

COVID19 ADJUSTMENT WHEEL - TIP SHEET

DIMENSION: PHYSICAL HEALTH



Since the advent of the pandemic, many significant changes across our society have impacted how we maintain our physical health. These include; less frequent visits to our GP, delays in getting regular checks such as blood tests and specialist checks ups, rescheduling elective surgery, and cancelling our regular fitness classes, to restrictions on easily accessible fresh fruit and vegetables. In addition, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on one's mental health has the potential to adversely affect our physical health through increased stress, feelings of apathy, fatigue, anxiety etc.

Therefore, a call to action to ensure we maintain our physical health is paramount. We can initiate this with a review of the changes in our physical health since the start of pandemic. For example, have the restrictions impacted your level of physical activity, or has working from home and having access to a full pantry unwittingly resulted in additional 'COVID' kilos? Has your sleep been impacted or perhaps alcohol consumption may have increased? A self-audit of physical health is an easy way to re-connect with our overall wellbeing and prioritise and practice good lifestyle habits, improving our health and wellbeing. You may find the Adjustment Wheel can provide you with some suggestions to get you going.



Key Tips

- **30-60 minutes of Physical Activity.** A sedentary lifestyle is usually associated with an increased risk for chronic disease, loss of movement and decreased immune health. For those reasons, keeping up our physical activity is extremely important during the coronavirus pandemic. Benefits of exercise include stress and anxiety relief, immune support, weight management, reduced health risks, bone and muscle balance and flexibility. Doing any physical activity is better than none but try aiming for 30-60 minutes of physical activity every day. This can be at one time or spread out throughout the day and can happen anywhere from outside to lounge rooms, on floors, in backyard/balconies. Any activity counts! It all adds up!
- **Improving Nutrition.** Eating a nutritious diet is more important than ever during these times, as it will assist our immune system in functioning at optimum capacity, as well as support our mental health. Try following the Australian Dietary guidelines daily, as best you can.
- **Maintain Health check-ups.** Whilst it's understandable that you want to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by staying at home, it's still important to manage your ongoing health and wellbeing. It is very important to not delay or put off any healthcare check-ups or treatment as this could be putting your own health at a greater risk down the track. Discuss with your GP or allied health professional over the phone first to decide what appointments and check-ups you may need, and they will advise you on the best option for face to face appointments. Consider using telehealth services where they are available.
- **Sleep. Sleep is key for our mental and physical health.** Inadequate sleep can heighten our feelings of anxiety and stress leading to increased irritability and difficulty in concentrating, ultimately affecting our productivity and life satisfaction. Tips to get a better night sleep include:
 - » **Establish a regular schedule.** Regular bedtime and wake-up times will help you maintain a healthy sleep routine.
 - » **Avoid backlit devices before bedtime.** Set aside phones, laptops and tablets at least 30 minutes before your scheduled sleep time. The blue light from these devices delay the uptake of melatonin thereby impacting the timing of your circadian rhythm and delaying sleep.
 - » **Limit caffeine.** Avoid drinking coffee late in the day as it can cause nervousness in some people and delay sleep in the evening.
 - » **Problem Solving.** Before going to bed, if you have any pressing matters on your mind, write them down and indicate a brief plan for each. This should limit the potential for those problems to go around and around in your mind when you are trying to sleep.
 - » **Limit Alcohol** close to bedtime as it can cause interruptions to your sleep pattern leading to increased tiredness the next day.



Prioritise your wellness and seek help early

Employee Assistance Program: Your EAP provides health coaching to assist in maintaining good physical health.

General Practitioner: Your GP can discuss medical or other support options with you. If you don't already have a local GP you can search for clinics in your area via: Health Engine, <https://healthengine.com.au>



Useful Resources



1800 273 865



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