

Why Be Active? fact sheet

Increasing your level of physical activity can help increase your energy, general health and wellbeing and decrease the risk of developing many serious illnesses associated with being overweight, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer.

Being more active may also help to:

- build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints, reducing risk of injury
- increase your metabolic rate - the rate your body uses up energy (from food and drink)
- improve your self-confidence and self-esteem
- reduce feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression
- improve sleep and mental health in general
- create more opportunities to socialise with others
- get more out of life!

Being active goes hand in hand with eating well to help maintain a healthy bodyweight. If you're not striking a balance between the energy that you put in (as food and drink) and the energy your body uses up (for bodily functions and being active), the extra energy you consume is stored as fat in the body. This excess of stored fat causes overweight and obesity.

Built to move

The human body was built to move for survival. From hunting and gathering food, to building homes and finding fuel to keep it warm. Today, technology has reduced much of the need for movement and activity with things like cars, washing machines, remote controls, cordless phones, e-mails, to name a few. Many occupations are now less labour-intensive, as special equipment helps take the load. Plus of course, television and computer screens keep us inactive for long periods of time.

Research shows that these decreases in physical activity are contributing directly to the rapid increase in obesity and other health problems. This is a serious problem when around 25 per cent of children, 66 per cent of adult males and 51 per cent of adult females in Queensland are already overweight or obese. In fact, **physical inactivity is one of the most important causes of preventable death.**

So, it's really important to make sure you're doing enough physical activity each day - for your own health and if you have children, for their health and wellbeing too.

What is physical activity?

We often use the words 'physical activity', 'sport' and 'exercise' to mean the same thing; but exercise is really just one type of physical activity, and sport is another.

Physical Activity is a broad term meaning any bodily movement that uses up energy. Physical activity includes all activity that you do each day, including:

- structured or planned activities (such as sport or organised recreation activities like yoga, walking groups, aerobics classes, football, netball)
- unstructured or lifestyle activities (such as household chores, gardening, walking to and from the bus, train or ferry, or cycling for fun).

Exercise is a general term meaning planned or structured activities and repetitive bodily movements that are performed for improving or maintaining fitness or to practice or train skills. Examples include circuit training at the gym, yoga, jogging, or organised sports.

Sport is an athletic activity governed by a set of specific rules or customs that requires skill or physical prowess, often of a competitive nature. There are many different sports such as football, soccer, netball and hockey, to name a few. Some sports are played for fun, others are played competitively. Either way, sport is always governed by certain rules of play and each sport requires specific skills, such as ball handling skills for cricket.