



**Everyone wants to be more active.
The problem is . . .**

Getting Started



Participate and Feel Great!

Welcome to...



By reading this brochure you've taken the first step to making physical activity a part of your lifestyle.

Regular physical activity is important for everyone. Some benefits are:

Feeling better...

- with more energy, improved sleep and added fun in your day.

Enjoying better health...

- through controlled weight, blood pressure and cholesterol, and lower risk of problems like heart disease, stroke and osteoporosis (bone loss).

Having a healthier state of mind...

- with lower stress, better concentration and more self confidence.

Being more active is great. Add healthy eating to the equation and you'll feel even better:

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (see page 14) has been developed to provide you with information about the amounts and kinds of food that you need each day to get enough of the nutrients essential for good health and well-being. Healthy eating habits throughout life will help reduce the risk of developing health problems such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity.

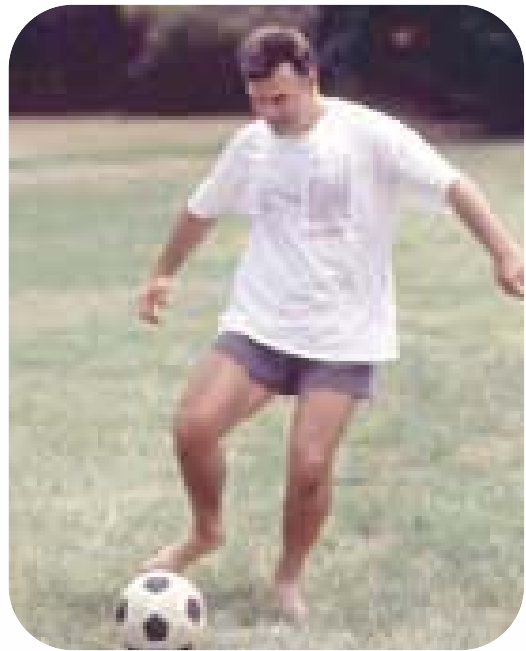
How much physical activity should you be doing?

Medical experts recommend that you should do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week.

Moderate activities include walking, swimming, gardening and playing golf. These are activities that increase your heart rate but don't necessarily make you puff.

Even periods of activity as brief as 10 minutes can be beneficial when they add up to 30 minutes on most days of the week. This makes it much easier for you to make physical activity a regular part of your lifestyle.

The National Physical Activities Guidelines for Australians can be found on the Internet at www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/active/links.htm



Barry

'I like getting down to the park to play a game of footy with my friend. Lately my wife has been getting me out of the house after dinner for a walk. We get a chance to catch up without the kids, and then when we get home I have more energy for other things.'

It's been good to get out and do a few different things. I think I should do it more often, but I have trouble finding the time. I feel that much better when I try to be active compared to when I sit around and do nothing. We're going to contact the local bushwalking club and find out what they do. It'd be great to do something active.'

How to be active regularly

Here are some tips to help you make physical activity a regular part of your lifestyle.

Choose the right time for you

- Think of the times that suit you to be active. If you are too tired when you get home at night perhaps some activity at lunchtime is better for you. Or if evenings suit you best, maybe you could make that the time to visit your local leisure centre.
- Make small changes to your daily routine. For example, you could go for a short walk at lunchtime or get off the bus a stop early and walk the rest of the way home.



Jennifer

'I started walking with my neighbour about a month ago. I really noticed a difference even though we only went once a week. I felt much brighter and more relaxed and I started to look forward to our weekly walk. Last Wednesday morning we went to the local fitness centre to try a gentle aerobics class. I had a good time and caught up with some friends who I hadn't seen in ages. This week I decided to set myself a goal and walk three times and go to one class. If I can do that then I will treat myself to a facial.'

Find an activity that suits you

- Being more active can be simply a matter of spending more time on things you already do — like gardening, or taking the dog for a walk.
- Try different things. Remember the emphasis is on moderate activity so there are many options to choose from. Some activities you could try are:
 - ◆ join a local sport, recreation or fitness club
 - ◆ take a walk in your lunch break
 - ◆ meet a friend for a bike ride in the park
 - ◆ go for a walk to explore a new area
 - ◆ play golf at a local club
 - ◆ park the car and walk the rest of the way to work
 - ◆ join a bushwalking club
 - ◆ take the stairs instead of a lift or the escalator
 - ◆ walk with a friend for half an hour before going for a coffee
 - ◆ use an exercise bike
 - ◆ get back to a sport or activity you used to enjoy years ago — check out the local clubs
 - ◆ choose active leisure activities — like bushwalks, walking on the beach, or throwing a frisbee in the local park
 - ◆ work in your garden
 - ◆ meet a friend for a swim
 - ◆ take an exercise class
 - ◆ go ballroom or line dancing
 - ◆ take the kids or grandkids to play ball in the park.

Many people find it easier to be active when they exercise with friends. This may be organising to join a neighbour for a regular walk. Or joining a local sporting club. Many clubs have social events or times when new players can come and see what the club can offer.

Remember, find an activity you enjoy — that way you are more likely to keep it up.

Set a goal and work towards it

- Start with short-term goals. They are a great way to move towards being more active. For instance, set the goal of going for a walk three times a week. Even if you only walk for 10 minutes each time, you have met your goal. Next week you might aim to walk for 15 minutes each time.
- Make your goals realistic. It is better to set goals that can be achieved. A good way to start is with small goals and then build up slowly.
- Reward yourself. When you have achieved one of your goals you deserve a reward. Treat yourself with something that you enjoy. Here are some ideas to get you started:
 - ◆ buy a magazine
 - ◆ go to a movie or sporting event
 - ◆ sleep in on the weekend
 - ◆ buy something new to wear
 - ◆ take a long, hot bath
 - ◆ buy a backpack for walking
 - ◆ have a massage.



Sylvia

'I had a pretty good routine going. I played netball on Saturdays and walked three mornings during the week. Well, first the netball comp finished and then we went on holidays for a few weeks. When we got back I realised I had hardly done anything. I felt really guilty so I rang the local tennis club, and they played social games on Tuesday nights.

I went along last week and enjoyed myself so much I am going back next week. I have also started my walking again and I am going to try and get back to where I was before we went on holidays. I'm glad I have been able to get back into the swing of things.'

Be active safely

Start out slowly

Start out slowly and allow your body to warm up. Do some basic stretching and build your activity sessions up over weeks not days. This will help you avoid muscle soreness and injury. Try a 2–3 minute jog, to raise a light sweat.

Take some time after your activity to do some gentle stretching of the muscles you've used. Hold stretches for 10–20 seconds and repeat each stretch 2–3 times. Don't bounce into your stretch. This will help to avoid muscle soreness.

Note: If you have a chronic illness or are worried about the risks, talk to your doctor before you start any extra physical activity.

Wear comfortable clothes

Wear loose clothes and supportive shoes. This will make your activity safer and more enjoyable. For specific foot problems and further advice on footwear, contact your local podiatrist.

Wear a hat and sunscreen when out in the sun (especially in the middle of the day during summer).

Drink enough water

Remember to drink lots of water before, during and after your activity (don't wait until you feel thirsty or start sweating).

Dehydration contributes to fatigue, a decrease in performance and may make you susceptible to cramps, heat stress and heat stroke. Children are at greater risk of heat stress.

Aim for moderate intensity

Your body is the best judge of how you feel and how hard you are exercising. You can estimate how hard you are working on a scale from 0 to 4 where 0 means you are doing nothing at all (rest) and 4 means you are working very, very hard (maximal).

Work at an intensity that allows you to breathe comfortably throughout your workout. This will ensure a safe and comfortable level of physical activity.

Talk test

0	at rest	breathing easily, easy to talk, resting heartbeat
1	light	still breathing easily but an increase in heartbeat
2	moderate	speaking comfortably, breathing more frequent, begin to warm up
3	hard	breathing more deeply and harder
4	very, very hard	you find it hard to carry on a conversation because you are breathing too hard or are short of breath

If you feel you can speed up, do so slowly and remember not to overdo it.

Dealing with setbacks

Once you start to be active regularly you may find something comes up that breaks your routine. That's OK. The key is to treat these setbacks as temporary and to get going again as soon as you can.

When facing setbacks it might help to:

- review the times that you are being active – are they practical?
- try a new activity if you are battling with boredom
- set some new short-term goals if your routine has been broken
- use breaks like holidays to be active in different ways
- remember that physical activity can help to beat the barriers of tiredness and stress
- find a friend with similar interests.



Janet

'I used to be pretty fit, going to the gym and playing tennis with some friends. But since my son was born, I find it's not so easy to be active any more. I've just started walking to the local shops to pick up the bits and pieces that I need. I take my son in his stroller and he seems to really enjoy being outside. When I get a bit fitter, I think I'll start walking to the shops in the next suburb. It'll take a bit longer, but the extra walk and the fresh air will really do me good.'

Plan your activity **NOW**

Use these steps as a guide to being regularly active. A table like the one in step 5 will help you record your progress.

Step 1: Choose the right time for you

- Think of the time to be active that you can stick to
- Remember, small changes to your daily habits can amount to a big step towards regular physical activity
- The best times for me to be active are:

Step 2: Find an activity that suits you

- Build upon what you already do
- You may like to try different activities — think of one and go for it
- An activity I would like to try is:

Step 3: Set yourself a goal and work towards it

- Set yourself a realistic short-term goal
- Plan to reward yourself
- My goal is:

- My reward will be:

Step 4: Be active safely

- Start out slowly
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes
- Drink plenty of water

Step 5: Record your activities

- Keep a record of your daily or weekly activities. You might want to use or adapt the one below to track progress.
- Review your diary every month. Reward yourself for good performance.
- Think about ways to improve if you have not met your activity goals.

Week or day	Best time of day	Activity chosen	Goal set (how long, how often)	Reward planned	Achieved (yes/no)
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

If you did not achieve your goal the first time around, don't worry. It often takes several attempts to become regularly active. Just keep trying!

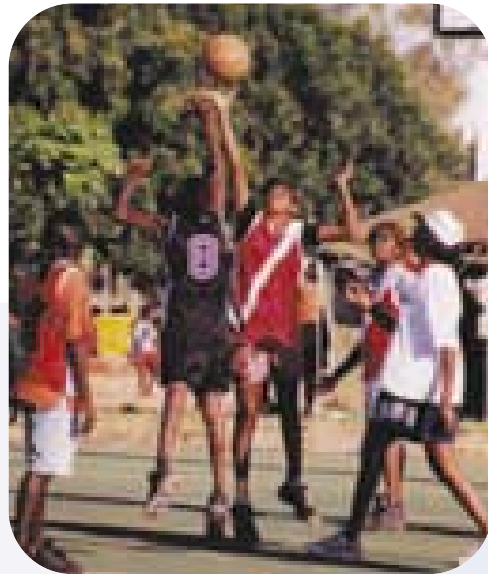
Join a sport, recreation or fitness club

Many people find it easier to stay active when they belong to a local sport, fitness or recreation club. It's a great way to make new friends and the commitment can help you to stay active.

Just because you haven't played a sport for a while, or are not an expert, doesn't mean that you can't belong to a club. Remember sport isn't just for the elite athlete. Sport can be challenging and fun at whatever level you play.



Look for clubs and organisations which are recognised as Active Australia Providers. These clubs have met a number of industry guidelines and are working hard to improve on the service they provide to their members.



Contact your local department of sport and recreation, fitness industry association or local council for details of clubs in your area.

ACT (02) 6207 2111

NSW 13 13 02

QLD (07) 3237 9830

VIC (03) 9666 4298

WA (08) 9387 9700

TAS (03) 6233 5627

NT 1800 045 678

SA (08) 8416 6677

Maintaining a **healthy diet**

Maintain a healthy body weight by balancing physical activity and your food intake

The total amount of food that you need will depend on your age, sex, body size, level of physical activity and, if you are female, whether you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Maintaining your weight means balancing the energy going into your body (as food and drink) and the energy being used. To keep your weight at a steady level, the energy from the things you eat must balance the energy used by your body for growth and repair, for physical activity, and to keep your bodily functions working.

What do I need to eat to ensure a healthy diet?

To eat a healthy diet it is important to eat a variety of foods every day from each of the following food groups:

bread, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles
vegetables, legumes
fruit
milk, yoghurt, cheese
meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, legumes

These foods provide the important nutrients the body needs.

Enjoy a variety of foods every day

Vegetables,
legumes

Fruit

Bread,
cereals,
rice, pasta,
noodles

Milk,
yogurt,
cheese

Lean meat, fish,
poultry, eggs, nuts,
legumes

Drink plenty of water

Choose these sometimes or in small amounts



What about all the other foods you eat?

Some foods, such as margarine, oil, chocolate, pastries and softdrink do not fit into the five food groups. These foods are not essential to provide the nutrients the body needs and contain too much fat, salt and/or sugars. However, these extra foods can add to the enjoyment of a healthy diet and can be chosen sometimes or in small amounts.

To eat a healthy diet:

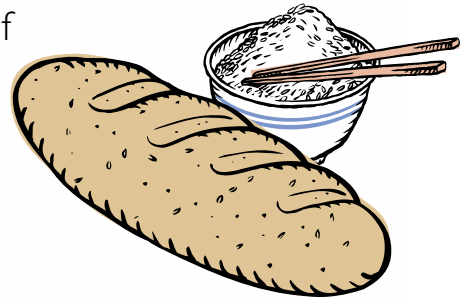
- 1** Choose foods from each of the **five food groups** every day.
- 2** Choose different **varieties of foods** from within each of the five food groups from day to day, week to week and at different times of the year.
- 3** Eat:
 - **plenty of plant foods** (bread, cereal, rice, pasta, noodles, vegetables, legumes and fruit)
 - **moderate amounts of animal foods** (milk, yoghurt, cheese, meat, fish, poultry, eggs) in the proportions shown in *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*
 - **small amounts of the other foods.**
- 4** **Drink plenty of water.**

If you are vegetarian, choose foods such as legumes, nuts and seeds to ensure you obtain enough protein and iron from your diet. Choose wholegrain or wholemeal bread and cereals, as these foods are good sources of iron and zinc, and drink fruit juice or eat fruit with your meal to increase iron absorption. If you do not eat any foods from the 'milk, yoghurt, cheese' food group, include other foods containing calcium such as soy milk (with added calcium), almonds, sardines or pink salmon with bones.

Some practical ways to include a variety of foods

Bread, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles

Foods from this group provide fibre, a wide range of vitamins and minerals, carbohydrates and protein which are all important for energy and growth and repair of the body.

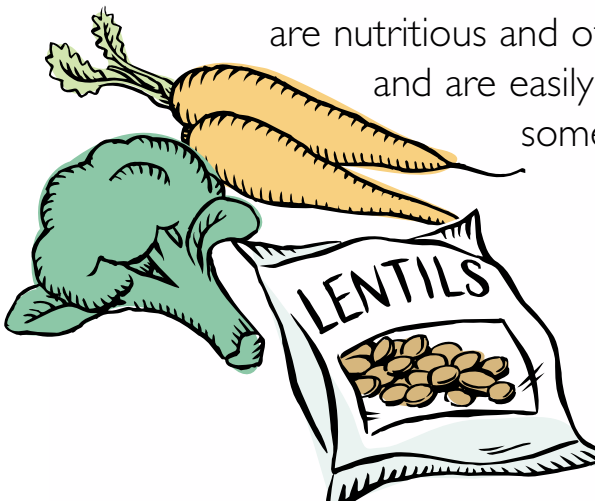


- Eat more wholegrain bread and high fibre cereal.
- Instead of choosing most of your serves as bread and breakfast cereal, also eat rice, pasta and noodles as they contain less salt.
- When choosing your breads, eat a wide variety of breads including white, brown, wholegrain, mixed grain, rye and rolls, pita breads and other flat breads.

Vegetables, legumes

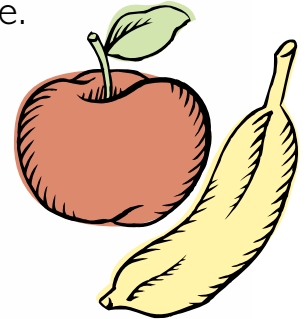
Foods in this group are a rich source of vitamins and fibre.

- Choose a wide variety of vegetables. Buy vegetables in season as these are the best value for money.
 - Use frozen and canned vegetables as an alternative to fresh. They are nutritious and often cheaper, quick and easy to prepare, and are easily stored and available in remote areas. Try some no-added-salt varieties.



Fruit

Fruit is a rich source of vitamins, including vitamin C and folate. Fruit also provides carbohydrates, natural sugars and fibre, especially in the edible skins.



Fruit also provides dietary fibre which can help prevent and manage conditions such as being overweight, bowel cancer, haemorrhoids, diabetes and high blood cholesterol.

- Choose fruit more often than juice, as it is higher in fibre.
- Dried fruit is nutritious and adds variety to a healthy diet, but can contribute to tooth decay. For this reason, eat more fresh fruit and limit dried fruit intake to once a day.
- Canned fruit can be used as a nutritious replacement for fresh fruit, especially those varieties that are canned in natural juice or without added sugar.

Milk, yoghurt, cheese

Foods in this group are excellent sources of calcium. Women and girls especially, need calcium to protect against osteoporosis. These foods are also a good source of protein, riboflavin and vitamin B12.

- Choices of milk, cheese and yoghurt can be made on the basis of fat content, type of sweetener and flavourings used.
- To avoid eating too much fat, choose the reduced fat varieties of milk, cheese and yoghurt. However, low and reduced fat varieties are not suitable for infants and young children.
- If you don't like drinking milk or eating yoghurt and cheese then add milk or milk powder to soups, casseroles and sauces, add cheese to pancakes, omelettes and vegetable dishes, and use yoghurt with curries and in dips or desserts.

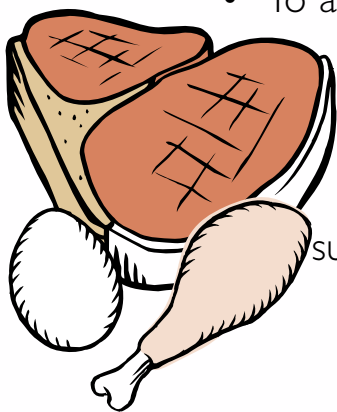
- If you do not eat any foods from this group, try other foods such as sardines, tuna, salmon, soy milk (with added calcium), lentils, almonds, brazil nuts and dried apricots as they also provide smaller amounts of calcium.



Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, legumes

These foods are good sources of iron as well as zinc. Iron helps your body carry oxygen in the blood and zinc is an important mineral that assists wound healing and is important for growth and reproduction.

- Lean red meat should be eaten 3–4 times a week, or high iron replacement foods will be required. This is especially true for girls, women, vegetarians and athletes. Iron supplements during pregnancy will often be recommended by your doctor or midwife.
- Eat a variety of meats and fish including beef, lamb, pork, kangaroo, chicken, turkey, duck, rabbit, different types of fish and shellfish.



- To avoid eating too much fat, choose lean meats, trim fat from meat and skin from poultry before cooking, avoid frying or roasting in fat and oil, eat sausages and processed meats only occasionally, use legumes as an alternative to meat, and use low fat cooking methods such as stir frying and grilling.

Materials are available for the general public and nutrition educators. Posters, a booklet and background information can be obtained from the Publications Officer, Population Health Division, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing on toll free call 1800 020 103 (ext 8654) or at email: phd.publications@health.gov.au

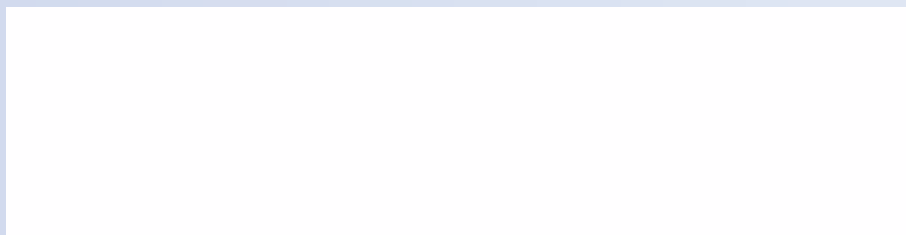
The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating can also be found on the Internet at www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/food/guide/

To order more of these brochures call
the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing on
1800 020 103

Do you need more information?
Active Australia has its own web site. Check out the site for the latest
information and news on Active Australia.

www.activeaustralia.org

Your local contact



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