

TIPS FOR STARTING AN EXERCISE PROGRAM

Starting an exercise program can sound like a daunting task but remember that your main goal is to boost your health by meeting the basic physical activity recommendations.

Even a small increase in physical activity can have a positive impact on your health and quality of life. Physical activity is not just about weight loss. It is beneficial to an individual's health whether or not they lose weight.

The Current Recommendations Are:

How much? 

150-300 minutes moderate or **75-150 minutes vigorous** activities per week or an equivalent combination of both.

Do **muscle strengthening activities** on at least



2 days
per week

Doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you currently do no physical activity, start by doing a little, and gradually build up to the recommended amount.



Be active on most, preferably all days every week.



Find Something you Like

Try something new and find an activity you genuinely enjoy.

- » Swimming
- » Golf
- » Yoga
- » Pilates
- » Cycling
- » Running
- » Walking
- » Dance
- » Boxing
- » Team Sport
- » Exercises at home
- » Exercise with a friend or group

Write it Down

Set yourself physical activity goals and carry them around with you or stick it on the fridge.

Set Aside Time Each Day to Exercise

Getting started can often be the most difficult part of any exercise routine. Scheduling exercise into your day and making it a priority will increase your chances of success.

Start Small and Work Your Way Up

Start with 5-10 minutes of exercise per day. Each week add an extra five minutes to your routine until you reach 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on at least five days per week.

Aerobic Activity

Australia's Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Adults recommend either 150 minutes per week of moderate activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity, or a combination of both. Moderate activity is done at a pace where you can carry on a conversation but cannot "sing". Examples include brisk walking, slow cycling, water aerobics, and general gardening. Vigorous activity is done at a pace where you cannot carry a conversation and may be out of breath. Examples include jogging/running, swimming laps, playing tennis and fast cycling. Try your best to perform your activity in "bouts" that are at least 10 minutes long.

Strength Training

It is recommended that adults do muscle strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week to increase bone strength and muscular fitness. Do 8-12 repetitions of activities that work your large muscle groups such as the legs, hips, abdomen, back, chest, shoulders and arms. These activities do not require going to a gym. You can use resistance bands, do body weight exercises (push-ups, sit-ups, lunges), carry heavy loads, or do heavy gardening or yard work.

Balance/Flexibility

Regular exercise to improve balance can help to prevent falls and flexibility activities can help you move more easily to maintain daily life activities such as putting on your own shoes and socks. Some examples include heel-to-toe walking, sideways leg raises, sit-to-stand transitions, heel and toe raises, and alternative knee lifts. These exercises can be done while you are waiting for the kettle to boil or even while talking on the phone.

Have a Physical Activity Plan

Older adults or adults with chronic conditions should have an exercise or activity plan developed by an appropriate health professional, such as an Accredited Exercise Physiologist, to manage risks and take therapeutic needs into account. This will maximise the benefits of physical activity and ensure your safety. **To find a local Accredited Exercise Physiologist, please visit www.essa.org.au**

Finding Help

If you are concerned about your health or have an injury, we recommend you speak to your doctor about a referral to an appropriate allied health professional such as an Accredited Exercise Physiologist. Eligible patients can claim AEP services through Medicare, DVA, workcover and private health insurance.

More Information

- » Exercise is Medicine Australia www.exerciseismedicine.org.au
- » Exercise Right www.exerciseright.com.au
- » Find an Accredited Exercise Physiologist www.essa.org.au

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