

The Australian Government has worked with experts to develop guidelines to help you, as parents and educators, support children and young people to build daily routines for better health.

The 24-Hour Movement Guidelines include a picture of what a day for a child or young person should look like, including time for physical activity, limiting sedentary activities, and getting adequate sleep.



Following these guidelines may be challenging at times; however, meeting them will benefit health. Achieving these guidelines is associated with better health and leads to improved body composition, cardiorespiratory and musculoskeletal fitness, cardiovascular and metabolic health, academic achievement and cognition, improved mental health and emotional regulation. For those not currently meeting these guidelines a progressive adjustment towards them is recommended.



Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Young People (5 to 17 years):
An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
VISIT WWW.HEALTH.GOV.AU

NOTE: These guidelines are relevant to all apparently healthy children and young people (5–17 years) irrespective of gender, cultural or language background, geographic location or the socio-economic status of the family. These guidelines may be appropriate for children and young people with a disability or medical condition; however, a health professional should be consulted for additional guidance.



Australian Government
Department of Health

GUIDELINES FOR **HEALTHY** **GR** **OWTH** & DEVELOPMENT FOR **CHILDREN &** **YOUNG PE** **OPLE** (5 TO 17 YEARS)



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & EDUCATORS

Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for
Children and Young People (5 to 17 years):
An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep



GENERAL ADVICE

For optimal health, children and young people (5–17 years) should achieve the recommended balance of high levels of physical activity, low levels of sedentary behaviour and sufficient sleep each day.



Children and young people should participate in a range of physical activities such as active play and recreation, sports, hobbies, chores and jobs while maintaining good quality sleep and limiting screen time and prolonged sitting. Whether at home or school, indoors or outdoors, on the field or in the water, moderate to vigorous physical activity can provide health benefits.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Children and young people should aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day involving mainly aerobic activities that makes their heart beat faster—more is better. The 60 minutes can be made up of shorter bursts of activity throughout the day that add up to 60 minutes or longer.



Activities that are vigorous, as well as those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated (in the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity) at least three days per week. In addition, several hours of a variety of light physical activities should be undertaken each day.

TIPS

- Basketball, soccer, netball, lap swimming, skipping or running are all great ways to add more **vigorous** activity to a day. They don't have to be organised, paid activities—they can be as simple as grabbing a ball or a friend and running around at the park. Anything that makes kids 'huff and puff' counts!
- Add to the daily total with **moderate-intensity** activities such as bike riding, scootering or skateboarding. Swap a drive to the local shops or library with a bike or scooter ride.
- Examples of **light activities** include leisurely walking or playing handball. Walking your dog or to school is a great way to increase light activity. Some activity is better than none.
- Great options to **strengthen muscles and bones** include skipping, running, yoga, jumping, push-ups, sit-ups, lifting weights, lunges, squats, climbing trees or swinging on monkey bars.
- Try to **switch sitting for being active**. Encourage kids to get off the bus a stop earlier, or to meet friends for a game in the park rather than spend their leisure time sedentary on a screen. These small changes will deliver health benefits, but remember to maintain sufficient sleep.
- **Teachers:** you can also help students to add vigorous activity by integrating short but intensive aerobic activities into Physical Education lessons and inside the classroom such as tuck jumps or fun simple dance routines.

SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR

Long periods of sitting can counteract the benefits of being physically active so should be broken up as often as possible.



Sedentary *recreational* screen time should be limited to 2 hours per day. This does *not* include screen-based activities for educational uses. Encourage positive social interactions and establish boundaries by discussing time limits and age appropriate content with children and young people.

TIPS

- **Parents:** be your child's role model and keep your own screen time to a minimum and be active too.
- **Parents:** leave the car at home and ride or walk together to your local activities. Be **active together** on the weekends by taking a nature walk or learning a new activity such as rock climbing.
- **Teachers:** add in physical activity such as star jumps to break up long periods of sitting in school.



SLEEP

Sleep is essential for optimal health.

Children (5–13 years) should have 9 to 11 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night and young people (14–17 years) should have 8 to 10 hours uninterrupted sleep per night.

To establish and maintain healthy sleep patterns, children and young people should have a consistent bedtime routine, avoid screen time before sleep, and keep screens out of the bedroom.

TIPS

- To keep a **consistent routine** try not to vary bedtime and wake-up times by more than 30 minutes.
- **Avoid screens** one hour before going to bed.
- Make bedrooms a **screen free zone**.

