

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Fact Sheet

People who exercise regularly have better mental and emotional health and a reduced chance of experiencing a mental illness. Exercise can also be a way to manage a mental illness.

Link between exercise and mental health

There are several explanations as to why being active can enhance a person's mood.

<p>Regular exercise assists people in getting better sleep. When people are meeting their sleep needs, they are better able to regulate their mood.</p> 	<p>Being active gives people a sense of control while also enhancing self-concept and ability to cope.</p> 
<p>When exercising with others, people are enhancing their sense of belonging and social health. For children, being active allows them to have fun, reduces antisocial behaviour and fosters teamwork.</p> 	<p>Exercise can be a distraction from negative thoughts and an outlet for feelings of frustration or anger. It can also be used as a method of alleviating stress.</p> 
<p>Brain chemicals such as serotonin are altered when people are active.</p> 	<p>People have more energy after doing exercise but also feel more relaxed as skeletal muscle tension has been eased.</p> 

Being active does not mean going to the gym and it does not have to be a formal type of exercise. Physical activity can be included in everyday life, through:

 <p>Walking instead of driving.</p>	 <p>Taking the stairs.</p>	 <p>Get off public transport a stop earlier and walk.</p>	 <p>Doing chores.</p>	 <p>Playing sport at lunchtime.</p>
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Activity Guidelines for Adults

The guidelines are to be active most (preferably all) days through a variety of moderate to vigorous activities as well as limiting time spent sitting and being sedentary. It is also recommended adults include muscle strengthening activities twice a week. Such activities include:



Moderate activity can be:

- A brisk walk
- Mowing the lawn
- Playing golf
- Swimming

Vigorous activity can be:

- Jogging
- Aerobics
- Team sports

Activity Guidelines for Children and Young People

Recommendations	Under 12 months	1-2 years	3-5 years	5-17 years
Physical activity	Interactive floor-based play, and at least 30 minutes of tummy time for babies per day.	At least 3 hours of energetic play per day.	At least 3 hours per day with 1 hour of energetic play.	At least 1 hour of moderate to vigorous activity involving mainly aerobic activities per day. Vigorous activities should be incorporated at least 3 days per week. Several hours of light activities per day.
Strength				At least 3 days a week.
Sedentary time	Do not restrain for more than 1 hour at a time.	Do not restrain for more than 1 hour at a time.	Do not restrain for more than 1 hour at a time.	Minimise and break up long periods of sitting.
Sedentary recreational screen time	None.	Under 2 years – none. 2 years – Maximum 1 hour per day.	Maximum 1 hour per day.	Maximum 2 hours per day.

PARENTS AND CARER SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Mothers might worry about losing their 'baby weight'. It is important that the body has time to recover once the baby is born. The most sensible approach is through healthy food choices and gentle exercise.

Regular movement is recommended for everyone, including new parents and carers. The best way to include movement when one has a newborn might be to make physical activity part of everyday life. Physical activity does not have to be complicated either; keep it simple. Some easy ways to be more active with a newborn:

Take the pram to get groceries.



Simple exercises done at home.

Workout videos on YouTube.



Walk or run around the block.

References

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