

## *Move more*

You don't need to be a gym junkie or weekend warrior to benefit from regular physical activity. The key is to find the activities you really love doing, mix it up to prevent boredom and include plenty of incidental activity like opting to take the stairs or doing active chores. Let's take a closer look at all the benefits of exercise and just how much you should be doing.

## *Keep a healthy weight*

Whether you lose weight or gain weight is a matter of energy balance. The energy (kilojoules) from our food intake is balanced against the energy (kilojoules) expended by our body for normal daily body functioning plus extra physical activity. When the body is in perfect energy balance, the energy consumed from food is equal to the energy expended, body weight remains stable.

When we consume more energy than we require our body is in positive energy balance and we gain weight. Conversely when we consume less energy than we require our body is in negative energy balance and we lose weight. As well as watching your food intake, regular physical activity is vital to keep a healthy weight. Physical activity burns kilojoules but also builds lean muscle which boosts your metabolism.

## *So many more benefits...*

There are so many more benefits of regular activity than just staying slim. Exercise can:

- Boost your energy levels
- Strengthen bones
- Reduce stress and improve mood
- Maintain flexibility
- Improve posture
- Enhance skills and self esteem

## *The power of three*

The key is to mix up your workouts so that you benefit from all three types of activity:

- Cardio or huff and puff activity like brisk walking, swimming or cycling is great for the heart and lungs and reduces your risk of lifestyle diseases.
- Resistance or strength training with light weights builds strong bones and lean muscle which boosts metabolism
- Flexibility like stretching exercises, tai chi, Pilates and yoga keeps muscles and joints in your body supple

### **So how much exercise should I be doing?**

The National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians give the minimum levels of physical activity required for good health. The four steps to good health are:

- Think of movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience. Any form of movement is an opportunity to improve your health.
- Be active every day in as many ways as you can. Make a habit of walking or cycling instead of using the car.
- Do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days. Moderate intensity activity includes a brisk walk or cycling. Combine short sessions of different activities of around 10 to 15 minutes each to a total of 30 minutes or more.
- If you can, try some regular, vigorous exercise for extra health and fitness benefits. Vigorous exercise makes you 'huff and puff'.

## *What about kids?*

The Government's Physical Activity recommendations for children and young people are that:

- Children and young people should participate in at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity every day.
- Children and young people should not spend more than 2 hours a day using electronic media for entertainment (e.g. computer games, Internet, TV), particularly during daylight hours.