



Ageing with vitality: Workbook

Welcome to the Ageing with vitality: *Workbook*. Please use this workbook in conjunction with Ageing with vitality: Your everyday guide to healthy active living to plan and record your progress as you find various ways to increase your levels of physical activity.



Physical activity is a great way to have fun, be with friends and family, enjoy the outdoors, improve your fitness and maintain your independence. Older adults also gain substantial health benefits from regular physical activity and these benefits last. The best way to be physically active is to make it a lifelong habit. Once you get started, keep going.



People often decide to become more active and follow a healthy eating plan to control their weight. For many people, these healthy habits lead to weight loss, but that's only part of the bigger picture. Healthy eating and physical activity help you become physically fit and stay healthy.

Think about other lifestyle changes you can make too. For example, smoking leads to a variety of serious diseases and can keep you from being active, so does drinking too much alcohol. Together, physical activity, a healthy diet, drinking in moderation and not smoking will help you achieve the main goal — the best of health.

On the following pages, you will find several worksheets you can use to help you meet your physical activity goals. Use the ones that work for you.



Quick tip

Make copies of the blank worksheets so you can update them as you progress.



Activity log

For a couple of weekdays and the weekend, write down how much time you are physically active (for example, walking, gardening, playing sport, dancing or lifting weights). The goal is to find as many ways as possible to increase your level and amount of physical activity.

	Activity	Number of minutes	Ways to increase activity
Weekday one			

Total minutes

Weekday two			

Total minutes

Weekend			

Total minutes



Goal-setting worksheet

Your success depends on setting goals that really matter to you. Write down your goals, put them where you can see them and renew them regularly.

Short-term goals

Write down at least two of your own personal short-term goals. What will you do over the next week or two that will help you make physical activity a regular part of your life?

1.

2.

3.

Long-term goals

Write down at least two long-term goals. Focus on where you want to be in six months, a year, or two years from now. Remember, setting goals will help you make physical activity part of your everyday life, monitor your progress and celebrate your successes.

1.

2.

3.



Weekly physical activity plan

Use this form to make your own physical activity plan — one you think you really can manage. Update your plan as you progress. Aim for moderate-intensity endurance activities on most, preferably all days. Try to do strength exercises for all your major muscle groups, **but don't exercise the same muscle group two days in a row**. For example, do upper-body strength exercises on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and lower-body strength exercises on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Don't forget to include balance and flexibility exercises.

Week of	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Upper-body strength							
Lower-body strength							
Balance							
Flexibility							
Endurance							



Sample weekly physical activity plan

Here is an example of how to use the weekly plan to set up your physical activity schedule. Add a variety of physical activities as you feel able. Remember to copy a number of blank plans. In the sample table below you will see mention of ‘repetitions’ and ‘sets’.

To check on these definitions, please refer to page 33 of *Ageing with vitality: Your everyday guide to healthy active living*.

Week of	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Upper-body strength	Wall push-up 10–15 repetitions; 1–2 sets Overhead arm raise 10–15 repetitions; 1–2 sets		Front arm raise 10–15 repetitions; 1–2 sets Elbow extension 10–15 repetitions with each arm; 1–2 sets		Side arm raise 10–15 repetitions; 1–2 sets Wrist curl 10–15 repetitions on each hand; 1–2 sets		Arm curl 10–15 repetitions; 1–2 sets Chair dip 10–15 repetitions; 1–2 sets
Lower-body strength		Back leg raise 10–15 repetitions on each leg; 1–2 sets Chair stand 10–15 repetitions; 1–2 sets		Side leg raise 10–15 repetitions on each leg; 1–2 sets Knee curl 10–15 repetitions on each leg; 1–2 sets		Back leg raise 10–15 repetitions on each leg; 1–2 sets Chair stand 10–15 repetitions; 1–2 sets	
Balance	Stand on one foot, hold for 10 seconds, 10–15 repetitions on each leg; 1–2 sets	Heel-to-toe-walk 20 steps	Toe stand 10–15 repetitions; 1–2 sets	Balance walk 20 steps	Stand on one foot, hold for 10 seconds, 10–15 repetitions on each leg; 1–2 sets	Tai Chi class	Heel-to-toe-walk 20 steps
Flexibility	Shoulder/chest Thigh	Back 1 Back of leg	Calf Neck	Back 2 Inner thigh	Shoulder Upper body	Lower back Back of leg	Shoulder and upper arm Thigh
Endurance	Mow the lawn	Swim	Brisk walk	Game of tennis	Brisk walk	Digging in the garden	Cycling



Daily endurance record

You can use this form to record your endurance activities. Try to build up to at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity endurance activity on most, preferably all days of the week. **Every day is best.**

Week of	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Endurance activity							
How long did you do it?							

Week of	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Number of steps							

Frequently asked questions

Question: 1

I'm not particularly active and I haven't exercised in years. Is it safe for me to start now?

Answer:

If you haven't been active for a while, it's important to start out at a low level of effort and work your way up slowly. Beginning slowly will help you become more fit without straining your body. For example, you may want to start with walking, cycling or swimming at a comfortable pace and then gradually do more, or start strengthening exercises with one or two-kilo weights and gradually add heavier weights. You should talk with your doctor or health professional if you decide to start a vigorous exercise program or significantly increase your physical activity.

Question: 2

I have a medical condition (such as arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease). Is it safe for me to engage in physical activity?

Answer:

Physical activity is safe for almost everyone. In fact, studies show that people with arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease benefit from regular physical activity. In some cases, physical activity actually can improve some of these conditions. You may want to talk with your doctor or health professional about how your health condition might affect your ability to be active (See page 18 of the *Ageing with vitality: Your everyday guide to healthy active living* for more information.)

Question: 3

Isn't it better for older adults to 'take it easy' and save their strength?

Answer:

Regular physical activity is very important to the health and abilities of older people. In fact, studies show that 'taking it easy' is risky. For the most part, when older people lose their ability to do things on their own, it doesn't happen just because they've aged. It's usually because they're not active. Physically active individuals can reduce their risk of Type 2 diabetes by 15–60 percent. Lack of physical activity also can lead to more visits to the doctor, more hospitalisations and more use of medicines for a variety of illnesses.

Question: 4

How much physical activity do I need?

Answer:

The goal is to achieve at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on most, preferably all days of the week. Every day is best, but doing anything is better than doing nothing at all. Try to do all four types of physical activity — strength, balance, flexibility and endurance. Try to do strength exercises for all your major muscle groups on two or more days a week for 30-minute sessions each, but don't do strength exercises on the same muscle group two days in a row. Try and also do some balance exercises every week to improve your skills. Tai chi can be a good help in achieving this goal.

Question: 5

How hard should I exercise?

Answer:

We can't tell you exactly how many kilos to lift or how steep a hill you should climb to reach a moderate or vigorous level of physical activity because what's easy for one person might be difficult for another. You should match your activity to your own needs and abilities. Start from where you are and build up from there. Listen to your body. During moderate activity, for instance, you can sense that you are pushing yourself, but that you aren't near your limit. As you become fitter, gradually make your activities more difficult. Generally, the more vigorous the activity and the more time you spend doing it, the more health benefits you will receive.

Question: 6

How long do I need to be active before I see results?

Answer:

Once you start being physically active, you'll begin to see results in just a few weeks. You may feel stronger and more energetic than before. You may notice that you can do things more easily, faster or for longer than before. As you become fitter, you may need to make your activities more challenging to see additional results.

Question: 7

Do I get enough physical activity in my regular day-to-day activities?

Answer:

(See page 4). One way to find out is to check your activity log. Did you list physical activities that get your body moving, such as gardening, walking the dog, raking leaves or climbing stairs? How about weight training or an aerobics class? There are many ways to be active every day. The key is to do all four of the major types of physical activity regularly and increase your level of effort over time.

Question: 8

I'm healthy now. Why do I need to be active?

Answer:

Research shows that physical activity can maintain and even improve your health. For example, physical activity can help you manage and even prevent diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and reduce falls.

Question: 9

I've been exercising for some time now. Why am I not seeing any more real improvements?

Answer:

As your body gets used to a level of physical activity, you'll need to vary your exercises or do more to see additional progress. If you are able, do your activities longer, further or harder. Do the activities more often or add new physical activities to your routine.

Question: 10

I'm 81 years old. Should I be exercising, and will it make a difference at my age?

Answer:

Yes, staying active is important throughout life. Regular physical activity can help you stay strong and fit enough to keep doing the things you enjoy. No matter what your age, you can find activities that meet your fitness level and needs.

Question: 11

Do I need to do other exercises in addition to my usual walking routine?

Answer:

Most people tend to focus on one type of physical activity and think they're doing enough. Try to do all four types — strength, flexibility, balance and endurance — because each one has different benefits. Doing one kind can also improve your ability to do the others. In addition, variety helps reduce boredom and the risk of injury.

Question: 12

Is it better to join a physical activity class or group or exercise on my own?

Answer:

There are many ways to be active. The key is to find activities you truly enjoy. If you prefer individual activities, try swimming, gardening or walking. Dancing or playing tennis may be for you if you enjoy two-person activities. If group activities appeal to you, try a sport, such as basketball, or join an exercise class. Some people find that going to a gym regularly or working with a fitness trainer helps them stay motivated.

Question: 13

If I'm overweight or obese, what kinds of physical activity can I do?

Answer:

You can do all the types of physical activity outlined in *Ageing with vitality: Your everyday guide to healthy active living*, including the four types of exercise shown in this guide. Try walking, water exercises, dancing or weight-lifting. Anything that gets you moving — even for only a few minutes a day in the beginning — is a healthy start. Very large people may face special challenges. For example, you may not be able to bend or move easily, or you may feel self-conscious. Facing these challenges is hard, but it can be done. Feel good about what you can do and pat yourself on the back for trying. It should get easier.

Question: 14

I don't do any kind of physical activity, but I watch my diet and I'm not overweight. Isn't that enough?

Answer:

Eating a nutritious diet and maintaining a healthy weight are only part of a healthy lifestyle. Regular physical activity is important to the physical and mental health of almost everyone, including older adults. Being physically active can help you stay strong and fit enough to keep doing the things you enjoy and to stay independent as you get older. Together, healthy habits, such as physical activity, a balanced diet and not smoking, will help you achieve the best of health.

Acknowledgment

The National Institute on Aging (USA) brought together some of the best-informed experts on the topic of physical activity for older adults to discuss the writing of the original versions of the guide and this workbook. Each expert is a major force in research devoted to improving the health and independence of older adults and their work is reflected throughout the guide and this workbook. We are grateful to them and to other leaders in the field for sharing their expertise and for kindly allowing us to produce this Queensland-based adaptation.

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For further information:

www.health.qld.gov.au/stayonyourfeet

