

Just move it!

The latest studies show that lifestyle activities such as housework, gardening and generally being more active around the home are just as effective as going out and joining a gym or doing an exercise class. Activities that are fun and free, like dancing to the radio or playing outdoor games with friends, can have huge health benefits.

Here are a few things you can do each day to keep you feeling fit and healthy:

- Take the stairs instead of using the lift or escalator.
- Walk or ride your bike instead of using the car.
- Increase your dog's fitness by regularly walking together.
- Instead of sitting and talking at lunchtime go for a walk with a friend.
- Arrange a game of soccer, basketball, cricket or football during your lunch break.
- Join a social league in a sport you enjoy.
- Go swimming in summer to get active and cool down.

If it has been a long time since you have been physically active, it is a good idea to visit your doctor before starting up a new form of physical activity.

More information

- Talk to a GP.
- Call Lifeline on 131 114.
- Call Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800.
- Call your local Community Health Centre (look under Health Services in the information pages at the front of the white pages).
- www.reachour.asn.au
- www.thesource.gov.au
- www.activeaustralia.org

If these services can't help you they can usually give you the contact details of a service in your area that can.

We acknowledge the assistance of Child Youth Health www.cyh.com.au



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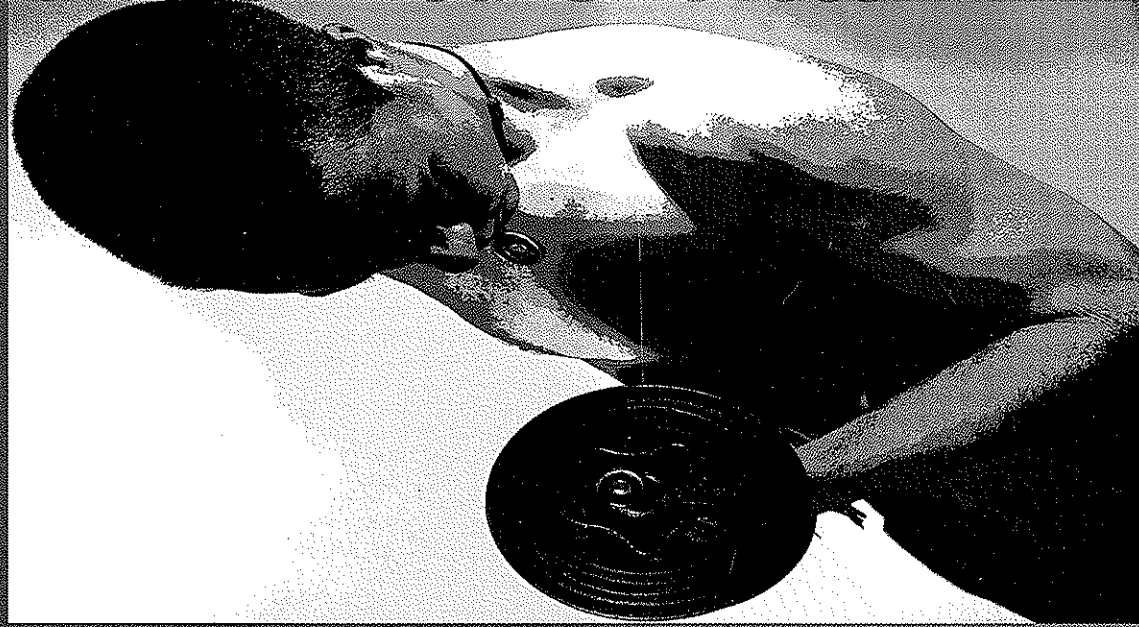
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Make Informed Choices

FITNESS



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Benefits of being active

As our society makes advances in technology, we are often required to do less, physically. Many people now spend most of their day working or studying at desks. Leisure time is also increasingly being spent in front of computers or TV.

Being physically active helps to reduce stress, gives us energy and helps us feel good about ourselves.

Looking good

Being active and healthy will help you look healthy. This can increase your self-esteem and confidence.

Get a natural 'high'

Physical activity releases endorphins in the body, which are natural chemicals that make us feel good.

Exhilaration

Any activity which is challenging can be exhilarating. This includes activities like rock climbing, abseiling, skateboarding and rollerblading.

Social enjoyment

You can make new friends, enjoy the fun of a social team sport, or talk with a friend while you walk.

More energy

Being active does not take away your energy, it actually gives you more energy.

Relaxation

Physical activity reduces stress, tension and can be used to reduce anger.

Sleep

You will have a better night's sleep when you are regularly active.

Increase your skills

Participating in new activities or sports can improve your skills and confidence.

Stronger muscles and bones

Using your muscles by being active makes them stronger and more toned. Bones can be strengthened by doing weight-bearing activities.

Strong heart and lungs

Physical activity will lower resting blood pressure and cholesterol.

Getting started

- Get active with a friend. You can motivate each other.
- Think about activities that you can build into your lifestyle so you can maintain them.
- If you are thinking about going to the gym make sure a trainer develops a program to suit you and shows you how to use the equipment.

Different types of fitness

Stamina or Endurance

Stamina refers to the body's ability to sustain physical activity over long periods of time. Aerobic activity like fast walking, jogging, swimming, cycling or dancing, strengthens your heart and lungs. It is recommended to do some aerobic activity for at least 20 to 40 minutes three times a week.

Strength and Power

Strength is built by doing anaerobic activities, like resistance training. You can use your own body weight as resistance (eg push-ups) or light weights. The resistance builds and strengthens muscle tissue. It is important not to use weights until the body's skeletal system has fully developed. Talk to your doctor if you wish to start using weights and get a professional to develop a program to suit your needs.

Flexibility

Being flexible means you can move your body freely without pain. If you do not keep your muscles flexible, you are much more likely to injure yourself. Gentle stretching activities like yoga or tai chi will improve flexibility.