

# Exercise for 19–64 year olds

## How to get started

Regular exercise significantly reduces your risk of heart disease, cancer, stroke, hypertension, obesity, diabetes and osteoporosis. It helps you to carry out the activities of daily living, including chores, work and leisure time with family and friends, with vitality and energy.

Exercise that includes cardiovascular, strength, flexibility and balance exercises helps maintain and promote your sense of health and wellbeing, reduces stress, anxiety and depression, and helps you to maintain a healthy weight.

An inactive, sedentary lifestyle can increase your risk of potential health complications. An active lifestyle not only increases how long you live for but also the quality of your life, and can dramatically reduce your risks of certain diseases or potential health problems should you require medical treatment such as an operation.

**Take all medicines as recommended by your doctor or pharmacist.**

## Warm up and cool down

**Always start your exercise session with a 10–15-minute warm up to loosen up the muscles and raise the heart rate safely.** Warm-up exercises include simple stretches, range-of-motion activities and beginning the activity at a low intensity. They can be done standing up, walking around, marching on the spot or seated.

**Always end your exercise session with a 10–15-minute cool down to ensure your heart rate and breathing return to normal safely.** Cool-down exercises include simple stretches and slowly decreasing the intensity of your activity. You should feel relaxed but energised after exercise!

## The exercises!

### Cardiovascular/stamina exercises—get your heart rate up!

<b>How often:</b>	Aim for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, or 150 minutes a week in total. If you are new to exercise, start with 2–3 days a week and add additional sessions as your strength and stamina increase.
<b>How hard:</b>	Moderate to vigorous intensity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With moderate intensity, though you will feel warm, breathe faster and more deeply; while your heart rate increases, you should still be able to carry on a conversation.</li> <li>• With vigorous intensity, you should feel the same as with moderate intensity but having a conversation will be difficult.</li> </ul>
<b>How long:</b>	At least 150 minutes of moderate exercise spread across the week (e.g. 30 minutes $\times$ 5 days a week) or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise spread across the week (e.g. 15 minutes $\times$ 5 days a week).
<b>Type:</b>	Consider brisk walking, hiking, swimming, cycling, dancing, running, jogging, rowing, aqua aerobics or recreational sports such as basketball, football, baseball, cricket and athletics. Choose an activity you enjoy! You can also include mini-workouts throughout the day by choosing the stairs instead of the elevator, parking your car furthest away in the car park and walking to the shops, or simply reducing your sitting time.

## What will it do for me?

*Regular cardiovascular exercise will help you stay fit and healthy. It prevents and treats many long term health conditions, improves mobility, independent living and reduces the risk of disability. It also helps improve sleep quality and pattern, confidence, self esteem and cognitive abilities.*

### Strength exercises—use your muscles!

<b>How often:</b>	Twice a week.
<b>How hard:</b>	Use weights, gravity or work against resistance.
<b>How many:</b>	Choose 8–10 upper body and lower body exercises, and repeat each exercise 10–15 times. Aim for 1–3 sets of each exercise.
<b>Type:</b>	Consider weight or resistance training, or join a circuit class that uses weight equipment. At home, try squats, calf raises, wall push-ups, arm curls, front arm raises, side arm raise, chair stands and knee curls using weights or a household item such as a can. Household chores such as carrying shopping, mowing the lawn and gardening are also good strength-building exercises.

## What will it do for me?

*Strength exercises help to improve your ability to do the activities of daily living by improving your bone, muscle and joint health. They reduce your risk of falls and injury and help improve core strength, which in turn helps improve your balance and coordination skills.*

### Flexibility exercises—stretch!

<b>How often:</b>	Twice a week.
<b>How many:</b>	Try 8–10 stretch exercises using the upper and lower body.
<b>How long:</b>	Hold each stretch for 10–30 seconds.
<b>Type:</b>	Consider Tai Chi, yoga, Pilates, swimming or gentle home stretching exercises for the neck, shoulders, chest, arms, back, core, legs and ankles.

## What will it do for me?

*Regular stretch exercises are effective for reducing anxiety and enhancing relaxation and a sense of wellbeing. They also help promote and maintain bone, muscle and joint health.*

### Balance exercises—move with confidence

<b>How often:</b>	Twice a week. Start with one session per week if necessary, and gradually work towards two.
<b>How many:</b>	Choose 2–3 balance exercises and repeat each exercise 10–15 times.
<b>How long:</b>	Hold each balance for 10–30 seconds.
<b>Type:</b>	Consider yoga, Tai Chi or home balance exercises such as standing on one foot or a heel-to-toe walk. Always exercise safely when doing balance exercises. If you are at high risk of falling, do seated balance exercises or exercise using a sturdy chair or wall for support.

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## What will it do for me?

*Practising balance exercises helps to train your body to react more quickly to impending balance loss, thereby reducing the risk of falls, fractures and injuries. They also improve your posture.*

## Your exercise, your way!

Choose activities that are easy to start with and that you enjoy. If walking is difficult, cycling, swimming and chair-based exercises are also excellent choices. Exercise with friends and family or join a group class. Try exercising both indoors and outdoors and see which you prefer!

## Exercise safety

Start with shorter sessions (e.g. 10–15 minutes) and slowly build up to the recommended level.

Aim to get slightly out of breath, but exercise sensibly and stop the activity if you feel unwell.

Always wear comfortable clothing and shoes that give good support. Take frequent breaks if necessary, and drink water before, during and after exercise.

Ensure you exercise safely at all times and ask for assistance if you are unsure about any exercises.

SAMPLE CHAPTER ONLY