

Exercise for healthy ageing



What is healthy ageing?

Healthy ageing means making choices that help you stay independent for longer.

Research has shown that 25% of ageing is determined by genetics. The other 75% is down to the lifestyle choices we make every day.

These choices include how you stay socially connected, whether you challenge your brain, and how you think and feel about your life.

Exercise is another important part of healthy ageing.



Why is healthy ageing important?

When you focus on healthy ageing you can thrive as part of your community.

As you get older, your risk of developing a health condition increases. Your physical strength and mobility can decline quicker too.

It's true that more than half of Australians over the age of 65 have a chronic health condition. But becoming older doesn't mean you have to be vulnerable or dependent.

Choosing to be physically active at every age is the cheapest and most effective defence against age-related decline.



Exercise makes you feel good

Exercise provides a wide range of important benefits and health improvements.

Exercise makes you feel good as it helps you:

- Sleep better
- Have more energy
- Have more fun
- Meet new people and make friends.



Exercise makes your body feel good

Some important physical benefits of exercise include:

- Reduces the risk of developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, and osteoporosis
- Helps manage your health issues
- Reduces the risk of falls
- Improves how your body functions
- Improves your independence
- Helps to manage pain
- Keeps your joints and bones healthy.

Exercise makes your brain feel good

There are also less obvious benefits of exercise including:

- Reducing stress and anxiety
- Improving your mood
- Improving memory function
- Improving your self confidence.



Where do I start?

The Department of Health has some easy guidelines to follow. These recommend older adults are active every day.

They suggest moving in as many ways as possible, as well as trying a variety of activities.

Try to complete at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days no matter your age, weight, or health condition.

What is moderate intensity exercise?

Some examples include:

- Brisk walking
- Water aerobics
- A leisurely bike ride
- Hiking
- Golf
- Gardening
- Washing the car
- Heavy housework.



Guidelines for exercise intensity

An easy way to check is to use the talk test:

- **Light intensity:** you can talk or sing comfortably whilst moving
- **Moderate intensity:** you can talk comfortably but you're not able to sing whilst moving
- **High intensity:** you can't talk or sing whilst moving.

If you think that 30 minutes may be too intense, you could start with as much as you feel comfortable doing.

For example, you could go for a 10-minute walk once or twice a day. After a few weeks you could gradually increase your walk from 10 to 15 minutes and work your way up to 30 minutes per day.

Stay on track

According to the Bureau of Statistics, 71.9% of Australians aged 65 and over don't complete 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days a week.

Exercise helps you feel the benefits of moving more often and means you can maintain your independence for longer.

Helpful tips to stay on track:

- Get into a routine – plan your physical activity for a regular time and place.
- Be social – include a friend, neighbour, or relative to join you.
- Add variety – keep things interesting and try different types of physical activity.

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