



Regular

physical activity

Why should I increase my level of physical activity?

Everyone can benefit from regular physical activity.

This eight week guide is designed to help you get started.... Will you meet the challenge?

Some of the benefits include:

- Reduce the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- Reduced weight and body fat.
- Lowered blood fats and blood pressure.
- Reduced stress and tension.
- Stronger bones.
- More restful sleep.
- More energy.
- Opportunities for new social contacts and friends.

Weeks 1 & 2

Goal: be more active

Exercise doesn't have to be difficult. By making a few simple changes you can make it part of your day:

- If you travel by car, bus or train, stop short of your destination and walk the rest of the distance.
- Walk to the shops (or part of the way) instead of taking transport. Reserve the ride for when you are loaded up with groceries. If you walk 10 minutes in each direction, suddenly you're doing 20 minutes of physical activity.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Make the most of your lunchtime and exercise for 20 minutes. Then you don't have to do it when you get home.
- Practice these changes as often as you can.



Regular physical activity continued

Weeks 3 & 4

Goal: for the next two weeks be active for at least 10 minutes at a time, three days per week

- Choose any activity you like. Low-impact aerobic exercises are best. Some examples are: walking, cycling, dancing, or tennis. Water based exercise or exercising in a chair is very beneficial if you have difficulty walking.
- Whatever activity you choose, start with a few minutes of stretching to loosen and warm up your muscles.
- Start slowly and go at your own pace. If you can't do 10 minutes in one go, try 5 and work your way up.
- You should aim for a level when you are gently puffing but able to talk.
- If you feel pain or breathless stop the activity. Discuss this with your doctor before continuing with the program.
- Do not exercise after consuming alcohol or if you are feeling unwell. If you have heart trouble or pain when moving, see your doctor prior to starting the physical activity program.

Weeks 5 & 6

Goal: for the next two weeks be active for at least 20 minutes at a time, three days per week

- Stretch and warm-up for 5 minutes at the beginning and end of the activity.
- It is best to spread the days over the week if possible, rather than one after the other.
- If you want to exercise with a group, contact your local community health centre, gym or club to find out what programs they have.

Weeks 7 & 8

Goal: for the next two weeks be active for at least 30 minutes at a time, three days per week

By now you might be doing a number of activities to give you variety. It all adds up. Hopefully your enthusiasm has rubbed off on your family and friends and they are joining you too. You can challenge yourself further by exercising: for longer, with more effort, or more often.



Regular physical activity continued

Congratulations!

You've made it through and proven to yourself (and others) you can do it. You should also be feeling better for your efforts.

To maximise the effect on body fat reduction maintain these changes to your exercise habits and eat a healthy balanced diet.

It's only the beginning...

This is the final step of the program but is only the beginning of the real challenge. Hopefully you will be enjoying the times you exercise and looking forward to them. If you are finding more excuses not to exercise than reasons to do it, you're not alone. The test is to keep going!

Read on and you'll find there is a solution to most problems.

I'm too busy

Regular activity should be a pleasure not a chore. Think of it as an opportunity to have some time for yourself or choose an activity that the family can do together.

I get enough exercise just running around

People often believe that their energy output is much greater than it actually is. While "running around" doing the day's activities will help your overall health, for fat loss it is important to do longer bouts of exercise.

I'm too old

Age should not be a barrier to being healthy as long as you set realistic goals for physical activity. If you do not want to exercise on your own, then collect your friends or join one of the many physical activity groups designed to meet the needs of seniors.

I can't walk

With the right instruction, exercises can be safely conducted from a chair or in water so lack of mobility need not pose a problem. These exercises can help build strength and confidence.



Regular physical activity continued

I get bored

Choose an activity (or several) which you like. Exercise with a group and turn it into a social occasion. It's amazing the influence other members of the group can have to inspire you.

I can't afford it

There are so many low-cost activities to choose from. Starting a walking program for example will cost you nothing except the cost of a suitable pair of shoes and loose fitting clothing.

I'm too tired

Regular exercise actually increases your energy levels over time. You'll sleep better as well.

On a final note

Being active every day is the ultimate aim. The more you can do the better. Aim to exercise a minimum of 30 minutes of accumulated physical activity on most days of the week.

For further information about physical activity or diabetes, call the Customer Care Line on 1300 136 588.

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