



Australian Government  
Department of Health

## AUSTRALIA'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES

# Fact Sheet: Adults (18-64 years)

## Introduction

Regular physical activity has important benefits for physical and mental health. It reduces the risk of many health problems, such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, anxiety, depression, musculoskeletal problems, some cancers and unhealthy weight gain. There is clear evidence that doing some physical activity is better than doing none at all, and that increasing amounts of physical activity provide even more health benefits.

These guidelines are for all adults aged 18-64 years. Although physical activity is generally safe for everyone, physical and mental abilities should be considered when interpreting the guidelines. Those who are unaccustomed to activity are advised to start gently (for example, by walking), without over-exertion, and to gradually build up towards reaching recommended levels. Consult a health professional if unsure.

In the context of these guidelines, physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by one or more large muscle groups, for movement as part of: leisure (including sports, exercise and recreational activities); transport (for example walking or cycling to get to or from places); and occupation (including paid and unpaid work like lifting, carrying or digging). These activities should be carried out at moderate to vigorous intensity. Moderate intensity activities require some effort, but conversation is possible. Examples include brisk walking, swimming, social tennis, dancing etc.

Vigorous activities make you breathe harder or puff and pant (depending on fitness). Examples include aerobics, jogging and many competitive sports.

Sedentary behaviour is associated with poorer health outcomes, including an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. However there is insufficient evidence to make a recommendation on the specific duration of sitting that is associated with these poor health outcomes. There is also emerging evidence to show that the negative effects of prolonged sitting may occur, even in those who meet the guidelines for moderate-vigorous physical activity.

**Make your move – Sit less – Be active for life!**





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### Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

#### *PHYSICAL ACTIVITY*

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

#### *SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR*

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

For more information visit: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

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