

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Components of Physical Activity



Physical activity incorporates three basic types of exercise

- 1 Heart-lung endurance training for cardiovascular fitness;
- 2 Muscular strength and endurance training for developing muscle mass and fatigue resistance; and
- 3 Joint flexibility training for loosening (lengthening) muscles and joints and improving range of motion

Because each type of exercise results in different health benefits, it's important to include each in your workout. While designing an exercise regime that fits your lifestyle, consider which physical activities you enjoy, consult your doctor, an exercise physiologist or a personal trainer about your plans, and remember to start out slowly and build up gradually.

Remember that the ultimate goal of anyone embarking on an exercise program is the long term sustainability of the program. Many people get fit but only for a period of time. Relatively few remain fit over the course of their life (one out of every two Australians don't get enough exercise!).

Long term commitment is far more likely if you enjoy the exercise you do. No matter how good running and swimming are for your health and fitness, if the activity feels like a chore, you'll start making excuses and that will signal a return to inactivity.

Which type of physical activity is best?

That's easy - it's the one that you enjoy and can commit to on a regular basis. Any exercise is better than no exercise! But to optimise the fitness benefits there are a few principles you should consider:

- Rhythmic, continuous activity of large muscle groups – if you use large muscle groups (ie. legs, back, chest, abs) in a continuous manner, you are likely to get your heart rate up to a level where cardiovascular fitness benefits are optimised
- For this reason, suitable exercises include running, jogging, a brisk walk, swimming, riding, aerobics, boxercise, dancing etc.
- Progressive overload can be implemented where you gradually increase the intensity, distance and/or time in order to gain further benefits and avoid reaching a "plateau"

Take a Walk

Taking the time to exercise can be a challenge for people who lead busy lives. Walking is inexpensive and possibly the most convenient of all exercises. It is easy to fit into even the busiest of schedules. You can walk at lunch time, on a business trip, or on holiday. No bookings, no cost and no company required – it doesn't get any simpler!



Health benefits of walking

- Brisk walking can reduce anxiety and tension for many hours after exercising
- Regular walking can help control weight
- Walking can help maintain bone mass which can assist in preventing osteoporosis
- Walking can reduce your future risk of diabetes by helping you lose excess weight
- For diabetics, walking can help use insulin more efficiently





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	Cardiovascular Fitness	Muscle Strength & Endurance	Muscle & Joint Flexibility	Weight Management
Best	Running/jogging Swimming Rowing Cycling Dancing Aerobics/boxercise Brisk walking Stair climbing Soccer/football Basketball/netball	Weight training Floor exercises such as sit ups Yoga/pilates (core strength) Martial arts (Taekwondo/ karate)	Yoga Pilates Tai Chi Stretching Martial Arts (Taekwondo/ karate)	Combining cardio work with strength training is the best option
Acceptable	Tennis/squash Martial arts (Taekwondo/ karate)	Tennis/squash Aerobics/boxercise Stair climbing Soccer/football Basketball/netball	Tennis/squash Aerobics/boxercise Stair climbing Soccer/football Basketball/netball	

Ease into your exercise program. Many injuries occur because people do too much, too soon.

Begin slowly and increase your schedule gradually. Make sure to include a rest period between sessions.

“Walking is man’s best medicine”
Hippocrates (460-377BC)

SPECIAL NOTE:

Warm-up your body before stretching. For example, slowly do the motion of your activity for 1-2 minutes. Then stretch for 2-5 minutes before exercising.

More importantly, stretch for 5-10 minutes after any exercise - when your muscles are warmed up and more easily stretched.

Current guidelines recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity, such as brisk walking, swimming or cycling. The target is at least 150 minutes per week.*

Warming up, cooling down, and stretching (before and after) is important but they do not count as part of the 30 minute recommendation. You will need to include an additional 10-15 minutes for warming up and cooling down.

Weekly time recommendations

(minimum recommendations)

Cardiovascular Fitness Activities

If you're a beginner, start slowly. Begin with a short daily walk of 10-15 minutes for the first week or so. Then gradually add the other activities and increase your time to reach the minimum recommended level of 150 minutes per week.

Muscular Strength and Endurance activities

Perform two to three times a week for 15 minutes or more each time.

Muscle and Joint Flexibility activities

Stretch for 3-5 minutes per day, or 10 minutes every other day.

*Summary of Australian Physical Activity Guidelines; Australian Government, 2020. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare