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## physically, *adv.*

**Pronunciation:** Brit. /'fɪzɪkli/, U.S. /'fɪzək(ə)li/

**Forms:** see PHYSICAL *adj.* and -LY *suffix*<sup>2</sup>; also 16 **phisikcallie**.

**Frequency (in current use):**

**Origin:** Formed within English, by derivation. **Etymons:** PHYSICAL *adj.*, -LY *suffix*<sup>2</sup>.

**Etymology:** < PHYSICAL *adj.* + -LY *suffix*<sup>2</sup>; compare -ICALLY *suffix*.

†1. Medically; medicinally; according to medical rules. *Obsolete.*

- 1582 J. HESTER tr. L. Fioravanti *Compend. Rationall Secretes* III. cxiv. 139 Then shall be finished the solution of Iron Physically, the whiche thou maiest giue safely.
- 1674 R. GODFREY *Var. Injuries in Physick* 208 To make it a Proverb, *Qui Medicè vivit, miserè vivit*, (i.e.) He that lives Physically, lives miserably.
- 1712 M. HENRY *Sober-mindedness in Wks.* (1853) I. 70 Then it [sc. mirth] must be used like a medicine,—must be taken physically.
- 1782 M. HENRY *Select Sermons* 146 A merry heart doth good like a medicine; but then it must be used like a medicine, must be taken physically.

### 2.

a. According to (the laws of) nature or physics; according to the world as perceived by the senses; materially as opposed to intellectually, morally, or spiritually.

- 1583 A. NOWELL et al. *True Rep. Disput. E. Campion* sig. Y4 You reason physically: but we must not be led by senses in these misteries.
- 1675 R. BURTHOGGE *Causa Dei* 48 It is not deni'd Physically, but Morally.
- 1735 T. DALLOWE tr. H. Boerhaave *Elements Chem.* I. II. 330 This Experiment..teaches us, that the smallest difference of some physical circumstance, may occasion the greatest difference in the Body physically produced.
- 1794 R. J. SULLIVAN *View of Nature* I. 417 The swelling of the ocean, by the joint attraction of the sun and the moon, is less physically intelligible, than the periodical effusions of the polar ices.
- 1855 W. R. GROVE *On Correlation Physical Forces* (ed. 3) 182 An atom or molecule physically indivisible.
- 1870 W. S. JEVONS *Elem. Lessons Logic* ii. 13 Nothing can physically exist corresponding to a general notion.

- 1942 E. WAUGH *Put out More Flags* ii. 114 There was an enormous fall of snow,..and for eight days the Old Mill was cut off physically, as for so long it had been cut in spirit, from all contact with the modern world.
- 2000 *Wired* Apr. 247/3 Evolution..must occur at every scale at which it's physically possible, down to and including the nanoecosystem of the genome.

†b. Essentially, intrinsically. *Obsolete.*

- 1629 H. BURTON *Truth's Triumph* 58 Justification..the forme whereof is relatue and not physically inherent in vs.
- 1684 T. HOCKIN *Disc. God's Decrees* 200 The will is physically ours, and the deed is also ours, but 'tis morally Gods.
- 1793 D. STEWART *Outl. Moral Philos.* II. 209 Not to demonstrate that the soul is physically and necessarily immortal.

†c. Practically, almost. *Obsolete. rare.*

- 1690 W. LEYBOURN *Cursus mathematicus* f. 450 It is a Body, though Physically Round, yet full of uneven Asperities.
- 1758 *Philos. Trans.* 1757 (Royal Soc.) 50 324 The velocity of the fluids, in the remoter series of vessels, will be, physically, nothing.

**3.** With regard to the body; in bodily terms or by bodily means. Also: *spec. sexually.*

*physically challenged*: see *challenged adj.* at CHALLENGE *v.* Derivatives.

- c1600 *Timon* (1980) *v.* iv. 79 He'es an asse logically, & Capitally, not Phisiccallie & animallie.
- 1651 R. BAXTER *Plain Script. Proof Infants Church-membership & Baptism* 179 It may be the child's Action Morally, and in Law-sence, when it is only the Father's Action Physically.
- 1794 tr. A. Barruel *Hist. Clergy during French Revol.* I. 92 That man, whose heart morally and physically corrupted had been consumed by an ignominious putrefaction, which ultimately had pervaded the whole system of his body.
- 1846 J. E. RYLAND in *Life & Corr. J. Foster* II. 107 Unless physically disabled.
- 1882 E. R. PITMAN *Mission Life in Greece* 194 These fellaheen are physically adapted to the climate.
- 1934 C. P. SNOW *Search* (1972) II. iii. 171 Does one ever love just physically?
- 1986 S. FORWARD *Men who hate Women* (1987) II. x. 196 I asked Nicki..to ventilate her anger physically by beating on the empty chair with a padded foam bat, called a bataka.
- 1995 *Independent* 21 Dec. 1/5 Older and physically unattractive women are defined as 'dragons', which gave men licence to be ruder to them.

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**PHRASES**

**physically impossible** *adj.* not possible according to the laws of nature or physics; beyond the limits of what can actually be done.

- 1666 R. BOYLE *Origine Formes & Qualities* 9 It is Physically impossible, that it [sc. matter] should be devoid of some Bulk or other, and som determinate Shape or other.
- 1703 *Philos. Trans.* 1702–3 (Royal Soc.) 23 1315 Dr Ward's Theory is Physically impossible, there being no Centripetal force towards the Sun, that can make them move in an Ellipse according to this Law.
- 1855 MACAULAY *Hist. Eng.* III. xii. 217 It would be physically impossible for many of them to surrender themselves in time.
- 1993 *New Musical Express* (BNC) 12 Sept. 31 I think it would be physically impossible to drink all that every night on tour.

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