

# excessive exercise

## Healthy Exercise

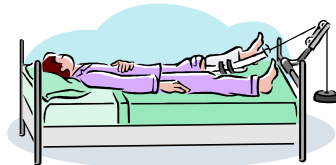
Exercise is an important part of healthy living. A healthy level of exercise strengthens muscle and bones, improves cardiovascular fitness, and promotes psychological well being.

Health professionals recommend that Australian adults exercise for 30 minutes most days, at a moderate intensity. Moderate intensity exercise includes activities such as walking. If extra fitness is required, vigorous exercise can be performed for 30 minutes, 3 to 4 days a week. Vigorous exercise includes activities such as playing a game of netball or tennis, or jogging.

## Excessive Exercise: Dangerous Consequences

You may feel that because exercise is good for you, you cannot exercise too much. However, this is wrong. Exercising everyday for hours is not healthy for your body. Excessive exercising can lead to serious health effects including:

- Lowered hormones (menstrual dysfunction in women, sexual dysfunction in men)
- Osteoporosis
- Depression
- Heart problems
- Dehydration
- Permanent damage to joints and tendons



## How Much is Too Much?

If you experience any of the symptoms below, you may be exercising at a level that is not healthy for your body:

- Exercising vigorously for over an hour every day, or more than once in a day.
- Feeling compelled to exercise, rather than exercising for enjoyment.
- Feeling guilty or anxious if you cannot exercise.
- Exercising despite injury, illness, or bad weather.
- Abandoning other commitments to make more time for exercise.
- Basing your self-worth on exercise.

## How Much Exercise is Right for You?

If you currently suffer from an eating disorder, it may be hard for you to know how much exercise is appropriate for your circumstances.



In general, here are some guidelines that you should follow in determining the amount of exercise that is right for you:

- If you are extremely underweight, with a BMI lower than 19, you should not be engaging in any exercise until you have regained weight. It is crucial for your health that you regain weight, and exercise may interfere with this goal.
- If you are overweight, low intensity exercise may be used as part of a weight management program.
- If you are not severely underweight, and have not received specific exercise guidelines from your clinician, a healthy level of exercise is recommended. This involves approximately 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise most days. If you enjoy more vigorous exercise, 30 minutes for 3 or 4 days a week is recommended.
- **When you do exercise, make it social and make it fun!**

*Note: if you are underweight, or overweight, or purging regularly or suffer from dizziness, you should not engage in any exercise without first consulting your General Practitioner.*