

Physical activity.

Reduce
your risk
of cancer

13 11 20
Cancer Council



**Cancer
Council**
WA

Benefits of being active

- Build fitness, balance and flexibility
- Maintain bone and muscle health as you age
- Improve mental health and mood
- Manage weight
- Sleep better
- Have a healthy blood pressure
- Reduce the risk of chronic diseases including:
 - heart disease
 - type 2 diabetes
 - some cancers
- Manage chronic diseases



Physical activity reduces cancer risk

People who are physically active are less likely to get bowel cancer than people who are not active. Physical activity may also protect against endometrial cancer and postmenopausal breast cancer. Vigorous-intensity physical activity has been linked to a reduced risk of breast cancer in premenopausal women.

Another benefit of physical activity is that it helps avoid weight gain and maintain a healthy weight. So it indirectly protects against cancers related to being overweight such as breast cancer (in postmenopausal women), bowel cancer and pancreatic cancer.



What should I do?

Guidelines for adults (18-64 years)

MOVE: Do at least some physical activity each week. Even if you don't currently do much physical activity, you'll see health benefits from moving a bit more

MOVE MORE: Be active on most days each week

MOVE HARDER: Each week aim for **2h 30min – 5h** of moderate-intensity activity; **1h 15min – 2h 30min** of vigorous-intensity activity; or an equivalent combination of both

MOVE STRONGER: Do strength exercises on at least **2 days** each week

MOVE OFTEN: Minimise the amount of time spent sitting and break up long periods of sitting as often as possible



Guidelines for older adults (65+ years)

MOVE: Do at least some physical activity each week, no matter your age, weight, ability or health. If you are new to exercise or are starting a new activity, start at a level that is easily manageable and gradually build up to the recommended amount – it's never too late to start!

MOVE MORE: Be active every day. Include activities that incorporate fitness, strength, balance and flexibility

MOVE HARDER: Do at least **30 minutes** of moderate-intensity activity on most days. If you have been doing vigorous physical activity all your life, keep doing this into later life if you are able to.



Guidelines for children (5+ years)

MOVE: Do a variety of aerobic activities, including some vigorous-intensity activity. Aerobic activities are those that increase your heart rate and get you puffing.

MOVE HARDER: Get at least **60 minutes** of moderate or vigorous intensity activity each day. For additional health benefits, aim to increase this to several hours each day.

MOVE STRONGER: Do activities that strengthen muscles and bones on at least **3 days** each week

MOVE OFTEN: Limit screen time to no more than **2 hours** each day and break up long periods of sitting as often as possible

Exercise intensity

Exercise intensity	Talk level	Examples
Light 	Normal breathing rate – can sing or talk	Slow walking Stretching Light housework 
Moderate 	Breathing getting faster – can carry a conversation but not sing	Brisk walking Cricket Leisurely swimming 
Vigorous 	Gasping for breath – can't hold a conversation	Jogging Soccer Dancing 



Move stronger

National guidelines recommend that adults do strength training on at least 2 days each week, however only 3 in 10 adults report doing any strength training at all.

Inactive adults lose 3% to 8% of their muscle mass each decade. To help keep your muscles and bones strong as you get older it's important to include strengthening activities into your week.

Strengthening your muscles doesn't have to involve going to the gym or doing weights; yoga, pilates, calf raises, squats, push-ups and sit-ups also count as strength exercises.



Get moving!

Physical activity includes just about any movement that results in using energy such as:

- Deliberate exercise or sports (e.g. running, playing football or going to the gym)
- Incidental activity (e.g. playing with kids, hanging out the washing, walking to the bus)
- Work-related activity (e.g. climbing a ladder, lifting boxes)



Getting from A to B

- Ride or walk to work or school each day
- If you have to drive, park further away from your destination and walk the rest of the way
- Take public transport to work or school. Get off one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way

At your desk job

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator to get your heart pumping before settling into your chair
- Are standing, treadmill or cycling desks an option? Find out from your employer
- Use the bathrooms on a different level, and take the stairs to get there
- Set an alarm on your phone to stand up and stretch every half hour

Leisure time

- The key to staying active is to find an exercise you enjoy. This can be an organised sport, rock climbing, gym class, tai chi, or simply taking the dog for a walk at the park or along the coast
- Rope a friend into your exercise plans to help you keep motivated
- House tasks like gardening, cooking and vacuuming all count as physical activity – get your house in order while moving more!
- Restrict the number of hours you watch TV, play video games or use a device each day.
- Train for an event, such as Run for a Reason

Getting started

- Anything is better than nothing! Start slow and gradually increase the time and intensity as your fitness improves.
- Choose an activity that is comfortable. Swimming may be suitable because the buoyancy of the water supports your body, while cycling is easier on the knees than running. Doing workout videos at home means you can set your own pace.
- Don't push yourself too hard. If an activity hurts, decrease the intensity or stop altogether. It's ok for it to be a bit uncomfortable, but pain is a sign that something is wrong. Going too hard can make exercise seem like a chore which won't help you keep it up in the long term.



Finding time to be active

- Make it a priority and schedule it into your day.
- Plan social activities that involve movement. Instead of watching a movie or sitting at a cafe, organise to go for a walk or ride, fly a kite, go to the park or zoo, or have a swim at the beach.
- Include physical activity in your daily life, such as by taking active transport to work or school, using a stationary bike while watching TV, and always taking the stairs instead of the lift.
- Reduce screen time. Switch off your screen and take a walk around the block or kick a footy with the family.

Body weight and exercise

Body weight, a healthy diet, and physical activity are all separate risk factors. While being physically active plays a role in weight management, exercise provides health benefits regardless of your weight. You can't outrun a bad diet. People who do more exercise will generally have higher energy needs. However, junk foods and sugary drinks contain a lot of kilojoules and you often cannot fit enough exercise in the day to use the extra energy in large amounts of junk food. Many people *overestimate* how many kilojoules are used during exercise and *underestimate* how many kilojoules are in their favourite treats.



Benefits of exercise during cancer treatment

For most people physical activity is safe and hugely beneficial during treatment. It's an effective way to manage the physical and mental side effects of cancer and treatment:

- Boost energy
- Reduce fatigue
- Reduce muscle wasting
- Improve sleep
- Improve mood

Being physically active before, during and after treatment may also help stop the cancer coming back.

For more information talk to your doctor or call 13 11 20 for Cancer Council's 'Exercise for people living with cancer' booklet.

Exercise cautions

If you have any cardiovascular symptoms (e.g. chest pain) or a history of heart disease, stroke, lung disease, diabetes, other active chronic disease, any medical concern or you are pregnant, you should consult your doctor before increasing the intensity or duration of your activity.

If you have any doubts or concerns at all about starting or increasing your activity levels you should consult your doctor.

When being physically active outdoors it's important to protect yourself against skin cancer. Be SunSmart in five ways:



SLIP



SLOP



SLAP



SEEK



SLIDE

See myUV.com.au for more information.

What can I do to reduce my risk of cancer?

- Stop smoking
- Move your body
- Stay in shape
- Eat for health
- Be SunSmart
- Avoid alcohol
- Talk to your doctor about cancer



For support and information on cancer and cancer-related issues, speak to a Cancer Council Nurse on **13 11 20**. Calls are confidential and available statewide Monday to Friday during business hours.