



Australian Government  
Department of Health

# More than half of all Australian adults are not active enough



Make your move – Sit less  
Be active for life!





Physical inactivity is the second greatest contributor, behind tobacco smoking, to the cancer burden in Australia.<sup>1</sup>

## What's it all about?

Being physically active and limiting your sedentary behaviour every day is essential for your health and well-being. This brochure presents Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for all adults aged 18 to 64 years, irrespective of cultural background, gender or ability. It also provides you with information about the benefits of being physically active, as well as tips and ideas for ways to move more every day.

More information about healthy living, including references to other Australian Government guidelines concerning healthy weight and healthy eating, can be found at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

### What is....

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?** – any activity that gets your body moving, makes your breathing become quicker and your heart beat faster. You can be physically active in many different ways, at any time of day.

**SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR?** – sitting or lying down (except for when you are sleeping). It is common to spend large amounts of time being sedentary when at work, when travelling or during leisure time.

**Move more, sit less, every day!**

# What are the benefits?

## Moving more and sitting less will...



Reduce your risk of, or help manage, cardiovascular disease (CVD).



Reduce your risk of, or help manage, type 2 diabetes.



Maintain and/or improve your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels.



Reduce your risk of, and assist with rehabilitation from, some cancers.



Prevent unhealthy weight gain and assist with weight loss.



Build strong muscles and bones.



Create opportunities for socialising and meeting new people.



Help you to prevent and manage mental health problems.



Help you develop and maintain overall physical and mental well-being.



**Did you know that higher levels of physical activity can help reduce your risk of some cancers and prevent unhealthy weight gain?**



**...and the more active I am, the more I will benefit.**

# Move more...

## Doing any physical activity is better than doing none.

If you are not currently doing any physical activity, you will benefit from starting some. You can start slowly and gradually increase the amount you do. Consult your doctor for advice on the best types of physical activity for you.



You can accumulate your activity by being active on most, preferably all, days every week.



Each week:

- 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) of moderate intensity physical activity, **or**
- 75 minutes (1 ¼ hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity,

will help improve blood pressure, cholesterol, heart health, as well as muscle and bone strength.

Each week, increasing to:

- 300 minutes (5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity, **or**
- 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity,

will provide greater benefits and help to prevent cancer and unhealthy weight gain.

**MODERATE INTENSITY ACTIVITIES** take some effort, but you are still able to talk while doing them.

E.g. a brisk walk, recreational swimming, dancing, social tennis, golf, household tasks like cleaning windows or raking leaves, or pushing a stroller.

**VIGOROUS INTENSITY ACTIVITIES** require more effort and make you breathe harder and faster ('huff and puff').

E.g. jogging, aerobics, fast cycling, many organised sports and tasks that involve lifting, carrying or digging.



I could do at least 30 minutes of physical activity on 5 days of the week.



I could enjoy a bike ride or game of tennis with friends.



I could invite some friends to the dance class I've signed up for.



I could go for a 15 minute jog before breakfast every day.

## A TIME SAVING TIP

You may choose to do a **combination of moderate and vigorous intensity activities.**

10 minutes of vigorous intensity activity is equal to 20 minutes of moderate intensity activity.

## ...and sit less!

Even if you do more than the recommended amount of physical activity every week, you will still benefit from minimising time spent sitting each day, and from regularly interrupting periods of sitting.

**Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.**



Sedentary behaviour is associated with poorer health outcomes, including an increased risk of type 2 diabetes.

## Be aware of time spent in front of the screen.



Watching TV and DVDs, playing electronic games, using computers and surfing the internet may all be popular activities, but they usually involve either sitting or lying down for long periods.

**Nearly 70%**

of Australian adults are either sedentary or have low levels of physical activity – that is almost **12 million adults!**<sup>2</sup>

I could turn off the TV during the day and get out in the garden.



I could visit my colleague to deliver the message in person.



I could set an alarm on my computer to remind me to stand up more often.



**There are many opportunities to sit in our daily lives. The key is to find opportunities to move.**

**What will you do**





## Getting stronger

The Guidelines recommend including muscle strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week.



**Did you know, that regular muscle strengthening activities will help to:**

- Manage blood pressure, blood sugar and blood cholesterol levels.
- Prevent and control heart disease and type 2 diabetes.
- Improve posture, mobility and balance.
- Reduce the risk of falls and injury.
- Maintain your ability to do everyday tasks.



I could do body weight exercises, like push-ups, squats or lunges, at home.

I could do tasks around the house that involve lifting, carrying or digging.

I could join a gym and do weights or other resistance training.

**What will you do**





# Why not try these ideas?

Think about when and where you can be physically active. Making some small changes to your daily routine can make a big difference.



## ACTIVE TRAVEL

- For short trips, walk or cycle and leave the car at home.
- For longer trips, walk or cycle part of the way.
- Use the stairs instead of the lift or escalator.
- Get off the bus one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way.
- Park further away from your destination and walk – you may even save on parking fees.



## ACTIVE AT WORK

- Park your car an extra 5 or 10 minute walk from work.
- Walk to deliver a message rather than emailing or making a phone call.
- Leave your desk at lunch time and enjoy a short walk outside.
- Organise walking meetings.



## ACTIVE AND FUN

- Catch up with friends for a walk, instead of sitting to chat.
- Plan outdoor activities, like bike riding or walking.
- Don't let the weather stop you. Try indoor activities like dancing, indoor swimming, squash or indoor rock climbing.



## ACTIVE AND SAFE

- If you are new to physical activity, have a health problem, or are concerned about the safety of being (more) active, speak with your doctor or health professional about the most suitable activities for you.
- Protect yourself from the sun – you should wear sun-protective clothing, including a hat, and apply sunscreen regularly.

**Be active every day in as many ways as you can!**

# Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Adults (18–64 years)

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you currently do no physical activity, start by doing some, and gradually build up to the recommended amount.
- Be active on most, preferably all, days every week.
- Accumulate 150 to 300 minutes (2 ½ to 5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity or 75 to 150 minutes (1 ¼ to 2 ½ hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous activities, each week.
- Do muscle strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week.

## SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR

- Minimise the amount of time spent in prolonged sitting.
- Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

## Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

- Move and Play Every Day – National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 Years.
- Make *your* move – Sit less – Be active for life!
  - Children (5-12 years)
  - Young People (13-17 years)
  - Adults (18-64 years)
  - Families
- Choose Health: Be Active – A physical activity guide for older Australians.

## OTHER HEALTHY LIVING RESOURCES:

- Healthy Weight Guide – [www.healthyweight.health.gov.au](http://www.healthyweight.health.gov.au)
- Eat for Health – [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)
- Shape Up Australia – [www.shapeup.gov.au](http://www.shapeup.gov.au)
- Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Overweight and Obesity in Adults, Adolescents and Children in Australia – [www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n57](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n57)
- Get Up & Grow – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood (for centre based care, family day care and pre-schools) – [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

To find out more, go to  
[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)