
Exercise - everyday activities

To keep healthy we need to be active every day in as many ways as we can.

Being active in small ways throughout the day can make a big difference. Short bouts of 10 minutes can be beneficial when they add up to 30 minutes on most days of the week. You can plan physical activity by doing things like going to the gym or playing sport.

There are lots of everyday things that provide an opportunity to be active and provide health benefits.

Make a habit of walking or cycling instead of using the car, or do things yourself instead of using labour-saving machines. The human body was designed to move but the technology of today has reduced much of the opportunity for human movement.

The car

Cars reduce how much we walk. Suggestions include:

- Walk to the corner shops instead of driving.
- Cycle to work one or two days every week.
- Walk to the bus stop or train station, and catch public transport to work.
- If taking the bus or tram, get off one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Park the car a fair distance from the entrance of the shops and walk, rather than parking right out front.
- Wash and vacuum the car yourself instead of taking it to a car wash.

In the workplace

Suggestions include:

- Take the stairs instead of the lift.
- Use at least half of your lunch break for a brisk walk, even if it is only 10–15 minutes.
- Stretch at your desk.
- When you need to talk to a colleague, don't use the phone or internal email – get up from your desk and walk over to them.
- If your job involves sitting at a desk all day, make sure you get up and walk around for a few minutes every hour.

At home

Suggestions include:

- You might enjoy the housework a little more if you think about all the kilojoules you're burning while pushing the vacuum and mop around.
- Listen to your favourite music or the radio and dance around the house.
- Play actively with your children.
- Walk the dog more often, or make your usual walk 10 minutes or so longer.
- Get stuck into your garden. Mow, rake leaves and get some planting done.
- Incorporate a few more physical activities into your family's leisure time, for example, you could take the children to the park or kick a ball around the backyard.

Out and about

Suggestions include:

- Ignore the lifts in favour of the stairs.
- In shopping centres, take the stairs instead of the escalators.
- Walk up the escalators instead of just riding them.

Where to get help

- Your doctor

Things to remember

- Everyday activities, such as housework and gardening, can help burn kilojoules.
- Research suggests that maintaining an active lifestyle is the key to good health and weight management.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Physical Activity Australia

Content on this website is provided for education and information purposes only. Information about a therapy, service, product or treatment does not imply endorsement and is not intended to replace advice from your doctor or other registered health professional. Content has been prepared for Victorian residents and wider Australian audiences, and was accurate at the time of publication. Readers should note that, over time, currency and completeness of the information may change. All users are urged to always seek advice from a registered health care professional for diagnosis and answers to their medical questions.

For the latest updates and more information, visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Copyright © 1999/2012 State of Victoria. Reproduced from the Better Health Channel (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au) at no cost with permission of the Victorian Minister for Health. Unauthorised reproduction and other uses comprised in the copyright are prohibited without permission.