

Easy ways to get more action into your day

Not being active enough ranks just behind smoking as a major cause of ill health in Australia. And yet the answer is simple. All it takes is thirty minutes a day and a moderate physical activity routine for you to enjoy improved health and wellbeing.

You've got a lot to gain by becoming more active.

There's the sense of achievement for one thing. You'll have more energy, sleep better at night and reduce your stress levels. And when you feel better, you can enjoy life more and make the most of all sorts of social opportunities.

Here are a few simple tips for getting more action into your day. Choose a few that suit you.

- **See physical activity as an opportunity, not an inconvenience.** Your body was designed to move. So the more movement you do, the healthier you'll be and the better you'll feel.
- **Be active in as many ways as you can.** Every movement is an opportunity to improve your health and wellbeing.
- **Avoid elevator music.** Stairs provide a great natural workout, so go for leg power whenever you can. For example, take the lift some of the way and walk the rest.
- **Park further away.** You can look for the car park space closest to the door at shopping malls. Or you can find the furthest parking spot and walk the extra distance. If you are catching public transport, try getting off a stop or two earlier.
- **Walk the dog.** Rather than just letting the dog loose in your backyard, walk it morning and evening if you can.
- **Fetch the paper.** The walk to and from the newsagent each morning will get the day off to a great start.
- **Find 30 minutes every day.** Any increase in physical activity will benefit your health, but experts agree that adults should aim to build up at least 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity on most days.
- **Break it up.** If 30 minutes all at once seems like a tall order, start with five minutes at least three times a day then gradually build up the time and frequency until 30 minutes feels easier.
- **Just think.** Running is a great calorie burner, however if you prefer something different, other activities such as walking, swimming or playing squash will also burn calories.



- **Find strength in numbers.** Being active can be a family thing, social thing, or something you enjoy doing on your own. Being active with others may give you that extra boost you need to get up and get active!
- **Take up dancing.** Any period, any style. Join a ballroom dancing class, learn to tango, belly dance, tap or simply dance around the house to your favourite tunes.
- **Keep it interesting.** Go on bush walks and visit parks with friends or family. Take part or help organise community events in your area. Go for a picnic in the country or go fly a kite on the beach.
- **Keep busy round the house.** Homes and gardens are convenient places for getting more activity into your day. Make use of your "green gym" by mowing, digging and weeding. For indoor alternatives, put on a CD and get stuck into the chores.
- **Anyone for tennis?** Or maybe squash, golf, bocce or rowing? Group or team activities can make things more entertaining.
- **Get back in the saddle.** Go bike riding or maybe you'd like to really take the reins and go horseriding. (Either way, make sure you wear a helmet.)
- **Set yourself a goal.** Set realistic goals and write them down. Keep track of your progress. Doing this with a friend or family member helps you keep on track.
- **Slip, slop, slap.** Don't forget the sunscreen and wear a hat, especially in summer and even if it's cloudy.
- **Warm up as a first step.** To avoid injuries, include warm-up time at the beginning of your activity program. Start slowly and gradually pick up the pace.
- **Schedule an activity routine every weekend.** For example, plan a series of walks every Saturday or Sunday.
- **Be prepared.** Wear comfortable clothing that is loose fitting and light in weight. Shoes also should be comfortable with good cushioning. Make sure you drink water throughout your activity.
- **Cool down as a final step.** As you complete your program, cool down your muscles by slowing the pace before stopping. Don't forget to re-hydrate yourself after the session is complete.
- **Consult an expert.** If you are just starting your activity program, it's a good idea to first check with your doctor or health practitioner. Moderate activities such as walking usually pose little health risk.

If you'd like any more information, tips or advice on increasing physical activity throughout your day visit www.beactive.com.au