

Modern Living and Exercise

We are all spending much more time sitting these days. We work, study and play in seats more than ever before. Many jobs are now desk jobs, replacing physical labour. Watching TV, video games and DVDs occupy a big part of people's spare time.

So exercise is not a part of daily life like it used to be. We now have to make an effort to make exercise a part our lives. But it doesn't have to be a chore or cost money - exercise should be fun and it can be included into your normal day.

Remember... any movement is an improvement!

- Climb stairs instead of using lifts or escalators.
- Ride a bike or walk whenever you can. You only need to plan your day a little better and you will save money and the environment.
- Walking the dog is a good way of improving your fitness, and your dog will love it too.
- At lunchtime, go for a walk with a friend instead of sitting down talking - you can talk while you walk. Get out into nature!
- Have a game of soccer, footy, cricket or basketball (or any other game) during your lunch break.
- Play school sports, even if you don't think you are very good at sports. You can learn as you go, and it can be a lot of fun even if you are not in the elite sports group.
- Throw a ball to each other - this improves coordination and can be fun.
- Go dancing with friends.
- Look for activities around your neighbourhood. Are there tennis courts, a beach, parks or reserves to visit, a skateboard ramp, cycling trails or any open area where you can practise skills alone or play games with friends?
- Cook healthy meals at home - you will save money on food and learn new recipes.
- Make use of whatever is around you to fit physical activity into everyday life. You don't need expensive gym equipment to help you exercise.

Benefits of being physically active

- You feel fit, energetic and positive about life. If you've ever suffered from a lack of energy, say after an illness such as glandular fever, you'll know how good it is to have a healthy body.
- Physical activity releases endorphins - these are the body's natural "feel good" chemicals.
- Physical activity reduces stress and tension, making you one relaxed person.
- Some activities, like climbing a rock wall or BMX racing, can give you a feeling of exhilaration - enjoy the thrill.
- Exercise can also be a way of socialising - making new friends, enjoying the fun of a social team game together, or the chatting while you walk, play tennis or bike ride together.
- Exercise can increase your skills - practice means getting better at what you do.
- More physical activity means you can eat more without gaining kilos.
- Your muscles become stronger with more physical activity.
- You have a better night's sleep when you are regularly active.

- You have more energy and feel less tired.
- Being healthy means looking your best - this can increase your self-esteem.
- You can use strenuous physical activity as a way of reducing your anger.
- Any physical activity that involves an impact, eg. walking, running, aerobics, helps to keep calcium in your bones, keeping them stronger for longer.
- Physical activity means a strong heart and lungs - they'll last longer - and so will you!