

Article: Mental Health

Content notes:

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AUDIENCE	Australians across life stages, from parents of young children to older adults who are looking for practical ways to support their mental wellbeing through physical activity.
COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES	White label content: Encourage individuals to view physical activity as a simple, accessible way to support mental wellbeing at every stage of life. Reinforce that movement doesn't need to be intense or time-consuming to be beneficial.
MESSAGE	Regular physical activity can support mental wellbeing, improve overall health and help people stay connected, independent and resilient, regardless of age or fitness level.
INSIGHTS	Many Australians are not achieving the recommended levels of physical activity, despite regular movement being an important part of overall health and wellbeing. Physical activity can support mental wellbeing across all stages of life, from childhood through to older age.
ASSOCIATED ASSET/S	TAL Health Connector, Headlight (where available), wellbeing resources and physical activity support services.
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.
LAST UPDATED	July 2026

Staying active for mental health at any age

You've probably heard that being active is good for your mental health. The amount and type of physical activity that's right for you may vary depending on your age, lifestyle and overall health. No matter where you're at in life, moving your body can make a positive difference to your physical and mental wellbeing.

Why physical activity matters

Research shows that more than half of adults and 7 out of 10 children are not getting enough physical activity for good health.¹ And the effects can add up, increasing the risk of mental health conditions.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Physical activity across the life stages*, 2023.

It's never too early or too late to start moving more. No matter your age, regular physical activity can help support your physical health, mental wellbeing and overall quality of life. Here's what that can look like across the ages.

FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS (5–17 YEARS)

Movement is essential for healthy growth and development. At least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise each day is recommended, which should include activities that strengthen muscles and bones, like running, climbing or sports.²

Regular physical activity can help build confidence, improve concentration and support emotional wellbeing.

FOR ADULTS (18–64 YEARS)

A busy work schedule or family duties can make it hard to stay active. But just 2.5 to 5 hours of moderate exercise each week (like brisk walking or cycling) can provide health and mental wellbeing benefits.³

Include muscle-strengthening activities, such as lifting weights or yoga, at least two days a week. Aerobic and resistance exercises are linked with significant reductions in depressive symptoms.⁴

FOR OLDER ADULTS (65+ YEARS)

As we age, staying active helps maintain independence, balance and cognitive function. Older adults should aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days. This includes exercises that strengthen muscles, improve balance and enhance flexibility.⁵

Gentle activities such as tai chi, walking or gardening can help you stay active while supporting mental wellbeing, balance and social connection. Doing these activities as part of a group can also help you stay connected with others.⁵

SUPPORT TO GET STARTED

It's okay if you're not where you want to be right now. Everyone starts somewhere, and doing some physical activity is better than doing none. If you have a health condition, it's worth speaking to your GP before starting a new activity.

TAL's Health Connector can also help by connecting you to free or low-cost government and community services to support your health goals.

Want more tips on getting active safely? Visit health.gov.au or talk to your healthcare professional.

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)

Important Information

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² Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, *Physical activity and exercise guidelines*, 2021.

³ Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, *Physical activity and exercise guidelines*, 2021.

⁴ Black Dog Institute, *Lifestyle*, 2025.

⁵ World Health Organisation, *WHO guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour*, 2020.

