

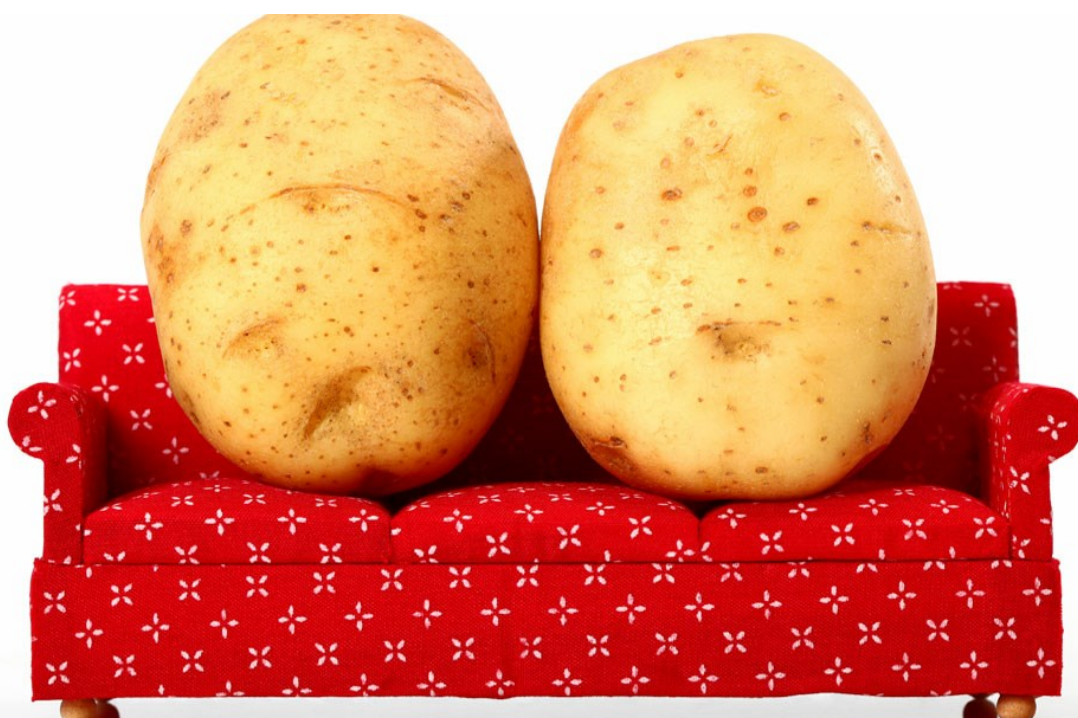
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## Physical activity - what's your excuse?

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### Summary

- You are never too old to start being active.
  - There is always a way to fit some physical activity into your day.
  - Build exercise into your everyday activities by trying things like walking part of the way to work.
  - Choose activities that are not weather-dependent on days when it might be too hot or too cold.
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Do you have an excuse for not being active? We can fix that.

### **I'm not fit**

All the more reason to get moving! Start with walking. It's fun, free and you don't need any special clothing or equipment, other than a pair of comfortable shoes. And you can do it on your own or with someone else.

You can also try stretching, strengthening and balancing exercises. There are plenty of movement activities that won't place too much stress on your body, and yet will help improve your overall fitness levels.

Technology can also help. Try using a fitness app or device that tracks your heart rate, breathing and distance travelled,. By monitoring your improved fitness, you'll get motivated do even more.

### **I'm scared or embarrassed**

Start in your comfort zone. Exercise on your own, in the privacy of your own home, or at a park where you won't bump into people you know. Then as you get into a routine, you might feel confident enough to exercise with others around.

It might be easier to exercise with a friend, colleague or family member who is around the same fitness level. Or you might prefer to join a beginner's class. Often, exercise can be less daunting when you know others are starting

at the same level as yourself.

A key to keeping motivated is to make exercise fun. Mix it up. Why not plan active social activities with your friends, like bowling or dancing?

### **I don't have any free time**

Plan ahead. Look at your diary at the start of your day or the week to see how much time is free. Perhaps there's a free spot now because something has been cancelled or postponed. Maybe you could reorganise some errands; spread them across the day or the week.

Try not to feel overwhelmed by lack of time. Think small. Consider shorter timed sets of exercise a few times a day, every day, instead of blocking out longer periods. Start with some stretches when you wake up, take a brief walk at lunchtime, then do core exercises at night. All short bursts.

Be kind to yourself. Don't worry if you miss a day, just get back into it the next day.

### **I don't have enough energy**

Sure, we all know that feeling. But did you know that activity **helps build your energy**? You'll feel better if you get moving.

Plan your exercise for when you usually feel most energetic. Are you a night or morning person? When you're tired, working out can be hard. It's easier when you're feeling fresh or not as rushed, such as the weekend.

Remember, you may feel flat before you start, but you'll soon feel a lot better. And you'll feel proud for pushing yourself.

Check your diet too. A **healthy diet** includes all of the foods and drinks you need to build and maintain good health. This means eating fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and avoiding highly processed foods, sugary drinks and many fast foods.

There are lots of other ways to **fight fatigue**, too, but if you're concerned about your energy levels, see your doctor.

### **I'm worried about injury**

You can reduce the likelihood of injury by choosing activities that suit your age, fitness level, skill level and health. What you do before and after exercise is important too. Learn **how to warm up and warm down**.

Start with low-impact activities, such as walking, that will help build your confidence, and lead you to do more and try other activities.

**If you have an injury, or you haven't exercised for a while**, consult a health professional such as your doctor before you get started. A physiotherapist can also help you to find out what activities are right for you.

### **I don't know how to do anything!**

Don't worry. Start with activities that don't use new skills, such as walking or climbing stairs.

If you want to develop some new skills or increase your confidence with some unfamiliar activities, why not take a class? Or you could book some lessons with a coach or some sessions with a registered exercise professional.

### **I can't afford it**

You don't need money to get fit. You can walk and run for free. If money is tight, choose activities that don't need facilities, equipment or instructors. Or choose activities that use cheap, easy-to-find equipment, such as skipping and swimming.

Councils, community groups and workplaces often run free or inexpensive recreation programs. And there are many fitness apps available for little or no cost.

A tough call for Melburnians, but maybe you can swap your daily coffee for a weekly exercise class.

And remember, investing in your health may save you money in the long run. Health care can be expensive – spending some money on exercise now may save you on doctors, physiotherapists, x rays and other costs down the track. You can do it.

## **The weather's not right**

We hear you. It's too hot. It's too rainy. It's too cold. Why not consider activities that aren't weather-dependent? Try these inside: indoor cycling, aerobics, dancing, indoor swimming, calisthenics, stair climbing, skipping or boxing.

Or buy some wet weather gear so you can walk or run in the rain. With the right gear it could be fun.

## **I travel a lot**

Lucky you. Try these suggestions:

- Put a skipping rope in your suitcase.
- Download an exercise podcast, or put some apps on your phone.
- At your hotel, climb the stairs instead of using the lift.
- Stay in hotels with swimming pools or exercise facilities.
- Check if your gym has branches in your regular destinations.
- Join a gym that offers reciprocal membership with other gyms at your regular travel destinations.
- Visit the local shopping mall and walk around for half an hour or more.
- Go for a run, or walk in a park/around the harbour/through the city/to a restaurant.

## **I have small children**

If you have small children, you might trade babysitting time with a friend, neighbour or family member who also has small children. You could always **exercise with the kids** or find a gym with childcare options.

While the kids are in bed, you could be on an exercise mat, stretching or following a fitness DVD.

## **I'm too old**

You're never too old. First, change your mindset: try to become more active, not less. Spend more time gardening, walking the dog, and playing with your grandchildren.

Learn a new skill, such as ballroom **dancing**, **tai chi** or **swimming**.

Now that you have more time, get active every day. Go for a walk every morning or every evening before dinner. The world is your oyster.

## **You haven't really got one, have you?**

There is always a way to fit some physical activity into your day.

So get moving. No more excuses!

## **Where to get help**

- Your **GP (doctor)**
- Local gym
- Local community centre
- **Registered exercise professional**
- **Fitness Australia** Tel. **1300 211 311**
- **Physiotherapist**
- **Podiatrist**
- **Exercise physiologist**
- **Heart Foundation Walking**

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

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