

Video Games and Physical Health

by Joseph Green

There's no doubt about it: young people love video games. A 2008 Pew Internet & American Life study reported that 97% of Americans ages 12 to 17 play video games. That's a lot of people! But how might this gaming affect their physical health?

Some people play video games for too long. They hold their body in one position for hours. They perform the same movements over and over. This tension and repetition can strain body parts such as the neck, wrist, or elbow. The strain can cause pain. However, in many cases the pain doesn't last. It goes away if people stop playing the games so much.

Video games have also been blamed for the rise in obesity. People may choose video games over physical activity. This problem can be avoided by making time for physical activity. Also, some video games can actually help people be more physically active. These games allow players to move their bodies to control the game. Some people say these games don't have the same benefits as "real" physical activity. Others see them as a good way to encourage people to move more.

Playing video games may lead to some health problems. But many of these problems occur when the games are played excessively. Moderate game playing doesn't usually harm people's physical health over the long term.