

Ways to increase your staying power

Most young people find that as they get older they become less active than when they were kids. Think about all those games that little kids play. Without those, you're probably not as active as you could be. And school, uni, TAFE and work pressures tend to get harder, leaving even less time to get out and do things. Inactivity really kicks in once we hit early adulthood, but it doesn't need to.

The solution, of course, is to build some activity into every day, and it doesn't need to be too strenuous. A brisk walk is enough to make a difference. The benefits of moderate activity during young adulthood are huge.

It helps you to 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.

- **Take it outside.** Ride a bike, go for a run, fly a kite, throw a frisbee or kick a ball around with your friends or walk the dog.
- **Miss the bus.** Walk to work or uni, ride a bike or jog to the shops. Or get off the tram or bus a few stops early and walk the rest of the way.
- **Go and play.** Play football, basketball, netball, tennis, hockey, soccer or any other group sport. Or take up dancing, go rollerblading, bowling or go for a swim.
- **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.
- **Start slowly.** You don't have to spend hours pumping the weights at the gym or jogging up and down the local park to do it. Getting active is as easy as dancing around, or getting off the bus stop early and walking the rest of the way.
- **Build up your activity over time.** 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.
- **Cut down screen time.** Count how many hours you spend in front of the telly and try to cut down. The same goes for the computer. Surfing the net, sending emails or watching TV can be totally absorbing, but you shouldn't spend more than 2 hours a day in front of the screen.
- **Exercise your social skills.** Swap screen time and long phone chats for a power walk with friends and catch up on the gossip face to face.
- **Make your social outing active.** Go for a BBQ at a national park and enjoy a hit of tennis or walk around the park. Why not try night bowls?



- **Get involved locally.** Look for social involvement such as joining sporting clubs or taking part in community events.
- **Ditch the car.** Take public transport one way and walk back. Find different ways of getting places, like rollerblading, skateboarding or bike riding.
- **Challenge yourself.** Try something different. Take up water polo, volleyball, fencing, tai chi or yoga.
- **Avoid elevator music.** Stairs provide a great natural workout, so go for leg power whenever you can.
- **Keep it interesting.** Go on bush walks and visit parks with friends or family. Take part or help organise community events in your area.
- **Anyone for tennis?** Or maybe squash, golf, bocce or rowing? Group or team activities can make things more entertaining.
- **Work out a plan.** What's the best use you can make of the time available before or after work, or uni, or during breaks? You'll be surprised what you can squeeze in. It can help if you draw up a plan.
- **Get some coaching.** If you are interested in a particular sport and want to improve your skills, think about getting a coach, trainer or mentor. Maybe you could try golf lessons, personal training at the gym or swimming lessons.
- **Keep motivated.** Involve other people - friends, family, work mates and neighbours to help maintain interest.
- **Stay focused.** Sometimes other commitments will 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.
- **Schedule an activity routine every weekend.** For example, plan a series of walks every Saturday or Sunday.
- **Prevent injuries.** You can't afford to miss work or study time because of your activity program. Make sure you always wear the right protective gear for the activities you choose such as helmets, knee-pads and mouth-guards.
- **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.
- **Be comfortable.** Wear clothing that is loose fitting and light in weight. Shoes should also be comfortable with good cushioning.
- **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 for how long.

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