



Australian Government

Department of Health

Is your family missing out on  
the benefits of being active  
every day?



Make your move – Sit less  
Be active for life!



# What's it all about?

Being physically active and limiting sedentary behaviour every day is good for your health and has other benefits too. This brochure provides you with information about the benefits of being physically active, and offers steps that you and your family can take towards better health, at any age. You will find information for everyone – infants and toddlers, children, young people and adults too, as well as tips and ideas for being more active and less sedentary every day.

More information about healthy living, including references to other Australian Government guidelines concerning healthy weight and healthy eating, can be found at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

## THE BENEFITS OF AN ACTIVE LIFE

Doing any regular physical activity is better than doing none. Look for ways to add physical activity and to limit sedentary behaviour in your day and be a good role model for your family.

Encouraging kids to be active each day establishes good habits that can stay with them throughout their lives.



## REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN:

- Provide families with opportunities to have fun together.
- Make you feel good.
- Help you to relax.
- Improve self-esteem and confidence.
- Help to prevent unhealthy weight gain and assist with weight loss.
- Reduce the risk of developing, and help manage, cardiovascular disease.
- Reduce the risk of developing, and help manage, type 2 diabetes.
- Reduce the risk of, and assist with rehabilitation from, some cancers.
- Help to build strong bones, muscles and joints.
- Promote healthy growth and development.

**Move more, sit less, every day!**

# Be physically active every day

Our bodies are designed to move from the minute we are born. The easiest way to be more physically active is to include a variety of activities as part of your family's routine. Remember to ensure that the activities you and your family do are age and development appropriate.

If you are not currently doing any physical activity, you will benefit from starting some activity, and gradually increasing the amount you do. Trying out new activities as a family can be fun and rewarding.

## INFANTS (BIRTH TO 1 YEAR)

Physical activity – particularly supervised floor-based play in safe environments – should be encouraged from birth.

## TODDLERS (1–3 YEARS) & PRE-SCHOOLERS (3–5 YEARS)

Be physically active every day for at least three hours, spread throughout the day.



## CHILDREN (5–12 YEARS) & YOUNG PEOPLE (13–17 YEARS)

- Accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity every day.
- Do a variety of aerobic activities, including some vigorous intensity activity.
- Engage in more activity – up to several hours per day, for additional health benefits.

## ADULTS (18–64 YEARS)

- Doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you currently do no physical activity, start by doing some, and gradually build up to the recommended amount.
- Accumulate 150 to 300 minutes (2½ to 5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity or 75 to 150 minutes (1¼ to 2½ hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous activities, each week.

### MODERATE INTENSITY ACTIVITIES

take some effort, but you are still able to talk while doing them.

E.g. brisk walking, recreational swimming, dancing, social tennis, riding a bike, golf, household tasks like cleaning windows or raking leaves, or playing active games.

### VIGOROUS INTENSITY ACTIVITIES

require more effort and make you breathe harder and faster ('huff and puff').

E.g. jogging, fast cycling, many organised sports, or tasks that involve lifting, carrying or digging.

Being physically active will make you breathe more quickly and your heart beat faster.



## Limit sedentary behaviour



Sedentary behaviour is the time you spend sitting or lying down, except when you are sleeping. To reduce the risk of poorer health outcomes, including type 2 diabetes everyone should limit their sedentary behaviour every day.

Even if you are physically active every day, you will still benefit from minimising sedentary behaviour at home, at work, during travel and for leisure.



### CHILDREN (0-5 YEARS)

Should not be sedentary, restrained, or kept inactive, for more than one hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping.

### CHILDREN (5-12 YEARS), YOUNG PEOPLE (13-17 YEARS) & ADULTS (18-64 YEARS)

- Minimise the time spent being sedentary every day.
- Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

There are some activities, like reading, doing school work, working on a computer, or travelling, that may need to be done while you are sitting. The key is to find a healthy balance, and to look for opportunities to stand up and move whenever you can.

# What is 'screen time'?



**Time spent using electronic media (such as television, seated electronic games, portable electronic devices or computers) for entertainment, is referred to as 'screen time'.**

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While screen time activities may be popular, they usually involve either sitting or lying down for long periods.

## CHILDREN AGED LESS THAN 2 YEARS

Should not spend any time watching television or using other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games).

## CHILDREN AGED 2 TO 5 YEARS

Sitting and watching television and the use of other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games) should be limited to less than one hour per day.

## CHILDREN (5–12 YEARS) & YOUNG PEOPLE (13–17 YEARS)

Limit use of electronic media for entertainment (e.g. television, seated electronic games and computer use) to no more than two hours a day – lower levels are associated with reduced health risks.

## You can limit your family's screen time by:

Allocating specific time periods for electronic media use, preferably not during daylight hours when you can be active outside.



Rewarding good behaviour with active family time, rather than with electronic media use.



Turning off the TV, especially during meal times.



Making bedrooms TV and computer free zones.



Storing portable electronic devices, such as phones, tablets and electronic games, out of sight.



Setting a good example – reduce your electronic media use for entertainment.





# What about strength?



Regular muscle strengthening activities can benefit all members of your family, from infants to adults. Doing activities to build strong and healthy muscles and bones can help:

- Prevent and control heart disease and type 2 diabetes.
- Manage blood pressure, blood sugar and blood cholesterol.
- Improve posture, mobility and balance.
- Maintain functional status and the ability to do everyday activities.

## **CHILDREN (5–12 YEARS) & YOUNG PEOPLE (13–17 YEARS)**

Do activities that strengthen muscle and bone on at least 3 days each week.

## **ADULTS (18–64 YEARS)**

Do muscle strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week.



## **GROWING STRONGER**

Help children to grow strong bones and muscles by encouraging them to:



- Skip, hop, run, and jump.
- Climb and swing.



- Play games like tug-o-war and hopscotch.



- Try more structured activities like dance, gymnastics or martial arts.

Participating in a variety of physical activities, especially dance, aerobics or martial arts, will help to build strength. For young people and adults, there are also many body weight exercises like sit-ups, push-ups, lunges and squats, or hand-held weight exercises that can be done at home.



# Move more, sit less, every day!



## ACTIVE FAMILIES

Set aside time to be active together as a family – visit playgrounds, parks, nature reserves, ovals or beaches. Trying out new activities can be fun and rewarding.

On rainy days, try a dance competition in the lounge room with the kids, play games with balloons or soft balls inside, or visit an indoor swimming pool.



## CHILDREN 0–5 YEARS

Children grow at different rates and develop physical skills at varying times, but regular physical activity is important and young children should be given plenty of opportunities to be active.

Physical activity for young children includes both structured activities and unstructured free play, and it can be done indoors or out.



## CHILDREN 5–12 YEARS

There are many activities that children can do as part of their 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Your children may enjoy organised sports like soccer, netball, basketball or swimming, or they may prefer riding their bike or scooter, playing a game of tag, throwing a frisbee or jumping rope. Remember, your child's 60 minutes of physical activity can be accumulated throughout the day.



## YOUNG PEOPLE 13–17 YEARS

Physical activity does not have to be organised or competitive to be beneficial – social activities with family and friends, or being active by yourself can be lots of fun and have many benefits. Using active modes of travel, like walking or riding a bike or skateboard safely, are a great way for young people to be active.



## ADULTS 18–64 YEARS

Doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you are not currently physically active, start with some activity and gradually increase the amount you do. Remember the more activity you do each week, the better.

**Be active every day in as many ways as you can!**



## Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

- Move and Play Every Day – National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 Years.
- Make *your* move – Sit less – Be active for life!
  - Children (5-12 years)
  - Young People (13-17 years)
  - Adults (18-64 years)
  - Families
- Choose Health: Be Active – A physical activity guide for older Australians.

To order these resources  
**FREE OF CHARGE,**  
phone **1800 020 103**

## OTHER HEALTHY LIVING RESOURCES:

- Healthy Weight Guide – [www.healthyweight.health.gov.au](http://www.healthyweight.health.gov.au)
- Eat for Health – [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)
- Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Overweight and Obesity in Adults, Adolescents and Children in Australia – [www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n57](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n57)
- Get Up & Grow – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood (for centre based care, family day care and pre-schools) – [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

To find out more, go to  
**[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)**