



Figure 7.8:
Regular physical activity boosts self-esteem and confidence.

Physical activity for health and wellbeing

Regular participation in physical activity provides many benefits for health and wellbeing. These include benefits for individuals, schools, the workplace and economy and disadvantaged groups.

Benefits for schools and learning

Physical activity and sport are usually promoted to highlight the benefits and positive impact they have on overall health, both physical and mental. Students who have good health and are regularly physically active will experience multiple benefits. These are outlined in Table 7.2.

Did you know?

The Heart Foundation reports that less than 20 per cent of Australians aged under 12–17 years meet the recommended Australian physical activity guidelines.

Internet activity

Log on to TitanOnline to complete Activity 7.3 to design a promotional advertisement for a community health initiative aiming to increase physical activity levels.

Table 7.2: Health benefits of being physically active.

Benefit	Explanation
Physical	<p>It is important for students, particularly from a young age, to participate in physical activity in order to continually develop their fundamental movement skills, including fine and gross motor skills. If students do not learn how to throw and catch, or even run properly in primary school, by the time they get to high school, sport and physical education can prove to be difficult.</p> <p>Students, particularly younger students, can benefit greatly from practising movement discovery activities. In these sorts of activities, students learn about travelling from one point to another using their body in a variety of different ways. Students also learn about concepts such as centre of gravity and base of support in a practical manner.</p> <p>By encouraging physical activity within and beyond the schooling environment, students are presented a great opportunity to prevent many lifestyle diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes.</p>
Cognitive	<p>There are multiple cognitive benefits achieved by students participating in regular physical activity and practising good health behaviours. Skills developed through participation in physical activity, particularly through team games and sports, provide students with cognitive skills that can be transferred across all areas of learning. These skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ problem solving ▪ decision making ▪ timing ▪ coordination ▪ spatial awareness ▪ negotiation skills ▪ memory ▪ divergent or lateral thinking ▪ multitasking.
Social	<p>The social benefits of students who participate regularly in physical activity and practise good health have been studied closely. According to the Heart Foundation, children who participate in regular sport and physical activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ are engaged with others and learn teamwork and negotiation skills ▪ learn to work within the rules, regulations and etiquette of a social system ▪ develop decision-making skills ▪ cumulatively acquire transferable motor skills, giving them a sense of movement competence and confidence. <p>Source: Heart Foundation (www.heartfoundation.org.au)</p> <p>Being involved in any physical activity provides students with an opportunity to make connections with their peers outside the classroom environment in a more natural setting. Involvement in physical activity can help build self-confidence and self-acceptance, which can help an individual's social skills.</p>

While there are many benefits of good health for students, there are also benefits for the school. Sport programs in schools:

- provide the school community opportunities to develop a strong identity and culture of excellence
- develop respect, fitness, responsibility and resilience among the student body
- encourage a partnership between the school and local community sporting and physical activity organisations.

Prioritising physical activity in the school environment has proven to have multiple benefits in relation to academic performance. Different school systems around the world treat physical education in different ways, with significantly different health outcomes. Finland, for instance, has been leading the world in terms of optimising student performance through using unconventional teaching methods. Students in Finland practise physical activity multiple times a day and have outstanding results in mathematics, English and science.



Figure 7.9:

Sport programs in schools develop respect, responsibility and resilience, as well as fitness.

Learning activity

1. Discuss the importance of incorporating physical activity into an individual's regular routine.
2. Suggest a range of benefits for a whole community practising good health habits and being regularly physically active.
3. Reflect on your own experiences to explain the cognitive benefits of regular physical activity.
4. Explain the social benefits you have benefited from as a result of regular physical activity.
5. Reflect on what your school is doing to promote physical activity among students and staff.

Benefits for the workplace and the economy

There are many benefits for the workplace and the economy from employees and employers practising good health habits and regular physical activity. Individuals are working long hours and many of these hours are carried out utilising technology, such as sitting in front of a computer screen, with little or no periods of physical exertion.

Presenteeism and absenteeism are two important terms to understand when discussing how good health habits and physical activity can benefit the workplace and the economy. Absenteeism relates to being absent or away from work. Presenteeism relates to being present at work, but not working at a fully productive rate. Just because an individual is present at their place of work does not mean they are benefiting the company. Presenteeism is responsible for the loss of more productivity than absenteeism. Presenteeism comes in numerous shapes and forms. Employees may be at work but not be working because:

- they are injured
- they are on restricted or light duties
- they are distracted
- of depression
- they are distracted by social media
- they are tired or bored
- the work area is unproductive or unhealthy, for example, noisy, unclean, cluttered, poor teamwork, ineffective leadership or poor lighting
- they are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs or recovering from recent use.

Many of these distractions can be easily avoided through the interaction of physical activity into the working schedule.

According to Exercise and Sports Science Australia, there are many health concerns associated with sitting at an office desk for prolonged periods of time. This is why it is so important to break up the working day and integrate physical activity into an individual's routine. Benefits of physical activity for the workplace and productivity include:

- increased alertness
- increased energy levels
- improved engagement
- better health, leading to less sick days
- improved stress management
- fewer workplace-related injuries.

If individuals from a workplace exercise together, team bonding is promoted. Regular exercise routines can also help individuals be more organised at work. Workplaces that value the health and wellbeing of their employees are one's in which job satisfaction and staff retention rates are higher. Employees are choosing to stay at jobs longer where there is a sense of camaraderie and support beyond the job requirements.

Did you know?

Research has shown that workplace health programs resulted in, on average, a 23.5 per cent decrease in sick leave absenteeism.

Source: Heart Foundation



Figure 7.10:

It is important to break up the working day and integrate physical activity into an individual's routine.

Learning activity

1. Discuss the benefits of physical activity and good health habits for the workplace and the economy.
2. Alice works in a fast-paced legal office that is usually pretty busy, is high-stress and employees rarely eat together or socialise outside of the office together. Suggest five ways Alice's employer could promote physical activity in the workplace.
3. Research a large company, such as Google, and describe how they incorporate physical activity into their employees' daily routine.

Benefits for groups experiencing disadvantage

Disadvantaged groups in society include any minority groups that experience a standard of living that is in some way, shape or form, limited or impaired more than that of the average person. Individuals from disadvantaged groups are not in a group together due to a sense of belonging but rather because they may require extra support to overcome health barriers. People who fall into the category of disadvantaged include:

- sole parent families
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people with mental health issues
- people of low socioeconomic status
- people with disability
- culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- the aged
- people from rural or remote areas.

As needs and individuals in these groups are so diverse, the benefits of participation in physical activity will vary considerably.



Figure 7.11:

The benefits of participation in physical activity will vary considerably for each group experiencing disadvantage.

Sole parent families

Sole parent families refer to one parent raising their child or children in a household by themselves, that can be the result of divorce, separation or the death of a spouse. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports that approximately 14 per cent of Australian families are sole parent families.

Source: ABS 2020 Labour Force Status of Families.

Being part of a sole parent family is challenging for both the dependant and the parent. The parent may feel unsupported, overwhelmed, overworked, stressed and as though they are not providing enough for their children. Children from sole parent families may feel resentful, lonely or like a part of them is missing.

There are a number of benefits this group can experience from participating in physical activity:

- Physical activity carried out between a parent and a dependant provides opportunities to bond, connect, communicate, be out of their comfort zone together, etc.
- Physical activity may be a parent's only opportunity to focus completely on themselves.
- Physical activity provides numerous health benefits, which makes it extremely important for sole parents because they are the sole carer of their children.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are considered a disadvantaged group in Australian society for a number of reasons. Indigenous people experience a lower health status than non-Indigenous people. There are a number of benefits this group can experience from participating in physical activity:

- An opportunity to practise cultural games and learn about their heritage.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience educational disadvantage and benefit educationally when physical activity and sport are integrated and valued in the curriculum. Physical activity provides a great opportunity for this.
- Create and foster new friendships, if physical activity pursuits are in the form of team sports or exercise classes.



Figure 7.12:

Participating in physical activity together is a great way for a parent and child to bond.



Figure 7.13:

Physical activity provides the opportunity to master fundamental movement skills.

Case study – The GO Foundation

The GO Foundation was started by Adam Goodes and Michael O’Loughlin, former professional players from the Sydney Swans AFL team. The GO Foundation was first introduced to the town of Dareton in NSW, a town with roughly 600 residents; one-third of whom share Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. According to Goodes and O’Loughlin, they are in a unique position where they have struggled growing up but managed to achieve great success in life through sport. They both grew up in small Indigenous communities in South Australia and have both worked hard to accomplish what they have today, while making some useful contacts and learning some inspiring lessons along the way. One of the major aims of this foundation is to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a quality secondary education. They believe that access to education is one of the core factors in attaining a promising future in adult life. An education not only qualifies and equips young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for their career and future life, but also teaches valuable skills in relation to health, wellbeing and physical activity skills, that they can share and pass on throughout their communities.

According to the Closing the Gap Report 2020, around 66 per cent of Indigenous Australians age 20–24 years had attained Year 12 schooling. In comparison, non-Indigenous Australians have an attainment rate of approximately 15 per cent higher. This is a dramatic difference for such a developed country and the Go Foundation aims to address this and to help achieve this goal, the GO Foundation has made partnerships with the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation.

Goodes and O’Loughlin visit communities and teach the importance of exercising regularly, restricting sedentary behaviours, eating a nutritious, healthy diet and looking after oneself.

1. Visit www.gofoundation.org.au and browse the website to investigate the current focus of the foundation.
2. Provide reasons why there is such a dramatic difference in the Year 12 completion rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other students.
3. Research other work Adam Goodes and Michael O’Loughlin are involved in, with relation to health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
4. Outline the foundation’s view on the correlation between a strong cultural identity and participation and achievement in education.

People with disability

Disability is commonly understood to be an illness or condition that prohibits an individual's ability to undertake core activities, particularly activities associated with self-care, mobility and communication. Just under one-fifth of the nation is living with disability. There are a wide variety of disabilities individuals are currently living with. Some people living with disability may have been born with the disability; in others their disability will develop as they age; and others may acquire disability through illness or injury. Forms of disability in Australia are varied, with common disabilities including:

- deafness
- blindness
- cerebral palsy
- multiple sclerosis
- epilepsy
- amputation.

There are a number of benefits this group can experience from participating in regular physical activity:

- Improved mood and overall happiness.
- Can improve conditions such as long-term workplace injuries.
- Can prolong the onset or development of disease, such as degenerative diseases, that gradually worsen to become disabilities.
- Promotes social interaction.



Figure 7.14:
Physical activity promotes social interaction.

Did you know?

Hand-cycling is an excellent alternative to conventional cycling for people with lower-limb impairment.

Learning activity

1. Explain what is meant by the term 'disadvantaged' in relation to groups in society.
2. Discuss statistics relating to the physical activity levels of sole parent families compared to traditional or nuclear families.
3. Propose reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people generally experience poorer health than other Australians.
4. Research current physical activity pursuits available to individuals with disability.
5. Participate in a range of physical activities and sports available to people with disability.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities are those communities with a broad range of cultures and ethnicities. These communities may have more than one language spoken and may hold opposing or varying beliefs concerning health, religion, politics, women's place in society, etc. The 2019 ABS Census found that the top 10 countries of birth for people who immigrate to Australia are:

- England
- China
- India
- New Zealand
- Philippines
- Vietnam
- South Africa
- Italy
- Malaysia
- Sri Lanka.

Besides the physical benefits obtained from participating in regular physical activity, there are a number of other benefits this group can experience:

- Helps develop English skills for those who are not fluent English speakers.
- Integrates individuals who participate in organised physical activity into the Australian community.
- Provides opportunities for individuals to socialise and starting new friendships.

Aged

Over the past two decades, the number of people aged 85 years and over increased by 117.1 per cent, compared with a total population growth of 34.8 per cent over the same period. In the year ending 30 June 2019, the number of people aged 85 years and over increased by 12,600 people to reach 515,700.

Source: ABS 3101.0 - Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2019.

There are a number of benefits this group can experience from participating in regular physical activity. Physical activity reduces the onset of a number of diseases and ailments associated with ageing, including:

- reduced bone strength
- arthritis
- reduced lean muscle and collagen
- decreased efficiency of the five senses
- dementia
- cataracts
- isolation and loneliness
- mobility issues
- reduced independence.

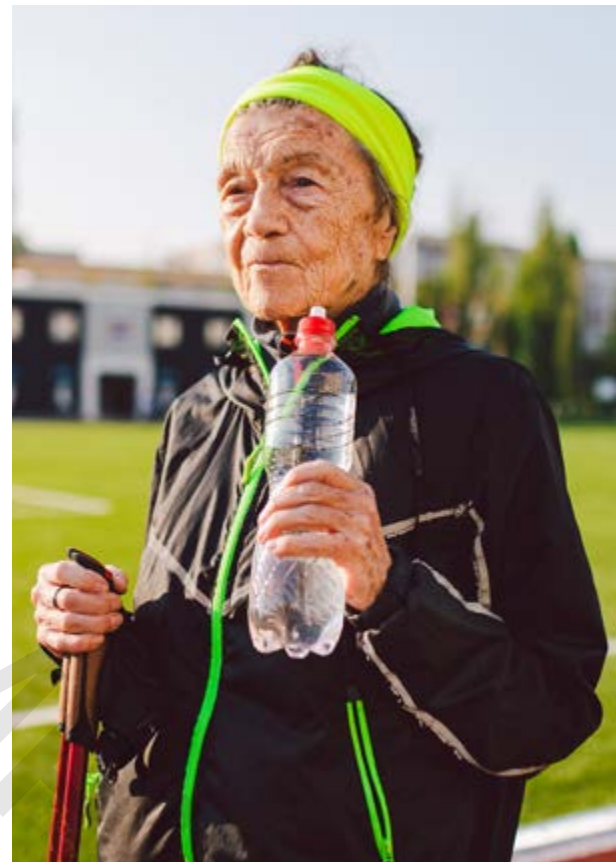


Figure 7.15: Physical activity reduces the onset of chronic diseases in the elderly.

Internet activity

Log on to TitanOnline to complete Activity 7.4 and investigate how physical activity organisations cater for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Did you know?

Walking, fitness/gym, swimming and cycling are the most popular sports and forms of physical activity for older Australians.

People from rural or remote areas

The majority of Australians live in urban areas (cities or towns of more than 1,000 people), with only 10–15 per cent of Australians live in rural or remote areas. Living rurally means there are often less choices in terms of education and career path, as well as limited facilities such as doctors, gyms, recreation parks and supermarkets.

There are a number of benefits this group can experience from participating in regular physical activity. Participating in physical activity:

- provides opportunities for individuals to socialise and form meaningful relationships
- benefits physical health
- prevents sedentary behaviours
- develops connectedness and bonds communities together in hard times
- minimises rates of mental illness and suicide.



Figure 7.16:

For a town with limited recreational facilities, hiking is a great way to participate in physical activity.

Learning activity

1. Analyse reasons why individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities may be less inclined to participate in regular physical activity.
2. Provide specific examples of how physical activity can benefit the aged population.
3. Research physical activity opportunities offered in the local area specifically targeting the aged.
4. Create a flyer advertising a new Flip Out (indoor trampoline arena) opening soon in a remote community. In the flyer, be sure to highlight the importance and benefits of regular physical activity.