

GetMoving

in Greater Bendigo

A guide for
older adults to
be more active



CITY OF GREATER
BENDIGO

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Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. We acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung People, the Traditional Owners of the land. We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples. We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.



Introduction

Staying active through regular physical activities is very important for older adults because it helps improve bone strength, increases energy levels, regulates blood pressure, improves sleep and helps prevent diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Regular exercise improves physical health and mental health and enhances older adults' connection to community.

Not only will people who become more active enjoy the many benefits that come with physical activity, they will also have an opportunity to meet new people in a relaxed and friendly local environment and, most importantly, have some fun.

Get Moving is an initiative of the City of Greater Bendigo and Loddon Mallee Move It Project and this guide has been designed for you to keep as a handy guide that you can refer to as needed.

We hope it encourages you to explore options to become more active!





Why should I keep active?

Participating in regular physical activity works wonders for our long-term physical health and is also great for our mental wellbeing.

For many older adults, changes to lifestyle, failing health or loss of motivation may reduce the amount of exercise we undertake each day.

In Greater Bendigo, nearly 20,000 people are aged over 65 (Census 2016) and yet only 52 per cent of men and 48 per cent of women are meeting the recommended activity guidelines each day (2019 Active Living Census).

The Active Living Census also told us that 42.5 per cent of men and 46.5 per cent of women aged over 70 want to be more active.

This guide highlights the benefits of physical activity for older adults and the many ways to get more active in Greater Bendigo.





How can I keep active?

Every minute of physical activity you do will help improve your health and wellbeing.

If you are starting a new exercise routine or looking to increase the amount of activity you do each day, it is recommended you talk to your doctor or health professional first.

Questions you may want to ask, include:

- What is the best physical activity for me?
- Are there any exercises or activities I should avoid?
- Are there any exercises I need to modify to my ability?
- How do I increase my physical activity gradually?
- How can I be active safely if I have high blood pressure, diabetes or cardiovascular disease?
- Are there exercises that may assist with managing depression and anxiety or other mental health concerns?
- What are the best exercises if I have a health condition? (e.g. If I have arthritis would water exercise be better for me?)
- Is there assistance through My Aged Care to get me to activities?
- How long will it take before things get better?



If you have a chronic disease or condition that could impact on your daily activities, get a referral to an Allied Health Professional who will assist you in making informed exercise choices.

Finding the right physical activity for you

Exercise is all about you!

You can build activity into your everyday routine by doing things you enjoy. This will help you stay motivated to stick to an active lifestyle and enjoy your activity.



Do you love the outdoors?

Try exercises like bushwalking or gardening.

Does music make you come alive?

Join a local dance class or turn the music up loud and dance around your home.

Do you enjoy being with others?

Join a community exercise group, suggest a coffee after class or exercise with a friend. You are more likely to stick with your exercise plan if you share it with someone close to you.

Do you like to explore and travel?

Various local clubs offer day trips and outings that will not only have you out having fun but keep you moving as well.

Does your dog need exercise?

Check out one of the off-leash dogs parks where you and your furry friend can exercise together.

Do you love to play team sports?

Check out local sporting clubs for available options.

Do you spend a lot of time in your car?

When you drive, consider parking a block from your destination so you can fit a little extra walking into your day.

Like variety?

Mix up your week so that you have a variety of activity options to keep you engaged.

Types of exercise

There are four main types of physical activity that should be included as part of our regular routine:

1. **Strength**
2. **Balance**
3. **Flexibility**
4. **Aerobic**

Be creative and choose activities from each of the four exercise types. Use the weekly physical activity plan in this booklet to write down your activities and try to have a mix over the week.

The Australian Physical and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommends including 8-10 exercises in each session.



1. Strength

Strength training, or resistance training, can enhance your quality of life and improve your ability to do every day tasks. By building muscle, you can improve your balance and even reduce your risk of falls. Strength exercises should be completed two to three days a week, with a day of rest in between.

Strength training can be done at home or in a gym by using your own body weight or household items like cans and bottles, lifting weights, or by using machines, rubber bands or balls.

Strength training helps to:

- Increase your muscle strength and endurance, so you can do daily activities with less effort and for longer
- Maintain your bone density and strength to prevent fractures and joint pain
- Maintain your energy levels
- Increase your balance and decrease your risk of falls or injury
- Maintain your mental health and happiness by reducing stress and anxiety
- Reduce your risk and symptoms of some chronic diseases
- Maintain your cognitive function and memory and reduce the risk of developing dementia



Get strong!



Research has shown that a lack of strength is a major risk factor for injury in both young and older adults. Additionally, muscle mass and strength decline significantly after the age of 50 years and dramatically after 65 years of age.

Joining a local gym can help with your strength exercises. If you need any help to get you started, an Allied Health professional can design a program right for you and ensure you're exercising safely.



Some examples of strength exercises that you could include in your day:

- Carrying shopping bags
- Gardening such as digging and shovelling
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Tai Chi
- Taking the stairs
- Squats and lunges
- Resistance bands exercises

2. Balance

Balance exercise provides physical benefits such as better stability, reducing the risk of falls and can also help to improve memory and spatial awareness.

Balance training should get progressively harder by progressing from stable to less stable positions and using less hand-rail support.

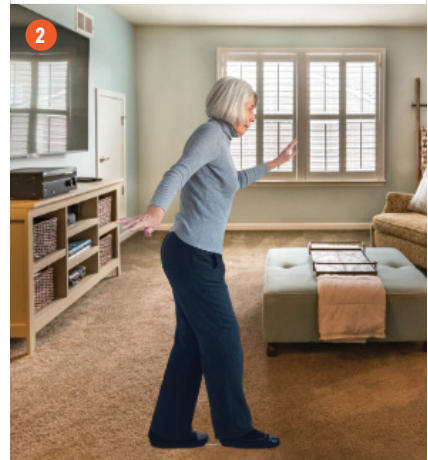
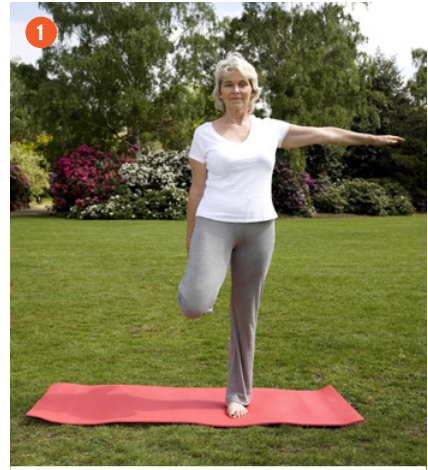
Balance exercises help to:

- Reduce risk of falls
- Improve muscle strength and endurance
- Increase bone strength resulting in less fractures
- Keep your mind sharp – better processing of your environment and the ability to avoid situations where you could trip or fall

Some examples include:

- Standing on an unstable surface, such as a foam mat. You could even try closing your eyes to really challenge your balance (Example 1)
- Practicing walking on a tightrope on the ground (Example 2)
- Toe taps (Example 3)
- Shifting your weight from one foot to the other
- Standing on one leg

It's recommended that older adults do at least two to three sessions of balance exercises per week.





3. Flexibility

Don't forget to stretch!

Incorporating stretching into your balance exercises can then also increase your flexibility, which is vital to active ageing and reducing pain when moving.

Stretching can help your body stay flexible and limber, which gives you more freedom of movement for your regular physical activity as well as for your everyday activities.

Flexibility exercises help to:

- Manage lower back pain and arthritis
- Improve posture
- Increase blood flow and energy levels

Examples of stretches and stretching activities include:

- Shoulder circles
- Arm swings
- Leg swings
- Tai chi
- Pilates
- Yoga

You should aim to do stretching exercises every day to give your body the best opportunity for freedom of movement.





4. Aerobic

Aerobic exercise is any movement where your breathing and heart rate increases for a period of time. By increasing your breathing and heart rate you improve your body's cardiorespiratory fitness, which is how well your heart, lungs and muscles work together to keep your body active and healthy.

You should aim to achieve around 30 minutes of aerobic exercises on most days of the week, or at least 150

minutes of exercise across the week, at a moderate intensity.

Aerobic training helps to:

- Make breathing easier when exercising
- Improve blood volume and delivery of blood to your heart and muscles
- Strengthen ligaments, tendons and bones
- Increase endurance so you can complete activities for longer
- Decrease anxiety and stress
- Improve overall mood

Examples of aerobic activities include:

- Walking
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Cycling

Did you know Greater Bendigo has two indoor public swimming pools? **Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre** in Kangaroo Flat and **Peter Krenz Leisure Centre** in Eaglehawk.



Incidental physical activity

Incidental physical activity is the small amounts of activity that build up over a day and tend to be less structured than planned exercise training.

Incidental movement is still important in the daily lives of older adults and can help contribute to daily physical activity recommendations.

We should minimise the amount of time spent sitting. Try breaking up long periods of sitting as often as possible with some movements and incidental activity.

Examples of incidental physical activity that can support good health include:

- Gardening
- Housework
- Walking to the bus, park, shops
- Volunteering
- Taking grandchildren to the park

Do you love gardening? Why not volunteer with the **Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens?**





Are you ready to get started?

Set goals for yourself

One way of ensuring you stay on track is by setting yourself goals that really matter to you.

Write down your goals, put them where you can see them and renew them regularly.

Short-term goals might be as simple as walking around the block each day,

contacting local community groups and exercise classes, asking a friend to join you or thinking of other ways to increase your current activity levels.

Long-term goals focus on where you would like your activity levels to be in future.

Questions to ask yourself

- How much time do you spend sitting?
- Are you living with a health condition or need an extra hand?
- What are your interests or what do you enjoy doing in life?
- What is your weekly routine?
- What physical activity do you already do?

Focus on starting slowly with small amounts of activity that gradually increase in frequency, duration, and intensity in that order.





Short-term goals

Write down at least two of your own personal short-term goals. What will you do over the next week or two that will help you make physical activity a regular part of your life?

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Long-term goals

Write down at least two long-term goals. Focus on where you want to be in six months, a year or two years from now. Remember, setting goals will help you make physical activity part of your everyday life, monitor your progress, and celebrate and reward yourself for your successes.

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Weekly physical activity plan

Map out your exercise

Use this activity chart to log the exercise you already do during the week. This will help you get an idea of how much you are already doing and assist you to map out ways to increase your activity levels if you need.

For a week, write down how much time you are physically active (for example, walking, gardening, playing sport, dancing or lifting weights). The goal is to find as many ways as possible to increase your level and amount of physical activity.

Remember all activity counts, so there may be more than one activity in a day!

Do the talk test

The talk test is a great way to know the intensity of your activity. When exercising, can you:

- Talk or sing comfortably? You're probably moving at a light intensity. Examples include incidental exercises such as getting up to make a tea, walking to the mailbox or vacuuming
- Talk comfortably but not sing? This is likely to be moderate intensity exercise. Examples include brisk walking, water aerobics, leisurely riding a bike or playing doubles tennis
- Neither talk nor sing comfortably? You're working hard at a vigorous to high intensity. Examples include fast walking, swimming or cycling, tennis or hiking up hill

Day of the week	Activity
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	

[illegible]

How and where to be active in and around Greater Bendigo

There are so many walking and cycling tracks in Greater Bendigo, many with improved seating and lighting that can make being active easier and convenient.

Let's Walk walking tracks

The Let's Walk walking tracks in Kangaroo Flat and Long Gully are 30-40 minute walking routes, clearly marked by colourful footpath stickers. Developed by Healthy Heart of Victoria, the walking routes provide a safe, accessible outdoor exercise option for all community members.

Let's Walk Kangaroo Flat starts and ends at the Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre and incorporates the recently upgraded walking track around Gateway Park, so people of all ages and abilities can safely walk on a flat surface around the lake. Seating and lighting have also been added as well as outdoor exercise equipment.

Let's Walk Long Gully starts and ends at the Long Gully Neighbourhood Centre and incorporates the sealed walking track around the Long Gully Recreation Reserve, which has been recently upgraded and includes outdoor fitness equipment and lighting.

For a list on some of the walking and cycling paths in Greater Bendigo visit www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Things-To-Do/Walk-or-Ride-a-Trail

Plan for breaks in your routine (life happens!)





Connect Greater Bendigo

The Connect Greater Bendigo community website is easy to browse and search for information to make finding a local sport and recreation club, community group, health care service or education provider easy. Connect also features a community events calendar that lists local events and activities on offer in Greater Bendigo.

Visit www.connectgreaterbendigo.com.au to find the perfect club, group or event to get you moving today.

Outdoor ovals, parks and open spaces

Exercising outside is great for both our physical and mental health. Greater Bendigo is well known for its parks and open spaces but best of all, they're open and free for the whole community to use. For example you could:

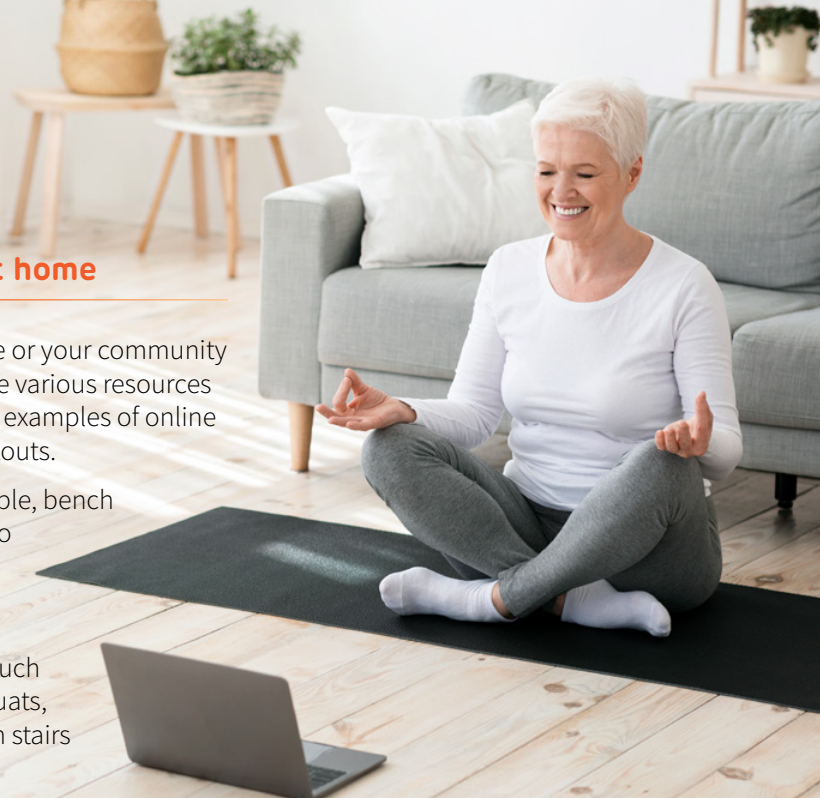
- Walk around Ewing Park and enjoy the new track and lighting
- Walk two laps around the Long Gully Recreation Reserve oval sealed footpath and then do some strength training at the outdoor fitness equipment
- Walk or cycle along the Bendigo Creek trail

For a full list of the open outdoor spaces in Greater Bendigo, visit www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Things-to-Do/public-gardens

Get moving at home

If leaving the house or your community is difficult, there are various resources available that offer examples of online exercises and workouts.

Home furniture (table, bench and chairs) can also be used in other ways to create a functional home exercise program such as chair stands, squats, going up and down stairs and even lunges.



Sue is 65 years of age and recently retired from her job as a nurse of over 30 years. Sue lives alone in Golden Square and since retiring has found she is keeping active in her garden and by walking her dog. However, Sue has also become quite lonely and misses catching up with work colleagues for coffee.

Sue decided to visit her local gym and found several programs available for older adults. She also discovered that there was a lot of members at the gym of a similar age to herself. Sue is now a member of Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre and loves attending the Active Adults group exercise class twice a week and a warm water aerobics class once a week. The highlight for Sue in going to the gym is that she has made new friends who she now enjoys a coffee and a chat with after her classes.



Services to help you get moving

Funded exercise programs

Depending on your personal situation you may be eligible to access government-funded activities through My Aged Care.

To access funded programs, people must undergo an assessment by the Regional Assessment Services. To arrange an assessment, please contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 (Translating and Interpreting Service 131 450, National Relay Service 133 677) or visit their website at www.myagedcare.gov.au

Bendigo Health Fitness for Older Adults Program

The Fitness for Older Adults Program (FOAP) delivers strength training and physical activity groups for older adults both in Bendigo and the surrounding region. The groups are conducted by qualified fitness instructors and supported by physiotherapists and exercise physiologists.

The following exercise groups are available to attend:

- Tai chi and stretch class
- Strength class
- Chair-based and moderate to high level exercise to music class
- Walking groups

For more information visit www.bendigohealth.org.au/FOAP

Bendigo Community Health Services – Active Living Program

Bendigo Community Health Services offers a great Active Living Program designed to ensure seniors can stay active, healthy and living independently. Services include:

- Exercise physiology
- Strength and conditioning groups
- Falls and balance exercise groups
- Type 2 Diabetes exercise program

For more information on the Active Living Program visit www.bchs.com.au or call 5406 1200.



Who can help you become more active?

General Practitioners

General Practitioners (GPs) are your local doctor and a great place to start to get you moving again and provide advice on what are the right exercises for you. Your GP can also help with referrals to see other health professionals.

Referrals

A referral is a letter from your GP to another health professional requesting they provide you with a consult for a specific condition.

A referral can contain information about your current and past health conditions and provides a better understanding of your health background.

You don't always need a referral from your doctor to see another health professional.

Medicare rebate

Medicare does not usually cover visits to allied health professionals.

However, if you have a long-term health condition, you might be eligible for Medicare rebates with a GP-prepared care plan, such as a chronic disease management plan.

Chronic disease management plan

If you have been diagnosed with a chronic disease your GP can write you a chronic disease management plan. A chronic medical condition is one that has been (or is likely to be) present for six months or longer, for example asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal conditions and stroke.

Your plan helps coordinate your care by a team of health professionals, which may include allied health professionals that can prescribe exercise programs to manage your health.

Allied health professionals

Allied health practitioners are trained professionals who can assist with the management of many health conditions including:



- Chronic diseases like diabetes, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, heart disease and obesity
- Rehabilitation and recovery after surgery or broken bones
- Aches, sprains and injuries
- Back and knee pain
- Arthritis
- Foot pain
- Balance issues
- Managing after a stroke
- Neurological conditions, like Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis

How will I know which allied health professional is right for my care needs?

Your GP can help you decide if an allied health service is right for you. Try to be open and honest about your needs.

- **Accredited exercise physiologists** specialise in clinical exercise interventions for people with a broad range of health issues
- **Podiatrists** are experts in foot, ankle and lower limb health
- **Physiotherapists** use physical techniques to improve movement, reduce pain and stiffness, speed up the healing process and increase quality of life
- **Occupational therapists** help make daily activities easier through using equipment, aids or different ways of moving

**Set
a goal
to be more
active
today!**

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www.bendigo.vic.gov.au

