



# Move for your Mental Health

Regular physical activity is a powerful tool for promoting overall wellbeing!

## Mental Health Benefits of Physical Activity

The more time you put in, the more benefits you get!

### SHORT-TERM



Improved mood



More focus & creativity



Stress Relief



Boost in energy levels

### LONG-TERM



Better overall brain health



Lower risk of cognitive decline



Boosted self-esteem



Better sleep quality

So use physical activity to switch off from worries or stress, and not only to feel stronger and more physically fit!

## Mental Health Conditions and Exercise

There is evidence that exercise can play a key role in managing various mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, and stress.

(Exercise should be part of a comprehensive treatment plan and you should speak to your healthcare provider for personalised guidance).



# Types of Physical Activity

There are different types of physical activity, and spending time on each one contributes to mental health in unique ways!



## Aerobic Exercise

These improve your heart and lung health. When you do these activities, your body releases chemicals called endorphins that make you feel good, boost your mood, and reduce stress.

**(Includes walking, jogging, swimming, cycling, and anything that gets your heart to beat faster)**



## Strength Training

These help you build muscle strength and also improve the overall shape and composition of your body. When you see improvements in your body, it can boost your confidence.

**(Includes using weights or your own body weight)**



## Flexibility Exercises

These improve your flexibility and range of motion, and they also help you become more relaxed and aware of your body.

**(Includes yoga, stretching, pilates)**

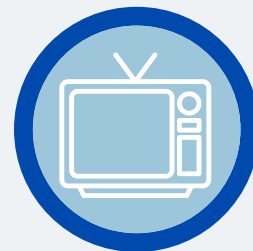
Meanwhile, it is wise to reduce the amount of time you spend on activities like:



**Computer**



**Sofa**



**TV**



# How active do I have to be?

These amounts of physical activity make up a small percentage of your day or week, but have the power to transform your overall wellbeing!

Age	Types of Physical Activity	Duration	Example
Infants (< 1 year)	Active play, such as crawling, rolling and kicking	Throughout the day, including at least 30 minutes of tummy time	Playing on the floor with toys, going for walks in the stroller, or being bounced on a yoga ball
Toddlers (1-2 years)	Active play, such as running, jumping and climbing	180 minutes of moderate-to-high intensity physical activity per day	Playing at the park, going for walks, or dancing.
Pre-schoolers (3-4 years)	Active play, such as running, jumping, and climbing	180 minutes per day with at least 60 minutes moderate-to-high intensity	Playing at the playground, going for bike rides, or swimming
Children and Youths (5-17 years)	Moderate- to high-intensity aerobic activity	60 minutes or more per day	Playing sports, dancing, or biking to school
Adults (18-64 years)	Moderate- to high-intensity aerobic activity	150 - 300 minutes of moderate intensity <b>OR</b> 75-150 minutes of high intensity per week	Playing sports, dancing, or going for long walks
Older Adults (65 years and over)	Moderate- to high-intensity aerobic activity	Same as for adults + include balance exercises	Walking, swimming, or dancing

Do not worry if you need to start off easy - some physical activity is better than none! Just do something you enjoy, so that you're more likely to keep doing it! Once you're able, try to increase the amount or duration.



# Tips for Adding More Movement to your Day

Remember: some is good, more is better!



## Start slow, then grow

Start with simple activities and gradually increase the intensity and duration of your work-outs. If you do not exercise, you might want to consult with your doctor before starting.



## Find activities you enjoy

Discover physical activities that bring you joy, and you'll be more likely to stick to them! Whether it's dancing, hiking, playing a sport, or joining group fitness classes, there will be something for you.



## Set realistic goals

Setting specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals, tracking them, and celebrating small victories will keep you motivated.



## Use your daily routine

Get creative and see how you can get more movement into your day. Take the stairs instead of the lift, change up your commute to work, or do small exercises at your work desk to break up long periods of sitting.



## Make it a social experience

Exercise with friends, join sports clubs or fitness classes. The social aspect makes it fun and increases your motivation, but also increases accountability and a sense of community!

## Bonus tip: What's on your exercise menu?

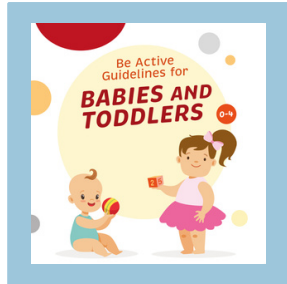
We don't always have the same energy levels, and that's alright. Choose a few 'starter' exercises that you can perform every day like stretching, yoga, swimming, or walking.

When you have the energy, engage in your 'mains' exercises, which are higher-intensity exercises.



## Our Resources

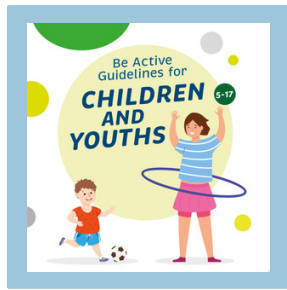
We have plenty of resources to help you on your movement journey! Feel free to browse our website, or have a look at the links below



### Be Active Guidelines for Babies and Toddlers

[Click here](#) for English Version

[Click here](#) for Maltese Version



### Be Active Guidelines for Children and Youths

[Click here](#) for English Version

[Click here](#) for Maltese Version



### Be Active Guidelines for ages 18-65

[Click here](#) for English Version

[Click here](#) for Maltese Version



### Be Active Guidelines for ages 65+

[Click here](#) for English Version

[Click here](#) for Maltese Version

Make the most of our islands by having a look at our online interactive map! [Click here!](#)