

Keep moving: How to stay active and healthy



People aged 70 years and over are at greater risk of more serious illness if they are infected with COVID-19. And they are likely to have to self-isolate for longer than younger age groups. For this reason the team at NARI, with input from our research volunteers, has developed a series of tip sheets. This one is about keeping active.

It is important to follow the [Government's recommendations](#) to minimise spread of the COVID-19 virus, and to care for yourself and your loved ones. **Here is what you need to do to keep physically active:**

Why physical activity is important

Physical activity supports the immune system, promotes strong muscles and bones, improves respiratory and cardiovascular health and reduces falls.

Keeping physically active is also good for mental health, it relieves stress, anxiety and depression, and can help you sleep better.

How to keep physically active during COVID-19

While there are restrictions to observe physical distancing, there are still many things that can be done both inside and outside the home to keep you active and healthy. Here are some examples:

- Try to keep up your existing exercise routines.
- If possible, go for a walk and get some fresh air. Being outside and getting some sunlight on your skin will enhance vitamin D production and can also improve mental health.
- According to Government guidelines (at 8 April 2020), you can exercise with members of your family or one person who is not from your household. Remember to maintain a physical distance from others of at least 1.5 metres (2 arm lengths).
- Try breaking up your day with some movement so you don't sit for too long; for example, do some gardening, household projects or chores.
- Try to keep a routine such as stretching in the morning, walking in the middle of day and so on, so you have a structure to follow.

"Do some gardening, walk around your house or up and down stairs and remember not to sit for too long before moving about."

- Edith

- Look at YouTube for exercise programs such as yoga, pilates and dance.
- Dance to your favourite music.
- Maintaining good balance is important to reduce your risk of falling. Exercises such as walking on your toes, or standing on one leg, can improve your balance. Make sure you do these close to a wall, or close to a stable object such as a kitchen bench, so you have somewhere to hang on to - just in case.
- Try some strengthening exercises using furniture as a support. For example: standing up and sitting down again several times from a chair, lunges or squats using a bench for support, and walking up and down stairs.
- Do whatever you can, every little bit counts!
- Don't forget: **be safe while exercising**. Stop exercise if you have chest pain or shortness of breath that stops you being able to talk. Exercise within your limits and use support for balance if you are unsure.
- Speak with a health professional if you experience more than mild pain or discomfort following exercise.

"There are excellent exercise classes for seniors on YouTube if you have and can use an iPad."

- Edith



More information

Australian Government Department of Health

- Latest coronavirus (COVID-19) health updates <https://bit.ly/3bXFSb6>
- Collection of COVID-19 resources, including translated resources. <https://bit.ly/380OwHe>
- Tip sheet: Coronavirus advice for older people <https://bit.ly/3aMvsLp>

National Coronavirus Health Information Line

Call 1800 020 080 if you are seeking information on novel coronavirus. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

Advice for Carers

Carers Australia: Visit carersaustralia.com.au for a range of information for carers.

Call 1800 242 636 for short-term counselling support services for carers and their families.