



Ageing with vitality: Your everyday guide to healthy active living

strength

flexibility

balance

endurance

healthy eating

Ageing with vitality: Your everyday guide to healthy active living



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Please use the green workbook to plan your physical activity and chart your progress.



A photograph of a middle-aged man with short brown hair, wearing a white swim cap, swimming in a pool. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The water is a vibrant blue, and there are ripples around him.

Welcome! Like most people, you've probably heard that physical activity is good for you. Our bodies are designed to be used and this becomes even more important as we get older.

If you're already active, keep up the good work. It may even be time to try a new activity, or add more physical activity to your daily life. If you have stopped being active for some reason, let us help you get started again and keep going. If you're not very physically active now, it's never too late to start. This guide to healthy active living has something for everyone.

A special note

It is recommended that you talk with your doctor or health professional if you aren't used to activity or are planning to significantly increase your physical activity. You should also talk with your doctor if you have any existing conditions or health problems. Your doctor or health professional can help you choose activities that are best for you and reduce any risks.

This guide has been adapted with permission from the United States of America resource *Exercise and Physical Activity: Your Everyday Guide* from the National Institute on Ageing to include the latest evidence and recommendations from Australia. This guide builds on an Australian Government booklet *Choose Health: Be Active: A physical activity guide for older Australians* by giving specific exercises to keep you healthy.

Introduction

Using this book

This guide can help you take charge of your health by being active. You may want to read through the entire book first and then keep it handy so you can refer to the sample exercises and use the charts in the workbook to record your activities. You may want to start at the chapter that is most relevant to you. Throughout the guide, you'll find personal stories we hope will inspire you to be more active every day.

Chapter 1: Get ready talks about the 'why' of exercise and physical activity. It tells you the benefits of being active and describes the different types of exercise.

Chapter 2: Get set guides you on getting organised and reviewing your current activity levels, setting short and long-term goals, and creating a realistic plan for becoming active over time.

Chapter 3: Go! is all about the 'how', and offers tips to help you get started. It also has ideas to help you stick with your decision to be active every day and to get you back on track if you have to stop exercising for some reason.

Chapter 4: Sample exercises gives you some specific physical activities to increase your strength, improve balance, become more flexible and increase endurance. All the exercises have easy directions to help you do them safely.

Chapter 5: How am I doing? offers you some ways to test your progress and reward your success.

Chapter 6: Healthy eating briefly discusses another key to good health — nutritious eating habits.

Chapter 7: Conclusion



Workbook: A separate booklet includes worksheets and ideas to help you plan, record your activity, keep track of your progress and stay motivated. You'll also find answers to frequently asked questions about physical activity for older adults and a list of resources for more information. Some of the resources will be useful for people with specific health problems or disabilities who want to be active.



Australia's physical activity recommendations for older adults

The Australian Government has introduced physical activity recommendations specifically for older Australians. This guide will help you to build these recommendations into your everyday life so you can stay fit and healthy as you get older.



Strength



Balance



Flexibility



Endurance

You can learn more about the physical activity guidelines by contacting the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing at www.health.gov.au.

“Australia’s Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines” by visiting: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines>

- 1 **Older people should do some form of physical activity, no matter what their age, weight, health problems or abilities.** Even a slight increase in your daily activity can make a difference to your health and wellbeing. Existing health problems may not stop you from being physically active every day — activities can be adjusted. It’s never too late.
- 2 **Older people should be active every day in as many ways as possible, doing a range of physical activities that incorporate fitness (endurance), strength, balance and flexibility.** The range of health benefits achieved is likely to be greater with a mixed range of physical activities.
- 3 **Older people should accumulate at least 30-minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.** The effects of physical activity are cumulative so you can still achieve health benefits by doing three 10-minute periods of physical activity in one day.
- 4 **Older people who have stopped physical activity, or who are starting a new physical activity, should start at a level that is manageable and gradually build up to the recommended amount, type and frequency of activity.** Even a break of two or three weeks can mean that you need to gradually build up the intensity again. If you experience any severe or uncomfortable pain, dizziness, palpitations or chest pain during physical activity, stop the activity and discuss with a doctor or health professional.
- 5 **Older people who continue to enjoy a lifetime of vigorous physical activity should carry on doing so into later life in a manner suited to their capability, provided recommended safety procedures and guidelines are adhered to.** Generally, higher levels of physical activity are associated with greater health outcomes. You may be able to gradually progress to vigorous physical activity over time — talk with your doctor or health professional before commencing more or a new form of vigorous activity.

1 Get ready



Today, we know a lot about the need to be physically active as we get older. Regardless of health and physical abilities, older adults can really benefit by staying physically active. Even if you have difficulty standing or walking, you can still be active and benefit. In fact, in most cases, you have more to lose by not doing anything.



Physical activity benefits every area of your life

It makes you look and feel better. It:

- gives you more energy
- helps you sleep better
- helps you to relax
- helps you to meet people or catch up with friends
- is fun
- tones your body
- helps you stay on your feet and maintain your independence.

It is good for your mind. It:

- reduces stress and anxiety
- improves concentration
- improves self-confidence
- reduces feelings of sadness.

It is good for your body because it:

- helps to control:
 - weight (and reduce body fat)
 - blood pressure
 - cholesterol
 - diabetes
 - bone and joint problems (for example, arthritis)
- reduces the risk of:
 - heart disease
 - stroke
 - some cancers
- helps to manage pain
- helps to maintain and increase joint movement
- helps to prevent falls and injury.

As you've probably noticed, the key word is **you**. The benefits you gain from physical activity will depend on your starting point and how regular you are with your physical activity. You'll need to match your physical activity to your own needs and abilities. For example, some people can swim a few kilometres without thinking twice about it. For others, a slow walk to the corner and back is a big achievement. Physical activity is good for everybody and there are so many great ways to be active!



[Go here for more information](#)

See page 18 for more on talking with your doctor or health professional about physical activity.

What's the difference between physical activity and exercise?

Physical activity and exercise both refer to voluntary body movements that burn kilojoules. Physical activities get your body moving and include everyday activities, such as (walking to the shop or gardening), through to a wide range of organised activities, such as (exercise classes and sporting activities). Exercise often refers to a physical activity that is specifically planned, structured and repetitive, such as (strength training, Tai Chi or an aerobics class).

Physical activity and exercise are both important and can help improve your ability to do the everyday activities you enjoy. Use this guide to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine to help you get your 30-minutes of physical activity a day.

The bottom line? There are many ways to be active every day. Find something active you enjoy doing, include it in your regular routine and try to gradually increase your level of activity over time.



Make it a priority

Being active and exercising regularly can change your life.

See how Betty has benefited from regular physical activity:

'At age 67, I'm in the best physical condition of my life. Two years ago, I joined a low-impact aerobics class at a nearby senior citizens centre. The entire routine is done to music and is planned and led by an instructor. My balance has improved greatly and my osteoporosis has remained stable. Now, I want to do more so I regularly go walking with my friends to keep me moving between classes.'



Why is physical activity such a big deal?

Regular physical activity is important to the physical and mental health of almost everyone, including older adults. Being physically active can help you continue to do the things you enjoy and stay independent as you age. Regular physical activity over long periods of time can produce long-term health benefits. That's why health experts say that older adults should be active every day to maintain their health.

In addition, regular physical activity can reduce the risk of diseases and disabilities that can develop as people grow older. In some cases, physical activity is an effective treatment for many chronic conditions. For example, studies show that people with arthritis, heart disease or diabetes benefit from regular activity. Physical activity also helps people who have high blood pressure, depression, balance problems or difficulty walking. Regular physical activity can help reduce your risk of injury from falls.

One of the great things about physical activity is that there are so many ways to be active. For example, you can be active in short periods throughout the day or you can set aside specific times of the day to be active. Many physical activities — such as brisk walking, raking leaves or safely taking the stairs whenever you can — are free or low cost and do not require special equipment. You could also borrow an exercise video or DVD from the library, visit your local gym or see what physical activities are on at a senior citizens centre or local park.

This guide shows you many ways to be physically active. It also has plenty of tips to help you be active in ways that suit your lifestyle, interests, health and budget. Whether you're just starting out, getting back to exercising after a break or currently active.



Go here for more information

For many people, real life — things like illness, travelling, or an unexpected event — can get in the way of being active. See page 26 for tips on how to deal with breaks in your physical activity routine.



Make it interesting

There are many ways to be active. For Pat, age 56, gardening is one regular activity that keeps her active:

'I know some people think gardening isn't really physical activity, but I'm here to say, "Are they kidding?" Not only am I exercising my imagination when I pore over plant catalogues to pick out seeds for the garden, but working in my garden means bending and lifting, moving and stretching not to mention digging and hauling!'

Anyone who's ever had a garden knows that shovelling compost, lifting 10-kilogram bags of mulch, transplanting seedlings, dividing plants and pulling weeds are serious physical activities.

For avid gardeners, there's always something to do — from planting and weeding to raking and cleanup. It keeps a body moving!'



Make it fun

Having fun and socialising are major reasons active people give when asked why they are physically active. Carol can show you how:

'I started playing tennis 42 years ago for pleasure. After moving north to warmer weather, I started playing year round. I play with friends every weekend, both singles and doubles. After tennis, we socialise over a few healthy snacks. That's the best part of our get-together. At age 68, I'm the oldest in the group; the youngest is 16. I love the game and hope to play forever.'



Quick tip

When outdoors, be sure to use SPF30 or above sunscreen and reapply every two hours. Also, wear wrap-around sunglasses, protective clothing and a broad-brimmed hat. Seek shade whenever possible.

What sort of physical activity should I be doing?

Four types of activity are needed to keep you healthy: strength, balance, flexibility and endurance. Although we describe them separately, some activities fit into several categories. For example, many endurance activities also help build strength, and strength exercises can help improve balance.



Strength

Even small increases in muscle strength can make a big difference in your ability to stay independent and carry out everyday activities such as; climbing stairs and carrying shopping bags. Some people call using weight to improve your muscle strength 'strength training' or 'resistance training'. Strength exercises include:

- working with a resistance band (see page 35)
- working with weights (see page 35)
- wall push-ups (see page 36).



Balance

Activities to improve balance help prevent falls, a common problem in older adults. Many lower-body strength exercises will also improve your balance. Exercises to improve your balance include:

- standing on one foot (see page 52)
- heel-to-toe walk (see page 54)
- Tai Chi.



Flexibility

Stretching can help your body stay flexible and limber, which gives you more freedom of movement for your regular physical activity as well as for your everyday activities. To increase your flexibility, try:

- shoulder and upper arm stretch (see page 64)
- calf stretch (see page 71)
- yoga
- Tai Chi.



Endurance

Endurance or aerobic exercises increase your breathing and heart rate. These activities help to improve your fitness and do the tasks you need to do every day. Endurance exercises improve the health of your heart, lungs and circulatory system. They also delay or prevent many diseases that are common in older adults, such as; diabetes, colon and breast cancer and heart disease. Physical activities that build endurance include:

- brisk walking
- dancing
- swimming
- playing sport
- gardening (mowing, raking)
- jogging
- cycling



Go here for more information

Chapter 4, beginning on page 29, shows you how to do the exercises mentioned on this page and many others.



2
Get set



We hope you agree that regular physical activity is important and that you're ready to take action! This chapter is all about getting organised. It offers tips for helping you become more active, choosing activities and fitting them into your daily routine, and getting the most from your activities safely.

The key is to know your starting point and build slowly from there. Knowing your starting point will help you pick activities that are comfortable and realistic for you. Setting goals and having the right tools and equipment will help you to be successful. This guide is also accompanied by a workbook. Wherever you see the workbook icon, turn to the workbook for tools to help your physical activity planning and progression.



Identify your starting point

Think about a typical weekday and weekend. How much time do you spend sitting? How much time are you active? When you're up and moving, what kinds of activities are you doing?

To help you figure out your activity level, try filling in an activity log in the workbook. For a couple of weekdays and a weekend, keep track of how much time you are physically active. Write down how much time you spend doing each activity.



You can use the last column of the activity log to write down some ways you think you can add activities to your daily routine. No matter how active you are build up gradually from your starting point. Remember it is better to make your starting point too easy rather than too hard.

Quit smoking

A good reason to quit

Smoking harms almost every organ in your body, but because it happens gradually, you probably don't notice. The best thing a smoker can do for their health is to quit. Quitting at any age is beneficial, increases life expectancy and improves quality of life. The benefits to quitting start immediately, with noticeable improvements in the first 72 hours.

How to quit

Discuss quitting smoking with a health professional, such as a general practitioner, pharmacist or community health worker. You can also call the Quitline on 13 QUIT (13 78 48), a statewide confidential telephone service dedicated to helping people who want to quit smoking. The service is available seven days a week to offer support, encouragement and resources to help all smokers quit.



Go here for more information

Examples of the four types of physical activity can be found on page 12.

Set your goals

Many people find that having a firm goal motivates them to move ahead on a project. Goals are most useful when they are specific, realistic and important to you. Consider both short and long-term goals. Your success depends on setting realistic goals that really matter to you.

Set short-term goals

Short-term goals will help you make physical activity a regular part of your daily life. For these goals, think about the things you'll need to get or do to be physically active. For example, you may need to buy walking shoes or fill out an activity log so you can figure out how to fit physical activity into your day. Make sure your short-term goals will really help you be active.

Here are a few examples of short-term goals:

- *Today, I will decide to be more active.*
- *Tomorrow, I will find out about exercise classes in my area.*
- *By the end of this week, I will talk with my friend about exercising with me a couple of times a week.*
- *On the weekend, I will make sure I have the shoes and comfortable clothes I need to start being more active.*
- *By the 25th, I will start going to the exercise class.*

If you're already active, think of short-term goals to increase your level of physical activity. For example, by incorporating more walking into your life generally, or increasing the number of endurance exercise sessions you complete from each week.

No matter what your starting point, reaching your short-term goals will make you feel good and give you confidence to progress toward your long-term goals.

To help you get started, you can write down your goals by using the goal-setting worksheet in the workbook. Put your list of goals where you can see them and review them regularly.



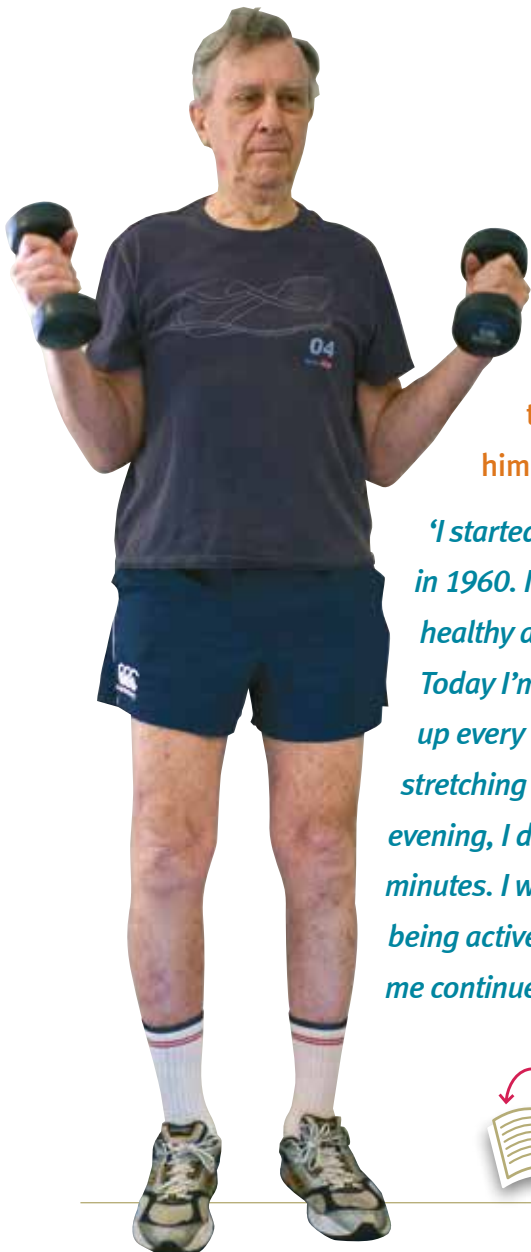
Set your long-term goals

After you write down your short-term goals, identify your long-term goals. Focus on where you want to be in six months, a year or two years from now. Long-term goals should be realistic, personal and important to you. Here are a few examples.

- *By this time next year, I will swim a kilometre.*
- *Next summer, I will be able to play backyard cricket with my grandchildren.*
- *In six months I will increase my physical activity and fitness levels.*

Add your own long-term goals to the goal-setting worksheet in your workbook.





Make it routine

For Sam, being able to do the things he enjoys doing motivates him to be active every day:

'I started regular physical activity way back in 1960. I decided I wanted to stay fit and healthy as I got older and so I joined a gym. Today I'm still lifting weights to stay fit. I get up every day and lift weights, followed by stretching and some balance exercises. In the evening, I do the same routine for about 15 minutes. I was a drummer by profession and being active keeps my muscles strong and lets me continue to drum.'



Go here for more information
See pages 18, 27 and 28.

Make it safe

For many people, even those who are regularly active, breaks in the routine mean the end of daily physical activity and its benefits. Maria tells how she carefully got started again:

'For more than 10 years, I jogged every day to clear the cobwebs and get my blood flowing. Imagine how awful I felt when I fell down the stairs and broke my ankle. At 54, I wasn't ready to be a couch potato. After the cast came off, I had physiotherapy. I worried about hurting my ankle again, but I wasn't going to let the injury keep me down. At first, I walked slowly in my neighbourhood, but didn't want to trip on uneven footpaths. My physiotherapist suggested I try a treadmill instead. Now, I go to the gym after work. I set the treadmill incline high, turn on my headphones and walk. Sometimes, I listen to music or a book on CD. I miss the fresh air, but I don't think about falling and my stamina is back. Plus, I've added strength and balance exercises to my routine. In many ways, I'm in better shape now than before the fall and that feels great!'

Write a physical activity plan

Some people find that writing a physical activity plan helps them keep their promise to be active. See if this works for you. Be sure the plan is realistic for you to do. You can update your plan as you gain experience in how to be active. You might even make a contract with a friend or family member to carry out your plan. Involving another person can help you keep your commitment.

Make your plan specific and grounded in your goals. For each physical activity you choose, include:

- what kind of activity you plan to do
- why you want to do it
- when you will do it
- where you will do it.

Choose activities of interest to you and add some variety to your plan. Start out with realistic activities based on how physically active you are now. Don't expect to go from couch potato to super athlete right away.

Regularly review and update your plan and long-term goals so that you can build on your success. You can use the weekly physical activity plan in your workbook to write down your planned activities. Get a health professional to see how realistic your plan really is.



When it comes to motivation, the first few months are crucial. If you can stick with physical activities you enjoy, it's a good sign you will be able to make physical activity a regular part of your everyday life.



Quick tips

There are many ways to fit physical activity into your regular routine:

- **Try something new:**
 - Take up a new active hobby such as pilates or kayaking.
- **Rethink your priorities:**
 - How important is watching TV? How about a short walk or doing some strength exercises while watching?
- **Work harder at the things you already do:**
 - Rake the leaves instead of using the grasscatcher.
 - Walk to the local shop to get the paper instead of having it delivered.
- **Don't forget to build rewards into your plan.** For each goal you reach, treat yourself to something special - a new CD to dance to, or a walk and picnic in the park.



Be safe: check with your doctor

There's a way for almost every older adult to be active safely and get meaningful health benefits. **It is recommended that you talk with your doctor or health professional if you aren't used to physical activity, are planning to significantly increase your physical activity or want to make it harder.**

You should also talk with your doctor if you have any existing conditions or health problems. Your doctor or health professional can help you choose activities that are best for you and reduce any risks.

Here are a few things you may want to discuss with your doctor or health professional:

- Ask whether there are any specific exercises or activities you should avoid. An illness or surgery may affect how you exercise. For example, if you've had hip or back problems or surgery, you may need to modify or avoid some exercises. It is important to know how to be active safely if you have high blood pressure, diabetes or cardiovascular disease.
- Ask your doctor or health professional how to increase your physical activity gradually.
- Ask questions so you understand how any ongoing health conditions might affect physical activity. For example, people with arthritis may need to avoid some types of activity, especially when joints are swollen or inflamed. Those with diabetes may need to adjust their daily schedule, meal plan or medications when planning their activities.
- If your doctor or health professional does not recommend a particular physical activity, ask them what particular concerns they have and if there are different activities you can do instead.
- While very rare, serious health events requiring immediate action can occur with physically activity (e.g. a heart attack or stroke). If you think you are having a serious health event, stop exercising, tell someone how you feel and call '000'.
- If during or following exercise you have any other unexplained symptoms, discomfort or soreness - stop exercising and talk with your doctor before re-commencing exercise (you may exacerbate an injury or medical condition).
- Your level of physical activity is an important topic to discuss with your doctor or health professional as part of your ongoing preventive health care.

Get the right shoes

Your shoes are an important part of your physical activity routine. Consider shoes that will help prevent you from tripping or falling. Choose and wear shoes that are appropriate for your feet and suit your activities. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Choose shoes that are made for the type of physical activity you want to do (walking, running, dancing, bowling, tennis).
- Look for shoes with:
 - firm, flat, non-skid soles that bend mainly at the ball of the foot
 - good heel support
 - a shape that conforms to the shape of your foot and is held on by laces, zips or velcro fastenings.
- Make sure your shoes fit well and provide proper support for your feet. This is especially important if you have diabetes or arthritis.
- Shoes should feel comfortable right from the start.
- Think of your shoes as safety equipment for your feet. Check them regularly and replace them when they're worn out. You need new shoes when:
 - the tread on the bottom is worn down
 - your feet (especially your arches) feel tired after activity
 - your shins, knees, or hips hurt after activity.
- Talk with a health professional, such as a podiatrist or physiotherapist, about any concerns you have about your feet or footwear. Ask them about specialist shoe stores that may have shoes that would be suitable for you.

Walk safely when out and about

Remember the following safety rules and enjoy your walk!

- Always walk facing oncoming traffic.
- Walk on footpaths and cross roads at designated areas wherever possible.
- If there is no footpath, look for a smooth, stable surface alongside the road.
- If there are guardrails, see if there's a smooth, flat surface behind the barrier where you can walk.
- If you need to walk on the shoulder, stay as far away from traffic as possible.
- Be sure drivers can see you. Wear brightly coloured clothing, and if you walk during low-light hours — dusk or dawn — be sure you have reflective material on your jacket or walking shoes and carry a torch.
- Take along a mobile phone and some identification, especially if walking alone.



Quick tip

Some people with diabetes may need special shoes or shoe inserts to prevent serious foot problems. Medicare may provide a rebate on podiatrist fees if you have a chronic condition and are referred by your doctor. Your doctor or podiatrist can tell you how to get these special shoes.



Preventing injury

The health benefits of physical activity far outweigh any risks of injury. However, you can take precautions to be active safely. You may feel some minor discomfort or muscle soreness when you start to exercise. This should go away as you get used to the activities. However, if you feel sick to your stomach or have strong pain, you've done too much. Go easier and then gradually build up.

Tips to avoid injury

- When starting to increase your physical activity, begin slowly with low-intensity activities.
- Wait at least two hours after eating a large meal before doing strenuous physical activity.
- Wear appropriate shoes for your activity and comfortable, loose-fitting clothing that allow you to move freely but won't catch on objects.
- Warm up with low-intensity exercises at the beginning of each physical activity session.
- Drink water before, during and after your physical activity session (don't wait until you are thirsty).
- When exercising outdoors, pay attention to your surroundings — consider possible traffic hazards, the weather and uneven walking surfaces.
- Do some stretching exercises after your activity to help avoid muscle soreness and injury (see Chapter 4 for sample exercises).

Stop exercising if you:

- have pain or pressure in your chest, neck, arm or shoulder - these are possible early signs of a heart attack - tell someone and consider calling 000
- feel dizzy or sick to your stomach
- break out in a cold sweat
- have muscle cramps
- feel severe pain in joints, feet, ankles or legs.





Finding a fitness professional

If you're not used to exercising, you may want to work with a fitness professional, especially at first to ensure you are exercising correctly. This could range from a personal trainer to a qualified instructor at a council-run group activity in the park.

Here are a few questions to help you choose a fitness professional who will meet your individual needs.

	Yes	No
Education and experience		
Is the fitness professional appropriately qualified to meet your needs?		
- Exercise trainers and personal trainers are able to plan, demonstrate and supervise exercise programs for healthy clients.		
- Accredited exercise physiologists specialise in exercise interventions for people at high risk of developing, or with existing, chronic and complex conditions or injuries.		
- If you are in doubt about whom you should engage seek advice from your doctor.		
Personality		
Does the fitness professional listen carefully to you and answer your questions?		
Does the fitness professional have a sense of humour and a personality you like?		
Business practices		
Has the fitness professional told you what to expect from the sessions?		
Are the costs of the sessions and the cancellation policy clearly stated?		
Is the fitness professional insured?		

3
Go!



Now that you know about the many types of physical activity and you've set your goals, you're ready to go! This chapter has tips to help you get started, resume your activity if you've stopped, stay active and even increase your activity level over time.

Four keys to success

There are four keys to success when planning your physical activity.

1. *Include physical activity in your everyday life*
2. *Try all four types of physical activity*
3. *Plan for breaks in your routine (life happens!)*
4. *Build up the benefits.*

1. Include physical activity in your everyday life

Physical activity needs to be a regular, permanent habit to produce benefits. Again, the key word is **you** (see page 8). Set yourself up to succeed right from the start by choosing activities that appeal to you, being safe, charting your progress to see your success, and making your activity routine fit your personal lifestyle. Here are a few ways to make physical activity a regular part of your daily life and get the most out of everyday activities you already do.

Keep it easy

If it's difficult or costs too much, you are less likely to maintain your activity. You are more likely to be active if it's easy to do.

- Put your weights next to your lounge chair so you can do some lifting while you watch TV.
- Walk up and down the soccer field during your grandchild's game.
- Replace a short car trip with a walk.
- Walk the length of the entire shopping centre or every aisle of the supermarket when you go shopping.
- When you go out to get the mail, walk around the block.
- Join a gym or fitness centre that's close to home.
- You can be active all at once, or break it up into smaller amounts throughout the day.
- Do more of the activities you already like and know how to do.

Keep it a priority

Many of us lead busy lives and it's easy to put physical activity at the bottom of the 'to do' list. Remember, being active is one of the most important things you can do each day to maintain and improve your health. Make a point to include physical activities throughout your day. Try being active first thing in the morning before you get busy. Think of your time to be active as a special appointment and mark it on your calendar.

Older adults should accumulate at least 30-minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.





Quick tips

You're more likely to stay active if you:

- think you will benefit from your activities
- include activities you enjoy
- feel you can do the activities correctly
- believe the activities are safe
- have regular access to the activities
- can fit the activities into your daily routine
- find that the activities are affordable
- can see the benefits of regular physical activity.

Keep it social

Enlist a friend or family member to join you. Many people agree that having an 'activity buddy' keeps them going.

- Take a yoga class with a neighbour or friend.
- If you don't already have an activity partner, find one by joining a local walking club or a class at a nearby gym or senior citizens centre.
- Take a walk during lunch with a co-worker.

Keep it interesting and make it fun

Do things you enjoy.

- If you love the outdoors, try cycling, orienteering or walking to explore your local neighbourhood and parks.
- Listen to music or a book on CD while walking, gardening or raking.
- Plan a bushwalk in a nearby national park.

Above all, make it an active decision

Seize opportunities. Choose to be active in many places and many ways.

- When you unload the groceries, strengthen your arms by lifting the milk carton or a 500g can a few times before you put it away.
- When you go shopping, build your endurance by parking the car at the far end of the car park and walking briskly to the shop.

- Get off the bus one or two stops earlier than usual.
- Instead of calling or emailing a colleague at work, go in person — and take the stairs!
- Carefully take a few extra trips up and down the stairs at home to strengthen your legs and build endurance.
- Try to do some of your errands on foot rather than in the car.
- Multi-task the active way:
 - While you're waiting in line, practise your balancing skills by standing on one foot for a few seconds, then the other. Gradually build up your time.
 - While you're talking on the phone, stand up and do a few leg raises or toe stands to strengthen your legs.
 - Take advantage of small bits of 'down time' to do an exercise or two. For example, while you're waiting for the coffee to brew or for your spouse to get ready to go out, do a few wall push-ups or calf stretches.





2. Try all four types of physical activity

Most people tend to focus on one type of physical activity and think they're doing enough. The goal is to be creative and choose activities from each of the four types — strength, balance, flexibility and endurance. Mixing it up will help you reap the benefits of each type of physical activity, as well as reduce boredom and risk of injury.

Use the weekly physical activity plan in your workbook to write down your activities.



Make it easy

Finding enjoyable ways to add physical activity to your life can be the ticket to success. See how Marian made it work for her:

'I'm an active 62-year-old, but a family history of heart disease and high cholesterol convinced me that I needed to be more active. After I tried walking on a treadmill at a nearby community centre, I knew I'd be happier outside. So I got a pedometer (step counter) and started walking around my little town. I love how nature changes so subtly with the seasons and I get to see it all. I always come home with more energy for the rest of my day. I even feel energised enough to do some stretches and resistance training most nights while relaxing in front of the television.'

For more on pedometers, see page 74.





Quick tip

If you're thinking of moving to a retirement or assisted-living community, ask if the community has a pool, organised physical activities, walking trails, a golf course or personal trainer. Does it have well-lit footpaths so you can walk safely in the evening as well as during the day? Are there parks nearby?



3. Plan for breaks in your routine (life happens!)

Getting older can mean more time for trips to see children and grandchildren or holidays away from home. People retire and move to new houses or even new parts of the country. Sometimes the unexpected happens — family illness, carer responsibilities or the death of a loved one. All these events can interrupt your physical activity routine.

These breaks can make it hard (or even impossible at times) to stick with your regular activities. But you can start again. Here are a few ideas to help you stay active or start again if you've had to stop.

- **Don't be too hard on yourself.** Recognise that there will be times when you won't want to be active, or when it feels too hard. You are not alone; everyone has those feelings. Just try to get back to your activities as soon as possible. The sooner you resume some sort of activity, the better you'll feel and the easier it will be to get back into your routine.
- **If you stopped exercising because of an illness or new symptoms,** talk with your doctor or health professional about when you can resume your regular routine.
- **Think about the reasons you started being more active and the goals you set for yourself.** Remembering your motivations and how much you've already accomplished may help recharge your batteries and get you started again.
- **Ask family and friends to help you get back on track.** Sometimes you may need an activity buddy. At other times, all you may need is a word of support.
- **If you no longer like the activity you started, try something easier or an activity you haven't done recently.** You might even want to try a physical activity you've never done before. Mastering something simple or new may give you the confidence you need to resume regular activity.
- **Talking with your doctor or fitness professional** may give you the boost you need to move past the hurdle.
- **If you haven't been active for several weeks, start again at a comfortable level.** Then gradually build back up. With a little time, you'll be back on track.
- **If you can't do your regular physical activities because of bad weather or a change in your routine, think creatively about other ways to be active.** For example, if caring for a loved one is keeping you indoors, try an exercise video or DVD, jog on the spot, dance around your lounge room or walk up and down the stairs a few extra times. Even house cleaning will keep you active. Just keep moving!
- **Be flexible.** When your grandchildren come for a visit, reschedule your planned physical activities to earlier in the day, or take them with you for a walk.
- **Believe in yourself!** Feel confident that even if your activity is interrupted, you can start again and be successful. Don't worry about the time you missed. What's important is to focus on your fitness goals and start again at whatever level is possible for you.

A few more tips on coping with breaks in your physical activity routine

Sometimes the reason you have to stop exercising is temporary; sometimes it's permanent. For example, there may be a change in your living arrangements or in your health. Some are happy occasions; some are sad. Here are some ways to manage these breaks.

Temporary change in your situation

You're on holiday.

- Many hotels now have gym equipment. Check out the recreation facilities where you'll be staying and bring along your exercise clothing or equipment (resistance band, swimming togs, or walking shoes).
- Get out and see the sights on foot rather than by tour bus.

Caring for an ill spouse is taking up much of your time.

- Work out to an exercise video or DVD when your spouse is resting.
- Ask a family member or friend to come over so you can go for a walk.

Temporary change in your health

The flu keeps you out of action for a few weeks.

- Wait until you feel better and then start your activity again.
- Gradually build back up to your previous level of activity.

Permanent change in your situation

Your usual activity buddy moves away.

- Ask another friend to join you in your physical activities.
- Ask other older adults in your area where they go for walks or what physical activity resources are available nearby.
- Join an exercise class at your local community centre or senior citizens centre. This is a great way to meet other active people.
- Join a walking group or bushwalking club.

You move to a new community.

- Check out the gyms, community centre, local council activities, parks and recreation associations in your new neighbourhood. Look for activities that match your interests and abilities.
- Get involved!

Permanent change in your health

You are recovering from hip or back surgery or have been diagnosed with a chronic disease.

- Talk with your doctor or health professional about specific exercises and activities you can do safely when you're feeling better.
- Start slowly and gradually build up your activities as your fitness and strength increases.



4. Build up the benefits

Once you start becoming more physically active, you'll begin to see results in just a few weeks — you'll feel stronger and more energetic. You'll notice that you can do things easier, faster or for longer than before. This tells you that your body is getting used to a higher level of activity. Now is the time to build on those benefits by gradually doing more. Keep your starting point in mind though. For some people, switching from one to two-kilogram weights is a big step forward. For others, building up to walking briskly or even running is a reasonable goal.

No matter what your starting point:

- **Add new physical activities.** Be creative! Try some new activities to keep your interest alive.
 - Sign up for dance lessons.
 - Talk to your friends about bowling together once a week.
 - Join a water aerobics class.
 - Save petrol by walking to your nearby supermarket or corner store.
 - Can you trade in any of your electric appliances for muscle-powered versions: how about your electric juicer or your powered leaf blower?



- **Review your goals.** If you are able, gradually do your activities longer, further or harder. Use the progression hints for the exercises in this book.
 - If you walk 30-minutes at lunchtime every day, make it 40-minutes.
 - If you only have 30-minutes for lunch, pick up the pace so you're walking faster and further in the same amount of time.
 - Try using a pedometer (step counter) to track your progress. Seeing the number of steps add up can be great motivation.
 - If you usually swim 400 metres, build up to 800 metres.
 - Use a harder resistance band when you do strength exercises.
- **Do the activities more often.** Spend time in your garden more often. Head over to the gym three times a week instead of two. Walk every day instead of every second day.
- **Don't push yourself too hard.** You may feel some minor discomfort or muscle soreness when you start to increase your physical activity. This should go away as you get used to the activities. Physical activity should not hurt. The old saying 'no pain, no gain' is not true. If you feel any pain, slow down or stop. Go easier and then gradually build up.



Go here for more information

Healthy eating and physical activity go hand in hand. See Chapter 6, starting on page 81, for more on this topic.

4

Recommended exercises



STRENGTH



BALANCE



FLEXIBILITY



ENDURANCE

Many types of physical activity can improve your health and future independence. Whether you do the exercises shown in this chapter or other physical activities that accomplish the same goals, gradually work your way up to include stretching, balance, flexibility and endurance activities.

This chapter provides exercises, tips and ideas for four main types of physical activity:



- **Strength**
p32



- **Balance**
p50



- **Flexibility**
p56



- **Endurance**
p73

Introduction

Each exercise in this guide indicates the type of physical activity it provides (strength, balance, flexibility or endurance) and if it provides more than one type of physical activity. For example, toe stand exercises for strength can also help to improve your balance. Most exercises provide progression options to help you choose an exercise level suitable for your starting point.

How much, how often

As discussed in Chapter 3 – Go!, it is important to mix up the types of physical activity to increase the health benefits to you. The aim is to do a range of physical activities that incorporate strength, balance and flexibility and endurance to reach at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity every day. If you lift weights, alternate these exercises with time on the treadmill or exercise bike. End your routine with stretching exercises. If you focus mainly on endurance activities, be sure to also add stretching, balance and strength exercises to your routine.

A sample weekly physical activity program covering all four types of activity is provided in the workbook. Use the weekly physical activity plan in your workbook to help you plan your own program.



Warm up/cool down

It's important to spend about five minutes at the beginning and end of your routine to warm up and cool down. Warming up and cooling down give your muscles a chance to get ready to work and gradually return to rest at the end. These 'before-and-after' activities help prevent injury and reduce muscle soreness later. Here are a few suggestions.

- Do some light endurance activity first, such as walking for five minutes.
- If you're going to be walking briskly or running, gradually build up to that pace.
- At the end of your activity, gradually slow down and let your body cool down.
- Do a few exercises to work the muscles and joints you'll be using in your activity. For example, if you plan to swim, do a few arm exercises first to warm up your arms and shoulders.

Safety

No matter which type of physical activity you do, there are certain safety tips to help you get the best benefits from physical activity.

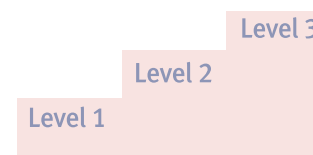
- Talk with your doctor or health professional if you plan to significantly increase your level of physical activity.
- Talk with your doctor or health professional if you are unsure about doing a particular exercise. For example, if you've had hip or back surgery/problems, talk about which exercises might be best for you.
- Don't hold your breath during exercises. Holding your breath while straining can cause changes in blood pressure. This is especially true for people with heart disease.

- Breathe regularly and evenly while exercising. If you cannot do this you are probably working too hard, reduce the intensity of what you are doing.
- Proper form, technique and safety go hand-in-hand. Concentrate on stabilising your core body by tightening your abdomen and back muscles while performing exercises.
- Keep your body in the correct alignment with your back straight and your hips under your shoulders. This is very important to avoid a back injury.
- Avoid 'locking' your arm and leg joints in a tightly straightened position. Keep your knees and elbows slightly bent to avoid injury.

Progressing to higher levels

To help you build your strength, balance, flexibility and endurance over time, most exercises in this book have three levels of progression — 1, 2 and 3. The exercise description and illustrations show the base level (**Level 1**) for each exercise. This is great place to start. As your muscles strengthen, your balance and flexibility improve and your cardiovascular fitness increases, you may be able to progress to a higher level of physical activity.

Progression **levels 2 and 3** give hints on how you can gradually increase the difficulty of the exercises and continue to build on the benefits of physical activity over time. If you are already active, then a higher starting point may be a more suitable.



Quick tips

- **Listen to your body and use common sense when you're physically active.**
- **If you feel sick or have pain during or after physical activity, you might be overdoing it.**
- **While you want to feel like you have done something, doing too much could leave you feeling exhausted, injured or with sore joints and muscles that stop you being physically active.**
- **Take it slow and gradually build up for the best ongoing benefits.**
- **None of the exercises in this guide should cause severe pain. If they do, stop and seek advice. Remember if it is a serious medical emergency call 000.**



strength



How to improve your strength: recommended exercises

Even very small changes in muscle strength can make a real difference in function, especially in people who have already lost a lot of muscle. An increase in muscle strength can make it easier to do everyday things such as; get up from a chair, climb stairs, carry shopping bags, open jars and even play with your grandchildren. Lower-body strength exercises will also improve your balance.

How much, how often?

- Try to fit strength exercises for all your major muscle groups into your weekly physical activity of 30-minutes each day, but don't exercise the same muscle group on any two days in a row. Use the weekly physical activity plan in your workbook.
- Muscle soreness lasting a few days and slight fatigue are normal after muscle-building exercises, at least at first. After doing these exercises for a few weeks, you will probably not be sore after your workout.



Make it affordable

Exercising at home is just one way to be active. Getting out into the community can also offer opportunities to be active for little cost, as Gwen found:

'I'm 69 and live on my pension income. My kids try to spoil me, but I'd rather do things on my own as much as possible. I checked out a gym where I could use strength-building equipment, but it really was quite expensive. I decided to look at the local council website and found a heap of activities that I could do for \$3 a session. I joined a seniors strength class and thoroughly enjoy working out to music with resistance bands and have become great friends with two of the ladies from my class. Even though I felt I may be too old, I also joined a walking group. Despite being the oldest, my endurance has greatly increased and I can now keep up with even the youngest person. I also hear more about what's going on in my neighbourhood. I've always been active, but never as active and social as I am now.'



About strength exercises

To do most of the strength exercises in this book, you need to lift or push weights, or use a resistance band.

Equipment

- You can use weights, resistance bands or common objects from your home. You can also use strength-training equipment at a gym.
- Some exercises in this guide require a chair. Choose a sturdy chair that is stable enough to support your weight when seated or to hold onto during the exercise.

How heavy?

- Start with light weights (or no weights at all) and gradually increase the amount of weight you use. Starting out with weights that are too heavy can cause injuries. Your body needs time to get used to strength exercises.
- If you can't lift or push a weight at least eight times in a row, it's too heavy for you. Reduce the amount of weight.

Lifting weights

- Take three seconds to lift or push a weight into place, hold the position for one second, and take another three seconds to return to your starting position. Don't let the weight drop, returning it slowly is very important.

- Over time, gradually build up to 10-15 repetitions for each exercise.
- For some exercises, you may want to start alternating arms and work your way up to using both arms at the same time.
- To prevent injury, don't jerk or thrust weights into position. Use smooth, steady movements.

Breathing

- Breathe out as you lift or push, and breathe in as you relax. For example, if you're doing leg lifts, breathe out as you lift your leg, and breathe in as you lower it. This may not feel natural at first, and you probably will have to think about it for a while as you do it.

You don't need to do all the exercises listed in this section. Do a variety and don't exercise the same muscle group two days in a row. Use your workbook to do a variety of strength exercises.



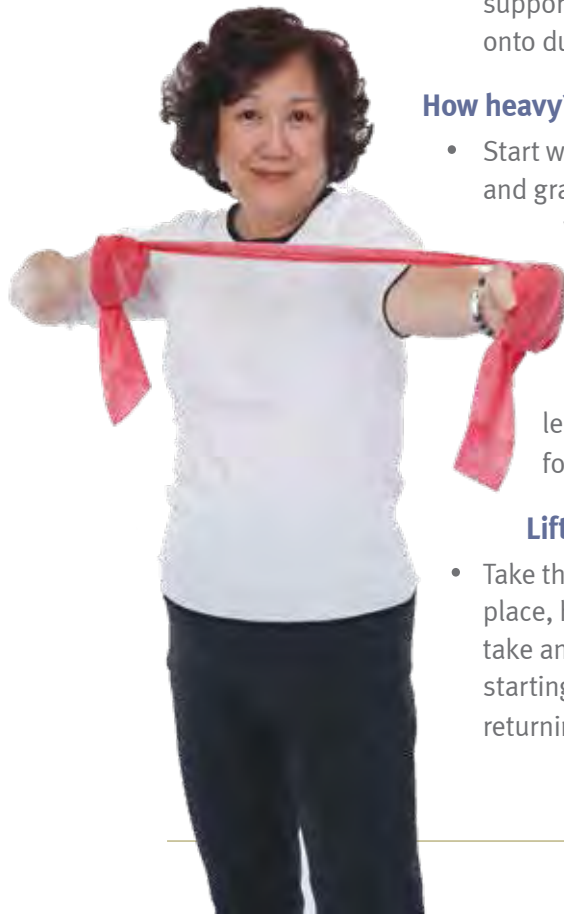
Quick tip

A repetition, or rep, is one complete movement of an exercise. A set is one group of reps. In this guide, a set of strength exercises is 10 to 15 repetitions. Use the strength and balance daily record in your workbook to keep track of the number of strength exercises you do.



Making it real !

Want to be able to lift your carry-on bag into the over-head locker of an aeroplane, or get in and out of the car more easily? Keep doing those strength exercises and you'll get there.



Making your own hand weights

You don't have to go out and buy weights for strength exercises. You can make your own weights from unbreakable household items. Find something you can hold on to easily.

- Fill a plastic milk container with sand or water and tape the opening securely closed.
- Fill a sock with nuts or rice and tie up the open end.
- Use common grocery items, such as bags of rice, vegetable or soup cans, or bottled water.

Strength exercises

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Hand grip | p34 |
| 2. Wall push up | p36 |
| 3. Seated row with resistance band | p37 |
| 4. Overhand arm raise | p38 |
| 5. Front arm raise | p39 |
| 6. Side arm raise | p40 |
| 7. Arm curl using hand weights | p41 |
| 8. Arm curl using a resistance band | p42 |
| 9. Elbow extension | p43 |
| 10. Chair dip | p44 |
| 11. Wrist curl | p45 |
| 12. Back leg raise | p46 |
| 13. Side leg raise | p47 |
| 14. Chair stand | p48 |
| 15. Knee curl | p49 |

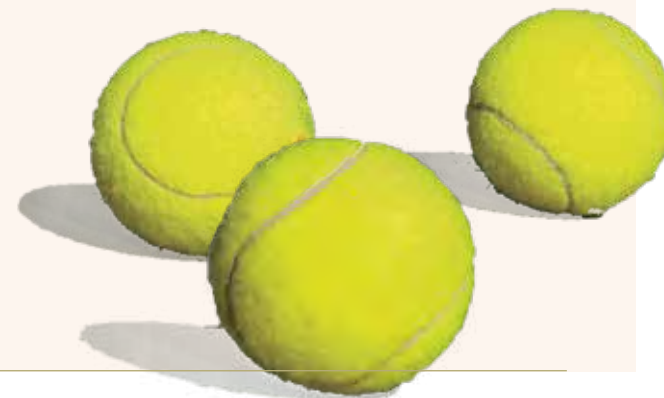


STRENGTH

Hand grip

This simple exercise should help if you have trouble picking things up or holding on to them. It also will help you open things like a jam jar more easily. You can even do this exercise while reading or watching TV.

1. Hold a tennis ball or other small rubber or foam ball in one hand.
2. Slowly squeeze the ball as hard as you can and hold it for three to five seconds.
3. Relax the squeeze slowly.
4. Repeat 10–15 times.
5. Repeat 10–15 times with other hand.
6. Repeat 10–15 times more with each hand.



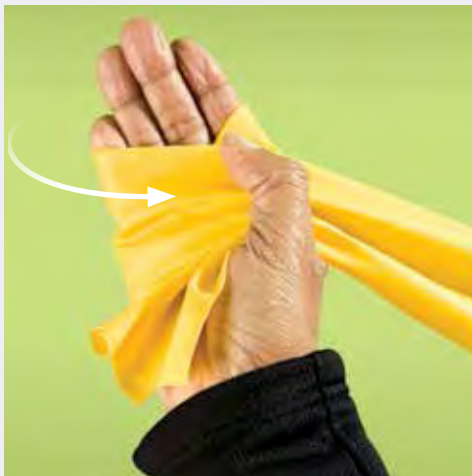
Working with a resistance band

Wrapping a resistance band

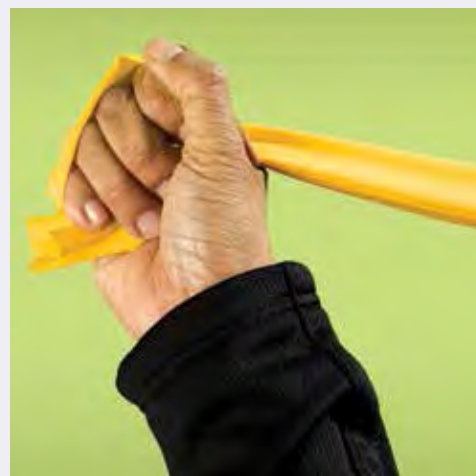
Resistance bands are stretchy elastic bands that come in several strengths, from light to heavy. You can use them in some strength exercises instead of weights.



1. Lay the band flat in your hand with the end toward your little finger.



2. Wrap the long end of the band around the back of your hand.



3. Grasp firmly.

Progressing using a resistance band

You can buy resistance bands from sports stores, department stores and some health professionals such as physiotherapists.

- If you are a beginner, try exercising without the band until you are comfortable, then add the band.
- Choose a light band if you are just starting to exercise.
- Move on to a stronger band when you can do two sets of 10 to 15 repetitions easily.

Progressing using hand weights

Muscle strength builds over time. Gradually increase the amount of weight you use to build strength. When you can do two sets of 10 to 15 repetitions easily, increase the amount of weight at your next session.

Start out with a weight you can lift at least 12 times. When you can do two sets of 10 -15 reps more easily, add more weight. Keep progressing until you reach your goal and then maintain that level longterm.



Quick tip

- Hold on to the band tightly (some bands have handles), or wrap it around your hand or foot to keep it from slipping and causing possible injury.
- Do the exercises in a slow, controlled manner and don't let the band snap back.

Wall push-up



STRENGTH

These push-ups will strengthen your arms, shoulders and chest.
Try this exercise during a TV commercial break.

1. Face a wall, standing a little further than arm's length away, feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Lean your body forward and put your palms flat against the wall at shoulder height and shoulder-width apart.
3. Slowly breathe in as you bend your elbows and lower your upper body toward the wall in a slow, controlled motion. Keep your feet flat on the floor and your body straight.
4. Hold the position for one second.
5. Breathe out and slowly push yourself back until your arms are nearly straight. Keep your elbows slightly bent so you don't lock your joints.
6. Repeat 10–15 times.
7. Rest, then repeat 10–15 more times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Push up off lower levels, such as a table or chair secured safely against a wall.

Level 3: Do regular push-ups on the floor. Start from on your knees and progress to your feet.



This exercise will strengthen your upper back, shoulder and neck muscles and should make everyday activities, such as raking and vacuuming easier
(See *Working with a resistance band* on page 35).



STRENGTH

Seated row with resistance band



1. Sit in a sturdy, armless chair with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Place the centre of the resistance band under both feet. Hold each end of the band with your palms facing inward.
3. Relax your shoulders and extend your arms beside your legs. Breathe in slowly.
4. Breathe out slowly and pull both elbows back until your hands are at your hips, pulling your shoulder blades together.
5. Hold position for one second, keeping your shoulders down.
6. Breathe in as you slowly return your hands to the starting position.
7. Repeat 10–15 times.
8. Rest, then repeat 10–15 more times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Use a heavier strength band or straighten legs to put more stretch on band.

Overhead arm raise



STRENGTH



BALANCE

This exercise will strengthen your shoulders and arms. It should make activities, such as lifting items into overhead cupboards, hanging out the washing and lifting and carrying grandchildren easier.

1. Sit in a sturdy, armless chair.
2. Keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
3. Hold weights beside you at shoulder height, with elbows bent and your palms facing forward. Breathe in slowly.
4. Slowly breathe out as you push upwards with both arms up over your head. Keep your elbows slightly bent so you don't lock your joints.
5. Hold the position for one second.
6. Breathe in as you slowly lower your arms.
7. Repeat 10–15 times.
8. Rest, then repeat 10–15 more times.
9. If you have a shoulder limitation, exercise can be modified; rather than push weight above head, push weight out in front of chest.

As you progress:

Level 2: Do this exercise while standing.

Level 3: Use a heavier weight. You may want to use alternate arms until you can lift the weight comfortably with both arms.



This shoulder exercise can help you put things on a shelf or take them down more easily.



STRENGTH



BALANCE

Front arm raise



1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Hold weights straight down at your sides, with palms facing backward.
3. Breathe out as you raise one arm in front of you to shoulder height, keeping your arm nearly straight. Keep your elbows slightly bent so you don't lock your joints.
4. Hold the position for one second.
5. Breathe in as you slowly lower your arm.
6. Repeat for the other arm.
7. Repeat each arm 10–15 times.
8. Rest, then repeat the exercise.

As you progress:

Level 2: Work up to lifting both arms at the same time, as shown in the picture.

Level 3: Use a heavier weight and alternate arms until you can lift the new weight comfortably with both arms.

Side arm raise



STRENGTH



BALANCE

This exercise will strengthen your shoulders and make lifting easier.

1. Sit in a sturdy, armless chair.
2. Keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
3. Hold hand weights straight down at your sides with your palms facing inward. Breathe in slowly.
4. Slowly breathe out as you raise both arms to the side and up to shoulder height, keeping your elbows slightly bent so you don't lock your joints.
5. Hold the position for one second.
6. Breathe in as you slowly lower your arms.
7. Repeat 10–15 times.
8. Rest, then repeat 10–15 more times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Do this exercise while standing.

Level 3: Use a heavier weight and alternate arms until you can lift the new weight comfortably with both arms.



After a few weeks of doing this exercise for your upper arm muscles, lifting those shopping bags onto the bench will be much easier.



STRENGTH



BALANCE

Arm curl using hand weights



1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Hold weights straight down at your sides with your palms facing forward. Breathe in slowly.
3. Breathe out as you slowly bend your elbows and lift weights toward chest. Keep elbows at your sides and your wrists straight.
4. Hold the position for one second.
5. Breathe in as you slowly lower your arms.
6. Keep your elbows slightly bent so you don't lock your joints.
7. Repeat 10–15 times.
8. Rest, then repeat 10–15 more times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Use a heavier weight and alternate arms until you can lift the new weight comfortably with both arms.

Arm curl using a resistance band



STRENGTH

This variation of the arm curl exercise uses a resistance band instead of weights
(See *Working with a resistance band* on page 35).

1. Sit in a sturdy, armless chair with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Place the centre of the resistance band under both feet. Hold each end of the band with your palms facing inward. Keep elbows at your sides. Breathe in slowly.
3. Keep wrists straight and slowly breathe out as you bend your elbows and bring your hands toward your shoulders.
4. Hold position for one second, keeping your shoulders down.
5. Breathe in as you slowly lower your arms.
6. Repeat 10–15 times.
7. Rest, then repeat 10–15 more times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Use a heavier strength band.



This exercise will strengthen your upper arms. If your shoulders aren't flexible enough to do this exercise, try the Chair dip on page 44.



STRENGTH



BALANCE

Elbow extension



1. Sit in a sturdy, armless chair with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Hold weight in one hand with your palm facing inward. Raise that arm toward ceiling.
3. Support this arm below the elbow with your other hand. Breathe in slowly.
4. Slowly bend your raised arm at the elbow and bring the weight toward your shoulder. Keep your elbow pointing towards the ceiling.
5. Hold position for one second.
6. Breathe out and slowly straighten your arm over your head. Be careful not to lock your elbow or swing your arm.
7. Repeat 10–15 times.
8. Repeat 10–15 times with other arm.
9. Repeat 10–15 more times with each arm.

As you progress:

Level 2: Do this exercise while standing as shown in the picture.

Level 3: Use a heavier weight.



Quick tip — If it's difficult for you to hold hand weights, try using wrist weights as pictured.

Chair dip



STRENGTH

1. Sit in a sturdy chair with armrests with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Lean slightly forward, keeping your back and shoulders straight.
3. Grasp the arms of the chair with your hands next to you. Breathe in slowly.
4. Breathe out and use your arms to push your body slowly off the chair. Be careful not to lock your elbows.
5. Hold position for one second.
6. Breathe in as you slowly lower yourself back down.
7. Repeat 10–15 times.
8. Rest, then repeat 10–15 more times

As you progress:

Level 2: Using a stable bench seat or low table, sit on the edge with your hands on either side so your palms rest on the furniture and your fingers are over the edge, with your feet flat on the floor shoulder-width apart. Keeping your back straight, tightening your abdomen and leaving your hands in place, move your buttocks slightly forward off the furniture and bend your elbows to dip

This pushing motion will strengthen your arm muscles even if you are not able to lift yourself up off the chair.



your buttocks toward the floor. Keep your knees above your ankles and dip only to the point where your upper arms are parallel to the floor. Use your arms to push yourself up to the starting position.

Level 3: Do the progression [Level 2](#) exercise, but with your legs out straight. Be careful not to lock your knees in front of you.

This exercise will strengthen your wrists, hands and forearms. It also will help ensure good form and prevent injury when you do upper-body strength exercises.



STRENGTH

Wrist curl



1. Rest your forearm on the arm of a sturdy chair with your wrist over the edge.
2. Hold weight with your palm facing upward.
3. Slowly bend your wrist up and down, without moving your forearm.
4. Repeat 10–15 times.
5. Repeat with other hand 10–15 times.
6. Repeat 10–15 more times with each hand.

As you progress:

Level 2: Use a heavier weight.

Back leg raise



STRENGTH



BALANCE

This exercise strengthens your buttocks and lower back.

1. Stand behind a sturdy chair, holding on for balance. Breathe in slowly.
2. Breathe out and slowly lift one leg straight back without bending your knee or pointing your toes. Try not to lean forward or arch your back. The leg you are standing on should be slightly bent.
3. Hold position for one second.
4. Breathe in as you slowly lower your leg.
5. Repeat 10–15 times.
6. Repeat 10–15 times with other leg.
7. Repeat 10–15 more times with each leg.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try improving your balance by gradually decreasing your hand support and eventually doing the exercise with your eyes closed.

Level 3: You may want to add ankle weights.



This exercise strengthens hips, thighs and buttocks.



STRENGTH



BALANCE

Side leg raise



1. Stand behind a sturdy chair with feet slightly apart, holding on for balance. Breathe in slowly.
2. Breathe out and slowly lift one leg out to the side. Keep your back straight and your toes facing forward. The leg you are standing on should be slightly bent.
3. Hold position for one second.
4. Breathe in as you slowly lower your leg.
5. Repeat 10–15 times.
6. Repeat 10–15 times with other leg.
7. Repeat 10–15 more times with each leg.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try improving your balance by gradually decreasing your hand support and eventually doing the exercise with your eyes closed.

Level 3: You may want to add ankle weights as shown in the picture.

Chair stand



STRENGTH

This exercise strengthens your abdomen and thighs, which will make it easier to get in and out of the car.

1. Sit toward the front of a sturdy, armless chair with knees bent and feet flat on floor, shoulder-width apart. Breathe in.
2. Breathe out and extend your arms so they are parallel to the floor as you slowly stand up, keeping your heels on the ground and legs slightly bent.
3. Breathe in as you slowly sit down.
4. Repeat 10–15 times.
5. Rest, then repeat 10–15 more times.

(If you find this difficult, place a cushion or piece of foam on the chair to raise the sitting height).

As you progress:

Level 2: Add hand weights or increase the distance from standing to sitting by removing the chair altogether and doing a squat by lowering your buttocks toward the floor and standing up again.



This exercise will make walking and climbing stairs easier.



STRENGTH



BALANCE

Knee curl



1. Stand behind a sturdy chair, holding on for balance. Breathe in slowly.
2. Breathe out as you slowly bring your heel up toward your buttocks as far as possible. Bend only from your knee, keep your hips still, your knees close together and don't point your toe. The leg you are standing on should be slightly bent.
3. Hold position for one second.
4. Breathe in as you slowly lower your foot to the floor, keeping a slight bend in both legs.
5. Repeat 10–15 times.
6. Repeat 10–15 times with other leg.
7. Repeat 10–15 more times with each leg.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try improving your balance by gradually decreasing your hand support and eventually doing the exercise with your eyes closed.

Level 3: Add ankle weights.



balance



Make it a habit

Lian, age 68, has found that regular Tai Chi classes have improved her balance and flexibility:

'Early every morning, I join a group of my neighbours and we practise Tai Chi for about an hour. We start out with a gentle warm-up and breathing exercises. Then our teacher shows us how to do certain poses and leads us step by step through the slow, flowing movements. We end with cooling-down exercises. This exercise routine has boosted my confidence and reduced my fear of falling. It also gets me out of the house and keeps my arthritis under control.'

Improving your balance

A simple fall can cause a serious fracture of the arm, hand, ankle or hip. Balance exercises can help you prevent falls and avoid the disability that may result from falling.

How much, how often?

You can do the balance exercises in this section as often as you like as part of your 30-minutes of physical activity each day. They overlap with the lower-body strength exercises, which can also improve your balance. Use the strength and balance daily record in your workbook to keep track of your balance exercises.

About balance exercises

- Having a sturdy chair, wall or a person



nearby to hold on to will help you work on your balance safely.

- You can do exercises to improve your balance almost anytime, anywhere and as often as you like, as long as you have something sturdy nearby to hold on to if you become unsteady.

Progressing

These exercises can improve your balance even more if you challenge yourself and modify them as you progress. Start by holding on to a sturdy chair with both hands for support. To challenge yourself, try holding on to the chair with only one hand. With time (as pictured below), you can:

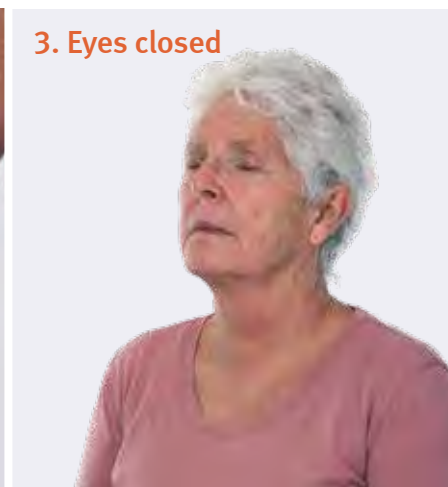
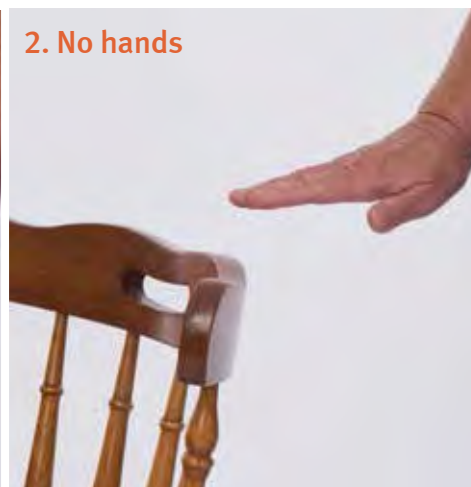
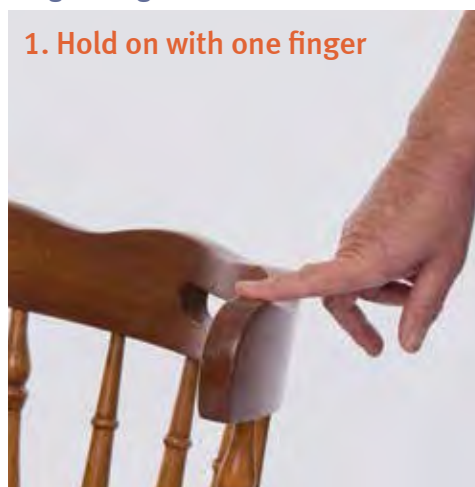
1. try holding on with only one finger
2. try without holding on
3. if you are steady on your feet, try doing the exercise with your eyes closed.

Making it real



You're walking in the neighbourhood and you hear a bicycle bell behind you. Knowing you can turn around quickly and move out of the way without losing your balance is a great feeling!

Progressing



Balance exercises

1. Stand on one foot p52
2. Toe stand p53
3. Heel-to-toe walk p54
4. Balance walk p55

Stand on one foot



BALANCE

You can do this exercise while brushing your teeth or standing in line at the shops.

1. Stand on one foot behind a sturdy chair, holding on for balance, the leg you are standing on should be slightly bent.
2. Hold position for up to 10 seconds.
3. Repeat 10–15 times.
4. Repeat 10–15 times with other leg.
5. Repeat 10–15 more times with each leg.

As you progress:

Level 2: Gradually decrease your hand support and eventually do the exercise with your eyes closed.

Level 3: Stand on foam or a similar soft, unstable surface. Ensure you hold on to a support when starting this progression level.



This exercise will make walking easier by strengthening your calves and ankles, as well as helping to improve your balance.



BALANCE



STRENGTH

Toe stand

1. Stand behind a sturdy chair, feet shoulder-width apart, holding on for balance. Breathe in slowly.
2. Breathe out and slowly stand on tiptoes, as high as possible.
3. Hold position for one second.
4. Breathe in as you slowly lower heels to the floor.
5. Repeat 10–15 times.
6. Rest, then repeat 10–15 more times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try improving your balance by gradually decreasing your hand support and eventually doing the exercise with your eyes closed. You may want to add hand weights.

Level 3: Do the exercise standing on one leg at a time. Add hand weights.



Heel-to-toe walk



BALANCE

Having good balance is important for many everyday activities, such as walking in the park and going up and down stairs. Do this exercise near a wall so you can steady yourself if you need to.

1. Position the heel of one foot just in front of the toes of the other foot. Your heel and toes should touch or almost touch. If you are having difficulty, leave a greater space between your toe and heel and build up to closing the gap.
2. Choose a spot ahead of you and focus on it to keep you steady as you walk.
3. Take a step. Put your heel just in front of the toe of your other foot.
4. Repeat for 20 steps.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try the exercise backwards.

Level 3: Try the exercise with your eyes closed.



Good balance helps you walk safely and avoid tripping and falling over objects in your way.
Do this exercise near a wall so you can steady yourself if you need to.



Balance walk

BALANCE



1. Raise arms to sides at shoulder height.
2. Choose a spot ahead of you and focus on it to keep you steady as you walk.
3. Walk in a straight line with one foot directly in front of the other.
4. As you walk, lift your back leg. Pause for one second before stepping forward.
5. Repeat for 20 steps, alternating legs.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try looking from side to side as you walk, but skip this step if you have inner-ear problems.

Try the exercise backwards.

Level 3: Try the exercise with your eyes closed.

flexibility



Improving your flexibility

Stretching or flexibility exercises are an important part of your physical activity program. They give you more freedom of movement for your physical and everyday activities, such as getting dressed and reaching objects on a shelf. Stretching exercises can improve your flexibility, but will not improve your endurance or strength.

How much, how often?

- Flexibility exercises can be included in your physical activity routine every day. Do each stretching exercise three to five times at each session.
- Always warm up before stretching exercises. Stretch after endurance or strength exercises. If you are doing only stretching exercises, warm up with a few minutes of easy walking first. Stretching your muscles before they are warmed up may result in injury.
- Use the flexibility daily record in your workbook to keep track of your flexibility exercises.



Make it happen

Grace, age 66, has found that stretching exercises have become an important addition to her daily physical activity:

'I grew up on a farm and continued farming after I married. So I was used to hard work and plenty of physical activity. When my son and his family took over running the farm, I needed to find a way to stay active and healthy. Now I begin most mornings with a walk and stretches. Good thing, too! The stretching keeps me limber and the walking gives me plenty of stamina to keep up with my seven grandchildren. Physical activity helps me stay active in their lives and that makes it all worthwhile.'



FLEXIBILITY

About floor exercises

To get down on the floor safely:

1. Stand facing the seat of a sturdy chair.
2. Put your hands on the seat and lower yourself down on one knee. Use a mat or towel to cushion your knee.
3. Bring the other knee down.
4. Put your left hand on the floor. Leaning on your hand, slowly bring your left hip to the floor. Put your right hand on the floor next to your left hand to steady yourself, if needed (see picture p58).
5. You should now be sitting with your weight on your left hip.
6. Straighten your legs.
7. Bend your left elbow until your weight is resting on it. Using your right hand as needed for support, straighten your left arm. You should now be lying on your left side.
8. Roll on to your back.



Quick tip

You don't have to use your left side. You can use your right side if you prefer.



Quick tips



- Use the chair to help you push up. Do not pull on furniture as you may pull it on to yourself.
- If you have trouble getting down on to or up from the floor by yourself, try using the buddy system. Find someone who will be able to help you. Knowing how to use a chair to get down on the floor and get back up again may also be helpful.
- If it is not possible for you to get on to the floor, many of these exercises can be done in bed.



FLEXIBILITY

To get up from the floor safely:

1. Roll on to your left side.
2. Place your right hand on the floor at about the level of your ribs and use it to push your shoulders off the floor. Use your left hand to help lift you up, as needed.
3. You should now be sitting with your weight on your left hip.
4. Roll forward, on to your knees, leaning on your hands for support.
5. Reach up and lean your hands on the seat of a sturdy chair.
6. Lift one of your knees so that one leg is bent, foot flat on the floor (see picture p57).
7. Leaning your hands on the seat of the chair for support, push up with your arms and legs and pivot your buttocks around on to the chair.



About flexibility exercises

Talk with your doctor if you are unsure about a particular exercise. **If you have hip, back or shoulder problems or have had hip or back surgery, talk with your health professional before doing the stretching exercises in this chapter.**

How far?

- Stretching may feel slightly uncomfortable. A mild pulling feeling is normal.
- You are stretching too far if you feel sharp or stabbing pain, or joint pain while doing the stretch or even the next day. Reduce the stretch so that it doesn't hurt.

Stretching

- Slowly stretch into the desired position, as far as possible without pain, and hold the stretch for 10 to 30 seconds. Relax, breathe, then repeat, trying to stretch further.
- Maintain good posture and keep your abdominal and back muscles strong. Avoid arching your back.
- Never 'bounce' into a stretch. Make slow, steady movements instead. Jerking into position can cause muscles to tighten, possibly causing injury.
- Avoid 'locking' your joints. Straighten your arms and legs when you stretch them, but don't hold them tightly in a straight position. Your joints should always be slightly bent while stretching.

Breathing

- Always remember to breathe normally while holding a stretch.

Progressing

You can progress in your stretching exercises. As you become more flexible, try reaching further (but not so far that it hurts) or hold positions for longer.

Flexibility exercises

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| • Back stretch | p60 |
| • Back twist | p61 |
| • Shoulder stretch | p62 |
| • Shoulder/Chest stretch | p63 |
| • Shoulder/Upper arm stretch | p64 |
| • Upper body stretch | p65 |
| • Neck stretch | p66 |
| • Lower back stretch | p67 |
| • Back of leg stretch | p68 |
| • Thigh stretch | p69 |
| • Inner thigh stretch | p70 |
| • Calf stretch | p71 |
| • Buddy stretch | p72 |

Making it real !

How easy is it for you to turn around in the car and look behind you before backing out of a parking space? What about bending down to tie your shoes? Flexibility exercises will help you do both more easily.



Back stretch



FLEXIBILITY

This exercise stretches your back muscles.

1. Sit securely toward the front of a sturdy, armless chair with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Slowly bend forward from your hips. Keep your back and neck straight so you are looking down at the floor.
3. Slightly relax your neck and lower your chin. Slowly bend further forward and slide your hands down the back of your legs toward your ankles. Stop when you feel a stretch or slight discomfort.
4. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
5. Straighten up slowly all the way to the starting position.
6. Repeat at least three to five times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Bend as far forward as you can and eventually touch your heels.

Level 3: Build up to touching your toes while standing, keeping your back straight and knees slightly bent.



This exercise will help you do activities that require you to twist or turn to look behind you, such as backing out of a parking space or swinging a golf club.



Back twist

FLEXIBILITY



1. Sit up toward the front of a sturdy chair with armrests. Stay as straight as possible. Keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Slowly twist to the left from your waist without moving your hips. Turn your head to the left. Lift your left hand and hold on to the left arm of the chair. Place your right hand on the outside of your left thigh. Twist further, if possible.
3. Hold the position for 10 to 30 seconds.
4. Slowly return to face forward.
5. Repeat on the right side.
6. Repeat at least three to five more times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try lifting your left arm and resting it comfortably on the back of the chair. Hold on to the left armrest with your right arm. Repeat on right side.

Shoulder stretch



FLEXIBILITY

This exercise is good for your shoulders and upper back muscles.

1. Sit in a sturdy, armless chair with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
2. Hold arms in front of you at shoulder height, palms facing down and hands side by side.
3. Relax your shoulders, keep your upper body still and reach forward with your hands. Stop when you feel a stretch or slight discomfort.
4. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
5. Sit back up.
6. Repeat at least three to five times.

As you progress:

Level 2: With your arms out in front, cross your arms and interlace your fingers as shown in the small picture.

Level 3: Bend forward keeping your back straight, cross your arms and grasp behind your knees.



This exercise to stretch your shoulder and chest muscles will help improve your posture.



FLEXIBILITY

Shoulder/chest stretch



As an alternative

Stand or sit in a sturdy chair, hold your arms out to the side at shoulder height with palms facing forward, slowly move your arms back while squeezing your shoulder blades together and hold as above.

1. Stand back against a wall, feet shoulder-width apart and arms at shoulder height.
2. Bend your elbows so your fingertips point toward the ceiling and touch the wall behind you. Stop when you feel a stretch or slight discomfort, and stop immediately if you feel sharp pain.
3. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
4. Let your arms slowly roll forward, remaining bent at the elbows, to point toward the floor and touch the wall again, if possible. Stop when you feel a stretch or slight discomfort.
5. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
6. Alternate pointing your fingertips above your head, then toward the floor.
7. Repeat at least three to five times.

Shoulder/upper arm stretch



FLEXIBILITY



BALANCE

This exercise to increase flexibility in your shoulders and upper arms will help make it easier to reach for your seatbelt.

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Hold one end of a towel in your right hand.
3. Raise and bend your right arm to drape the towel down your back. Keep your right arm in this position and continue holding on to the towel.
4. Reach behind your lower back and grasp the towel with your left hand.
5. To stretch your right shoulder, pull the towel down with your left hand. Stop when you feel a stretch or slight discomfort in your right shoulder.
6. Repeat at least three to five times.
7. Reverse positions and repeat at least three to five times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try gradually decreasing the distance between your top and bottom hands.

Level 3: Try completing the exercise without a towel, eventually making the fingertips of your two hands touch.



This exercise increases the flexibility of your arms, chest and shoulders and will help you reach items on the upper shelves of your wardrobe or kitchen cupboard.



Upper body stretch

FLEXIBILITY



1. Stand facing a wall slightly further than arm's length from the wall, feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Lean your body forward and put your palms flat against the wall at shoulder height and shoulder-width apart.
3. Keeping your back straight, slowly walk your hands up the wall until your arms are above your head.
4. Hold your arms overhead for about 10 to 30 seconds.
5. Slowly walk your hands back down.
6. Repeat at least three to five times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Gradually reach higher up the wall.

Neck stretch



FLEXIBILITY

This easy stretch can help relieve tension in your neck. Try to stretch after strength training and during any activity that makes you feel stiff, such as sitting at a desk.

1. You can do this stretch while standing or sitting in a sturdy chair.
2. Keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart, with hands clasped behind your back.
3. Slowly turn your head to the right until you feel a slight stretch. Be careful not to tip or tilt your head forward or backward, but hold it in a comfortable position.
4. Hold the position for 10 to 30 seconds.
5. Turn your head to the left and hold the position for 10 to 30 seconds.
6. Repeat at least three to five times.



This exercise stretches the muscles of your lower back.



Lower back stretch

FLEXIBILITY



1. Lie on your back with your legs together, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Try to keep both arms and shoulders flat on the floor throughout the stretch.
2. Keeping knees bent and together, slowly lower both legs to one side as far as you comfortably can, keeping your head still.
3. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
4. Bring legs back up slowly and repeat toward other side.
5. Continue alternating sides for at least three to five times on each side.

As you progress:

Level 2: Gently move your head to the opposite side as your legs to increase the stretch.

Level 3: Use your hand to gently push your knees closer to the ground.

Back of leg stretch



FLEXIBILITY

This exercise stretches the muscles in the back of your legs.

Floor

1. Lie on your back with left knee bent and left foot flat on the floor.
2. Raise right leg, keeping knee slightly bent.
3. Reach up and grasp right leg with both hands. Keep head and shoulders flat on the floor. If you can't reach your leg, loop a resistance band, belt or towel over your foot and hold both ends.
4. Gently pull right leg toward your body until you feel a stretch in the back of your leg.
5. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
6. Repeat at least three to five times.
7. Repeat at least three to five times with left leg.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try to work up to reaching your foot.



Chair/bench

1. Sit sideways on a bench seat or other hard surface, such as two chairs placed together.
2. Keeping your back straight, stretch one leg out on the bench, toes pointing up.
3. Keep your other foot flat on the floor.
4. If you feel a stretch at this point, hold position for 10–30 seconds.
5. If you don't feel a stretch, lean forward from hips (not waist) sliding your arm down towards your foot until you feel stretching in the leg on the bench.
6. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
7. Repeat at least three to five times.
8. Repeat at least three to five times with your other leg.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try to work up to reaching your foot.



This exercise stretches your thigh muscles.



Thigh stretch



Floor

1. Lie on your side with legs straight and knees together.
2. Rest your head on your arm.
3. Bend your top knee and reach back and grab the top of your foot. If you can't reach your foot, loop a resistance band, belt or towel over your foot and hold both ends.
4. Gently pull your leg until you feel a stretch in your thigh.
5. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
6. Repeat at least three to five times.
7. Repeat at least three to five times with your other leg.



Standing

1. Stand behind a sturdy chair with your feet shoulder-width apart and your legs straight, but knees slightly bent.
2. Hold on to the chair for balance with your right hand.
3. Bend your left leg back and grab your foot in your left hand. Keep your knees together and your back straight. If you are unable to reach your foot use a rolled up towel looped around your foot and held in each hand.
4. Gently pull your leg until you feel a stretch in your thigh.
5. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
6. Repeat at least three to five times.
7. Repeat at least three to five times with your right leg, holding it with your right hand.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try improving your balance by gradually reducing your hand support.

Inner thigh stretch



FLEXIBILITY

This exercise will stretch your groin and inner thigh muscles.

1. Lie on your back with your legs together, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Try to keep both shoulders on the floor throughout the stretch.
2. Slowly lower one knee as far as you comfortably can. Try not to move the other leg as you keep your feet close together and your hips and back flat on the floor.
3. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
4. Bring knee back up slowly.
5. Repeat at least three to five times.
6. Repeat at least three to five times with your other leg.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try this exercise in a sitting position, with the soles of your feet touching and in as close to your body as possible. Gently lower both knees outwards toward the floor as far as you comfortable can.

Level 3: Gently push down on your knees with your hands to increase the stretch.



Because many people have tight calf muscles, it's important to stretch them.



FLEXIBILITY

Calf stretch



1. Stand facing a wall slightly further than arm's length from the wall, feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Put your palms flat against the wall at shoulder height and shoulder-width apart.
3. Step forward with right leg and bend right knee. Keeping both feet flat on the floor, bend left knee slightly until you feel a stretch in your left calf muscle. It shouldn't feel uncomfortable. If you don't feel a stretch, bend your right knee until you do.
4. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds, and then return to starting position.
5. Repeat with left leg.
6. Continue alternating legs for at least three to five times on each leg.

Buddy stretch



FLEXIBILITY

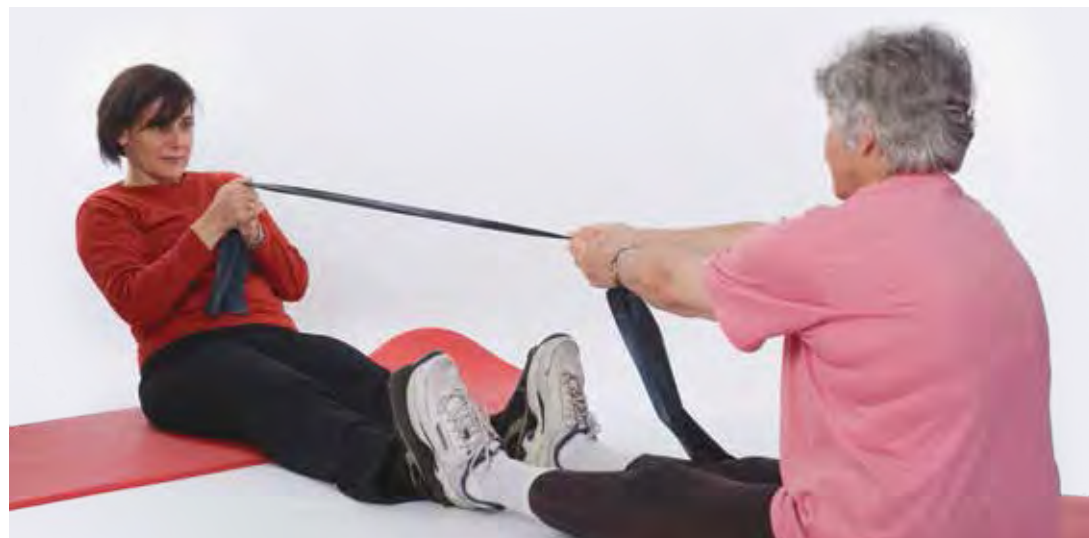
This is a good overall stretch that's fun to do with a exercise buddy. It stretches your shoulders, arms, back and legs. (See *Working with a resistance band* on page 35).

1. Sit on the floor facing your buddy and place your feet against your partner's feet.
2. Both of you should grab one end of a resistance band or towel. Depending on each person's flexibility, you may need to loop two bands or towels together.
3. Slowly pull the band or towel so that your buddy bends forward and you lean backward.
4. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds.
5. Slowly return to starting position.
6. Now it's your buddy's turn to pull the band or towel so that you bend forward and your buddy leans backward. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds, and then return to starting position.
7. Repeat at least three to five times.

As you progress:

Level 2: Try holding the band so that your hands are closer to your buddy's, or try using a heavier strength band.

Level 3: Build up to reaching out and holding hands with your buddy during the stretch.





Make it rewarding

Regular endurance activity has helped Tom stay healthy after major heart surgery:

'At age 45, I had quadruple bypass surgery. I was shocked because I was so young. Those months after my surgery are a blur to me now. After several months of cardiac rehab, I knew my heart health was in my hands. So now I run regularly around my neighbourhood. I have a number of different routes and if it's raining, I use my treadmill. I admit I was nervous at first to push myself. I worried I might do more harm than good. But it's been 12 years and I feel great! This year, I will celebrate my daughter's graduation from university, continue as assistant coach for the local football team and maybe even teach my wife to play golf. I believe physical activity has made all of that possible for me.'



endurance



How to improve your endurance

Walking, jogging, swimming, mowing, sweeping, dancing and playing tennis require you to be active for an extended period. It is recommended that the exercise be of a moderate intensity - that is, while they take some effort, you are still able to talk while doing them. Remember to focus on becoming active on most if not every day of the week.

How much, how often?

Refer to your starting goals and build up your endurance gradually. If you haven't been active for a long time, it's especially important to work your way up over time. It may take a while to go from a longstanding inactive lifestyle to doing some of the activities in this section. For example, start out with five or 10 minutes at a time, and then build up to at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity endurance activity daily. Doing less than 10 minutes at a time won't give you the desired heart and lung benefits.

Try to build up to at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.



For more information

Check out the 10,000 Steps website
www.10000steps.org.au



Counting your steps

Pedometers, or step counters, can help you keep track of your endurance activity, set goals and measure progress.

Aim for at least 10,000 steps per day. Most inactive people get fewer than 5,000 steps a day, and some very inactive people get only 2,000 steps a day. You can use a step counter to see how many steps you take or if you have a smart phone download a pedometer app, put your phone in your pocket and off you go. Use the endurance daily record in your workbook to record your steps. If you get:



- fewer than 5,000 steps a day — gradually try to add 3,000 to 4,000 more steps a day
- about 8,000 steps a day — you're getting close to meeting the recommended activity target; try gradually adding 2,000 more steps a day
- 10,000 or more steps a day — you can be confident that you're getting an adequate amount of endurance activity
- 10,000 steps a day comfortably — try for 15,000 steps a day, which would put you in the high-activity group.

Listen to your body

Listen to your body when doing endurance activities. Is the activity making you feel unwell or too tired?

Do a little light activity, such as easy walking, before and after your endurance activities to warm up and cool down.

Stay safe

When you're outdoors, watch out for low-hanging branches and uneven surfaces. Walk during the day or in well-lit areas at night and be aware of your surroundings.

When it's not possible to be outdoors, you may want to try indoor activities:

- If you have stairs at home, safely go up and down the steps a few times in a row.
- Walk at a shopping centre or on a treadmill.
- Go for a swim at your local pool.



Go here for more information

For more about drinking enough fluids, see page 84.

Drink enough water

As you get older, you may not feel thirsty even though your body needs fluids. Be sure to drink water prior to, during and following physical activity. By the time you notice you are thirsty, you probably are already low on fluid. This guideline is important year round, but it's especially important in hot weather. If your doctor has told you to limit your fluids, be sure to discuss your planned changes in physical activity with them prior to doing so, and to specifically ask them about when and how much water you should drink with exercise. For example, people with congestive heart failure or kidney disease may need to limit fluids.

Watch your temperature

Older adults can be affected by heat and cold more than others. In extreme cases, too much heat can cause heatstroke, and very cold temperatures can lead to a dangerous drop in body temperature. Dress in layers so you can add or remove clothes as needed. Remember to be sun safe when outside.



Quick tip

Some people are afraid to be physically active after a heart attack or being diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. However physical activity can help reduce your chances of having a heart attack.

If you've had a heart attack, talk with your doctor to be sure you're following a safe, effective physical activity program. Ask about cardiac rehabilitation programs, which include exercise, education and counselling to help you return to an active life.

Making it real !

Walking one kilometre a day at the shopping centre will help you keep up with your grandchildren during a trip to the park.

Some people may not be able to be active for 30 minutes at a time. It's important to set realistic goals based on your own health and abilities.



Equipment

Whatever activity you choose, stay safe. To prevent injuries, be sure to use safety equipment. For example, wear a helmet when cycling. Ask someone to go with you. Wear the proper shoes (see page 19).

Ways to gauge your effort

The amount of effort you need to do an activity will depend on your starting point, including your fitness level, how strong you are and how active you've been. For example, walking a kilometre in 15 minutes will be a lot easier for someone who does it every day compared with someone who has never done it.

You can use these informal guidelines to estimate how much effort you are putting into your endurance activities.

- A **moderate level of physical activity** will cause your heart to beat faster with some shortness of breath, but you should be able to talk comfortably while being active. A good example of moderate-intensity activity is brisk walking, mowing the lawn, digging in the garden, or medium-paced swimming or cycling. Remember, older people should accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.

- A **vigorous level of physical activity** will cause your heart to beat a lot faster with shortness of breath that makes talking difficult. A good example of vigorous-intensity activity is jogging, brisk rowing or playing sports such as football, squash or netball.

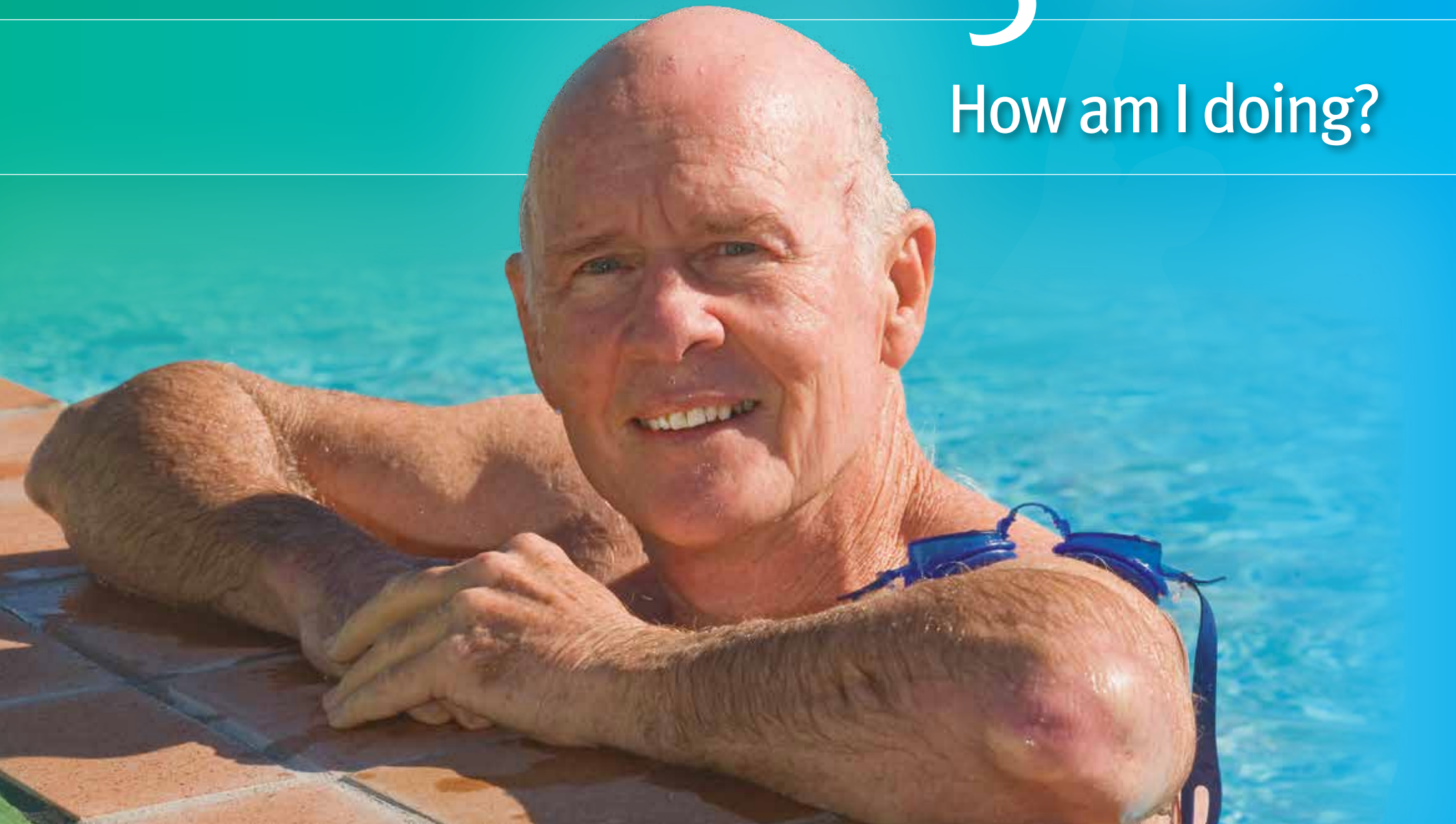
Progressing

You will be able to do more endurance activity in time. The three things to focus on are: being active on most, if not every day; only gradually increasing the amount of physical activity you do; and being active at an intensity that allows you to hold a conversation.



5

How am I doing?



If you've been exercising regularly, you'll soon be able to tell when it's time to move ahead in your activities. For example, when you can lift a weight easily 10–15 times, it's time to add more weight in your strength exercises or move to a higher progression level. When your endurance activity no longer feels challenging, it's time to be active a little longer, or make it a little more difficult such as by walking up steeper hills or increasing your pace.

Introduction

The simple tests in this chapter will show you just how far you've come. You might want to test yourself every month or so. Write down your scores each time so you can see your improvement the next time you test yourself. You can record your scores on the monthly progress test in your workbook.



You might want to do these tests for a couple of reasons. Most people make rapid progress soon after they start to increase their physical activity and it's encouraging to see your scores improve after just a month.

These tests are also a good way to let you know if you are continuing to progress and if you need to update your goals.

But remember, it is normal for your improvement to slow down at times. Also remember that each person is different. Some will be able to progress with time; for others, reaching a certain level of activity and staying there is right for their age and ability level.

If you're not ready to do these tests, don't worry, just keep working on your current physical activities until you are.

One last tip: Regardless of whether you do these tests, don't forget to congratulate yourself for your efforts. Tell your family and friends about your achievements. You've made a lot of progress and you're ready for more!



Quick tip

Whether you are testing yourself or exercising, it should not be distressing or hurt.

After completing these tests, make sure you record your scores in your workbook so you can measure your progress



- **Endurance**

Pick a fixed course — the distance from your house to the corner, once around the oval at your local high school or from one end of the shopping centre to the other — whatever is convenient. See how long it takes to walk or run that distance.

- **Upper-body strength**

Count the number of arm curls (see page 41) you can safely do in two minutes. If you are just starting to exercise, you may have to stop and rest before the two minutes are up. That's okay, it still gives you a great starting point to measure your progress.

- **Lower-body strength**

Count the number of chair stands (see page 48) you can safely do in two minutes. You may have to stop and rest before the two minutes are up if you are just starting to exercise. That's okay, you will be able to measure your progress from this starting point.



Go here for more information
Review the safety guidelines on page 18 before testing yourself.

- **Balance**

Time yourself as you stand on one foot, without support, for as long as possible. Stand near something sturdy to hold on to, in case you lose your balance. Record your score.

- **Flexibility**

If you've had hip or back surgery, talk with your doctor before you do this test. Sit securely toward the front of a sturdy chair and stretch one leg straight out in front of you with your heel on the floor, toes pointing upward. Bend the other leg so that your foot is flat on the floor. With your elbows slightly bent and your hands palm down, slowly bend forward from your hips (not your waist) and reach as far as you can toward your toes. How far down can you reach until you feel a stretch?

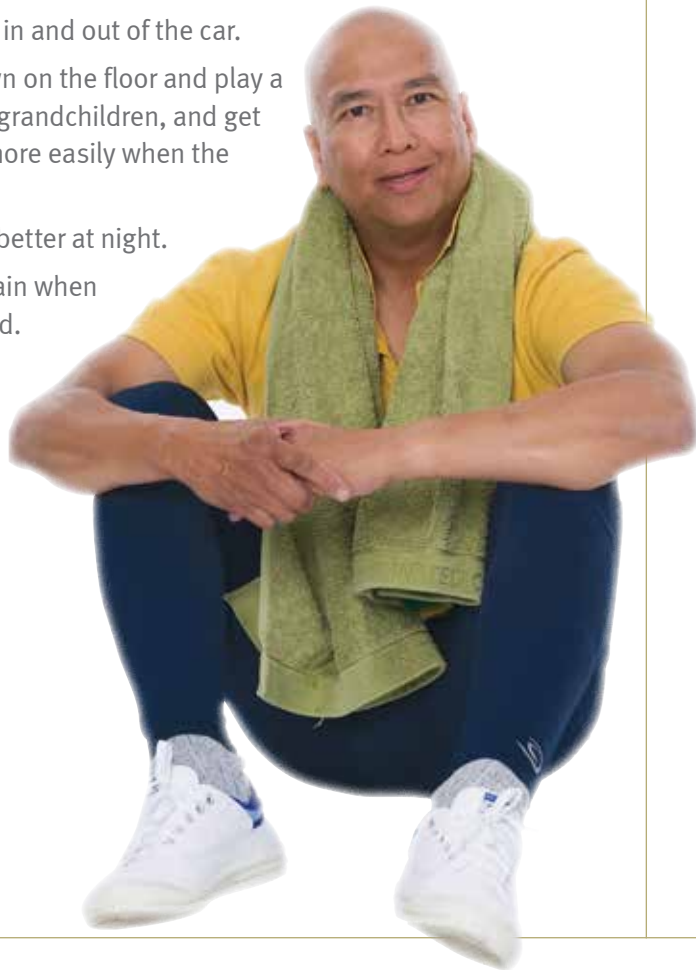
You will see an improvement when these five activities are performed regularly each week. Test yourself monthly to show your results!



Other ways to measure your progress

As you become more active, you'll probably notice other signs that you're getting fitter.

- You have more energy.
- Your overall mood and outlook on life have improved.
- It's easier to do your usual daily activities.
- Climbing a couple of flights of stairs is easier.
- It's easier to get in and out of the car.
- You can get down on the floor and play a game with your grandchildren, and get back up again more easily when the game is over.
- You're sleeping better at night.
- You have less pain when you move around.
- Symptoms of an ongoing health condition may improve.



Make it social

Marty's 'activity mates' keep him going:

'Every morning I head out to the shopping centre — not to shop, but to join my mall-walkers group. At 75, I'm one of the youngest members. When I retired, my wife Harriet insisted that we walk every morning. Some of us move at a steady clip through the centre, while others take a slower pace. We count our laps and keep a daily record of our progress — pushing ourselves to go a little faster and a little further.'

When Harriet died unexpectedly, it was quite a blow, but the walkers were my lifeline. They kept me moving when all I wanted to do was sit. At first, I walked because it was something to do each morning. But now, I realise that I like how it feels to be moving. Measuring how fast I can walk gives me goals, something to work toward. I walk and feel stronger every day. I often think of and silently thank her for insisting that we walk together.'

6

Healthy eating



Healthy eating and being physically active are keys to a healthy lifestyle. But just what does ‘healthy eating’ mean?

Introduction

Eating a range of nutritious foods is as important as staying active. As you get older, you have to get smarter about eating better. Dietary requirements could change as your need for energy may decrease, while your need for nutrients, such as proteins, vitamins and minerals, may stay the same or even increase. This chapter gives tips for healthy eating, getting enough fluids, eating out and dietary supplements.

Dietary guidelines

The *Australian Government’s Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults* recommends that for a healthy diet, you enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods.

- Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruit including different types and colours.
- Eat cereals (including breads, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley), preferably wholegrain.
- Include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives such as eggs, legumes, tofu, seeds and nuts.
- Include milk, yoghurts and cheeses and/or alternatives. Choose reduced-fat products where possible.
- Drink plenty of water.

Queensland Government Healthier. Happier. (<http://healthier.qld.gov.au/>) advises:

- Add fruit and vegetables to your meals
- Have smaller portion sizes
- Cut back on sugary drinks
- Choose healthier options when eating out
- Sit less and move more.



For more information

Go to <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>
<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/australian-guide-healthy-eating>
 and
 Healthier.Happier at <http://healthier.qld.gov.au/>



Quick tip

This chapter does not address specific nutritional needs for people who:

- have been ill
- are undergoing surgery
- have lost weight recently without trying
- have a poor appetite
- are on a special diet.

In these cases, it is recommended that you speak to your doctor or health professional and seek a referral to a dietitian.

What is a serve of vegetables or fruit?



or



or



or



or



or



½ cup green or orange vegetables or ½ cup cooked lentils

½ medium potato

1 cup leafy raw salad

1 medium piece (e.g. apple)

2 small pieces (e.g. apricots)

1 cup chopped or canned fruit

(<http://www.healthier.qld.gov.au/>)

Tips for healthy eating

Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables every day

- Eat 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables, including different colours to give your body a wide range of valuable nutrients including magnesium, potassium, vitamin C and folate.
- Leave skins on your fruits and vegetables where possible. For example, eat the skin when you have a baked potato, and snack on washed unpeeled apples, pears and peaches.
- Don't forget to rinse fruits and vegetables before cooking or eating.
- Keep some tinned or frozen fruits and vegetables on hand. These are good choices, convenient and easy to prepare. Choose fruit tinned in natural juice not syrup.

Eat a diet rich in foods with fibre

- Eat 3-6 serves of grain foods every day. For example whole grain bread, pasta or cereals. Food from grains such as oats, rye, rice, barley and corn are high in dietary fibre.
- Breakfast is a good time to enjoy foods with fibre. For example, try unsweetened wholegrain cereals, and add fruit, such as bananas, stewed fruit in natural juice and berries.

Season your foods with lemon juice, herbs or spices instead of butter and salt

- Coriander, ginger, garlic, chilli and lemongrass

are great in a vegetable stir fry; or top steamed vegetables with a dash of olive oil and mixed herbs, such as parsley, basil, thyme and oregano (fresh or dried).

Avoid foods that are high in fat, especially saturated fat

- Saturated fat is mostly found in foods that come from animals such as fatty meats and butter and from processed foods such as biscuits, cakes, pastries and takeaways.

Choose healthy fats and oils

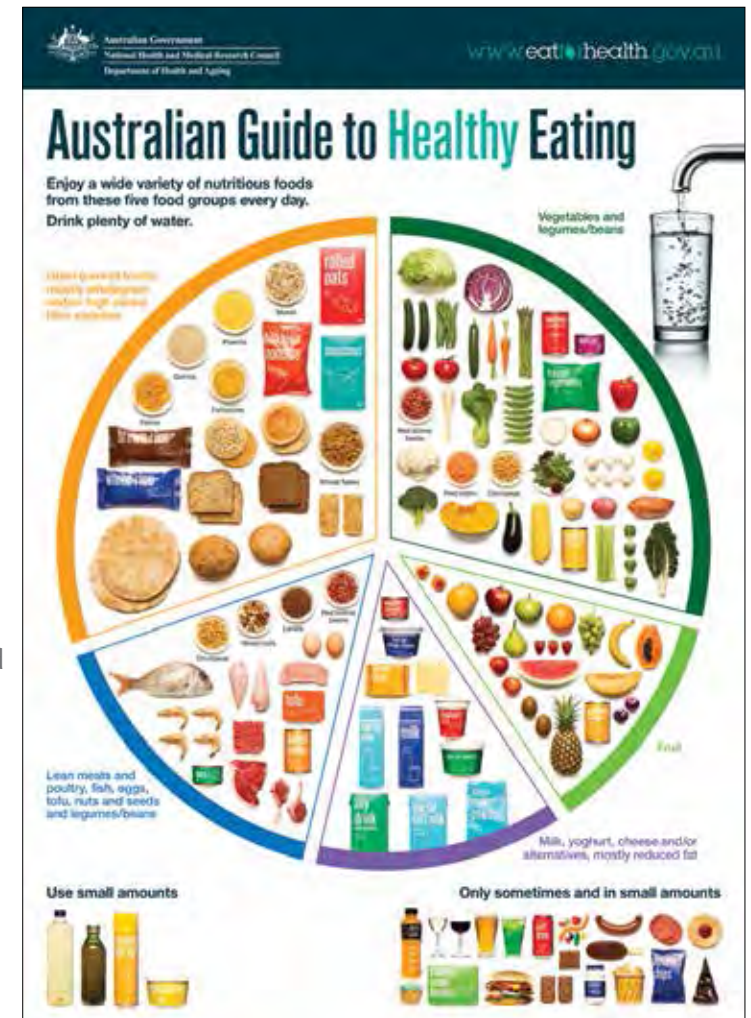
- The healthiest options are canola, olive, sunflower, soy and peanut oils as well as polyunsaturated and monosaturated oils and spreads.

Ensure you get enough calcium

- Eat 2.5 - 4 serves of milk, yoghurt, cheese daily. These foods are rich sources of calcium, vitamin A, D and B12.
- These foods are important for strong bones and preventing fractures.

Ensure you get enough protein

- Choose a variety from this food group. Eat everyday 2-3 serves of lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds legumes/beans. This food group is a rich source of protein, iron, zinc, iodine and B12. For vegetarians legumes and beans are a good plant based alternative.
- These foods help to maintain healthy muscles.



**Quick tip**

Drink water rather than drinks containing added sugars.

**Choose and prepare foods with little salt**

- Choose low-salt varieties of packaged foods (eg. tuna in spring water rather than brine).

Reach and maintain a healthy weight

- The secret is to balance your 'energy in' and 'energy out'. 'Energy in' comes from foods and beverages you have each day. 'Energy out' is what you burn for basic body functions and during physical activity. Your weight will stay the same when the energy you eat and drink is balanced with the energy you burn.
- Combining healthy eating and physical activity can help you reach and keep a healthier weight.

Watch your portion size

- Controlling portion size helps limit energy intake, especially when eating foods that are high in energy.

More advice

- Discuss the option of using low-fat or reduced-fat food options with your doctor, dietitian or health professional.

Drinking enough fluids

It's important to drink enough fluids every day to keep your body working properly. This is particularly true for older adults as you may not feel thirsty even if your body needs fluids. Drinking enough fluid is essential for everyone. Check with your doctor, however, if you've been told to limit how much you drink.

Have small amounts of fluids often over the day. While water is the best option, other fluid sources include reduced-fat milk, 100% juice, tea, coffee and foods with high moisture content such as fruits, vegetables, custard, ice-cream and reduced-salt soups. Limit your intake of drinks with added sugar.

Reducing your alcohol intake

The 2009 *Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol* recommends that people who drink alcoholic beverages should do so in moderation, which means no more than two standard drinks per day for men or women. Try to have alcohol-free days each week. Alcohol does not supply any essential nutrients and is high in kilojoules.

How many standard drinks are in a typical drink?

1.4
150ml
Average
restaurant serving
of White Wine
11.5% Alc./Vol



1.4
375ml
Full Strength
Beer 4.8%
Alc./Vol



1.5
375ml
Full Strength
Pre-mix Spirits
5% Alc. Vol

Eating out

Eating out can be enjoyable, but restaurants often serve large meals which can be high in energy, fat, sugar and salt. Here are a few tips to help make your meal both delicious and nutritious.

- Skip the ‘super sizes’. Ask for ‘small’, share a portion or ask for an entrée-sized meal as a main dish.
- Order lean meats, low-fat cheeses and low-fat or fat-free dressings and sauces.
- Ask for sauces and dressings on the side so you have control of how much you use.
- Choose a tomato-based sauce instead of a cream-based or white sauce.
- Choose minestrone or vegetable soups rather than creamy soups.
- Choose foods that are baked, grilled, steamed, sautéed or boiled instead of fried.
- Order meals with high protein and plenty of nutrients (eg. lean meat with vegetables).
- Choose food with a bread base instead of pastries.
- Instead of hot chips, ask for baked or steamed potatoes, a side salad or fruit.
- Order extra steamed vegetables without butter or a salad with low-fat or fat-free dressing to help fill you up.
- Taste your food before automatically adding table salt.
- Drink water, reduced-fat milk or other drinks without added sugars.
- Beware of extras such as butter with bread, chips with meals and creamy sauces.



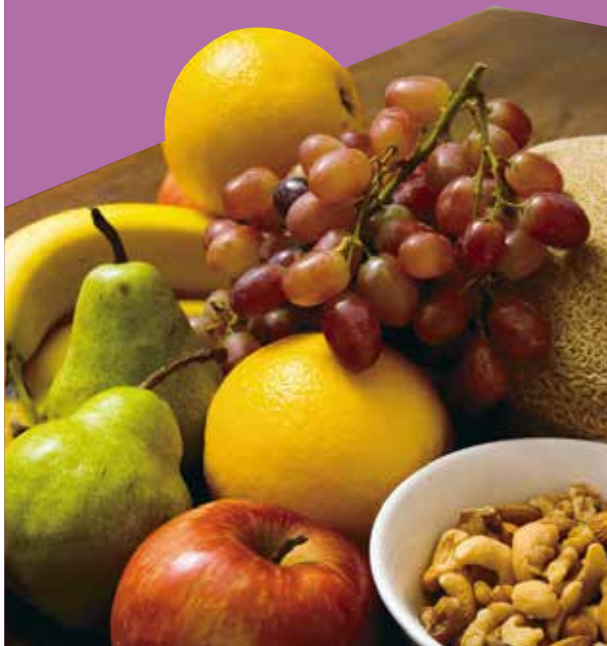
Quick tips

- **Beware of diets that make big promises about losing weight, regaining youth or achieving high energy.**
- **If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.**
- **To maintain and improve your health, follow the dietary guidelines and be physically active every day.**

Healthy snacks

We all like to have a snack between meals sometimes. Make sure you have healthy snacks on hand to avoid choosing packets of chips or sweet biscuits. Try these healthy snacks:

- fresh, canned or stewed fruit
- wholemeal or wholegrain toast, fruit toast or a toasted sandwich
- high-fibre muffin with fruit or grated vegetables
- yoghurt or custard
- vegetable sticks, such as carrots, celery and capsicum with a non-cream-based dip, such as mashed-up avocado and lemon juice.



Dietary supplements

Most people who eat a variety of nutritious foods do not need multivitamins.

Whole foods have big advantages over supplements and contain things like polyphenols that protect against cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

Are dietary supplements safe?

Although certain dietary supplements may help some people it's best to get advice from your doctor or a health professional.

- Taking a combination of supplements, using supplements together with prescription or over-the-counter medications, or using them in place of medicines prescribed by your doctor can lead to harmful, even life-threatening side-effects. Be alert to any warnings about these products.
- Some supplements can have unwanted or harmful effects before, during or after surgery.

Do I need a supplement?

Eating healthy foods is the best way to get the nutrients you need. For example, fruits and vegetables provide a variety of important nutrients, including fibre, folate, potassium and vitamins A and C.

People who eat a varied diet with the recommended amount of food and who do not have problems absorbing a particular nutrient will not gain any additional health benefit by taking the nutrient as a supplement. For example, people who eat enough fruits and vegetables don't need extra vitamin C.

Talk with a registered health professional or a dietitian to find out if you need to take a supplement.

Healthy teeth and gums.

Maintaining healthy teeth and gums is important to eat well.

Missing teeth, sore gums and dentures that don't fit properly can make it difficult to chew food and compromise healthy eating.

Have your teeth checked regularly and ensure your dentures are adjusted correctly so that you can continue to enjoy a variety of foods and drinks without restriction. Visit your dentist whenever you are having difficulty with your teeth, gums or dentures.

7

Conclusion



A final word

This guide has given you information and strategies to help you stay physically active and age with vitality!

The *Ageing with Vitality: Workbook* has many activities to help you plan to be more active and to stick with it along the way. The workbook also has common questions and answers, plus an extensive list of resources and services for more information.



We wish you all the best in becoming more active as you make small changes to your everyday life. Here are some final tips to help you stay motivated:

- Keep the guide or workbook somewhere visible to remind you about the importance of being active and eating healthy. Don't let this resource become a bookshelf dust collector.
- Share this guide with friends and family and encourage them to join you in benefiting your health with physical activity.

Best recipe for healthy active ageing

- Stay physically active.
- Stay socially active.
- Eat a wide variety of nutritious foods.



