

Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

This page contains Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines including links to brochures, a summary fact sheet for each of the guidelines, tips and ideas for how to be physically active, as well as evidence review reports.

Page last updated: 21 November 2017

Regardless of how young or old you are, there are physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines available for you.

- [Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years \(Birth to 5 years\)](#)
- [Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children \(5-12 years\)](#)
- [Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Young People \(13-17 years\)](#)
- [Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Adults \(18-64 years\)](#)
- [Choose Health: Be Active – A physical activity guide for older Australians](#)
- [Make Your Move – Sit Less – Be active for life! - A resource for families](#)
- [Ordering publications](#)

Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines are supported by a rigorous evidence review process that considered:

- the relationship between physical activity (including the amount, frequency, intensity and type of physical activity) and health outcome indicators, including the risk of chronic disease and obesity; and
- the relationship between sedentary behaviour/sitting time and health outcome indicators, including the risk of chronic disease and obesity.

The Evidence Review Reports provide a summary of the scientific evidence that supports Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines. Evidence Review Reports are available as follows:

- A Systematic Review to update the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children and Young People – June 2012. - PDF 1.5 MB | - Word 462 KB
 - A Systematic Review to inform the Australian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Young People – June 2012. - PDF 1.2 MB | - Word 141 KB
 - Development of Evidence-based Physical Activity recommendations for Adults (18-64 years) – August 2012. - PDF 1.5 MB | - Word 937 KB
 - [National physical activity recommendations for older Australians: Discussion Document](#)
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National Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep Recommendations for Children (Birth to 5 years)

The Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 years) show there is an important relationship between how much sleep, sedentary behaviour and physical activity young children get in a 24-hour period.

These recommendations are for all children aged Birth to 5 years who have not yet started school, irrespective of cultural background, gender or ability. The recommendations are outlined below and are also available in the brochure – [Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years \(Birth to 5 years\)](#) - PDF 150 KB. An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep

[Order 'Early Years \(Birth to 5 years\)' publication](#)

Physical Activity Recommendations

For healthy growth and development in:

- **Infants (Birth to one year)** physical activity particularly through supervised interactive floor-based play in safe environments should be encouraged from birth. For those not yet mobile, 30 minutes of tummy time including reaching and grasping, pushing and pulling, and crawling spread throughout the day during awake periods is encouraged.
- **Toddlers (1 to 2 years)** should spend at least 180 minutes a day doing a variety of physical activities including energetic play such as running, jumping and twirling spread throughout the day- noting more is better.
- **Pre-schoolers (3 to 5 years)** should spend at least 180 minutes a day in a variety of physical activities, of which 60 minutes is energetic play such as running, jumping and kicking and throwing, spread throughout the day - noting more is better.

Sedentary Behaviour Recommendations

- **Infants (Birth to one year)** should not be restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g. in a stroller, car seat or high chair). Infants should also not spend any time watching television or using other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games) and instead, when sedentary, the caregiver is encouraged to engage with them through activities such as reading, singing, puzzles and storytelling.
- **Toddlers (aged 1-2 years)** should not be restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g. in a stroller, car seat or high chair) or sit for extended periods. For those toddlers younger than 2 years, screen time is not recommended during sedentary periods. For those aged 2 years, screen time should be no more than 1 hour in total throughout the 24-hour period- less is better. When toddlers are sedentary, the caregiver is encouraged to engage with them through activities such as reading, singing, puzzles and storytelling.
- **Pre-schoolers (aged 3-5 years)** should not be restrained, for more than 1 hour at a time e.g. in a stroller or car seat) or sitting for extended periods. Sedentary screen time should be no more than 1 hour in total throughout the 24-hour period -less is better. When pre-schoolers are sedentary,

caregivers are encouraged to engage with them through activities such as reading, singing, puzzles and storytelling.

Sleep

- **Infants (Birth to one year)** are recommended to have 14 to 17 hours (for those aged 0-3 months) and 12 to 16 hours (for those aged 4-11 months) of good quality sleep, including naps during the 24 hour period.
- **Toddlers (aged 1-2 years)** are recommended to have from 11 to 14 hours of good quality sleep, including naps during the 24-hour period with consistent sleep and wake-up times.
- **Pre-schoolers (aged 3-5 years)** are recommended to have 10 to 13 hours of good quality sleep, which may include a nap, with consistent sleep and wake-up times.

Future Research and Surveillance

The evidence supporting the development of [24-Hour Movement Guidelines](#) is strong. As such the World Health Organization is considering the adoption of this 24-hour approach as part of the development of global guidelines.

Further Information

- [Fact Sheet - 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years \(Birth to 5 years\)](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Research and Statistics](#)
 - [Other Resources & Links](#)
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Australia's Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children (5-12 years)

Being physically active is good for kids' health, and creates opportunities for making new friends and developing physical and social skills. These Guidelines are for all children aged 5-12 years who have started school, irrespective of cultural background, gender or ability.

The guidelines are outlined below and are also available in the **Make your move – Sit less – Be active for life! brochure** - PDF 1.1 MB | - Word 26 KB which provides further information and guidance about physical activity, play, sedentary behaviour (sitting) and 'screen time' for children.

[Order 'Make your move – Sit less – Be active for life!' \(5-12 years\) brochure](#)

Physical Activity

- For health benefits, children aged 5–12 years should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity every day.

- Children's physical activity should include a variety of aerobic activities, including some vigorous intensity activity.
- On at least three days per week, children should engage in activities that strengthen muscle and bone.
- To achieve additional health benefits, children should engage in more activity – up to several hours per day.

Sedentary Behaviour

- To reduce health risks, children aged 5-12 years should minimise the time they spend being sedentary every day. To achieve this:
 - Limit use of electronic media for entertainment (e.g. television, seated electronic games and computer use) to no more than two hours a day – lower levels are associated with reduced health risks.
 - Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

Further Information

- Fact Sheet - [Two page printer-friendly summary of the guidelines](#) - PDF 437 KB | [HTML](#)
 - Tips & Ideas for how to build physical activity into your day - PDF 553 KB | [HTML](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Research and Statistics](#)
 - [Other Resources & Links](#)
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Australia's Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Young People (13 -17 years)

As young people move through school, start work and become more independent, being physically active and limiting sedentary behaviour every day is not always easy, but it is possible and it is important. These guidelines are for all young people, irrespective of cultural background, gender or ability.

The **Make your move – Sit less – Be active for life! brochure** - PDF 1.3 MB | - Word 25 KB presents the guidelines and provides further information and advice about physical activity and sedentary behaviour (sitting) for young people.

[Order 'Make your move – Sit less – Be active for life!' \(13 -17 years\) brochure](#)

Physical Activity Guidelines

- For health benefits, young people aged 13–17 years should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity every day.

- Young peoples' physical activity should include a variety of aerobic activities, including some vigorous intensity activity.
- On at least three days per week, young people should engage in activities that strengthen muscle and bone.
- To achieve additional health benefits, young people should engage in more activity – up to several hours per day.

Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

- To reduce health risks, young people aged 13–17 years should minimise the time they spend being sedentary every day. To achieve this:
 - Limit use of electronic media for entertainment (e.g. television, seated electronic games and computer use) to no more than two hours a day – lower levels are associated with reduced health risks.
 - Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

Further Information

- Fact Sheet - [Two page printer-friendly summary of the guidelines](#) - PDF 438 KB | [HTML](#)
- Tips & Ideas for how to build physical activity into your day - PDF 553 KB | [HTML](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Research and Statistics](#)
- [Other Resources & Links](#)

Australia's Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Adults (18-64 years)

Being physically active and limiting your sedentary behaviour every day is essential for health and wellbeing. These guidelines are for all adults aged 18 – 64 years, irrespective of cultural background, gender or ability.

The Guidelines are outlined below and are also available in the **Make your Move – Sit less – Be active for life! brochure** - PDF 1.2 MB | - Word 26 KB which provides further information and guidance about physical activity and sedentary behaviour (sitting) for adults.

[Order Make your Move – Sit less – Be active for life! brochure \(18-64 years\)](#)

Physical Activity Guidelines

- Doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you currently do no physical activity, start by doing some, and gradually build up to the recommended amount.
- Be active on most, preferably all, days every week.
- Accumulate 150 to 300 minutes (2 ½ to 5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity or 75 to 150 minutes (1 ¼ to 2 ½ hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous activities, each week.
- Do muscle strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week.

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Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

- Minimise the amount of time spent in prolonged sitting.
- Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

Further Information

- Fact Sheet - [Two page printer-friendly summary of the guidelines PDF 436 KB](#) | [HTML](#)
 - Tips & Ideas for how to build physical activity into your day - PDF 530 KB | [HTML](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
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Physical Activity Recommendations for Older Australians (65 years and older)

Being physically active and staying fit and healthy will help you to get the most out of life, whatever your age. These recommendations are designed to help older Australians achieve sufficient physical activity for good health as they age. They are mainly for people who are not currently building 30 minutes of physical activity into their daily lives, and are looking for ways they can do so.

Being physically active for 30 minutes every day is achievable and even a slight increase in activity can make a difference to your health and wellbeing.

Hard copies of this resource are no longer available

Physical Activity Recommendations

There are five physical activity recommendations for older Australians. These recommendations are also available in the [Choose Health: Be Active - A physical activity guide for older Australians](#) brochure which provides further information about physical activity for older Australians.

1. Older people should do some form of physical activity, no matter what their age, weight, health problems or abilities.
2. Older people should be active every day in as many ways as possible, doing a range of physical activities that incorporate fitness, strength, balance and flexibility.
3. Older people should accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.
4. Older people who have stopped physical activity, or who are starting a new physical activity, should start at a level that is easily manageable and gradually build up the recommended amount, type and frequency of activity.
5. Older people who continue to enjoy a lifetime of vigorous physical activity should carry on doing so

in a manner suited to their capability into later life, provided recommended safety procedures and guidelines are adhered to.

Further Information

- [Choose Health: Be Active – A physical activity guide for older Australians](#)
 - [Tips & Ideas for how to build physical activity into your day - PDF 607 KB | HTML](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Research and Statistics](#)
 - [Other Resources & Links](#)
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Make your Move – Sit Less – Be Active for Life! – A resource for Families

This **brochure for families** ([PDF 1.3 MB](#)) | - Word 25 KB provides you with a summary of Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for all ages. It provides information about the benefits of being physically active, and offers steps that you and your family can take towards better health, at any age. You will find information for everyone – infants and toddlers, children, young people and adults too, as well as tips and ideas for being more active and less sedentary every day.

[Order 'Make your Move – Sit Less – Be Active for Life! – A resource for Families' brochure](#)

Further Information

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