

# 2 | GETTING ACTIVE

## WHY EXERCISE?

Staying physically healthy is important for everyone, but can be particularly hard if someone has a mental health problem.

Symptoms of some mental illnesses include lower energy, problems with motivation, loss of enjoyment in activities, and problems with sleep.

Some people can feel like their medication affects their energy levels too.

These symptoms can really get in the way of staying fit and healthy.

## SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER...

### OTHER MEDICAL CONDITIONS:

Be careful if you have another medical condition which may be affected by a new exercise i.e. Asthma. If you are concerned speak to your OYH doctor or GP before starting.

### BE PRACTICAL:

Plan your exercise around your budget and support systems.

Will you need a lift to a sports centre?

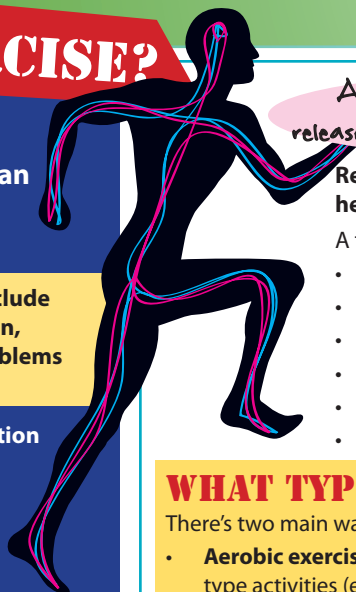
How much will it cost?

Ask your OYH doctor or case manager if there are any financial supports to help with exercise.

### BE BRAVE:

Starting a new sport/joining a new gym or trying exercise for the first time can be a little scary.

Why not talk with your friends, family or OYH case manager to get some ideas and encouragement to help.



Apart from maintaining a healthy body, exercise releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good.

Regular exercise can also boost your self-esteem and help you concentrate, sleep, feel and look better.

A few of the positive benefits of exercising could be:

- less tension, stress and mental fatigue
- a natural energy boost
- improved sleep/sleep patterns
- a sense of achievement
- less anger or frustration
- meeting other people



## WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE SUITS ME?

There's two main ways that your body burns energy when you exercise.

- **Aerobic exercise** happens when your body uses oxygen for endurance type activities (e.g. 'cardio' exercises like jogging) and **anaerobic exercise** happens when your body switches to burning fuel without oxygen for intense speed or strength activities (like sprinting or weight lifting).
- Aerobic exercise can reduce your body fat levels, and anaerobic exercise can increase the lean muscle to fat body mass ratio.
- **A balanced combination of both types of exercise is best for keeping fit, strong and at a healthy weight.**

Aerobic exercises	Anaerobic exercises
Jogging	Weight lifting
Swimming	Push-ups
Cycling	Sprinting

Aerobic exercise: endurance	Anaerobic exercise: speed/strength
Moderate intensity	High intensity
Long duration	Short duration
Involves many muscle groups	Often involves few selected muscle groups
Increases cardiovascular fitness	Builds muscle
Leads to overall weight loss	Increases body strength
Requires a moderate intensity to induce fat loss	Reduces fat

## HOW TO GET EXERCISING

Start small. Some activity is better than none.

Walk or ride to the store instead of driving.



Choose something you'll enjoy (or at least something you won't hate!)

Don't go to the gym if you've never liked the gym. Go for a walk, ride a bike to a friends place or throw a frisbee/ play footy at the park with some mates.

Choose a time of the day/week that works for you.

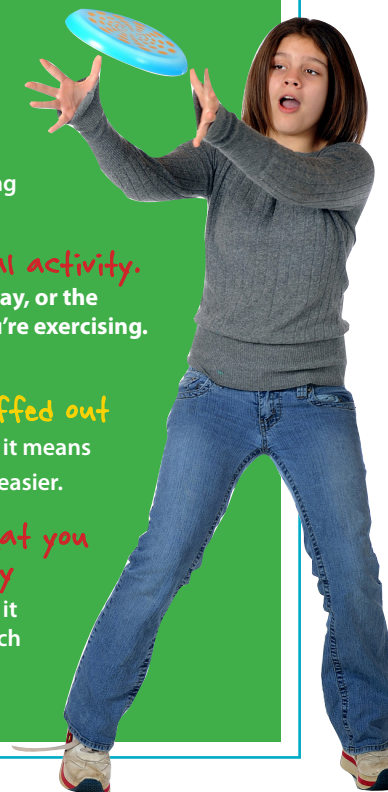
Everybody is different and is motivated at different times, morning, arvo or evening. Just be cautious about evening exercise as you may have problems getting to sleep.

Gradually build up physical activity.

Increase the amount of time in a day, or the number of days in a week that you're exercising. Aim for 30 -60 minutes a day.

Getting warm or a bit puffed out doesn't feel that great but it means you're working hard and it will get easier.

Remember if you smoke that you may feel puffed out pretty quickly. It's important to keep at it and you will be amazed at how much longer you can go without feeling puffed out in only a few weeks.



## 2 | GETTING ACTIVE continued

Don't forget different foods contain different amounts of energy.

It will take about 40 minutes jogging or 2 hours walking to burn off a 100g pack of corn chips or potato crisps, but a whole lot less for a banana!

So if you've had some chocolate cake or chips, enjoy it, then balance it out by eating healthily for the rest of the day or tomorrow.

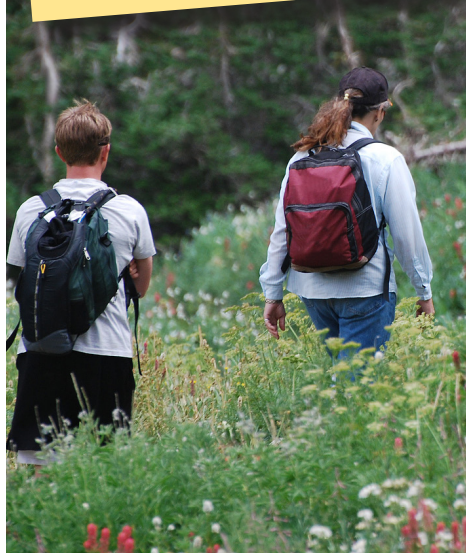


"I take the dog for a walk when I'm bored instead of going to the fridge, within a few weeks I felt heaps better and the dog thinks I'm the greatest!"

If you haven't got a dog borrow one - the dog's owner will think you're the greatest too!

"I can't find much time to exercise and don't want to get sweaty on the way to work/school/visit someone, so I walk part of the way home instead of getting the tram/train/a lift."

### Ways to help STICK WITH IT



- **Don't fly solo.** Find a friend, family member or local group you can exercise with. It makes it more fun, but also helps you to keep up momentum if you know that you have this commitment to others, and the built-in cheer squad. Let them know what you're working towards and let them help you stay motivated.
- **Set achievable goals.** For someone who hasn't been exercising at all, exercising once a week for 20 minutes might be a good start. If you find yourself feeling like 20 minutes is even too much, then just try to get out the door, and give it a go - once you're out you might just feel like going further.
- **Hang in there!** If you miss a day or a week, don't give up, try to push yourself to get going again.
- **Notice your progress.** For walking or jogging, time yourself and notice your improvements.
- **Try something new.** If what you've been doing has got boring, get some coaching, get a friend involved, or try something completely different.
- **Find something flexible,** that you can do when you feel like it. Try a Zumba or dance DVD, go skating or blading, throw a few hoops, a kick in the park or even a hike with a friend.
- **What about technology?** Try a bit of Wii tennis or SingStar dancing.

### NO EXCUSES....

#### Top five reasons given **NOT TO** EXERCISE

1. too hot/cold/windy/rainy
2. can't be away from my facebook
3. my shorts are dirty
4. too busy/tired
5. I will do it tomorrow

#### Top five reasons given **TO** EXERCISE

1. better mood/ more energy
2. less stress
3. better sleep
4. more confidence/looking good
5. meet new friends



## \$\$\$ MONEY MATTERS

Exercise doesn't need to cost a lot of money



ditch  
the lift

and use the stairs  
for less than 4 floors

- park at the far end of the supermarket
- leave the car at home for short journeys
- time your daily walks to and from the train station, can you go faster?
- put on some music for a 10 minute dance

**get skipping:** jumping rope is cheap and a quick way to get some good exercise



apply some real  
elbow grease when  
cleaning the car/  
house, crank up  
the stereo and  
have fun!

## Websites & Resources

There are some great clubs, classes and groups out there just waiting for you to sign up and get involved. Try [www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au) or try your local council, community centre, TAFE or uni.

- If you've got a phone with apps or mp3 player or access to youtube, have a search for videos, apps or podcasts which can help you with exercise ideas.
- You can find apps or sites that can record how far you've walked, help plan a run, show you yoga or pilates or abs workouts, or play an exercise music mix- what ever you're interested in.
- You might want to have a look at couch-to-5K ([www.c25k.com](http://www.c25k.com)) for help with taking up running and [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au) for more information.