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Children and young people aged between 5 and 18, are supposed to get an hour's exercise each day. But a new study has found that activity levels are already dropping off by the age of just seven. New research, carried out in the north-east of England, overturns previous thinking that teenagers should be the main focus for efforts to boost exercise. Children are supposed to be active for an hour every day, but most youngsters don't get enough exercise, and this study suggests bad habits start at an earlier age. More than 400 children from Gateshead wore an activity monitor for a week at a time. Their exercise levels were measured at the ages of seven, nine, 12 and 15. Physical activity dropped off from the age of seven onwards, in boys and girls.

The orthodox view is that this adolescent decline is not only something which happens at adolescence, so it coincides with puberty or with transition to high school, but also it is something that particularly affects girls. And our study shows that that is clearly not the case. I think what that means, in terms of public health programmes, is programmes and policies and practices all have to focus much earlier, probably around about the time children go to school. Too much time looking at screens and sitting down is storing up health problems for the future, according to Public Health England. It is campaigning to try and change the fact that one in five children leaves primary school obese. studio. Are you surprised by this? People are coming in with the

consequences of inactivity. You're looking at the psychological impact. Not developing the same friendship groups, developing anxiety, depression, the referral rates are skyrocketing. We are seeing cases of rickets. Because they are not in the sunshine? When we are in the sunshine we make vitamin diesel stop we see lots of children with soft bones and rickets. -- vitamin D. When we do the blood tests, we find they have low vitamin D levels. Saw lots of children with rickets? Not lots but it is becoming more common. So juicy the impact in a different way. At what age do you see these problems starting? Preschool, more

than likely. Parents are coming in with lack of exercise mentioned, you will get a hunch, talking about computer games. Is that what it is? Telephones, tablets, it is too easy. We all know that. We are all human. Children are just the same. But it is making exercise fun and interesting. It has wider implications. Not just obesity but helping improve imagination. Often we use social media to keep in touch with friends and we're not learning skills for future life. A lot of the public education on this has been focused that teenagers. Have we got it wrong? Do we need to focus on

younger kids? Yes, some primary schools are bringing in things like your car which is great. We need to look at things in a different way. What ever it is to get children active and interested in exercise. Does it help if the parents are active with them? Humongous way. Finding what the child is good at and going for it. Not everybody will be good at everything. I was not sporty when I was little. But we must pursue things that we are good at. What should people be aiming for? An hour a day is difficult, I could not do that, but anything from

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