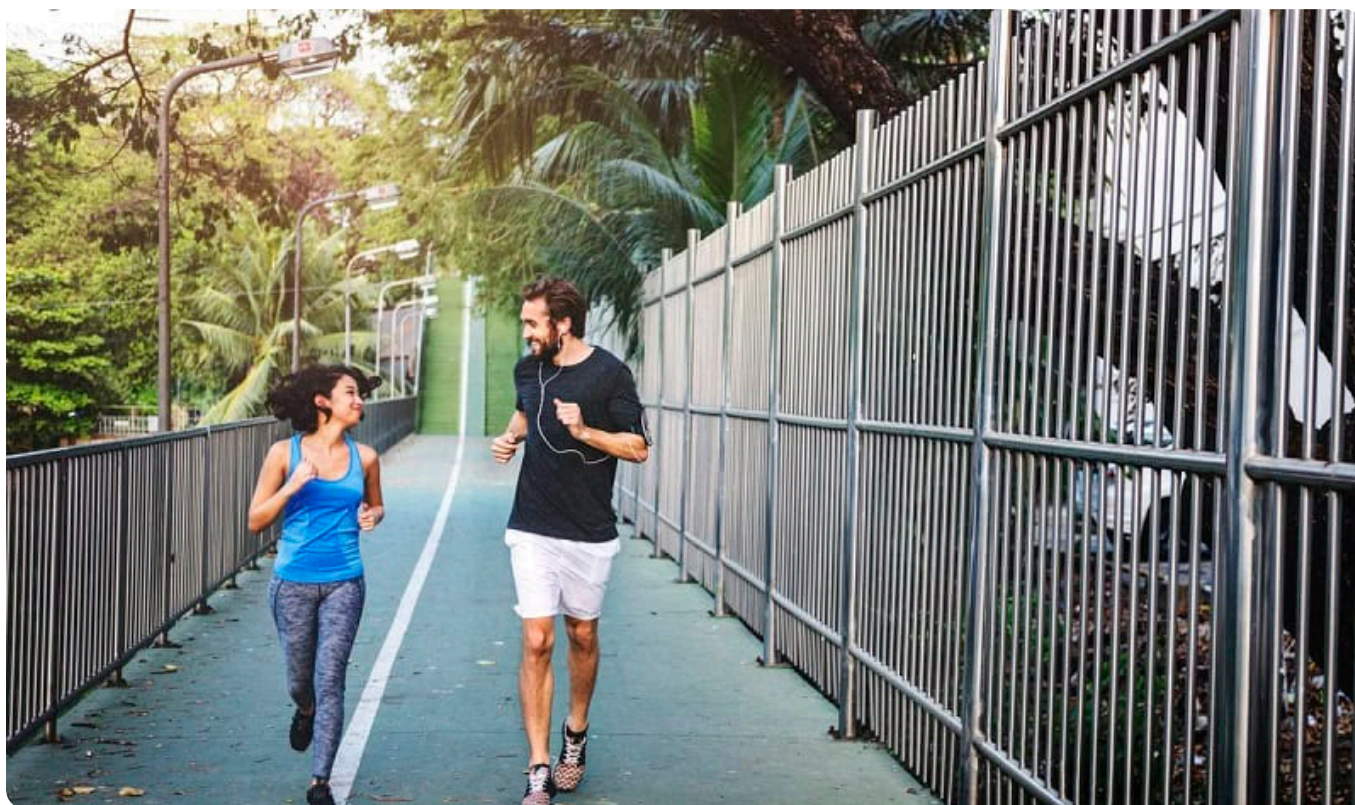


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14 ways exercise makes you healthier

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 Posted by: admin

The world is facing one of the most severe health crises of modern times. With most of us forced to stay home and self-isolate in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, staying active has never been more important both for our physical and

mental health.

Science continues to highlight the crucial relationship between health and exercise. And we're not just talking about physical health in its traditional sense. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), health isn't just the absence of disease, but of complete state of physical, mental and social well-being.

The more we learn about the human body and mind, the more we realise how important being physically active is for all aspects of our health. Our bodies were designed to move, regularly and freely. Without movement, we not only have an increased risk of developing chronic diseases and mental health conditions, but we just feel worse. It's not healthy. And yet only half of all Australian adults are getting enough exercise.

If you're one of the almost 50% who finds themselves insufficiently active, the good news is it's not too late to start. Research shows that even those who start exercising later in life can still reap the benefits.

So how much exercise is enough?

The WHO states that for health, you need to do the following as a weekly minimum:

- 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity, or
- 75 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity, or
- A combination of both

That's just 22 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per day. No matter how busy you are, we can ALL find 22 minutes.

It's also important to include strength training exercises on at least two days per week.

If you're a parent, then remember that your kids need more exercise than you do. Children and adolescents should get at least an hour a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Read more: Learn about the Physical Activity Guidelines for each stage of life. (<https://exerciseright.com.au/exercise-right-for-life/>)

Health benefits of exercise

If you need a little motivation to get active, we're here to help! Here are 15 health benefits of living an active lifestyle:

1. It keeps your heart healthy

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is one of the leading causes of death in Australia, killing one Australian every 12 minutes. It affects 4.2 million Aussies and accounted for nearly 30% (43,477) of all deaths in 2017.

Exercise is vital in the prevention of CVD and improving heart health. Not only will being physically active prevent you from developing several risk factors associated with the disease, but it will also strengthen your cardiovascular system.

Exercise also plays an integral role in cardiac rehabilitation. It results in reduced mortality, greater reductions in total cholesterol and triglyceride levels and reduced systolic blood pressure. Being active in your rehabilitation post a cardiac event is vital in preventing a relapse and promoting longevity and quality of life. It's important to get expert advice when exercising after a cardiac event, so chat to your doctor about a referral to an exercise physiologist (<https://exerciseright.com.au/what-is-an-accredited-exercise-physiologist/>) to help you get moving safely.

2. It reduces your risk of type 2 diabetes

Diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases in Australia affecting around 1.7 million people. The prevalence of diabetes is also increasing at a frightening rate, with 280 Australians developing diabetes every day. That's one person every five minutes. 85–90 per cent of these cases are type 2 diabetes, which is strongly linked to lifestyle factors such as physical inactivity.

Type 2 diabetes is a progressive condition in which the body becomes resistant to the normal effects of insulin and/or gradually loses the capacity to produce enough insulin in the pancreas.

Your risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases if you have high blood pressure, are overweight or obese, have insufficient physical activity levels, or eat a poor diet. Increasing your exercise and physical activity levels is an easy way to reduce your risk.

If you've been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, exercise can also play a crucial role in helping to manage your condition. Being active helps to your weight and can help insulin to work more efficiently. It's important to make sure you chat to an appropriately qualified professional, like an exercise physiologist (<https://exerciseright.com.au/what-is-an-accredited-exercise-physiologist/>), to make sure that the exercises you do are safe and tailored to your individual needs.

3. It helps to manage your weight

Over two thirds (67% (<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/behaviours-risk-factors/overweight-obesity/overview>)) of Aussie adults are overweight or obese. Obesity contributes substantially to the overall burden of non-communicable disease in Australia. As a result, it's now considered the second leading contributor to preventable illness and death.

Being obese puts you at an increase risk of developing chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers.

Despite being a global epidemic, obesity is preventable. It can be managed and treated with a range of lifestyle changes. Lifestyle interventions for the management of obesity initially begin with improved nutrition and increased physical activity. The combination of the two has been shown to produce the most considerable and most sustained weight loss results.

4. It improves your brain health

We all know that being active is good for your body, but regular exercise is also crucial for your brain health. Science has repeatedly drawn a link between higher levels of physical activity and better cognitive function, which refers to mental abilities like learning, thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving and decision making.

Being active also helps to boost your memory. Regular exercise increases the size of your hippocampus, which is the memory center of the brain. The World Health Organization actually states that being physically active is one of the best ways to reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.



5. It improves your aerobic fitness

Research has shown that cardiorespiratory fitness (or aerobic fitness) is one of the best predictors of health (<https://exerciseright.com.au/aerobic-fitness-best-predictor-of-health/>). Cardiorespiratory fitness refers to the ability of the circulatory and respiratory systems to supply oxygen to skeletal muscles during sustained physical activity.

There's a difference in protective effect of "general physical activity" vs "aerobic fitness". The data shows that increasing your fitness has a significantly greater impact on your health, compared to just 'being active'.

Not sure how to increase your fitness? Ask an expert! Targeted exercise programming prescribed by a professional (<https://exerciseright.com.au/about-us/>) is the best way to increase your fitness safely and effectively.

6. It reduces your risk of some cancers

Regular exercise helps to reduce your risk of developing a wide range of cancers, especially breast, colon and endometrial cancer. The exact mechanisms behind this protective effect aren't fully understood, however the relationship between higher levels of physical activity and lower rates of some cancers has been clearly established.

For those who have been diagnosed with cancer, being physically active should be considered a standard part of your recovery. Exercise may feel like the last thing you want to do during cancer treatment, but research shows it could make all the difference. It helps to boost energy levels, minimise side effects and even enhance the recovery process. Some studies have also shown that those who are active or increase their activity levels during treatment have a lower risk of dying from cancer than those who remain inactive.

Read more: How exercise can help you to recover from cancer.

(<https://exerciseright.com.au/how-exercise-can-help-you-recover-from-cancer/>)

7. It boosts your mental health

Being active makes you feel good. Period. Exercise releases “happy hormones” like endorphins into your system which boost your mood and feelings of well-being. It also helps to manage stress levels by regulating hormones such as cortisol.

With one in five Australians experiencing a mental illness in any given year, it’s also important to highlight the role that exercise plays in the prevention and management of these conditions. Exercise has a protective effect against mental illnesses like depression and anxiety. And it doesn’t take much to make a difference. In fact, research has shown that as little as an hour a week can help to reduce your risk of developing depression.

For those living with a mental health condition, exercise can help to manage the severity of symptoms (alongside regular treatment). It’s important to stress that exercise should be prescribed by an expert, like an exercise physiologist (<https://exerciseright.com.au/what-is-an-accredited-exercise-physiologist/>), who specialises in and understands the complexities associated with mental health.

8. It keeps your bones strong

Osteoporosis is a common disease in Australia with 1.2 million (<https://www.osteoporosis.org.au/about-osteoporosis>) people estimated to have osteoporosis and further 6.3 million (<https://www.osteoporosis.org.au/about-osteoporosis>) with low bone density.

Throughout our lifetime, our bones are constantly going through a process called “bone remodelling”. New bone cells are produced (bone formation) and old bone cells are gotten rid of (bone resorption). In osteoporosis, the rate of bone resorption is increased with no increase in bone formation.

Exercise can help to counter this imbalance by placing stress on the skeletal system and triggering an increase in the rate of bone formation. Strength exercises (like lifting weights or doing body-weight resistance training) and plyometric exercise (like jumping) are great for increasing your bone density.

9. It helps to reduce your risk of stroke

A stroke occurs when blood flow to or within the brain is affected. This results in a lack of oxygen and nutrients to areas of the brain causing cell death of that area. Many lifestyle factors can increase your risk of stroke, including smoking, high blood pressure, artery disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity and a lack of physical activity.

Exercise decreases your total risk factors for stroke by decreasing your blood pressure, decreasing total cholesterol and managing your weight.

10. It can improve social connection

In Australia, 1 in 2 adults report feeling lonely at least once a week. Research has shown that being lonely can increase your risk of early death by as much as 26%. This means that the risk of premature death associated with social isolation and loneliness is similar to that associated with well-known risk factors such as obesity and smoking.

It's well known that being active, especially in a group environment, is a great way to improve mood and mental health. Research is also starting to acknowledge the power of physical activity as a means to reduce individual and community isolation. Movement brings people together and can help to reduce feelings of loneliness. This improves your social well-being and therefore, your "health" as a whole.

At this time, self-isolation restrictions have limited exercise sessions in Australia to two people. But it's important to remember that when this is over, being physically active together will be a great way to reconnect with your friends and family. For now, virtual workout sessions are being streamed online and this allows people to connect and move together while being apart.



11. It reduces your risk of dementia & Alzheimer's Disease

Dementia is the leading cause of death for Australian women, and the second leading cause of death for all Australians. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia and it affects up to 70% of all people living with this condition. Alzheimer's disease damages the brain, causing impaired memory, thinking and behavior.

Although there's currently no cure for dementia or Alzheimer's Disease, the World Health Organization list being physically active as one of the best things you can do to reduce your risk. Research has also found that exercise may help protect against this Alzheimer's, even in those who are genetically predisposed or at high risk of developing it.

12. It can help you to sleep better

Good sleep patterns improve your energy levels, mental health and general well-being as well as helping to protect you from illness. But a lot of us struggle to get a decent night's sleep!

Being physical activity increases the amount of time you spend in deep sleep, which is the most physically restorative sleep phase. In addition to improving the quality of sleep, exercise also can help you increase the duration of your nightly

rest. These results have been replicated across all age groups, including teens, but are especially significant in older populations.

13. It keeps your muscles strong

Muscular strength is vital for health. Adults should aim to do strength training exercises at least twice each week. So why does this matter?

Firstly, having more muscle mass helps you maintain a healthy body weight. Muscle mass increases your basal metabolic rate (BMR) which refers to the calories you burn when you're resting. This means that having more muscle helps to improve your body composition, which is the ratio between fat and muscle.

Strong muscles also help to improve stability, balance, and flexibility. This means that you're less prone to injuries and can reduce falls risk, especially in older adults. Being strong also helps you to maintain your independence and quality of life as you age.

14. It helps to manage chronic pain

Living with persistent pain (also called chronic pain) can be extremely frustrating and drastically affect quality of life. Pain is "chronic" if it persists for more than three months or beyond "normal healing time".

Research shows that there's one thing that builds physical resilience, self-efficacy, the feelings of control over your pain... EXERCISE! But it's complex and multifactorial, which is why it's essential to be individually assessed by an exercise physiologist (<https://exerciseright.com.au/what-is-an-accredited-exercise-physiologist/>).

An exercise physiologist can not only help you to understand your pain in a more comprehensive manner, they can also assist you in exposing you to painful and feared movements in a controlled approach.

Need help?

Are you convinced yet? We hope so! Now, it's time to get active...

If you're ready to start moving more but don't know how to get started, then ask for help! An exercise scientist (<https://exerciseright.com.au/accredited-exercise-scientist/>) can help to make sure your technique is correct and build you a program to get you moving safely.

If you're living with an illness or injury, you should then get advice from an specialist, like an exercise physiologist. (<https://exerciseright.com.au/what-is-an-accredited-exercise-physiologist/>) This ensures that the exercises prescribed are safe and tailored to your individual needs. Services delivered by exercise physiologists are deemed “essential” during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they are allied health professionals. This means you can still see an exercise physiologist at their clinic or access their services via telehealth. These telehealth services are also covered under Medicare.

To find an accredited exercise professional near you, click here.
(<https://www.essa.org.au/find-aep>)

If you need some ideas for staying active during the coronavirus pandemic, check out Exercise Right at Home (<https://exerciseright.com.au/exercise-home/>).



(<https://exerciseright.com.au/blog/>)

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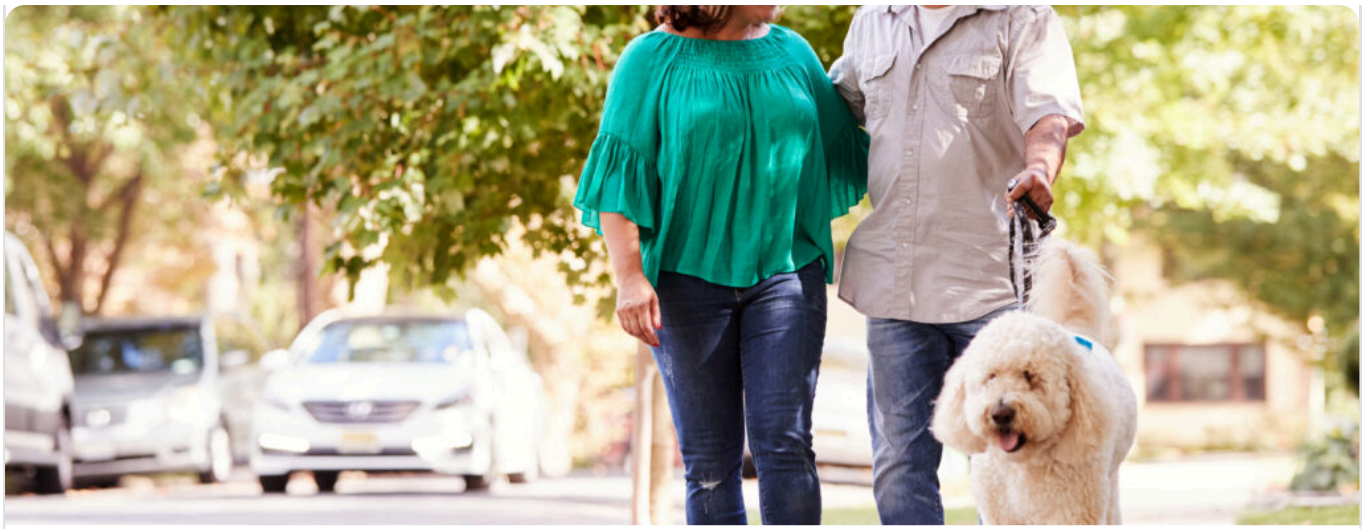


How exercise can help people living with dementia

This article was written by Alister MacInnes, Senior Exercise Physiologist and Exercise Scientist at The Biomechanics. Dementia is one of the most significant health and aged care issues facing Australia, and it is now the leading cause of death in the country.¹ In

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Young onset dementia and exercise: Where to start and why it matters

This article was written by Nicholas Lawlis, Accredited Exercise Physiologist and Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Centre for Ageing Research and Translation at the University of Canberra. Being diagnosed with dementia before the age of 65 is not what

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