



Why Walk to Work?

Walking to work is a great way to start the day!

Did you know that people who walk before and after work are generally healthier, more creative, more productive, and are less stressed? It's true, but not only is walking to and from work good for you; it's great for the environment too! Walking doesn't require any equipment, and it can actually save you money. Walking is a great form of physical activity as most people are able to do it regardless of how fit they are.

Importance of being active

Physical activity is important for good health and well being. Physical activity can help to prevent a range of health problems, including heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. Being active improves mental well being and helps people feel better and sleep well. Together with a healthy diet, physical activity is important in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Whether you want to maintain a healthy weight, or to lose a few kilos; walking is right for you!

Is there a link between physical activity and cancer?

Research shows the benefits of physical activity in reducing cancer risk.

- There is convincing evidence that physical activity protects against bowel cancer
- Being physically active probably reduces the risk of cancer of the endometrium (lining of the womb) and breast (in post-menopausal women)
- There is limited but suggestive evidence that physical activity may reduce the risk of lung, pancreatic and ovarian cancers.

How much physical activity should we do?

For cancer prevention, the evidence suggests that 30-60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity may be most beneficial. People should try and work up to doing 30 minutes or more of vigorous activity (such as aerobics, jogging or fast cycling) OR 60 minutes or more of moderate activity (such as brisk walking or medium-paced swimming) every day. For people who are inactive, any increase in physical activity is beneficial.

Cancer Council encourages people to increase the amount of incidental activity they do, such as walking to work or the shops, as this can help increase the total amount of energy burnt and help maintain a healthy weight.

The Australian Government 'Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults' has four simple steps to get your heart pumping.

Step 1: Think of movement as an opportunity not an inconvenience. Where any form of movement of the body is seen as an opportunity for improving health, not as a time wasting inconvenience. Walking to work, or even part of the way, should be seen as a mode of transport.

Step 2. Be active everyday in as many ways as you can. Make a habit of walking or cycling instead of using the car, or do things yourself instead of using labour saving machines e.g. hang the washing out on the line, rather than using the dryer.

Step 3: Put together at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days. You can accumulate your 30 minutes (or more) throughout the day by combining a few shorter sessions of activity of around 10-15 minutes each. 15 minute power walks to and from work makes up your 30 minutes; just make sure you get your heart rate up!

Step 4: If you can, also enjoy some regular, vigorous activity for extra health and fitness. This guideline does not replace Guidelines 1-3. Rather, an extra level for those who are able, and wish, to achieve greater health and fitness benefits. Go for a bike ride on the weekend with your friends / family down to the park or make some time to kick a ball around with the kids.

Need some tips for keeping active at work?

Modern workplaces are becoming more reliant on technology to make our jobs easier, giving us more time to devote to other workplace jobs. It is clear that we are undertaking less physical labour when compared to what we should be doing.

Studies have shown that sitting at your desk all day can have serious health consequences. Here are some handy tips to increase your activity levels, get your blood circulating and also make you a more productive worker.

- Get up from your desk every hour, go to the bathroom, get a drink of water, pick up your printing, etc
- Do some quick stretches at your desk to help keep you comfortable, but also to get the blood circulating
- Have lunch away from your desk; go for a lunch walk with colleagues, or walk to the local park for a nice picnic lunch
- Stand at the back of a meeting rather than taking a seat
- Rather than emailing or calling, get up and walk to speak to your colleague
- Try a standing or walking meeting
- Include movement where ever you can!



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More information

- Swap it, Don't Stop it: Government initiative which has a plethora of suggestions about how to become a swapper, you can even suggest your own swaps: <http://swapit.gov.au/>
- Cancer Council Nutrition and Physical Activity Information: <http://www.cancerCouncil.com.au/editorial.asp?pageid=1035>
- Australian Government Physical Activity Guidelines:
[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/BC3101B1FF200CA4CA256F9700154958/\\$File/adults_phys.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/BC3101B1FF200CA4CA256F9700154958/$File/adults_phys.pdf)
- More information on active transport:
 - <http://www.travelsmart.gov.au/about.html>
 - <http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/web12cat?openview&restricttcategory=active+transport&count=10&start=1>
 - <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/AboutSydney/ParkingAndTransport/Cycling/>
- Visit your local government website to see what physical activity options are available in your area