

Article: Mental Health

Content notes:

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AUDIENCE	Australians looking for practical ways to support their mental wellbeing through physical activity and healthy lifestyle habits.
COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES	White label content: Encourage individuals to view physical activity as an accessible and effective way to support mental wellbeing, manage stress and build resilience.
MESSAGE	Regular physical activity can support mental wellbeing, improve resilience, reduce stress and help people feel more connected, energised and capable.
INSIGHTS	An Australian study found that people who get enough regular exercise are 26% less likely to experience depression, yet only 43% of Australian adults meet the recommended physical activity guidelines.
ASSOCIATED ASSET/S	TAL Health Connector, Headlight, Live Life Get Active, wellbeing resources and community-based physical activity programs.
CTA	Explore the wellbeing support services, including TAL's Health Connector and other wellbeing tools and resources that may be available to you. IMPORTANT: If you'd like to feature Headlight during Mental Health Month, please ensure that you use your existing unique URL. If you don't have one currently, please contact your TAL Partnership Manager to obtain a unique URL. We'll only be able to provide access reporting where a unique URL is used.

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.¹ Regular physical activity is one of the most effective lifestyle habits that can support mental wellbeing, and it's something many people can start incorporating into their daily routine.

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

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. *National study of mental health and wellbeing*. 2022.

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).²

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 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

Research continues to show a strong connection between physical activity and mental wellbeing. An Australian study found that people who get enough regular exercise are 26% less likely to experience depression.³ Yet, only 43% of Australian adults do the recommended 150 minutes of moderate activity each week.⁴ 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 can help older adults maintain independence, support cognitive health and stay socially connected.

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.

Need support? Where to find help

If you're finding things tough, know that support is available. [TAL's Health Connector](#) links you to a wide range of free and low-cost government and community services that may be able to provide the support you need.

Depending on the wellbeing services available through [\[insert super fund/employer/ Health Hub/Headlight\]](#), you may also have access to mental health screening tools, personalised wellbeing resources and recommendations designed to help you better understand and manage your mental wellbeing.

These resources can help you identify areas where additional support may be beneficial and connect you with information and services tailored to your needs.

DISCLAIMER [please add to your post]

(Insert disclaimer)

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² Mayo Clinic. *Exercise and stress: Get moving to manage stress*. 2025.

³ Wanjau, M. N. et al. *Physical activity and depression and anxiety disorders in Australia: a lifetable analysis*. 2022.

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). *Physical activity across the life stages*. 2023.