



Government  
of South Australia

# be active.

## Teenagers | Physical Activity

### Ways to keep up with others in your class.

*From when you're 12 to the time you're 18 you probably go through more changes than you do during the rest of your life.*

You go from primary school to high school. Then there are Years 11 and 12, the exams, the increased workload at school and the larger social activity after school. There's sport and all the other physical activity you do, even if it's only running for the bus. And throughout these years there are the friendships, relationships and all the ups and downs.

Most teenagers find that they get less active as they get a bit older. Think about all those games you used to play when you were a kid. Without those, you're probably not as active as you used to be. And school gets harder too, leaving even less time to get out and do things. Inactivity really kicks in once we hit the teenage years and it usually affects more girls than guys.

The solution, of course, is activity and it doesn't need to be strenuous. A daily walk is enough to make a healthy difference. The benefits of keeping active when you are a teenager are huge. It helps you relax and sleep better by relieving stress and tension. It builds up stamina and improves concentration. And socially, it's the perfect way to make new friends or keep in touch with old ones.

Here are lots of ways to get more staying power in your day.

- **Get more play into your day.**  
There are loads of ways to get active and have fun too. Go skateboarding, fly a kite, throw a frisbee or kick a ball around with your mates. Walk the dog, shoot some hoops or play footy with friends. Dive on in or dance around.
- **Get organised.**  
Play football, basketball, netball, tennis, hockey, soccer or any other group sport. You could also enrol in dancing, go rollerblading, bowling or join a swim team.
- **Enjoy Phys. Ed.**  
PE is a fun way to learn new games and sports, and it allows us to develop and practice skills like throwing, catching and hopping.
- **Warm-up first.**  
Start your program slowly every time and gradually pick up the pace. Do some stretches before a run or strenuous activity.
- **Cool down last.**  
As you complete your activity session cool down your muscles by slowing the pace of your activity before stopping.

# Take every opportunity to **be active.**

- **Prevent injuries.**  
Make sure you always wear the right protective gear for the activities you choose such as helmets, kneepads and mouthguards.
- **Work out a plan.**  
Figure out the best time to squeeze in your chosen activities, either before or after school or work. Don't waste your weekends or holidays vegging out in front of the TV.
- **Take a study break.**  
Study is important. But even if it's your absolute number one priority, try to work your activity program around it.
- **Cut down screen time.**  
Count how many hours you spend in front of the telly and try to cut that number down. The same goes for the computer. Surfing the net and sending emails can be totally absorbing, but limit the time you spend staring at the screen.
- **Get serious.**  
Try to include some vigorous 'huff and puff' stuff a few times a week and make it last for 15 minutes or more each time.
- **Lighten up.**  
If spending hours jogging or swimming laps isn't your thing to do, try something as easy as dancing around your bedroom to your favourite CD.
- **Break out.**  
If you fancy a bit of a challenge or something different, take up rock climbing, water polo, volleyball, fencing, discus, javelin or archery. Ask your PE teacher or contact your local community centre about getting started.
- **Miss the bus.**  
Walk to school, ride a bike, rollerblade or jog to the shops. Get off the tram or bus a few stops early and walk the rest of the way.
- **Get involved locally.**  
Look for social involvement such as joining sporting clubs or taking part in community or school events.
- **Keep motivated.**  
Involve other people - friends, family, work mates and neighbours - to help maintain interest in your physical activities.
- **Get some coaching.**  
If you show promise in a particular sport or you want to improve your skills, think about getting a coach, trainer or mentor. Don't be shy; ask your PE teacher or contact your local community centre.
- **Stay focused.**  
Sometimes other commitments get in the way of your activity plans. Don't get put off because of a missed activity, just pick up from where you left off.
- **Slip, slop, slap.**  
Even on cooler days, make sure you're protected against UV rays.
- **Drink plenty of water.**  
Drink water before, during and after each activity.
- **Tell someone who cares.**  
If an activity takes you away from home, always tell someone where you're going and how long you will be gone.

*If you'd like any more information, tips or advice on increasing physical activity throughout your day visit [www.beactive.com.au](http://www.beactive.com.au)*



Information in this Fact Sheet kindly supplied courtesy of the Government of Victoria.