

# Benefits of being Physically active



**Regular physical activity is a known protective behaviour for preventing mental health issues, and is beneficial to mental health and wellbeing.**

Evidence suggests young people who are more physically active are more likely to report higher levels of wellbeing and life satisfaction, and are less likely to be diagnosed with a mental health condition. Although the evidence is still emerging, it seems exercise may also reduce the incidence of mental health conditions such as depression.

Regular physical activity may also improve cognitive development, social skills and can have positive impacts on academic achievement.

## **Australia's physical activity guidelines**

The national physical activity guidelines recommend children and young people aged between 5 and 17 years should do at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day. Activities that strengthen the muscle and bones should be incorporated into the recommended 60 minutes at least three days per week.

## **Participation rates of school aged children**

Data suggests less than half of Western Australian school-aged children (aged 5-15 years) are being

active every day with data from 2018 suggesting only 40.1% met the recommended physical activity levels. In addition, 65% of 5-8-year-olds, 78% aged 9-11 years and 72% aged 12-14 years participated in organised sport outside of school only once per week.



# Here are some suggestions on how to be physically active at school:

## In the classroom

- Identify ways to turn sedentary activities (e.g. sitting) into physical activities (e.g. standing, stretching).
- Movement within lessons where appropriate (e.g. drama games, science lessons outside in nature).
- Fitness brain breaks (e.g. in-class yoga).

## During break times

- Make equipment accessible at recess and lunch.
- Open the gym at recess and lunch and encourage mini tournaments (i.e. table tennis, basketball).
- Have regular staff and student sport competitions.

## Whole of school

- Inclusive physical education and activities:



[app.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/policy-inclusion](http://app.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/policy-inclusion)

- 10-minute morning whole school exercise/movement (such as in assembly).
- Encourage school sport or dance clubs or competitions.
- Encourage other aspects of activity such as lunch time yoga, dance or meditation.

## Before and after school

- Promote the KidSport grants to parents and caregivers through your school newsletter:



[dlgsc.wa.gov.au/funding/sport-and-recreation-funding/kidsport](http://dlgsc.wa.gov.au/funding/sport-and-recreation-funding/kidsport)

- Encourage walk or bike to school days (if safe and appropriate).
- Consider structural barriers in the school setting for why students aren't using active transport such as bike lockers or lack of access to showers.

