

# Article: Mental Health

## Content notes:

The following blog has been prepared by TAL. It is available to use in white-label format for communications and is designed to provide information on positive ways to improve mental wellbeing.

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<b>AUDIENCE</b>	Australians of all ages seeking ways to improve mental health through lifestyle changes.
<b>COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES</b>	White label content: Highlight the strong link between physical activity and mental wellbeing across all life stages.
<b>MESSAGE</b>	Moving your body supports your mind. Exercise helps manage stress, boost mood, and improve resilience.
<b>INSIGHTS</b>	Only 43% of adults meet activity guidelines, yet movement can reduce depression risk by up to 30%.
<b>ASSOCIATED ASSET/S</b>	TAL Health Connector
<b>CTA</b>	Take the first step. Connect with support through TAL's Health Connector or join a free community fitness class.

## How staying active can improve your mental health

Most people know that physical activity benefits our heart, muscles and waistline. But not everyone understands just how important it is for the brain, especially when it comes to managing stress, anxiety and low mood.

In Australia, around half of all adults will deal with a mental health condition at some point in their lives, with anxiety and depression among the most common.<sup>1</sup> The good news is that regular physical activity is one of the most effective early actions you can take to protect your mental wellbeing, and it's something you can start today.

TAL, our life insurance partner, works with trusted health organisations like the [Heart Foundation](#) and [Beyond Blue](#) to support Australians in building healthier lives. Through [TAL's Health Connector](#), tools and services can be accessed that make it easier to take early, proactive steps, including support for mental health and physical activity.

### The effects of physical activity

When you exercise, your body releases endorphins: chemicals that help reduce pain and create positive feelings. These 'feelgood' hormones can create a short-term boost in mood and help reduce feelings of stress. At the same time, movement helps regulate serotonin and dopamine (the two key neurotransmitters that affect mood, motivation and emotional balance).

Physical activity also plays a role in lowering cortisol: the stress hormone. High cortisol levels over a long period of time can lead to anxiety, sleep problems and fatigue. Exercise helps bring these levels down, helping the body recover from

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National study of mental health and wellbeing*, 2022.

daily pressures. It also boosts blood flow to the brain, improving cognitive function and memory. As a result, it makes it easier to manage everyday challenges with a clearer, more focused mindset.

## Why moving matters

The mental health benefits of movement are not just theoretical. An Australian study found that people who get enough regular exercise are 26% less likely to experience depression.<sup>2</sup> Yet, only 43% of Australian adults do the recommended 150 minutes of moderate activity each week.<sup>3</sup> For people who are at risk, like those with a family history of mental illness or ongoing stress, regular movement can be key for early prevention.

Physical activity also supports sleep quality, which is important for good mental health, as it helps regulate mood, reduce stress, and improve overall emotional resilience.

No matter your age or fitness level, it's never too late to start moving. [[LINK TO: \*Staying active for mental health at any age\* ARTICLE](#)] Children and teens benefit from movement through emotional regulation and better concentration. Adults can use it to manage work-related stress and life transitions. Regular activity helps older adults stay mentally sharp, stay socially connected, and lower their risk of developing dementia.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, or unsure where to begin, speak to your GP or find support through the [TAL Health Connector](#). If you're ready to start moving for your mental health, programs like [Live Life Get Active](#) offer free outdoor fitness classes across Australia, making it easier to take that first step.

DISCLAIMER [please add to your post]

(Insert disclaimer)

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<sup>2</sup> Wanjau, M. N. et al. *Physical activity and depression and anxiety disorders in Australia: a lifetable analysis*. (2022).

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). *Physical activity across the life stages*. (2023).