- Exercise / Lifestyles

Importance of physical activity for healthy living

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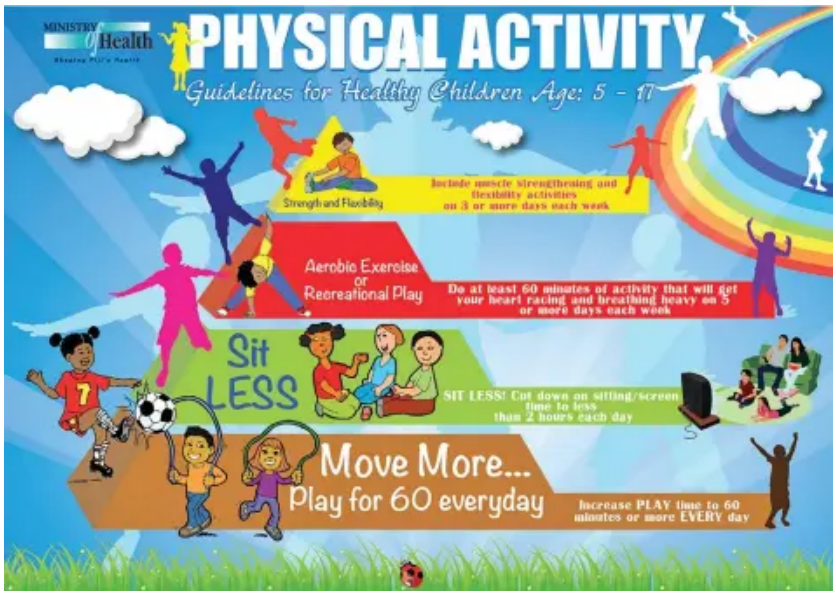
Physical activity is any bodily movement that results in energy expenditure. Everyone needs to be active each day to maintain a healthy lifestyle. It is great for your body and your mind.



What does this mean? Get up! Move! Physical activity can be done anywhere, anytime, and requires no special clothes or equipment. It can be sport and recreation, gardening, farming, housework, cycling, walking from home to town or even a physical job that has you moving a lot.

What are the benefits of physical activity?

There are so many benefits of regular physical activity at every age, such as:

■Healthy body weight and positive body image

■Weight loss

■Improving strength, stamina & flexibility

■It helps keep your mind clear by improving cognitive function

■you stronger bones by increasing bone density

Physical activity releases many endorphins (natural chemicals that make you feel good) so Physical Activity is not just great for your body, but also for your mind.

■Improved quality of sleep

■Improved self-esteem

■Lowers stress

■Boosts mood

Physical Activity also lowers your risk of premature death and many diseases and conditions such as;

■Heart disease

■Stroke

■Type 2 diabetes

■High blood pres sure

■High blood cholesterol

■Many types of cancer such as colon, breast, lung & endometrial cancers
Hip fractures, falls in older adults Depression and anxiety, abdominal obesity
So if you are not being active enough, your risk of the above conditions is much higher. There are 3 levels of intensity when it comes to aerobic exercise.

1. Aerobic Exercise (Cardiovascular)

Aerobic activities increase the need for oxygen.
When done regularly and for extended periods of time, aerobic activity strengthens the heart and improves the body's ability to deliver oxygen to all its cells.
Engaging routinely in aerobic activities, builds endurance of the cardiovascular system (heart & lungs).
Examples of Aerobic/Recreational Activities Netball, Volleyball, Cycling, Rugby, Soccer, Basket-ball, Swimming, Running, Track & field, Dancing, Brisk walking, Playing tag (He), School yard games (Pani), Skipping rope, Riding a bike, Hula hooping.
You should aim for mainly moderate, and some vigorous activities
when you do aerobic exercise
For extra health benefits, such as losing weight, do at least 60 minutes of moderate, aerobic physical activity most, if not all days

2. Strength training

Strength is the ability to apply force against resistance, the ability to move or lift a maximum weight.
Strengthening activities improve bone density, tone muscle, and boost stamina. Examples of strengthen ing Activities Push-ups, Stomach crunches, pull-ups, Climbing, Doing handstands and cartwheels, wrest ling around with each other, Use textbooks/dumbbells/ resistive bands for added weight, squats, lunges, jumps

3. Flexibility

Range of motion in joints. Stretching activities help improve flexibility, allowing muscles and joints to bend and move easily through their full range of motion. Examples of Flexibility Activities Yoga, Splits, Cartwheels, Jungle gym, Monkey bars, Karate, Pilates, Taichi GUIDELINES Fiji has a set of guidelines in place for how much physical activity you should be doing at every age for healthy living. No matter how old or young you are, every person should be exercising daily.
Physical Activity Guidelines
(Age 5 – 17)
Guidelines for healthy children (517): sit less & move more
Guideline 1: move more! increase play time to 60 minutes or more every day!
Guideline 2: SIT LESS! Cut down on sitting time to less than two hours each day. Such as watch-ing TV, playing video games, sitting in class, internet usage.
Guideline 3: Do at least 60 minutes of activities that will get your heart racing and breathing heavy (moder ate – vigorous) on 5 or more days each week. Such as aerobic exercises or recre-ational activities -He/ Tag, Playing Pani, swimming, skipping rope, hopscotch, brisk walking, dancing.
Guideline 4: Include muscle strengthening and flexibility activities on 3 or more days each week. Such as strength and flexibilityJungle gym, monkey bars, tree climbing, pushups, pull-ups, karate.