

Staying active during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many of us staying / working at home, completing less physical activity, and sitting down a lot more than we usually would.

In order to manage the risks associated with reduced physical activity and increased sitting time, we need to manage both of these independent, yet related risk factors. Below is some practical information on staying active during COVID-19.

The benefits of staying active	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health benefits include reducing high blood pressure; assisting with weight management; and reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and various cancers. These conditions can increase susceptibility to COVID-19.• Physical activity also improves bone and muscle strength; increases balance, flexibility and fitness; and is also good for our mental health, reducing the risk of depression and cognitive decline, as well as improving feelings of wellbeing.• Regular physical activity can help give our days a routine, and can be a way of staying connected to family and friends.
What is adequate physical activity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The World Health Organisation recommends guidelines for various age groups. The following are recommended to benefit the health and wellbeing of adults over 18 years of age:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity throughout the week.○ For additional health benefits, increase moderate-intensity physical activity to 300 minutes per week.○ For developing and maintaining musculoskeletal health, muscle-strengthening activities involving major muscle groups should be done on two or more days a week.• Just 30 minutes every day can lead to positive health outcomes
Staying motivated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find an activity that you enjoy. If you choose an activity that you don't enjoy you are less likely to stick to a commitment to participate.• Develop a routine and stick to it - do it even when you don't feel like it.• If it's hard to get self-motivated, find someone who is interested in exercising with you (at a safe distance), and enjoys similar activities.• There are currently a range of online exercise classes on offer, many of which are free and can be found on YouTube.• Get outdoors – whether it's an improvised circuit in the backyard or a walk around the block, the impact of fresh air and sunshine can never be underestimated.• Physical activity does not necessarily have to be about “exercise” or “sport”. It includes things like cleaning and gardening, and if you enjoy music, take up dancing!• If you have pets or children, bond with them through active play.• Consider how you can change your home environment to support you to move more, e.g. if you have stairs, include them as a regular activity to break up your day.

Reduce your sitting time

- Too much sitting has negative impacts on your health, regardless of whether or not you meet the physical activity guidelines. So reducing your time spent sitting is just as important as increasing your time spent participating in physical activity. Ideally, sit for 20 minutes – MOVE for 2 minutes
- Tips for reducing your sitting time:
 - Schedule regular breaks into long meetings.
 - Set a screen saver reminder to break from sitting at least every 20 minutes.
 - Rather than keeping a water jug on your desk, only keep a glass to encourage you to walk to the kitchen regularly for refills.
 - Stand up and walk about while completing phone calls – at home, in the local park or around your neighbourhood.

Other resources

- [10 exercises you can do with no equipment](#)
- [15-minute daily flexibility routine](#)
- [Home-based exercises](#)