

Why is staying active important?

Regular physical activity and exercise is vital to help us maintain our overall health, independence and quality of life. More specifically, staying active can:

- **Improve physical health:** reduces our risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes and arthritis
- **Enhance mobility and balance:** lowers our risk of falls and injuries by maintaining strength, flexibility and co-ordination
- **Support mental health:** exercise boosts mood, lowers symptoms and feelings of anxiety and depression, and may delay cognitive decline
- **Promote social engagement:** group activities and classes provide opportunities to connect with others
- **Keep independence:** staying physically fit makes it easier for us to perform daily tasks and live independently for longer

Public health guidelines recommend all older people to be active every day.

Any movement is better than none!

We get extra benefits from activities that promote strength, fitness and flexibility. Choose an activity you enjoy. Start slowly and gradually build up. Similar recommendations apply to people of any age, including those with health conditions or walking problems.

Physiotherapists from around Australia developed the Safe Exercise at Home website and booklet to provide advice on exercises you can do at home. These physiotherapists are experts in exercise and physical activity for older people and people with health problems.

The website and booklet provides information on ways to stay active at three levels of function and fitness. If you are not sure which level best suits you, start at the easiest level (Level 1), and work your way up. There is also information about how hard you should work when exercising and tips to keep you motivated. Remember, if you need a assistance, a physiotherapist can help you decide how to start exercising safely.

Information provided on Safe Exercise at Home is not intended to replace individual health professional care. If you have any concerns or questions about what you can safely do, you should seek professional advice from your doctor, physiotherapist, or other health professional with expertise in exercise prescription.

Exercises are performed at your own risk.