

FACTSHEET

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How to get the kids to be more active

- Australian children are less active than ever before. This is due to many factors including the increasing use of technology (television, DVD, computers, hand-held computer games) and less every day activity such as walking to school
- Adults are also less active. There is a general trend for everyone to drive more and walk less
- It is recommended that children do at least 60 minutes (yes, an hour!) of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day in order to keep them fit and healthy. This means that they are “huffing and puffing”. Start by increasing physical activity by thirty minutes each day and work your way up to 60 minutes
- The more activity you can squeeze into your everyday life the better. Extra “incidental activity” such as walking to and from school, doing household chores and walking up stairs is also encouraged
- One of the main things that affect how much physical activity a child is doing is the amount of television they are watching. The more TV, the less activity a child does
- Think about “screen time” as well as TV time. This includes television, videos, DVDs, computers, computer games such as PlayStation and hand held devices such as phones. Studies show that the more screen time children have, then the higher weight they are
- Try to keep “screen time” to **under 2 hours per day**
- Active parents mean active kids. At first, your children will need you to encourage them in physical activities. Doing things together starts healthy habits. Ask your kids what physical activities they would like to do and set a goal for how many times you could do it in a week (see below for ideas on what to do as a family). You’ll enjoy spending time together, you’ll feel healthier and your mood will improve!

Ideas on ways to be more physically active

- Physical activity options that help to improve a child’s health and fitness include: running, chasing, playing outdoors, scooting, skateboarding, bike riding and structured sports such as soccer, footy, swimming and netball
- Encourage time outdoors each day for play
- Develop active parking habits. For example, park further away from your destination, always take the stairs, not the lift
- Walk to school
- Walk to the local shops for the paper
- Don’t use remote controls
- Get a pedometer and aim for 10 000 steps each day
- Offer pocket money for active jobs like walking the dog, washing the car

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- Use stairs instead of lifts
 - Set goals to encourage activity
 - Make exercise fun (map games, twister, hide and seek)
 - Set aside time in the day to be active
 - Parents and carers and brothers and sisters should be good role models. Plan time on the weekends for all the family to be active together
 - Put up a basketball or netball hoop
 - Purchase inexpensive play equipment such as ball on a rope and badminton or a skipping rope
 - Organise activities around the house e.g. a ball in the backyard
 - Have the children walk the dog together, every day
 - Have a family sporting team to support and go out to watch games on the weekends
 - Make the most of day light saving time and go for a regular family walk after dinner
 - For other ideas on ways children can increase their activity levels, contact the Department of Sport and Recreation on www.dsr.nsw.gov.au There are a number of school holiday programs and after school programs that are run to help get children in Australia active

Remember

- Australian children need to be more physically active for good health.
- It is recommended that children be physically active (huffing and puffing) for at least an hour each day.
- Limit your child's screen time (TV, video, DVD, computer) to less than 2 hours each day.
- Active children come from active families. Support your family in becoming more physically active by encouraging active family activities such as regular walks, trips to the park, bike riding and family games