 | -0.28, 0.76 | 0.37 | -0.38 | -0.92, 0.16 | 0.16 |
| Model 3 | 0.38 | -0.30, 1.05 | 0.27 | -0.52 | -1.15, 0.11 | 0.10 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.12, 0.09 | 0.84 | -0.01 | -0.11, 0.08 | 0.80 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.16, 0.13 | 0.83 | -0.06 | -0.18, 0.07 | 0.36 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.18, 0.19 | 0.96 | -0.05 | -0.20, 0.10 | 0.49 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.05, 0.06 | 0.90 | -0.06 | -0.09, -0.02 | < 0.01 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.07, 0.08 | 0.90 | -0.07 | -0.11, -0.02 | < 0.01 |
| Model 3 | 0.02 | -0.07, 0.10 | 0.73 | -0.07 | -0.13, -0.02 | < 0.01 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.00 | -0.03, 0.03 | 0.91 | -0.02 | -0.04, 0.00 | 0.02 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------|------|-------------|------|-------|------------------|------|
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.04, 0.04 | 0.97 | -0.03 | -0.05, - 0.00 | 0.03 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.04, 0.06 | 0.65 | -0.03 | -0.05, 0.00 | 0.08 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in sedentary activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in sedentary activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of pubertal development (pds (boys) and age at menarche (girls)), screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM ≥ 1952).

Appendix Table 2. Association between minutes per day spent in light activity (CPM 100 – 1951) at baseline and changes in body composition, adjusted for puberty#.

| | Boys (n = 143) | | | Girls (n = 256) | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.05 | -0.10, 0.20 | 0.53 | 0.04 | -0.10, 0.18 | 0.56 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.18, 0.19 | 0.98 | 0.11 | -0.05, 0.27 | 0.17 |
| Model 3 | -0.02 | -0.22, 0.18 | 0.85 | 0.10 | -0.06, 0.26 | 0.20 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.53, 0.51 | 0.97 | 0.53 | -0.01, 1.06 | 0.05 |
| Model 2 | -0.34 | -0.97, 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.51 | -0.11, 1.13 | 0.11 |
| Model 3 | -0.38 | -1.05, 0.30 | 0.27 | 0.52 | -0.11, 1.15 | 0.11 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.05 | -0.09, 0.18 | 0.51 | 0.02 | -0.11, 0.14 | 0.80 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.16, 0.18 | 0.93 | 0.06 | -0.09, 0.20 | 0.43 |
| Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.19, 0.18 | 0.96 | 0.05 | -0.10, 0.20 | 0.49 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.08, 0.06 | 0.84 | 0.04 | -0.01, 0.09 | 0.09 |
| Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.10, 0.07 | 0.80 | 0.08 | 0.02, 0.13 | < 0.01 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|-------|----------------|------|------|-------------|--------|
| | Model 3 | -0.02 | -0.10, 0.07 | 0.73 | 0.07 | 0.02, 0.13 | < 0.01 |
| | Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| | Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.04, 0.04 | 0.93 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.04 | 0.19 |
| | Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.05, 0.04 | 0.78 | 0.03 | -0.00, 0.06 | 0.06 |
| | Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.06, 0.04 | 0.65 | 0.03 | -0.00, 0.05 | 0.08 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in light activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in light activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of pubertal development (pds (boys) and age at menarche (girls)), screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM \geq 1952).

Appendix Table 3. Association between minutes per day spent in MVPA (CPM \geq 1952) at baseline and changes in body composition, adjusted for puberty[#].

| | Boys (n = 143) | | | Girls (n = 256) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.11 | -0.08, 0.31 | 0.24 | -0.01 | -0.17, 0.16 | 0.95 |
| Model 2 | 0.06 | -0.15, 0.28 | 0.55 | 0.07 | -0.12, 0.25 | 0.48 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.28 | -0.38, 0.95 | 0.40 | -0.03 | -0.69, 0.63 | 0.94 |
| Model 2 | -0.03 | -0.77, 0.72 | 0.95 | -0.00 | -0.72, 0.72 | 0.99 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.02 | -0.16, 0.20 | 0.80 | -0.01 | -0.17, 0.14 | 0.86 |
| Model 2 | 0.04 | -0.16, 0.24 | 0.68 | 0.05 | -0.12, 0.22 | 0.55 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.08 | -0.02, 0.17 | 0.11 | 0.03 | -0.03, 0.09 | 0.35 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.09, 0.11 | 0.81 | 0.02 | -0.04, 0.09 | 0.49 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.05 | -0.01, 0.10 | 0.09 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.14 |
| Model 2 | 0.02 | -0.04, 0.07 | 0.60 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.20 |

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3 #: The table displays the association between minutes spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity
4 (MVPA) and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass
5 in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit
6 Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 15 minutes increase in MVPA. Both
7 models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between
8 measurements and baseline values of pubertal development (pds (boys) and age at menarche (girls)),
9 screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and
10 device wear time.
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STROBE statement for submitted manuscript entitled “*The association between objectively measured physical activity and longitudinal changes in body composition in adolescents; The Tromsø Study Fit Futures Cohort.*”

| | Item No | Recommendation |
|---------------------------|----------------|---|
| Title and abstract | 1 | (a) P. 1, lines 1-2. (b) P. 3, lines 1-23 |
| Introduction | | |
| Background/rationale | 2 | P. 5, lines 1-25 and P. 6, lines 1-3. |
| Objectives | 3 | P. 6, lines 3-8. |
| Methods | | |
| Study design | 4 | P. 6, lines 11-12. |
| Setting | 5 | P. 6, lines 12-17 and P. 6, lines 22-23. |
| Participants | 6 | (a) P. 6, lines 18-21. |
| Variables | 7 | P. 8, lines 7-10, lines 15-25. P. 9, lines 1-14. |
| Data sources/ measurement | 8* | P. 6, lines 22-24. P. 7, lines 3-25. P. 8, lines 1-11. |
| Bias | 9 | P. 9, lines 10-14. |
| Study size | 10 | P. 6, lines 17-21. |
| Quantitative variables | 11 | P. 9, lines 1-3. |
| Statistical methods | 12 | (a) P. 8, lines 14-25 and P. 9, lines 1-16. (b) P. 9, lines 10-15. (c) P. 6, lines 17-21. (e) P. 17, lines 22-25 |
| Results | | |
| Participants | 13* | (a) P. 6, lines 12-21. (b) See (a). |
| Descriptive data | 14* | (a) See Table 1. (b) See 13a (c) See Table 1. |
| Outcome data | 15* | See Table 1. |
| Main results | 16 | (a) See Tables and P. 9, lines 4-15. (b) See Table 1. |
| Other analyses | 17 | P. 9, lines 11-15, and P. 16, lines 19-22. P. 17, lines 22-25. |
| Discussion | | |
| Key results | 18 | P. 14, lines 4-10. |
| Limitations | 19 | P. 15, lines 20-24. P. 17, lines 2-8 and 11-25. P. 18, lines 1-3. |
| Interpretation | 20 | P. 14, lines 11 – 24. P. 15, 1-24. P. 16, lines 1-25. P. 17, lines 1-8. |
| Generalisability | 21 | |
| Other information | | |
| Funding | 22 | P. 19, lines 15-19. |

BMJ Open

The association between objectively measured physical activity and longitudinal changes in body composition in adolescents; The Tromsø Study Fit Futures Cohort.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Journal: | <i>BMJ Open</i> |
| Manuscript ID | bmjopen-2020-036991.R1 |
| Article Type: | Original research |
| Date Submitted by the Author: | 29-Apr-2020 |
| Complete List of Authors: | Aars, Nils; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine; Nordlandssykehuset HF Beldo, Sigurd; UiT Arctic University of Norway, School of Sport Sciences Jacobsen, Bjarne; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Centre for Sami Health Research Horsch, Alexander; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Computer Science Morseth, Bente; UiT Arctic University of Norway, School of Sport Sciences; UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine Emaus, Nina; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Health and Care Sciences Furberg, Anne-Sofie; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine; Universitetssykehuset Nord-Norge, Department of Microbiology and Infection Control Grimsgaard, Sameline; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine |
| Primary Subject Heading: | Public health |
| Secondary Subject Heading: | Sports and exercise medicine, Epidemiology |
| Keywords: | EPIDEMIOLOGY, PUBLIC HEALTH, SPORTS MEDICINE |
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4 1 **The association between objectively measured physical activity and longitudinal**
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7 2 **changes in body composition in adolescents; The Tromsø Study Fit Futures Cohort.**
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For peer review only

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4 1 **Abstract**

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7 2 **Objectives:** Physical activity may play an important role in deterring the world-wide
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11 3 obesity epidemic. This study aimed to determine if objectively measured physical
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14 4 activity in first year of upper secondary high school predicted changes in body
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18 5 composition over two years of follow up in a cohort of Norwegian adolescents (n
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21 6 =431).

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25 7 **Design:** A longitudinal study of adolescents (60.3% girls, mean age 16 (SD 0.4) at
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29 8 baseline) participating in the Fit Futures studies 1 (2010-11) and 2 (2012-13).

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33 9 **Setting:** All eight upper secondary high schools in neighbouring municipalities of
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37 10 Tromsø and Balsfjord, Northern Norway.

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41 11 **Participants:** Students participating in both studies and under the age of 18 at
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44 12 baseline, and with valid measurement of physical activity at baseline and body
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48 13 composition at both time points.

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52 14 **Primary- and secondary outcomes:** Change in objectively measured body mass index
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55 15 and waist circumference, and change in dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry measured
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59 16 fat mass index, lean mass index and appendicular lean mass index between baseline
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1 and follow-up. Differences in physical activity at baseline between sexes was also
2 compared.

3 **Results:** At baseline, boys had significantly higher physical activity volume ($p=0.01$)
4 and spent on average 6.4 (95% CI: 2.1, 10.6) more minutes in moderate-to-vigorous
5 physical activity (MVPA) than girls ($p < 0.01$). In multivariate regression analyses
6 there was no significant association between either measure of baseline physical
7 activity and changes in body composition parameters in boys. In girls there was a
8 significant association between sedentary- and light activity and changes in lean
9 mass index ($p < 0.01$) and appendicular lean mass index ($p = 0.05$).

10 **Conclusions:** In this cohort of Norwegian adolescents, sedentary and light physical
11 activity were associated with changes in indices of lean mass in girls, but not boys.
12 Minutes spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity was not associated with
13 changes in either measure of body composition in either sex.

14 **Strengths and limitations of this study**

- 15 • This study used objective measures of physical activity.

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4 1 • The study included objectively measured weight, height and waist
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7 2 circumference, and dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) measures of fat-
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10 3 and lean mass.
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14 4 • We were not able to fully adjust for nutrition and not for pubertal development.
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17 5 • The 431 participants with complete data from both baseline and follow-up
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20 6 represents 41% of those attending Fit Futures 1, indicating a degree of
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24 7 selection.
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1 Background

2 The potential of physical activity to prevent or treat a number of diseases has been
3 highlighted by the World Health Organization,[1] with inactivity accounting for 9% of
4 worldwide premature mortality.[2] Public health guidelines state that adolescents
5 should engage in Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA) \geq 60 minutes per
6 day,[3] but in 2011, only 50% of Norwegian 15 year olds met these
7 recommendations.[4] During adolescence there is a decline in both total physical
8 activity and MVPA,[5, 6] and many quit or reduce participation in organized sports.[7]
9 As of 2013, the prevalence of overweight and obesity (Body Mass Index (BMI) \geq 25
10 kg/m²) in Norwegians aged <20 years appear to be stabilizing at around 20% in boys
11 and 16% in girls - comparable to the Nordic countries.[8] This is lower than in the
12 United States (around 29% in boys and girls) [8], but the health effects for those
13 concerned may still be substantial over the long term.[9]
14 While physical activity has many positive health effects, its relationship with adiposity
15 is less clear and it has proven difficult to determine causality, direction and magnitude
16 of this relationship.[10] Cross-sectional research typically shows a strong inverse

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4 1 association between physical activity and weight status,[11] but temporality cannot be
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7 2 ascertained using such study designs.[12] Longitudinal studies may ascertain if lower
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10 3 physical activity precedes excess weight gain, but a review found no evidence for a
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14 4 relationship between objectively measured physical activity and body fat gain in
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17 5 adolescents.[12] The lack of congruent results may in part be explained by the
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21 6 diverse and inadequate measures of both exposure and outcome used in research of
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24 7 the association between physical activity and body composition.[10, 11]
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28 8 Although many methods to measure physical activity are available, the most common
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32 9 and most feasible is self-report which commonly overestimates the total amount of
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36 10 physical activity.[13] Body composition is most commonly assessed using BMI, but
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39 11 BMI does not distinguish between fat- and muscle mass.[14] This has the potential to
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43 12 cause misclassification of overweight status and may attenuate a true association
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46 13 between physical activity and fat or muscle mass. Thus, in the current study, we
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50 14 sought to overcome these limitations by applying objective measures of both physical
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53 15 activity and specific measures of body composition. Our aim was to investigate the
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57 16 association between objectively measured physical activity and changes in five
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60 17 different measures of body composition (body mass index, waist circumference, fat

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4 1 mass index, lean mass index and appendicular lean mass index) over two years of
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7 2 follow-up in a cohort of Norwegian adolescents.
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15 4 **Methods and materials**

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19 5 We used data from the first and second Fit Futures cohort studies, performed in
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23 6 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, respectively. The first study invited all students (n=1,117)
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26 7 in their first year of upper secondary high school in the neighbouring municipalities of
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28
29
30 8 Tromsø and Balsfjord in Northern Norway, and had a participation of 93%. The study
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34 9 was repeated two years later, when the students were in their last year of upper
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37 10 secondary high school or had started as apprentices if they studied vocational
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41 11 subjects. The second study included 868 participants, giving an attendance of 77%.
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44 12 All eight upper secondary high schools in the two municipalities participated in both
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47 13 studies. Altogether 735 adolescents attended both surveys. For the present study we
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51 14 excluded those aged ≥ 18 years of age at baseline (n = 38). Some participants (n =
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54 15 240) did not have valid measurements of physical activity at baseline, and were
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58 16 therefore not included in the study. We also excluded those with missing data on
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4 1 change in body composition parameters or variables included in the model (n = 26).
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7 2 Thus, 431 participants were included in the present study (60.3% girls).
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11 3 Students were granted leave of absence from school to attend an examination at the
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14 4 Clinical Research Unit at the University Hospital of Northern Norway in both surveys.
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18 5 The participants attended a clinical examination where they also completed a
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21 6 questionnaire, which included questions on lifestyle, screen time, dietary habits etc.
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25 7 The participants signed a letter of informed consent, and those under the age of 16
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28 8 brought a letter of consent signed by their parent or guardian.
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33 9 All measurements were performed by trained personnel. Height was measured to the
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36 10 nearest centimeter and weight to the nearest 100 gram, wearing light clothing and
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40 11 using an automatic electronic scale/stadiometer (Jenix DS 102 stadiometer, Dong
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42
43 12 Sahn Jenix, Seoul, Korea). Body mass index was calculated as body weight in
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46 13 kilograms/height in meters². Waist circumference was measured to the nearest 0.1
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50 14 centimeter at the height of the umbilicus. Fat and soft tissue lean mass in grams was
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54 15 estimated by whole-body dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) (GE Lunar
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56
57 16 Prodigy, Lunar Corporation, Madison, WI, USA). Fat mass comprises all fat, while
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4 1 soft tissue lean mass comprises all bodily tissue except fat and skeletal mass. These
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7 2 variables were used to calculate fat mass index (FMI, fat mass in kilograms/height in
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10 3 meters²) and lean mass index (LMI, lean mass in kilograms/height in meters²). In
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14 4 addition we calculated appendicular lean mass index (aLMI), which is the sum of soft
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17 5 tissue lean mass in kilograms in all four extremities divided by height in meters².
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21 6 Although most commonly used in studies of sarcopenia in elderly,[15] this variable is
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24 7 arguably more specific to skeletal muscle mass than total lean mass index. The
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27 8 ability of DXA to detect changes in appendicular lean mass in young adolescents is
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31 9 good, and has been validated against Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).[16]
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35 10 Physical activity was objectively measured using the ActiGraph GT3X accelerometer
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39 11 (ActiGraph, LLC, Pensacola, USA). Participants were instructed to wear the device
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42 12 on their right hip for seven consecutive days, and to remove it only when showering,
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46 13 swimming or sleeping. The ActiLife software was used to initialize the accelerometer
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50 14 and download data, which was imported into the Quality Control & Analysis Tool
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53 15 (QCAT) for data processing. This software was developed by the research group of
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56 16 professor Horsch in Matlab (The MathWorks, Inc., Massachusetts, USA) for
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60 17 processing of accelerometer data. The accelerometer was set in raw data mode, with

1 a sampling frequency of 30 Hertz and with normal filtering epochs of 10 seconds.

2 Data collection was initiated at 14:00 hours the first day, and concluded at 23:58 on

3 the 8th day of measurement. We excluded data from the first day of measurement to

4 reduce reactivity bias. The criteria for a valid measurement of physical activity was

5 wear time of \geq four consecutive days, with \geq ten hours wear time per day. This has

6 been demonstrated as representative of activity over a full week.[17] The triaxial

7 algorithm developed by Hecht et al. was used to calculate wear time.[18] Minutes per

8 day in sedentary (0 – 99 CPM), light (100 – 1951 CPM), moderate (1952 – 5723

9 CPM) and vigorous (\geq 5724 CPM) physical activity was determined using the cut-offs

10 developed by Freedson.[19] The choice of these cut-offs enables direct comparisons

11 as the cohort ages, and although these cut-offs are not commonly used for

12 adolescents, we consider the bodily proportions of an adolescent to resemble that of

13 an adult in terms of measured acceleration. The device collected data in both

14 uniaxial- and triaxial mode, but in the present study only the uniaxial data had been

15 processed and therefore available. Studies have shown that uniaxial data recorded

16 from the GT3X correlate well with uniaxial data recorded from previous ActiGraph

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4 1 models.[20] Data on objectively measured physical activity was only available from
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7 2 Fit Futures 1.
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11 3 Baseline characteristics were presented as means with standard deviation (SD) or
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14 4 prevalence in percentages with number of subjects (n) (Table 1). Sex-specific
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18 5 difference in body composition between baseline and follow-up was tested using a
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21 6 paired samples t-test. The difference in physical activity between sexes was tested
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25 7 using a two-sample t-test, while sex differences in categories of minutes spent in
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28 8 MVPA was tested using a chi-square test. Difference in linear trend across categories
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31 9 of minutes spent in MVPA was tested using STATA's non-parametric test for trend,
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35 10 developed by Cuzick.[21] Linear regression was used to determine the effect of
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39 11 baseline physical activity on change in body composition, i.e., the change in BMI,
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42 12 waist circumference, FMI, LMI and aLMI from the first to the second Fit Futures
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46 13 Study.

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50 14 We used three different predictors of change in body composition, performing three
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53 15 sets of analyses, with first; minutes per day spent in sedentary activity (Table 2)
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57 16 second; minutes per day spent in light activity (Table 3) and third; minutes per day
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3 1 spent in MVPA (Table 4). We divided the continuous variables sedentary- and light
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7 2 activity by 30 and the continuous variable MVPA by 15 before inclusion in the
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10 3 models, thus presenting the beta coefficient for change in body composition
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14 4 parameter per 30 minutes of sedentary- or light activity, or per 15 minutes of MVPA,
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17 5 with 95% confidence intervals and a p-value. In model 1 we adjusted for the baseline
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20 6 measurement of the body composition parameter. In the adjusted models (models 2)
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24 7 we also included time between measurements (mean (SD): 730 (74) days) and
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28 8 baseline values of device wear time, age in half years and questionnaire data on
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31 9 screen time on weekdays (how many hours per weekday the students spent in front
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35 10 of a computer or television - answers ranged from none to more than ten hours per
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39 11 weekday) and regularity of eating breakfast as an indicator of healthy meal patterns
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42 12 (answers ranging from rarely/never to every day). In the analyses of sedentary- and
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45 13 light activity we also adjusted for minutes spent in MVPA (models 3). In a subset of
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49 14 analyses (Appendix tables 1 and 2) we repeated the analyses performed in Table 2
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52 15 and 3, adjusting also for self-reported pubertal status measured by either pubertal
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56 16 development scale (boys) or age at menarche (girls). These analyses included the
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4 1 143 boys and 256 girls with valid data on pubertal status. In all the analyses, a p-
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7 2 value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.
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11 3 All analyses were performed sex-specific as decided a-priori, using STATA version
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14 4 14 (StataCorp. 2015. *Stata Statistical Software: Release 14*. College Station, TX:
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18 5 StataCorp LP.).
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21 22 6 **Patient and public involvement**

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26 7 Participating schools were consulted and included in the design phase of the study.
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30 31 8 **Results**

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34 9 Table 1 displays the participants' body composition measurements at baseline and
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38 10 follow-up, as well as physical activity measurements at baseline. Boys had a
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42 11 statistically significant increase in all measures of body composition. Girls had a
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45 12 statistically significant increase in body weight, BMI, fat mass in kg and FMI, but not
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49 13 in LMI and appendicular lean mass. Boys were statistically significantly more
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52 14 physically active than girls in some aspects, with higher mean counts per minute
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55 15 ($p=0.01$) and more minutes in MVPA ($p<0.01$). Time spent in sedentary- or light
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59 16 intensities did not differ significantly between sexes. Twenty-seven percent of boys
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1 and 17% of girls complied with the recommendations of 60 minutes per day

2 Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA).

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Table 1. Characteristics of the longitudinal cohort of the Tromsø Study; Fit Futures 2010-11 and 2012-13 [◇].

| | Boys (n = 171) | | Girls (n = 260) | |
|--|----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | FF1 | FF2 | FF1 | FF2 |
| Age (years) | 16.0 (0.4) | 18.2 (0.4) | 16.1 (0.4) | 18.1 (0.4) |
| Height (cm) | 177.1 (6.6) | 179.0 (6.5)* | 165.4 (6.6) | 166.1 (6.6)* |
| Body weight (kg) | 69.0 (12.3) | 74.3 (13.0)* | 60.8 (10.8) | 63.4 (11.6)* |
| Body mass index (BMI kg/m ²) | 22.0 (3.5) | 23.2 (3.7)* | 22.2 (3.7) | 23.0 (4.0)* |
| Waist circumference (cm) | 81.0 (10.3) | 83.9 (10.9)* | 76.7 (9.8) | 78.0 (10.8)* |
| Total Body Fat Mass (kg) | 13.3 (9.4) | 15.6 (10.4)* | 19.9 (8.3) | 21.7 (9.1)* |
| Fat Mass Index (FMI kg/m ²) | 4.2 (3.0) | 4.9 (3.2)* | 7.3 (3.0) | 7.9 (3.3)* |
| Total Body Lean Mass (kg) | 54.0 (6.5) | 56.4 (6.9)* | 38.9 (4.5) | 39.3 (4.7)* |

| | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Lean Mass Index (LMI kg/m ²) | 17.2 (1.6) | 17.6 (1.8)* | 14.2 (1.3) | 14.2 (1.4) |
| Appendicular Lean Mass (kg) | 25.3 (3.4) | 26.2 (3.6)* | 17.4 (2.3) | 17.4 (2.3) |
| Appendicular Lean Mass Index (aLMI kg/m ²) | 8.1 (0.9) | 8.2 (0.9)* | 6.4 (0.7) | 6.3 (0.7)* |
| Accelerometer variables | | | | |
| Wear time per valid day | 14.2 (1.2) | | 14.1 (1.1) | |
| Counts per minute | 362.9 (137.5) | | 334.0 (111.9) [∞] | |
| Minutes per day in different intensities | | | | |
| Sedentary (cpm 0 – 99) | 573.3 (77.3) | | 565.3 (63.2) | |
| Light (cpm 100 – 1951) | 230.5 (58.8) | | 236.2 (48.4) | |
| Moderate (cpm 1952 – 5723) | 45.8 (20.6) | | 40.2 (17.7) [∞] | |
| Vigorous (cpm ≥ 5724) | 3.7 (5.8) | | 2.9 (4.1) [∞] | |
| MVPA [#] (cpm ≥ 1952) | 49.5 (23.4) | | 43.1 (19.6) [∞] | |
| Meeting MVPA guidelines per day | | | | |
| 0 – 29 minutes | 35 (20.5) | | 69 (26.5) | |
| 30 – 59 minutes | 90 (52.6) | | 146 (56.2) | |
| ≥ 60 minutes | 46 (26.9) | | 45 (17.3) [§] | |

1 ◇: Values are means with standard deviation (SD) or n (prevalence in percentages). BMI: body weight
 2 in kg/height in meters², FMI: fat mass in kg/height in meters², LMI: lean mass in kg/height in meters²,
 3 aLMI: appendicular lean mass in kg/height in meters². Data on physical activity in FF2 was not
 4 available.

5 *: Significantly different from baseline measurement (p < 0.05)

6 ∞: Significantly different from boys (mean).

7 #: MVPA: moderate to vigorous physical activity, using cut-offs suggested by Freedson.[19]

8 §: significantly different linear trend from boys (p<0.05)

9

10 Table 2 displays the association between minutes spent in sedentary activity at
 11 baseline and changes in body composition between baseline and follow-up. There

1 was no association between sedentary activity and changes in BMI, waist
 2 circumference and FMI in neither boys nor girls. In girls, but not in boys, there was a
 3 significant association between minutes spent in sedentary activity at baseline and
 4 changes in both LMI ($p < 0.01$) and aLMI ($p = 0.02$). Adjustment for covariates and
 5 MVPA slightly attenuated the association with aLMI ($p = 0.05$).

Table 2. Association between minutes per day spent in sedentary activity (CPM 0 – 99) at baseline and changes in body composition#.

| | Boys (n = 171) | | | Girls (n = 260) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.02 | -0.13, 0.09 | 0.76 | -0.05 | -0.15, 0.05 | 0.33 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.17, 0.12 | 0.75 | -0.11 | -0.24, 0.03 | 0.12 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.17, 0.20 | 0.88 | -0.11 | -0.27, 0.05 | 0.16 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.17 | -0.21, 0.56 | 0.37 | -0.01 | -0.41, 0.40 | 0.96 |
| Model 2 | 0.27 | -0.24, 0.78 | 0.30 | -0.33 | -0.87, 0.20 | 0.22 |
| Model 3 | 0.42 | -0.23, 1.07 | 0.20 | -0.44 | -1.06, 0.18 | 0.17 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.10, 0.10 | 0.99 | -0.01 | -0.11, 0.08 | 0.83 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.16, 0.11 | 0.74 | -0.06 | -0.18, 0.07 | 0.36 |
| Model 3 | 0.00 | -0.17, 0.17 | 0.98 | -0.05 | -0.20, 0.09 | 0.48 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.05, 0.05 | 0.88 | -0.06 | -0.09, -0.02 | <0.01 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|------|-------------|------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.06, 0.07 | 0.77 | -0.07 | -0.12, - 0.02 | <0.01 |
| Model 3 | 0.02 | -0.06, 0.10 | 0.63 | -0.08 | -0.13, - 0.03 | <0.01 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.03, 0.03 | 0.84 | -0.02 | -0.04, - 0.00 | 0.02 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.03, 0.04 | 0.81 | -0.03 | -0.05, - 0.01 | 0.02 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.04, 0.05 | 0.71 | -0.03 | -0.06, 0.00 | 0.05 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in sedentary activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in sedentary activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the body composition parameter. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM \geq 1952).

Table 3 displays the association between minutes spent in light activity at baseline and changes in body composition between baseline and follow-up. There was no association between the exposure and either body composition parameter in boys. In girls there was some evidence to suggest an association with change in waist circumference ($p = 0.05$), but the association was attenuated after adjustments ($p = 0.17$). Minutes spent in light physical activity was also associated with changes in LMI ($p < 0.01$ (Models 2 and 3)) and aLMI ($p = 0.04$ (Model 2) and 0.05 (Model 3)).

Table 3. Association between minutes per day spent in light activity (CPM 100 – 1951) at baseline and changes in body composition#.

| | Boys (n = 171) | | | Girls (n = 260) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.04 | -0.11, 0.18 | 0.60 | 0.05 | -0.09, 0.19 | 0.47 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.17, 0.18 | 0.93 | 0.12 | -0.04, 0.27 | 0.13 |
| Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.20, 0.17 | 0.88 | 0.11 | -0.05, 0.27 | 0.16 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.11 | -0.62, 0.40 | 0.68 | 0.54 | 0.01, 1.07 | 0.05 |
| Model 2 | -0.38 | -1.00, 0.23 | 0.22 | 0.43 | -0.19, 1.05 | 0.17 |
| Model 3 | -0.42 | -1.07, 0.23 | 0.20 | 0.44 | -0.19, 1.06 | 0.17 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.03 | -0.10, 0.16 | 0.67 | 0.02 | -0.10, 0.15 | 0.71 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.15, 0.18 | 0.87 | 0.06 | -0.09, 0.20 | 0.43 |
| Model 3 | -0.00 | -0.17, 0.17 | 0.98 | 0.05 | -0.09, 0.20 | 0.49 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.07, 0.06 | 0.84 | 0.04 | -0.01, 0.09 | 0.08 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.09, 0.06 | 0.67 | 0.08 | 0.03, 0.13 | <0.01 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|-------|-------------|------|------|-------------|-------|
| | Model 3 | -0.02 | -0.10, 0.06 | 0.63 | 0.08 | 0.03, 0.13 | <0.01 |
| | Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| | Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.03, 0.04 | 0.87 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.04 | 0.16 |
| | Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.05, 0.04 | 0.73 | 0.03 | 0.00, 0.06 | 0.04 |
| | Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.05, 0.04 | 0.70 | 0.03 | -0.00, 0.06 | 0.05 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in light activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in light activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the body composition parameter. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM \geq 1952).

Table 4 displays the association between minutes in MVPA at baseline and changes in body composition between baseline and follow-up. There was no association between time spent in MVPA and changes in either measure of body composition for either sex.

Table 4. Association between minutes per day spent in MVPA (CPM \geq 1952) at baseline and changes in body composition#.

| | Boys (n = 171) | | | Girls (n = 260) | | |
|--|----------------|--------|---------|-----------------|--------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|-------------|------|-------|-------------|------|--|
| Δ BMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.11 | -0.07, 0.30 | 0.22 | -0.00 | -0.17, 0.16 | 0.97 | |
| Model 2 | 0.08 | -0.13, 0.29 | 0.47 | 0.07 | -0.11, 0.25 | 0.47 | |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.25 | -0.39, 0.89 | 0.44 | -0.03 | -0.68, 0.63 | 0.94 | |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.75, 0.71 | 0.95 | 0.02 | -0.70, 0.74 | 0.96 | |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.02 | -0.15, 0.19 | 0.83 | -0.01 | -0.17, 0.14 | 0.86 | |
| Model 2 | 0.06 | -0.14, 0.25 | 0.57 | 0.05 | -0.12, 0.22 | 0.54 | |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.07 | -0.02, 0.15 | 0.11 | 0.03 | -0.03, 0.09 | 0.33 | |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.08, 0.10 | 0.86 | 0.02 | -0.04, 0.09 | 0.44 | |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.03 | -0.02, 0.08 | 0.19 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.13 | |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.05, 0.05 | 0.92 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.18 | |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) and difference in BMI (kg/m^2), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m^2), LMI (lean mass in kg/m^2) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m^2) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 15 minutes increase in MVPA. Both models were adjusted for baseline values of the body composition parameter. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time.

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8 2 In Appendix Tables 1-3, we present sub-analyses restricted to those with complete
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11 3 data on pubertal development, confirming the results displayed in Tables 2-4 also
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14 4 after adjustments for pubertal development. Overall, adjustment for pubertal
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18 5 development had no substantial impact on an association between sedentary, light
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22 6 and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity and changes in body composition for
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24
25 7 either sex in complete case analyses. However, the association between minutes
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28 8 spent in sedentary activity- and light activity and changes in appendicular lean mass
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32 9 index was no longer significant for girls in Model 3. The point estimates did not differ
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34
35 10 from those from analyses without adjustments for pubertal development, however.
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40 **Discussion**

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44 12 In this longitudinal population-based study of Norwegian adolescents there were in
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47 13 both boys and girls no associations between objectively measured physical activity at
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51 14 baseline and two-year changes in BMI, waist circumference and FMI. Both boys and
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54 15 girls had statistically significant increases in the measures of body composition
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56
57
58 16 (except lean mass index and appendicular lean mass in girls). Objectively measured
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4 1 physical activity did not predict changes in boys. In girls there was a weak
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7 2 association between minutes spent in sedentary- and light physical activity and
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10 3 changes in indices of lean mass.
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14 4 Although the magnitude of change differed, both sexes experienced increases in
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18 5 measures of body composition. In boys, FMI increased by 0.7 units, (+ 16.7%),
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21
22 6 whereas LMI increased by 0.4 units (+ 2.3 %) from baseline. Similar relative changes
23
24
25 7 were observed in girls, (FMI +8.2 %) and (LMI + 0.7%), indicating that FMI increases
26
27
28 8 relatively more than LMI during late adolescence. We observed statistically significant
29
30
31
32 9 differences in minutes spent in moderate ($p < 0.01$) and vigorous ($p = 0.04$) intensity
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36 10 between boys and girls, but time spent in other intensity levels did not differ.
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39 11 Differences in physical activity by sex is consistent with previous research.[22, 23]
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41
42 12 Differences in changes in body composition by sex are biologically determined during
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45
46 13 adolescence, with sex hormones resulting in fat mass accrual in girls and lean mass
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49
50 14 accrual in boys.[24, 25] The observation that sedentary- and light activity predicted
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54 15 changes in indices of lean mass in girls, but not boys, may be explained by these
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57
58 16 expected biological differences. Physical activity may have somewhat greater
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61 17 potential to influence lean mass accrual in girls than in boys during this period, as fat-

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4 1 free mass is relatively stable in girls in late adolescence whereas it increases up to
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7 2 18 years of age in boys.[26]
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11 3 In the present study sedentary- and light activity had opposing effects on lean mass
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13
14 4 in girls. In a study using iso-temporal substitution models, positive prospective effects
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18 5 on fat mass was found when substituting 30 minutes of sedentary activity with MVPA,
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22 6 but not when substituted with light activity.[27] We did not use such modelling
23
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25 7 techniques, but it is reasonable that sedentary- and light physical activity have
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28 8 opposing effects on lean mass.[28] Sedentary- and light activity was correlated ($r = -$
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32 9 0.39), but minutes spent in different intensity levels are not directly a function of each
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36 10 other as wear time in the participants varies between individuals. Based on wear time
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39 11 inclusion criteria, the theoretical time span for wear time lies between 10 and 24
40
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42 12 hours. Thus, minutes spent in sedentary activity may not be deduced from the sum of
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46 13 minutes spent in other intensities and vice versa, but it is plausible that higher wear
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49 14 time results in more sedentary time. This was evident in an exploratory analyses on
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53 15 the same cohort (not included in the present study), where higher wear time was
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56 16 significantly associated with more sedentary activity and less light activity ($p < 0.01$).
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59 17 Adjusting for wear time (Models 2) did not change the associations substantially for

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4 1 sedentary activity (Table 2), but had some effect on the associations with light
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7 2 physical activity (Table 3). Because of the inverse relationship between minutes
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10 3 spent sedentary and in light activity, it is not possible to determine whether it is
11
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14 4 sedentary time or light activity-time that is associated with change in LMI. The
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17 5 practical consequences are nevertheless that being active increases lean mass in
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21 6 girls.

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25 7 When interpreting results, we must acknowledge the limitations of DXA in the
26
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28 8 estimation of lean mass, which can be affected by both biological factors and
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32 9 measurement error.[29] Because the relative increase in lean mass was small, only
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35 10 slight differences in for instance individual hydration status at the two time-points may
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39 11 influence estimates and thus the association.

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43 12 There was no associations between objectively measured physical activity and
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46 13 change in BMI, waist circumference and FMI for either sex. It may be that the
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50 14 negative effects of less physical activity have not yet had time to manifest themselves
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53 15 in a population still undergoing physiological changes as a result of natural growth,
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57 16 especially considering the relatively short 2-year follow-up. Our results are in line with
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1 a systematic review suggesting that objectively measured PA is not an important
2 predictor of change in adiposity in children, adolescents and adults.[12] In contrast,
3 another systematic review found a protective effect of physical activity on adiposity in
4 adolescents.[10] There were however several methodological weaknesses in the
5 included studies of this review, particularly regarding the validity of the measurement
6 of both physical activity and body composition. In contrast, our study employed
7 robust measures of both these exposures- and outcomes, a combination which is
8 lacking in much past research on the association between the two.[10-12]

9 In adolescents, physical activity is influenced by friends, family and other social
10 support,[30] and is less stable than in adults.[31-33] Follow-up data on objectively
11 measured physical activity was not available in the present study, but some evidence
12 suggests that the decline in physical activity is steeper prior to the onset of
13 adolescence.[34] Reductions in level of physical activity during the transition from
14 adolescence to young adulthood nevertheless often occur.[35] Prior observations
15 from the same cohort showed that change in self-reported physical activity between
16 baseline and follow-up was a stronger predictor of change in body composition than
17 self-reported baseline physical activity.[36] Other studies have suggested that

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4 1 change in activity during follow-up might obscure an association with body
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7 2 composition.[37, 38] In a sub-analyses, one of four in both the highest and lowest
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10 3 categories of MVPA at baseline reported decreased (high MVPA at baseline) and
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14 4 increased (low MVPA at baseline) self-reported physical activity at follow up, thus
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16
17 5 indicating that physical activity in adolescents is fluctuant. These two observations,
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20
21 6 assuming that measurement of both MVPA and self-reported hours per week of
22
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24 7 physical activity are representative of actual physical activity behaviour at the time,
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26
27
28 8 work in opposing directions with regard to the effect of physical activity on changes in
29
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31 9 adiposity. This phenomenon is known as regression dilution bias and may flatten the
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35 10 regression slope and cause an underestimate of the actual association.[39] With an
36
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38 11 annual decline in total physical activity of 7% in adolescents, researchers must
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41
42 12 consider the possibility that measured physical activity has a “best before-date”. It
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45
46 13 remains questionable whether baseline measurements of a fluctuant behaviour such
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49 14 as physical activity is representative of actual habits during the period of follow-up. It
50
51
52 15 may be that the measurement represents current, but not future (or even prior)
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56 16 habits.[12, 40] This has implications for longitudinal studies of the relationship
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58
59 17 between physical activity and body composition.[38]
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78 2 Strengths and limitations
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11 3 The primary strength of this study are objective measures of both physical activity
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15 4 and body composition parameters, and the inclusion of tissue-specific measures of
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19 5 body composition. Some limitations have to be considered. As the Fit Futures study
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21
22 6 did not include a validated food frequency questionnaire or similar instrument for
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26 7 nutritional assessment, we were not able to fully adjust for the potential confounding
27
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29 8 effects of nutrition and changes in food habits of adolescents on changes in body
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33 9 composition. Accelerometer-measured physical activity has limitations. A hip worn
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36 10 accelerometer such as the ActiGraph GT3X is not able to correctly measure cycling
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40 11 and swimming.[41] Furthermore, accelerometers are dependent on user-compliance,
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44 12 and non-wear time therefore affects the amount of activity which is actually
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47 13 measured. Subjective judgement determines data management and analyses, e.g.
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50 14 the decision to exclude participants with wear time < 10 hours and < 4 consecutive
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54 15 days, is a trade-off between quality of data and the number of participants with valid
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57 16 data. We lacked complete data on physical activity and adjustment variables in 212
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4 1 participants, but changes in BMI, waist circumference, FMI, LMI (except in girls, $p =$
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7 2 0.04) and aLMI were not significantly different between those with- and without
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10 3 complete exposure data. Furthermore, of those with valid data concerning both
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14 4 physical activity and body composition parameters at baseline, close to 25% did not
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17 5 attend the follow up. Although longitudinal observational studies are superior to
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21 6 cross-sectional studies to examine causation, they are also susceptible to directional
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24 7 bias, since participants may avoid physical activity because they are overweight, and
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28 8 not be overweight because they are inactive.[42-44] Finally, as the participants were
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32 9 16 years old, much may already have happened both to the level of physical activity
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35 10 and the different measures of body composition prior to participation. In light of this, 2
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38 11 years of follow-up may be a short time frame to determine the potential effects of
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42 12 physical activity on changes in the different body composition parameters.
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50 14 **Conclusion**

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54 15 Objectively measured physical activity was not significantly associated with change in
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58 16 objectively measured BMI, waist circumference or FMI after two years in this cohort
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4 1 of Norwegian adolescents. There was evidence to suggest that sedentary- and light
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7 2 activity affected indices of lean mass in girls, but not boys.
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For peer review only

1 Acknowledgements

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7
8 2 The authors thank the participants in the study, as well as the staff at the Clinical
9
10
11 3 Research Unit at the University Hospital of North Norway for data collection and
12
13
14 4 clinical measurements. We also thank the Fit Futures Steering Committee in both
15
16
17
18 5 studies.

6 Footnotes

7 Contributors

8 NAA wrote the draft of the manuscript, which was revised and edited by all authors
9
10 several times during the process. SB produced the accelerometer variables in close
11
12 collaboration with AH, who wrote the software which converted raw accelerometer
13
14 data to variables. BKJ contributed to the statistical analyses, and BM specifically
15
16 contributed to the discussion of physical activity. NE and ASF were among the
17
18 principal investigators in FF1 and FF2 and contributed significantly to the acquisition
19
20 of data. SG formulated the research question and conceived the study. All authors
21
22 have substantially contributed to the study, and have read and approved the final
23
24 manuscript.

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3 1 Funding
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7 2 This particular manuscript has not received any specific funding.
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9

10
11 3 Competing interests
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15 4 The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
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19 5 Consent for publication
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23 6 Not applicable
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27 7 Ethics approval
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31 8 This study was approved by The Regional Committee of Medical and Health
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36 9 Research Ethics (2014/1666/REK nord).
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40 10 Data availability statement
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44 11 The data that support the findings of this study are available from UiT – The Arctic
45
46
47 12 University of Norway. Restrictions apply to the availability of these data, which were
48
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51 13 used under license for the current study, and are thus not publicly available.
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Supplementary file

Appendix Table 1. Association between minutes per day spent in sedentary activity (CPM 0 – 99) at baseline and changes in body composition, adjusted for puberty[#].

| | Boys (n = 143) | | | Girls (n = 256) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.02 | -0.14, 0.09 | 0.70 | -0.05 | -0.15, 0.05 | 0.32 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.17, 0.13 | 0.82 | -0.10 | -0.24, 0.03 | 0.14 |
| Model 3 | 0.02 | -0.18, 0.22 | 0.85 | -0.10 | -0.26, 0.06 | 0.20 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.12 | -0.27, 0.51 | 0.55 | -0.01 | -0.42, 0.40 | 0.96 |
| Model 2 | 0.24 | -0.28, 0.76 | 0.37 | -0.38 | -0.92, 0.16 | 0.16 |
| Model 3 | 0.38 | -0.30, 1.05 | 0.27 | -0.52 | -1.15, 0.11 | 0.10 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.12, 0.09 | 0.84 | -0.01 | -0.11, 0.08 | 0.80 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.16, 0.13 | 0.83 | -0.06 | -0.18, 0.07 | 0.36 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.18, 0.19 | 0.96 | -0.05 | -0.20, 0.10 | 0.49 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.05, 0.06 | 0.90 | -0.06 | -0.09, -0.02 | < 0.01 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.07, 0.08 | 0.90 | -0.07 | -0.11, -0.02 | < 0.01 |
| Model 3 | 0.02 | -0.07, 0.10 | 0.73 | -0.07 | -0.13, -0.02 | < 0.01 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.00 | -0.03, 0.03 | 0.91 | -0.02 | -0.04, -0.00 | 0.02 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.04, 0.04 | 0.97 | -0.03 | -0.05, -0.00 | 0.03 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.04, 0.06 | 0.65 | -0.03 | -0.05, 0.00 | 0.08 |

[#]: The table displays the association between minutes spent in sedentary activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in sedentary activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of pubertal development (pds (boys) and age at menarche (girls)), screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM ≥ 1952).

Appendix Table 2. Association between minutes per day spent in light activity (CPM 100 – 1951) at baseline and changes in body composition, adjusted for puberty[#].

| | Boys (n = 143) | | | Girls (n = 256) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.05 | -0.10, 0.20 | 0.53 | 0.04 | -0.10, 0.18 | 0.56 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.18, 0.19 | 0.98 | 0.11 | -0.05, 0.27 | 0.17 |
| Model 3 | -0.02 | -0.22, 0.18 | 0.85 | 0.10 | -0.06, 0.26 | 0.20 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.53, 0.51 | 0.97 | 0.53 | -0.01, 1.06 | 0.05 |
| Model 2 | -0.34 | -0.97, 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.51 | -0.11, 1.13 | 0.11 |
| Model 3 | -0.38 | -1.05, 0.30 | 0.27 | 0.52 | -0.11, 1.15 | 0.11 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.05 | -0.09, 0.18 | 0.51 | 0.02 | -0.11, 0.14 | 0.80 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.16, 0.18 | 0.93 | 0.06 | -0.09, 0.20 | 0.43 |
| Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.19, 0.18 | 0.96 | 0.05 | -0.10, 0.20 | 0.49 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.08, 0.06 | 0.84 | 0.04 | -0.01, 0.09 | 0.09 |
| Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.10, 0.07 | 0.80 | 0.08 | 0.02, 0.13 | < 0.01 |
| Model 3 | -0.02 | -0.10, 0.07 | 0.73 | 0.07 | 0.02, 0.13 | < 0.01 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.04, 0.04 | 0.93 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.04 | 0.19 |
| Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.05, 0.04 | 0.78 | 0.03 | -0.00, 0.06 | 0.06 |
| Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.06, 0.04 | 0.65 | 0.03 | -0.00, 0.05 | 0.08 |

[#]: The table displays the association between minutes spent in light activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in light activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of pubertal development (pds (boys) and age at menarche (girls)), screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM ≥ 1952).

Appendix Table 3. Association between minutes per day spent in MVPA (CPM \geq 1952) at baseline and changes in body composition, adjusted for puberty[#].

| | Boys (n = 143) | | | Girls (n = 256) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.11 | -0.08, 0.31 | 0.24 | -0.01 | -0.17, 0.16 | 0.95 |
| Model 2 | 0.06 | -0.15, 0.28 | 0.55 | 0.07 | -0.12, 0.25 | 0.48 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.28 | -0.38, 0.95 | 0.40 | -0.03 | -0.69, 0.63 | 0.94 |
| Model 2 | -0.03 | -0.77, 0.72 | 0.95 | -0.00 | -0.72, 0.72 | 0.99 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.02 | -0.16, 0.20 | 0.80 | -0.01 | -0.17, 0.14 | 0.86 |
| Model 2 | 0.04 | -0.16, 0.24 | 0.68 | 0.05 | -0.12, 0.22 | 0.55 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.08 | -0.02, 0.17 | 0.11 | 0.03 | -0.03, 0.09 | 0.35 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.09, 0.11 | 0.81 | 0.02 | -0.04, 0.09 | 0.49 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.05 | -0.01, 0.10 | 0.09 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.14 |
| Model 2 | 0.02 | -0.04, 0.07 | 0.60 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.20 |

[#]: The table displays the association between minutes spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 15 minutes increase in MVPA. Both models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of pubertal development (pds (boys) and age at menarche (girls)), screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time.

STROBE statement for submitted manuscript entitled “*The association between objectively measured physical activity and longitudinal changes in body composition in adolescents; The Tromsø Study Fit Futures Cohort.*”

| | Item No | Recommendation |
|---------------------------|----------------|--|
| Title and abstract | 1 | (a) P. 1, lines 1-2. (b) P. 3, lines 1-23. |
| Introduction | | |
| Background/rationale | 2 | P. 5, lines 1-25 and P. 6, lines 1-3. |
| Objectives | 3 | P. 6, lines 3-8. |
| Methods | | |
| Study design | 4 | P. 6, lines 11-16. |
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| Results | | |
| Participants | 13* | (a) P. 6, lines 11-23. (b) See (a). |
| Descriptive data | 14* | (a) See Table 1. (b) See 13a (c) See Table 1. |
| Outcome data | 15* | See Table 1. |
| Main results | 16 | (a) See Tables and P. 9, lines 6-20. (b) See Table 1. |
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| Interpretation | 20 | P. 15, lines 9 – 25. P. 16, 1-25. P. 17, lines 1-25. P. 18, lines 1-7. |
| Generalisability | 21 | P. 19, lines 4-6. |
| Other information | | |
| Funding | 22 | P. 20, lines 16. |

BMJ Open

The association between objectively measured physical activity and longitudinal changes in body composition in adolescents; The Tromsø Study Fit Futures Cohort.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Journal: | <i>BMJ Open</i> |
| Manuscript ID | bmjopen-2020-036991.R2 |
| Article Type: | Original research |
| Date Submitted by the Author: | 13-Aug-2020 |
| Complete List of Authors: | Aars, Nils; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine; Nordlandssykehuset HF Beldo, Sigurd; UiT Arctic University of Norway, School of Sport Sciences Jacobsen, Bjarne; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Centre for Sami Health Research Horsch, Alexander; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Computer Science Morseth, Bente; UiT Arctic University of Norway, School of Sport Sciences; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine Emaus, Nina; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Health and Care Sciences Furberg, Anne-Sofie; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine; Universitetssykehuset Nord-Norge, Department of Microbiology and Infection Control Grimsgaard, Sameline; UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Department of Community Medicine |
| Primary Subject Heading: | Public health |
| Secondary Subject Heading: | Sports and exercise medicine, Epidemiology |
| Keywords: | EPIDEMIOLOGY, PUBLIC HEALTH, SPORTS MEDICINE |
| | |

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4 1 **The association between objectively measured physical activity and longitudinal**
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7 2 **changes in body composition in adolescents; The Tromsø Study Fit Futures Cohort.**
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2 Word count: 3992

For peer review only

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4 1 **Abstract**

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7 2 **Objectives:** Physical activity may be important in deterring the obesity epidemic. This
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10
11 3 study aimed to determine if objectively measured physical activity in first year of
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14 4 upper secondary high school predicted changes in body composition over two years
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18 5 of follow-up in a cohort of Norwegian adolescents (n =431).

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22 6 **Design:** A longitudinal study of adolescents (mean age 16 (SD 0.4) at baseline,
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26 7 60.3% girls) participating in the Fit Futures studies 1 (2010-11) and 2 (2012-13).

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30 8 **Setting:** All eight upper secondary high schools in two municipalities in Northern
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33 9 Norway.

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37 10 **Participants:** Students participating in both studies and under the age of 18 at
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41 11 baseline, and with valid measurement of physical activity at baseline and body
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44 12 composition in both surveys.

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48 13 **Primary- and secondary outcomes:** Change in objectively measured body mass index
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52 14 and waist circumference, and change in dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry measured
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56 15 fat mass index (FMI), lean mass index (LMI) and appendicular lean mass index
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59 16 (aLMI) between baseline and follow-up.
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4 1 **Results:** At baseline, boys had significantly higher physical activity volume ($p=0.01$)
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6
7 2 and spent on average 6.4 (95% CI: 2.1, 10.6) more minutes in moderate-to-vigorous
8
9
10 3 physical activity (MVPA) than girls ($p < 0.01$). In girls, multivariate regression analyses
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12
13
14 4 showed that more sedentary time was negatively associated with changes in LMI (p
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16
17 5 < 0.01) and aLMI ($p < 0.05$), whereas more light activity had opposite effects on
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20
21 6 these measures ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$, respectively). No significant associations
22
23
24 7 between measures of baseline physical activity and changes in body composition
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26
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28 8 parameters was observed in boys.

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32 9 **Conclusions:** In this cohort of Norwegian adolescents, sedentary and light physical
33
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35 10 activity was associated with changes in LMI and aLMI in girls, but not boys. Minutes
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39 11 spent in MVPA in first year of upper secondary high school was not associated with
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41
42 12 changes in measures of body composition in neither sex after two years.

43 44 45 46 13 **Strengths and limitations of this study**

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51 14 • This study used objective measures of physical activity.

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4 1 • The study included objectively measured weight, height and waist
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7 2 circumference, and dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) measures of fat-
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10 3 and lean mass.
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14 4 • We were not able to fully adjust for nutrition and not for pubertal development.
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17 5 • The 431 participants with complete data from both baseline and follow-up
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20 6 represents 41% of those attending Fit Futures 1, indicating a degree of
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24 7 selection.
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1 Background

2 The potential of physical activity to prevent or treat a number of diseases has been
3 highlighted by the World Health Organization,[1] with inactivity accounting for 9% of
4 worldwide premature mortality.[2] Public health guidelines state that adolescents
5 should engage in Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA) \geq 60 minutes per
6 day,[3] but in 2011, only 50% of Norwegian 15 year olds met these
7 recommendations.[4] During adolescence there is a decline in both total physical
8 activity and MVPA,[5, 6] and many quit or reduce participation in organized sports.[7]
9 As of 2013, the prevalence of overweight and obesity (Body Mass Index (BMI) \geq 25
10 kg/m²) in Norwegians aged <20 years appear to be stabilizing at around 20% in boys
11 and 16% in girls - comparable to the Nordic countries.[8] This is lower than in the
12 United States (around 29% in boys and girls), [8] but the health effects for those
13 concerned may still be substantial over the long term.[9]
14 While physical activity has many positive health effects, its relationship with adiposity
15 is less clear and it has proven difficult to determine causality, direction and magnitude
16 of this relationship.[10] Cross-sectional research typically shows a strong inverse

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4 1 association between physical activity and weight status,[11] but temporality cannot be
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7 2 ascertained using such study designs.[12] Longitudinal studies may ascertain if lower
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10 3 physical activity precedes excess weight gain, but a review found no evidence for a
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14 4 relationship between objectively measured physical activity and body fat gain in
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17 5 adolescents.[12] The lack of congruent results may in part be explained by the
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21 6 diverse and inadequate measures of both exposure and outcome used in research of
22
23
24 7 the association between physical activity and body composition.[10, 11]
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28 8 Although many methods to measure physical activity are available, the most common
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32 9 and most feasible is self-report which commonly overestimates the total amount of
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36 10 physical activity.[13] Body composition is most commonly assessed using BMI, but
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39 11 BMI does not distinguish between fat- and muscle mass.[14] This has the potential to
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43 12 cause misclassification of overweight status and may attenuate a true association
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46 13 between physical activity and fat or muscle mass. Thus, in the current study, we
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50 14 sought to overcome these limitations by applying objective measures of both physical
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53 15 activity and specific measures of body composition. Our aim was to investigate the
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57 16 association between objectively measured physical activity and changes in five
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60 17 different measures of body composition (body mass index, waist circumference, fat

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4 1 mass index, lean mass index and appendicular lean mass index) over two years of
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7 2 follow-up in a cohort of Norwegian adolescents.
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10 11 3 12 13 14 15 4 **Methods and materials** 16

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19 5 We used data from the first and second Fit Futures cohort studies, performed in
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23 6 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, respectively. In the first study we invited all students
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26 7 (n=1,117) in their first year of upper secondary high school in the neighbouring
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30 8 municipalities of Tromsø and Balsfjord in Northern Norway, and 93% participated.
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33 9 The study was repeated two years later, when the students were in their last year of
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37 10 upper secondary high school or had started as apprentices if they studied vocational
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40 11 subjects. The second study included 868 participants, giving an attendance of 77%.
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44 12 All eight upper secondary high schools in the two municipalities participated in both
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47 13 studies. Altogether 735 adolescents attended both surveys. For the present study we
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51 14 excluded those aged ≥ 18 years of age at baseline (n = 38). Some participants (n =
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54 15 240) did not have valid measurements of physical activity at baseline, and were
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58 16 therefore not included in the study. We also excluded those with missing data on
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4 1 change in body composition parameters or variables included in the model (n = 26).
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7 2 Thus, 431 participants were included in the present study (60.3% girls). Appendix
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9
10 3 Table 1 includes descriptive characteristics of the boys and girls with a valid baseline
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12
13
14 4 measurement of physical activity and variables included in the analyses, but who
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17 5 were missing follow-up data on body composition parameters (n = 133).
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21 6 Students were granted leave of absence from school to attend an examination at the
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25 7 Clinical Research Unit at the University Hospital of Northern Norway in both surveys.
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28 8 The participants attended a clinical examination where they also completed a
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32 9 questionnaire, which included questions on lifestyle, screen time, dietary habits etc.
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36 10 The participants signed a letter of informed consent, and those under the age of 16
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39 11 brought a letter of consent signed by their parent or guardian.
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43 12 All measurements were performed by trained personnel. Height was measured to the
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47 13 nearest centimeter and weight to the nearest 100 gram, wearing light clothing and
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49
50 14 using an automatic electronic scale/stadiometer (Jenix DS 102 stadiometer, Dong
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54 15 Sahn Jenix, Seoul, Korea). Body mass index was calculated as body weight in
55
56
57 16 kilograms/height in meters². Waist circumference was measured to the nearest 0.1
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4 1 centimeter at the height of the umbilicus. Fat and soft tissue lean mass in grams was
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7 2 estimated by whole-body dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) (GE Lunar
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10 3 Prodigy, Lunar Corporation, Madison, WI, USA). Fat mass comprises all fat, while
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14 4 soft tissue lean mass comprises all bodily tissue except fat and skeletal mass. These
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17 5 variables were used to calculate fat mass index (FMI, fat mass in kilograms/height in
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21 6 meters²) and lean mass index (LMI, lean mass in kilograms/height in meters²). In
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25 7 addition we calculated appendicular lean mass index (aLMI), which is the sum of soft
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28 8 tissue lean mass in kilograms in all four extremities divided by height in meters².
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31 9 Although most commonly used in studies of sarcopenia in elderly,[15] this body
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35 10 composition parameter is arguably more specific to skeletal muscle mass than total
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39 11 lean mass index. The ability of DXA to detect changes in appendicular lean mass in
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45 12 young adolescents is good, and has been validated against Magnetic Resonance
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53 13 Imaging (MRI).[16]
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57 14 Physical activity was objectively measured using the ActiGraph GT3X accelerometer
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61 15 (ActiGraph, LLC, Pensacola, USA). Participants were instructed to wear the device
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65 16 on their right hip for seven consecutive days, and to remove it only when showering,
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71 17 swimming or sleeping. The ActiLife software was used to initialize the accelerometer

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4 1 and download data, which was imported into the Quality Control & Analysis Tool
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7 2 (QCAT) for data processing. This software was developed by the research group of
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10 3 professor Horsch in Matlab (The MathWorks, Inc., Massachusetts, USA) for
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14 4 processing of accelerometer data. The accelerometer was set in raw data mode, with
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17 5 a sampling frequency of 30 Hertz and with normal filtering epochs of 10 seconds.
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21 6 Data collection was initiated at 14:00 hours the first day, and concluded at 23:58 on
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24 7 the 8th day of measurement. We excluded data from the first day of measurement to
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28 8 reduce reactivity bias. The criteria for a valid measurement of physical activity was
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31 9 wear time of \geq four consecutive days, with \geq ten hours wear time per day. This has
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34
35 10 been demonstrated as representative of activity over a full week.[17] The triaxial
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38 11 algorithm developed by Hecht et al. was used to calculate wear time.[18] Minutes per
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42 12 day in sedentary (0 – 99 CPM), light (100 – 1951 CPM), moderate (1952 – 5723
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44
45 13 CPM) and vigorous (\geq 5724 CPM) physical activity was determined using the cut-offs
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49 14 developed by Freedson.[19] The choice of these cut-offs enables direct comparisons
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51
52 15 as the cohort ages, and although these cut-offs are not commonly used for
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56 16 adolescents, we consider the bodily proportions of an adolescent to resemble that of
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58
59 17 an adult in terms of measured acceleration. The device collected data in both
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3 1 uniaxial- and triaxial mode, but in the present study only the uniaxial data had been
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7 2 processed and therefore available. Studies have shown that uniaxial data recorded
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10 3 from the GT3X correlate well with uniaxial data recorded from previous ActiGraph
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14 4 models.[20] Data on objectively measured physical activity was only available from
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17 5 Fit Futures 1.
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21 6 Baseline characteristics were presented as means with standard deviation (SD) or
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25 7 prevalence in percentages with number of subjects (n) (Table 1). Sex-specific
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28 8 difference in body composition between baseline and follow-up was tested using a
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31
32 9 paired samples t-test. The difference in physical activity between sexes was tested
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36 10 using a two-sample t-test, while sex differences in categories of minutes spent in
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39 11 MVPA was tested using a chi-square test. Difference in linear trend across categories
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43 12 of minutes spent in MVPA was tested using STATA's non-parametric test for trend,
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45
46 13 developed by Cuzick.[21] Linear regression was used to determine the effect of
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49 14 baseline physical activity on change in body composition, i.e., the change in BMI,
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53 15 waist circumference, FMI, LMI and aLMI from the first to the second Fit Futures
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56 16 Study.
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4 1 We used three different predictors of change in body composition, performing three
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7 2 sets of analyses, with first; minutes per day spent in sedentary activity (Table 2)
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10 3 second; minutes per day spent in light activity (Table 3) and third; minutes per day
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14 4 spent in MVPA (Table 4). We divided the continuous variables sedentary- and light
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17 5 activity by 30 and the continuous variable MVPA by 15 before inclusion in the
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21 6 models, thus presenting the beta coefficient for change in body composition
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24 7 parameter per 30 minutes of sedentary- or light activity, or per 15 minutes of MVPA,
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28 8 with 95% confidence intervals and a p-value. In model 1 we adjusted for the baseline
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31 9 measurement of the body composition parameter. In the adjusted models (models 2)
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35 10 we also included time between measurements (mean (SD): 730 (74) days) and
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38 11 baseline values of device wear time, age in half years and questionnaire data on
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42 12 screen time on weekdays (how many hours per weekday the students spent in front
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45 13 of a computer or television - answers ranged from none to more than ten hours per
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49 14 weekday) and regularity of eating breakfast as an indicator of healthy meal patterns
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52 15 (answers ranging from rarely/never to every day). In the analyses of sedentary- and
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56 16 light activity we also adjusted for minutes spent in MVPA (models 3). In a subset of
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59 17 analyses (Appendix Tables 2 - 4) we repeated the analyses performed in Table 2 - 4,
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3 1 adjusting also for self-reported pubertal status measured by either pubertal
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7 2 development scale (boys) or age at menarche (girls). These analyses included the
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10 3 143 boys and 256 girls with valid data on pubertal status. In all the analyses, a p-
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14 4 value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.
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18 5 All analyses were performed sex-specific as decided a-priori, using STATA version
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21 6 14 (StataCorp. 2015. *Stata Statistical Software: Release 14*. College Station, TX:
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25 7 StataCorp LP.).
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28 29 8 **Patient and public involvement**

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33 9 Participating schools were consulted and included in the design phase of the study.
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37 10 **Results**

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41 11 Table 1 displays the participants' body composition measurements at baseline and
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45 12 follow-up, as well as physical activity measurements at baseline. Boys had a
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49 13 statistically significant increase in all measures of body composition. Girls had a
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52 14 statistically significant increase in body weight, BMI, fat mass in kg and FMI, but not
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56 15 in LMI and appendicular lean mass. Boys were statistically significantly more
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59 16 physically active than girls in some aspects, with higher mean counts per minute
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1 (p=0.01) and more minutes in MVPA (p<0.01). Time spent in sedentary- or light
 2 intensities did not differ significantly between sexes. Twenty-seven percent of boys
 3 and 17% of girls complied with the recommendations of 60 minutes per day
 4 Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA).

Table 1. Characteristics of the longitudinal cohort of the Tromsø Study; Fit Futures 2010-11 and 2012-13 [◇].

| | Boys (n = 171) | | Girls (n = 260) | |
|--|----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | FF1 | FF2 | FF1 | FF2 |
| Age (years) | 16.0 (0.4) | 18.2 (0.4) | 16.1 (0.4) | 18.1 (0.4) |
| Height (cm) | 177.1 (6.6) | 179.0 (6.5)* | 165.4 (6.6) | 166.1 (6.6)* |
| Body weight (kg) | 69.0 (12.3) | 74.3 (13.0)* | 60.8 (10.8) | 63.4 (11.6)* |
| Body mass index (BMI kg/m ²) | 22.0 (3.5) | 23.2 (3.7)* | 22.2 (3.7) | 23.0 (4.0)* |
| Waist circumference (cm) | 81.0 (10.3) | 83.9 (10.9)* | 76.7 (9.8) | 78.0 (10.8)* |
| Total Body Fat Mass (kg) | 13.3 (9.4) | 15.6 (10.4)* | 19.9 (8.3) | 21.7 (9.1)* |
| Fat Mass Index (FMI kg/m ²) | 4.2 (3.0) | 4.9 (3.2)* | 7.3 (3.0) | 7.9 (3.3)* |
| Total Body Lean Mass (kg) | 54.0 (6.5) | 56.4 (6.9)* | 38.9 (4.5) | 39.3 (4.7)* |
| Lean Mass Index (LMI kg/m ²) | 17.2 (1.6) | 17.6 (1.8)* | 14.2 (1.3) | 14.2 (1.4) |
| Appendicular Lean Mass (kg) | 25.3 (3.4) | 26.2 (3.6)* | 17.4 (2.3) | 17.4 (2.3) |

| | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Appendicular Lean Mass Index (aLMI kg/m ²) | 8.1 (0.9) | 8.2 (0.9)* | 6.4 (0.7) | 6.3 (0.7)* |
| Accelerometer variables | | | | |
| Wear time per valid day | 14.2 (1.2) | | 14.1 (1.1) | |
| Counts per minute | 362.9 (137.5) | | 334.0 (111.9) [∞] | |
| Minutes per day in different intensities | | | | |
| Sedentary (cpm 0 – 99) | 573.3 (77.3) | | 565.3 (63.2) | |
| Light (cpm 100 – 1951) | 230.5 (58.8) | | 236.2 (48.4) | |
| Moderate (cpm 1952 – 5723) | 45.8 (20.6) | | 40.2 (17.7) [∞] | |
| Vigorous (cpm ≥ 5724) | 3.7 (5.8) | | 2.9 (4.1) [∞] | |
| MVPA# (cpm ≥ 1952) | 49.5 (23.4) | | 43.1 (19.6) [∞] | |
| Meeting MVPA guidelines per day | | | | |
| 0 – 29 minutes | 35 (20.5) | | 69 (26.5) | |
| 30 – 59 minutes | 90 (52.6) | | 146 (56.2) | |
| ≥ 60 minutes | 46 (26.9) | | 45 (17.3) [§] | |

◇: Values are means with standard deviation (SD) or n (prevalence in percentages). BMI: body weight in kg/height in meters², FMI: fat mass in kg/height in meters², LMI: lean mass in kg/height in meters², aLMI: appendicular lean mass in kg/height in meters². Data on physical activity in FF2 was not available.

*: Significantly different from baseline measurement ($p < 0.05$)

[∞]: Significantly different from boys (mean).

#: MVPA: moderate to vigorous physical activity, using cut-offs suggested by Freedson.[19]

§: significantly different linear trend from boys ($p < 0.05$)

Table 2 displays the association between minutes spent in sedentary activity at baseline and changes in body composition between baseline and follow-up. There was no association between sedentary activity and changes in BMI, waist

1 circumference and FMI in neither boys nor girls. In girls, but not in boys, more
 2 minutes spent in sedentary activity at baseline was associated with lower LMI ($p <$
 3 0.01) and aLMI ($p = 0.02$). Adjustment for covariates and MVPA slightly attenuated
 4 the association with aLMI ($p = 0.05$).

Table 2. Association between minutes per day spent in sedentary activity (CPM 0 – 99) at baseline and changes in body composition#.

| | Boys (n = 171) | | | Girls (n = 260) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.02 | -0.13, 0.09 | 0.76 | -0.05 | -0.15, 0.05 | 0.33 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.17, 0.12 | 0.75 | -0.11 | -0.24, 0.03 | 0.12 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.17, 0.20 | 0.88 | -0.11 | -0.27, 0.05 | 0.16 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.17 | -0.21, 0.56 | 0.37 | -0.01 | -0.41, 0.40 | 0.96 |
| Model 2 | 0.27 | -0.24, 0.78 | 0.30 | -0.33 | -0.87, 0.20 | 0.22 |
| Model 3 | 0.42 | -0.23, 1.07 | 0.20 | -0.44 | -1.06, 0.18 | 0.17 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.10, 0.10 | 0.99 | -0.01 | -0.11, 0.08 | 0.83 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.16, 0.11 | 0.74 | -0.06 | -0.18, 0.07 | 0.36 |
| Model 3 | 0.00 | -0.17, 0.17 | 0.98 | -0.05 | -0.20, 0.09 | 0.48 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.05, 0.05 | 0.88 | -0.06 | -0.09, -0.02 | <0.01 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.06, 0.07 | 0.77 | -0.07 | -0.12, -0.02 | <0.01 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|------|-------------|------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Model 3 | 0.02 | -0.06, 0.10 | 0.63 | -0.08 | -0.13, - 0.03 | <0.01 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.03, 0.03 | 0.84 | -0.02 | -0.04, - 0.00 | 0.02 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.03, 0.04 | 0.81 | -0.03 | -0.05, - 0.01 | 0.02 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.04, 0.05 | 0.71 | -0.03 | -0.06, 0.00 | 0.05 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in sedentary activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in sedentary activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the body composition parameter. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM \geq 1952).

Table 3 displays the association between minutes spent in light activity at baseline and changes in body composition between baseline and follow-up. There was no association between the exposure and either body composition parameter in boys. In girls there was some evidence to suggest an association with change in waist circumference (p = 0.05), but the association was attenuated after adjustments (p = 0.17). More minutes spent in light physical activity was associated with higher LMI (p < 0.01 (Models 2 and 3)) and aLMI (p = 0.04 (Model 2) and 0.05 (Model 3)).

Table 3. Association between minutes per day spent in light activity (CPM 100 – 1951) at baseline and changes in body composition#.

| | Boys (n = 171) | | | Girls (n = 260) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.04 | -0.11, 0.18 | 0.60 | 0.05 | -0.09, 0.19 | 0.47 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.17, 0.18 | 0.93 | 0.12 | -0.04, 0.27 | 0.13 |
| Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.20, 0.17 | 0.88 | 0.11 | -0.05, 0.27 | 0.16 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.11 | -0.62, 0.40 | 0.68 | 0.54 | 0.01, 1.07 | 0.05 |
| Model 2 | -0.38 | -1.00, 0.23 | 0.22 | 0.43 | -0.19, 1.05 | 0.17 |
| Model 3 | -0.42 | -1.07, 0.23 | 0.20 | 0.44 | -0.19, 1.06 | 0.17 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.03 | -0.10, 0.16 | 0.67 | 0.02 | -0.10, 0.15 | 0.71 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.15, 0.18 | 0.87 | 0.06 | -0.09, 0.20 | 0.43 |
| Model 3 | -0.00 | -0.17, 0.17 | 0.98 | 0.05 | -0.09, 0.20 | 0.49 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.07, 0.06 | 0.84 | 0.04 | -0.01, 0.09 | 0.08 |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.09, 0.06 | 0.67 | 0.08 | 0.03, 0.13 | <0.01 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|-------|-------------|------|------|-------------|-------|
| | Model 3 | -0.02 | -0.10, 0.06 | 0.63 | 0.08 | 0.03, 0.13 | <0.01 |
| | Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| | Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.03, 0.04 | 0.87 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.04 | 0.16 |
| | Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.05, 0.04 | 0.73 | 0.03 | 0.00, 0.06 | 0.04 |
| | Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.05, 0.04 | 0.70 | 0.03 | -0.00, 0.06 | 0.05 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in light activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in light activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the body composition parameter. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM \geq 1952).

Table 4 displays the association between minutes in MVPA at baseline and changes in body composition between baseline and follow-up. There was no association between time spent in MVPA and changes in either measure of body composition for either sex.

Table 4. Association between minutes per day spent in MVPA (CPM \geq 1952) at baseline and changes in body composition#.

| | Boys (n = 171) | | | Girls (n = 260) | | |
|--|----------------|--------|---------|-----------------|--------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|-------------|------|-------|-------------|------|--|
| Δ BMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.11 | -0.07, 0.30 | 0.22 | -0.00 | -0.17, 0.16 | 0.97 | |
| Model 2 | 0.08 | -0.13, 0.29 | 0.47 | 0.07 | -0.11, 0.25 | 0.47 | |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.25 | -0.39, 0.89 | 0.44 | -0.03 | -0.68, 0.63 | 0.94 | |
| Model 2 | -0.02 | -0.75, 0.71 | 0.95 | 0.02 | -0.70, 0.74 | 0.96 | |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.02 | -0.15, 0.19 | 0.83 | -0.01 | -0.17, 0.14 | 0.86 | |
| Model 2 | 0.06 | -0.14, 0.25 | 0.57 | 0.05 | -0.12, 0.22 | 0.54 | |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.07 | -0.02, 0.15 | 0.11 | 0.03 | -0.03, 0.09 | 0.33 | |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.08, 0.10 | 0.86 | 0.02 | -0.04, 0.09 | 0.44 | |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.03 | -0.02, 0.08 | 0.19 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.13 | |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.05, 0.05 | 0.92 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.18 | |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) and difference in BMI (kg/m^2), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m^2), LMI (lean mass in kg/m^2) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m^2) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 15 minutes increase in MVPA. Both models were adjusted for baseline values of the body composition parameter. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time.

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8 2 Appendix Table 1 shows the descriptive characteristics of the participants with valid
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11 3 baseline measurements of physical activity and adjustment variables, but who were
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14 4 lost to follow-up. Both boys and girls lost to follow-up had significantly higher mean
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18 5 BMI, waist circumference, fat mass and FMI at baseline, as well as significantly less
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22 6 minutes per day spent in light- and moderate-to-vigorous (girls only) physical activity.
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25 7 In Appendix Tables 2-4, we present sub-analyses restricted to those with complete
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28 8 data on pubertal development, confirming the results displayed in Tables 2-4 also
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32 9 after adjustments for pubertal development. Overall, adjustment for pubertal
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36 10 development had no substantial impact on an association between sedentary, light
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39 11 and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity and changes in body composition for
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43 12 either sex in complete case analyses. However, the association between minutes
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46 13 spent in sedentary activity- and light activity and changes in appendicular lean mass
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49 14 index was no longer significant for girls in Model 3. The point estimates did not differ
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53 15 from those from analyses without adjustments for pubertal development, however.
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57 Discussion

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4 1 In this longitudinal population-based study of Norwegian adolescents there were in
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7 2 both boys and girls no associations between objectively measured physical activity at
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10 3 baseline and two-year changes in BMI, waist circumference and FMI. Both boys and
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14 4 girls had statistically significant increases in the measures of body composition
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17 5 (except lean mass index and appendicular lean mass in girls). Objectively measured
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21 6 physical activity did not predict changes in boys. In girls there was a significant
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24 7 association between minutes spent in sedentary- and light physical activity and
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28 8 changes in indices of lean mass.

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32 9 Although the magnitude of change differed, both sexes experienced increases in
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36 10 measures of body composition. In boys, FMI increased by 0.7 units (+ 16.7%),
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39 11 whereas LMI increased by 0.4 units (+ 2.3 %) from baseline. Similar relative changes
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42 12 were observed in girls, (FMI +8.2 %) and (LMI + 0.7%), indicating that FMI increases
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46 13 relatively more than LMI during late adolescence. We observed statistically significant
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49 14 differences in minutes spent in moderate ($p < 0.01$) and vigorous ($p = 0.04$) intensity
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53 15 between boys and girls, but time spent in other intensity levels did not differ.

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56 16 Differences in physical activity by sex is consistent with previous research.[22, 23]

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59 17 Differences in changes in body composition by sex are biologically determined during

1 adolescence, with sex hormones resulting in fat mass accrual in girls and lean mass
2 accrual in boys.[24, 25] The observation that sedentary- and light activity predicted
3 changes in indices of lean mass in girls, but not boys, may be explained by these
4 expected biological differences. Physical activity may have somewhat greater
5 potential to influence lean mass accrual in girls than in boys during this period, as fat-
6 free mass is relatively stable in girls in late adolescence whereas it increases up to
7 18 years of age in boys.[26]

8 In the present study sedentary- and light activity had opposing effects on lean mass
9 in girls. In a study using iso-temporal substitution models, positive prospective effects
10 on fat mass was found when substituting 30 minutes of sedentary activity with MVPA,
11 but not when substituted with light activity.[27] It is reasonable that sedentary- and
12 light physical activity have opposing effects on lean mass.[28] In the present study
13 sedentary- and light activity was inversely correlated ($r = - 0.39$), but minutes spent in
14 different intensity levels are not directly a function of each other as wear time in the
15 participants varies between individuals. Based on wear time inclusion criteria, the
16 theoretical time span for wear time lies between 10 and 24 hours. Thus, minutes
17 spent in sedentary activity may not be deduced from the sum of minutes spent in

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4 1 other intensities and vice versa, but it is plausible that higher wear time results in
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7 2 more sedentary time. This was evident in an exploratory analyses on the same
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10 3 cohort (not included in the present study), where higher wear time was significantly
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12
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14 4 associated with more sedentary activity and less light activity ($p < 0.01$). Adjusting for
15
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17 5 wear time (Models 2) did not change the associations substantially for sedentary
18
19
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21 6 activity (Table 2), but had some effect on the associations with light physical activity
22
23
24 7 (Table 3). Because of the inverse relationship between minutes spent sedentary and
25
26
27
28 8 in light activity, it is not possible to determine whether it is sedentary time or light
29
30
31 9 activity-time that is associated with change in LMI. The practical consequences are
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35 10 nevertheless that being active increases lean mass in girls.

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39 11 When interpreting results, we must acknowledge the limitations of DXA in the
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43 12 estimation of lean mass, which can be affected by both biological factors and
44
45
46 13 measurement error.[29] Because the relative increase in lean mass was small, only
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48
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50 14 slight differences in for instance individual hydration status at the two time-points may
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53 15 influence estimates and thus the association.

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4 1 There was no associations between objectively measured physical activity and
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7 2 change in BMI, waist circumference and FMI for either sex. It may be that the
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10 3 negative effects of less physical activity have not yet had time to manifest themselves
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12
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14 4 in a population still undergoing physiological changes as a result of natural growth,
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16
17 5 especially considering the relatively short 2-year follow-up. Our results are in line with
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21 6 a systematic review suggesting that objectively measured PA is not an important
22
23
24 7 predictor of change in adiposity in children, adolescents and adults.[12] In contrast,
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28 8 another systematic review found a protective effect of physical activity on adiposity in
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31 9 adolescents.[10] There were however several methodological weaknesses in the
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35 10 studies included in this review, particularly regarding the validity of the measurement
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39 11 of both physical activity and body composition. In contrast, our study employed
40
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42 12 robust measures of both these exposures- and outcomes, a combination which is
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45 13 lacking in much past research on the association between the two.[10-12]
46
47
48
49 14 In adolescents, physical activity is influenced by friends, family and other social
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53 15 support,[30] and is less stable than in adults.[31-33] Follow-up data on objectively
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57 16 measured physical activity was not available in the present study, but some evidence
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59
60 17 suggests that the decline in physical activity is steeper prior to the onset of

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4 1 adolescence.[34] Reductions in level of physical activity during the transition from
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7 2 adolescence to young adulthood nevertheless often occur.[35] Prior observations
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10 3 from the same cohort showed that change in self-reported physical activity between
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12
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14 4 baseline and follow-up was a stronger predictor of change in body composition than
15
16
17 5 self-reported baseline physical activity.[36] Other studies have suggested that
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21 6 change in activity during follow-up might obscure an association with body
22
23
24 7 composition.[37, 38] In a sub-analyses, one of four in both the highest and lowest
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28 8 categories of MVPA at baseline reported decreased (high MVPA at baseline) and
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31 9 increased (low MVPA at baseline) self-reported physical activity at follow up, thus
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35 10 indicating that physical activity in adolescents is fluctuant. These two observations,
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39 11 assuming that measurement of both MVPA and self-reported hours per week of
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42 12 physical activity are representative of actual physical activity behaviour at the time,
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44
45 13 work in opposing directions with regard to the effect of physical activity on changes in
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49 14 adiposity. This phenomenon is known as regression dilution bias and may flatten the
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52 15 regression slope and cause an underestimate of the actual association.[39] With an
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56 16 annual decline in total physical activity of 7% in adolescents, researchers must
57
58
59 17 consider the possibility that measured physical activity has a “best before-date”. It
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4 1 remains questionable whether baseline measurements of a fluctuant behaviour such
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6
7 2 as physical activity is representative of actual habits during the period of follow-up. It
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9
10 3 may be that the measurement represents current, but not future (or even prior)
11
12
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14 4 habits.[12, 40] This has implications for longitudinal studies of the relationship
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16
17 5 between physical activity and body composition.[38]
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7 Strengths and limitations

8 The primary strength of this study are objective measures of both physical activity
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10 and body composition parameters, and the inclusion of tissue-specific measures of
11
12 body composition. Some limitations have to be considered. As the Fit Futures study
13
14 did not include a validated food frequency questionnaire or similar instrument for
15
16 nutritional assessment, we were not able to fully adjust for the potential confounding
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18 effects of nutrition and changes in food habits of adolescents on changes in body
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20 composition. Accelerometer-measured physical activity has limitations. A hip worn
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22 accelerometer such as the ActiGraph GT3X is not able to correctly measure cycling
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24 and swimming.[41] Furthermore, accelerometers are dependent on user-compliance,
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1 and non-wear time therefore affects the amount of activity which is actually
2 measured. Subjective judgement determines data management and analyses, e.g.
3 the decision to exclude participants with wear time < 10 hours and < 4 consecutive
4 days, is a trade-off between quality of data and the number of participants with valid
5 data. We lacked complete data on physical activity and adjustment variables in 212
6 participants, but changes in BMI, waist circumference, FMI, LMI (except in girls, $p =$
7 0.04) and aLMI were not significantly different between those with- and without
8 complete exposure data. Furthermore, of those with valid data concerning both
9 physical activity and body composition parameters at baseline, close to 25% did not
10 attend the follow up (Appendix Table 1). This group differed significantly from those
11 included in the main analyses with respect to both physical activity and body
12 composition parameters. The prospective associations between physical activity and
13 changes in body composition parameters in this group ($n = 133$) may be different
14 from those observed in the group of participants included in the main analyses ($n =$
15 431), and the associations in all the 564 participants with valid baseline data may
16 therefore be different from what we find in the main analyses. This is however not
17 possible to determine given the lack of follow-up data.

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4 1 Although longitudinal observational studies are superior to cross-sectional studies to
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7 2 examine causation, they are also susceptible to directional bias, since participants
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10 3 may avoid physical activity because they are overweight, and not be overweight
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14 4 because they are inactive.[42-44] Finally, as the participants were 16 years old, much
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17 5 may already have happened both to the level of physical activity and the different
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21 6 measures of body composition prior to participation. In light of this, 2 years of follow-
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24 7 up may be a short time frame to determine the potential effects of physical activity on
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28 8 changes in the different body composition parameters.
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36 **Conclusion**

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40 11 Objectively measured physical activity was not significantly associated with change in
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44 12 objectively measured BMI, waist circumference or FMI after two years in this cohort
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47 13 of Norwegian adolescents. There was evidence to suggest that sedentary- and light
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51 14 activity affected indices of lean mass in girls, but not boys.
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1 Acknowledgements

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8 2 The authors thank the participants in the study, as well as the staff at the Clinical
9
10
11 3 Research Unit at the University Hospital of North Norway for data collection and
12
13
14 4 clinical measurements. We also thank the Fit Futures Steering Committee in both
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18 5 studies.
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22 Footnotes

23 24 25 26 7 Contributors

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30 8 NAA wrote the draft of the manuscript, which was revised and edited by all authors
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32
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34 9 several times during the process. SB produced the accelerometer variables in close
35
36
37
38 10 collaboration with AH, who wrote the software which converted raw accelerometer
39
40
41 11 data to variables. BKJ contributed to the statistical analyses, and BM specifically
42
43
44
45 12 contributed to the discussion of physical activity. NE and ASF were among the
46
47
48 13 principal investigators in FF1 and FF2 and contributed significantly to the acquisition
49
50
51 14 of data. SG formulated the research question and conceived the study. All authors
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55 15 have substantially contributed to the study, and have read and approved the final
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58 16 manuscript.
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1
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3 1 Funding
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7 2 This particular manuscript has not received any specific funding.
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10
11 3 Competing interests
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15 4 The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
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19 5 Consent for publication
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23 6 Not applicable
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27 7 Ethics approval
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31 8 This study was approved by The Regional Committee of Medical and Health
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35 9 Research Ethics (2014/1666/REK nord).
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39 10 Data availability statement
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43 11 The data that support the findings of this study are available from UiT – The Arctic
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47 12 University of Norway. Restrictions apply to the availability of these data, which were
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51 13 used under license for the current study, and are thus not publicly available.
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Supplementary file

Appendix Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of participants lost to follow-up (n = 133), with p-value for difference from sample in Table 1*.

| | Boys (n = 79) | P for difference | Girls (n = 54) | P for difference |
|--|---------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Age (years) | 16.1 (0.4) | 0.26 | 16.1 (0.4) | 0.42 |
| Height (cm) | 176.7 (13.8) | 0.31 | 164.5 (5.9) | 0.18 |
| Body weight (kg) | 73.3 (18.0) | 0.01 | 63.5 (1.9) | 0.06 |
| Body mass index (BMI kg/m ²) | 23.4 (5.2) | 0.01 | 23.4 (4.4) | 0.02 |
| Waist circumference (cm) | 85.1 (13.9) | <0.01 | 80.0 (12.4) | 0.02 |
| Total Body Fat Mass (kg) | 17.6 (12.8) | <0.01 | 22.8 (10.3) | 0.01 |
| Fat Mass Index (FMI kg/m ²) | 5.6 (4.0) | <0.01 | 8.4 (3.5) | 0.01 |
| Total Body Lean Mass (kg) | 53.9 (7.8) | 0.46 | 38.6 (4.6) | 0.33 |
| Lean Mass Index (LMI kg/m ²) | 17.2 (1.9) | 0.43 | 14.2 (1.4) | 0.42 |
| Appendicular Lean Mass (kg) | 25.3 (4.1) | 0.49 | 17.4 (2.5) | 0.48 |
| Appendicular Lean Mass Index (aLMI kg/m ²) | 8.1 (1.0) | 0.41 | 6.4 (0.76) | 0.29 |
| Accelerometer variables | | | | |
| Wear time per valid day | 14.3 (1.2) | 0.26 | 13.7 (1.0) | <0.01 |
| Counts per minute | 338.4 (112.1) | 0.08 | 300.5 (121.5) | 0.03 |
| Minutes per day in different intensities | | | | |
| Sedentary (cpm 0 – 99) | 570.1 (82.6) | 0.38 | 562.6 (68.9) | 0.39 |
| Light (cpm 100 – 1951) | 244.3 (64.7) | 0.05 | 223.4 (46.3) | 0.04 |
| Moderate (cpm 1952 – 5723) | 42.9 (19.6) | 0.15 | 33.0 (17.6) | <0.01 |
| Vigorous (cpm ≥ 5724) | 2.3 (2.9) | 0.03 | 2.7 (5.1) | 0.40 |
| MVPA [#] (cpm ≥ 1952) | 45.2 (21.0) | 0.08 | 35.6 (20.0) | 0.01 |
| Meeting MVPA guidelines per day | | | | |
| 0 – 29 minutes | 21 (26.6) | | 24 (44.4) | |
| 30 – 59 minutes | 41 (51.9) | | 23 (42.6) | |
| ≥ 60 minutes | 17 (21.5) | | 7 (13.0)* | |

*: Statistically significantly different linear trend from sample included in manuscript (Table 1).

Appendix Table 2. Association between minutes per day spent in sedentary activity (CPM 0 – 99) at baseline and changes in body composition, adjusted for puberty[#].

| | Boys (n = 143) | | | Girls (n = 258) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.02 | -0.14, 0.09 | 0.70 | -0.05 | -0.15, 0.05 | 0.32 |
| Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.17, 0.14 | 0.85 | -0.11 | -0.24, 0.03 | 0.12 |
| Model 3 | 0.03 | -0.17, 0.23 | 0.76 | -0.11 | -0.27, 0.05 | 0.19 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.12 | -0.27, 0.51 | 0.55 | -0.01 | -0.42, 0.39 | 0.95 |
| Model 2 | 0.24 | -0.28, 0.77 | 0.36 | -0.38 | -0.91, 0.15 | 0.16 |
| Model 3 | 0.37 | -0.32, 1.06 | 0.29 | -0.52 | -1.14, 0.10 | 0.10 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.12, 0.09 | 0.84 | -0.01 | -0.11, 0.08 | 0.81 |
| Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.15, 0.13 | 0.85 | -0.06 | -0.18, 0.07 | 0.35 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.17, 0.20 | 0.90 | -0.05 | -0.20, 0.10 | 0.49 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.05, 0.06 | 0.90 | -0.06 | -0.09, -0.02 | < 0.01 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.07, 0.08 | 0.89 | -0.07 | -0.12, -0.02 | < 0.01 |
| Model 3 | 0.02 | -0.08, 0.11 | 0.74 | -0.08 | -0.13, -0.02 | < 0.01 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.00 | -0.03, 0.03 | 0.91 | -0.02 | -0.04, -0.00 | 0.02 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.04, 0.04 | 0.92 | -0.03 | -0.05, -0.00 | 0.02 |
| Model 3 | 0.01 | -0.04, 0.07 | 0.59 | -0.03 | -0.06, 0.00 | 0.06 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in sedentary activity and difference in BMI (kg/m^2), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m^2), LMI (lean mass in kg/m^2) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m^2) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in sedentary activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of pubertal development (pds (boys) and age at menarche (girls)), screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity ($\text{CPM} \geq 1952$).

Appendix Table 3. Association between minutes per day spent in light activity (CPM 100 – 1951) at baseline and changes in body composition, adjusted for puberty[#].

| | Boys (n = 143) | | | Girls (n = 258) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.05 | -0.10, 0.20 | 0.53 | 0.04 | -0.09, 0.18 | 0.54 |
| Model 2 | -0.00 | -0.19, 0.18 | 0.97 | 0.11 | -0.04, 0.27 | 0.15 |
| Model 3 | -0.03 | -0.23, 0.17 | 0.76 | 0.11 | -0.05, 0.27 | 0.19 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.53, 0.51 | 0.97 | 0.53 | -0.00, 1.07 | 0.05 |
| Model 2 | -0.34 | -0.98, 0.30 | 0.30 | 0.50 | -0.11, 1.11 | 0.11 |
| Model 3 | -0.37 | -1.06, 0.32 | 0.29 | 0.51 | -0.11, 1.13 | 0.10 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.05 | -0.09, 0.18 | 0.51 | 0.02 | -0.11, 0.14 | 0.78 |
| Model 2 | 0.00 | -0.17, 0.18 | 0.97 | 0.06 | -0.09, 0.20 | 0.43 |
| Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.20, 0.17 | 0.90 | 0.05 | -0.10, 0.20 | 0.49 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | -0.01 | -0.08, 0.06 | 0.84 | 0.04 | -0.01, 0.09 | 0.08 |
| Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.10, 0.07 | 0.80 | 0.08 | 0.02, 0.13 | < 0.01 |
| Model 3 | -0.02 | -0.11, 0.07 | 0.74 | 0.08 | 0.02, 0.13 | < 0.01 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.00 | -0.04, 0.04 | 0.93 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.04 | 0.17 |
| Model 2 | -0.01 | -0.06, 0.04 | 0.73 | 0.03 | 0.00, 0.06 | 0.04 |
| Model 3 | -0.01 | -0.07, 0.04 | 0.59 | 0.03 | -0.00, 0.06 | 0.06 |

[#]: The table displays the association between minutes spent in light activity and difference in BMI (kg/m²), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m²), LMI (lean mass in kg/m²) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m²) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 30 minutes increase in light activity. All models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of pubertal development (pds (boys) and age at menarche (girls)), screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time. In Model 3 adjusted also for minutes spent in Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (CPM ≥ 1952).

Appendix Table 4. Association between minutes per day spent in MVPA (CPM \geq 1952) at baseline and changes in body composition, adjusted for puberty[#].

| | Boys (n = 143) | | | Girls (n = 258) | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Beta | 95% CI | p value | Beta | 95% CI | p value |
| Δ BMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.11 | -0.08, 0.31 | 0.24 | -0.00 | -0.17, 0.16 | 0.97 |
| Model 2 | 0.07 | -0.15, 0.29 | 0.51 | 0.07 | -0.11, 0.25 | 0.43 |
| Δ waist circumference | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.28 | -0.38, 0.95 | 0.40 | -0.02 | -0.68, 0.64 | 0.95 |
| Model 2 | -0.06 | -0.82, 0.70 | 0.88 | 0.02 | -0.69, 0.72 | 0.97 |
| Δ FMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.02 | -0.16, 0.20 | 0.80 | -0.01 | -0.17, 0.14 | 0.88 |
| Model 2 | 0.05 | -0.16, 0.25 | 0.66 | 0.06 | -0.11, 0.22 | 0.52 |
| Δ LMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.08 | -0.02, 0.17 | 0.11 | 0.03 | -0.03, 0.09 | 0.34 |
| Model 2 | 0.01 | -0.09, 0.11 | 0.84 | 0.03 | -0.04, 0.09 | 0.42 |
| Δ aLMI | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | 0.05 | -0.01, 0.10 | 0.09 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.05 | 0.13 |
| Model 2 | 0.02 | -0.04, 0.07 | 0.60 | 0.02 | -0.01, 0.06 | 0.15 |

#: The table displays the association between minutes spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) and difference in BMI (kg/m^2), waist circumference, FMI (fat mass in kg/m^2), LMI (lean mass in kg/m^2) and aLMI (appendicular lean mass in kg/m^2) between Fit Futures 1 (2010-2011) and Fit Futures 2 (2012-2013). The models give the beta coefficient for 15 minutes increase in MVPA. Both models were adjusted for baseline values of the outcome. In model 2 also adjusted for time between measurements and baseline values of pubertal development (pds (boys) and age at menarche (girls)), screen time on weekdays, study specialisation, age in half-years, regularity of eating breakfast and device wear time.

STROBE statement for submitted manuscript entitled “*The association between objectively measured physical activity and longitudinal changes in body composition in adolescents; The Tromsø Study Fit Futures Cohort.*”

| | Item No | Recommendation |
|------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Title and abstract | 1 | (a) P. 1, lines 1-2. (b) P. 3, lines 1-23. |
| Introduction | | |
| Background/rationale | 2 | P. 5, lines 1-25 and P. 6, lines 1-3. |
| Objectives | 3 | P. 6, lines 3-8. |
| Methods | | |
| Study design | 4 | P. 6, lines 11-16. |
| Setting | 5 | P. 6, lines 11-23. |
| Participants | 6 | (a) P. 6, lines 18-23. |
| Variables | 7 | P. 8, lines 11-24. P. 9, lines 1-25. |
| Data sources/ measurement | 8* | P. 6, lines 17-23. P. 7, lines 3-24. P. 8, lines 1-17. |
| Bias | 9 | P. 9, lines 17-25 and P. 10, lines 1-3. |
| Study size | 10 | P. 6, lines 11-23. |
| Quantitative variables | 11 | P. 9, lines 12-17. |
| Statistical methods | 12 | (a) P. 9, lines 1-24 and P. 10, lines 1-6. (b) P. 9, line 1 and P. 10, lines 1-3. (c) P. 6, lines 19-24 and P. 7, lines 1-2. (d) P. 6, lines 23-24 and P. 7, lines 1-2. (e) P. 19, lines 1-12. |
| Results | | |
| Participants | 13* | (a) P. 6, lines 11-23. (b) See (a). |
| Descriptive data | 14* | (a) See Table 1. (b) See 13a (c) See Table 1. |
| Outcome data | 15* | See Table 1. |
| Main results | 16 | (a) See Tables and P. 9, lines 11-25. (b) See Table 1. |
| Other analyses | 17 | P. 10, lines 1-3, and P. 14, lines 9-17. P. 15, lines 1-4. P. 17, lines 22-25. P. 19, lines 1-12. |
| Discussion | | |
| Key results | 18 | P. 15, lines 6-12. |
| Limitations | 19 | P. 16, lines 21-25. P. 17, lines 22-25. P. 18 lines 1-11 and lines 16-25. P. 19, lines 1-19. |
| Interpretation | 20 | P. 15, lines 13-24. P. 16, 1-25. P. 17, lines 1-25. P. 18, lines 1-11. |
| Generalisability | 21 | P. 19, lines 1-12 and lines 16-18. |
| Other information | | |

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Funding

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P. 21, lines 16.

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