

# Infographic. COFIT-19: let's get moving through the COVID-19 pandemic!

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## ARE MY UNFIT PATIENTS MORE AT RISK FROM COVID-19?

YES! The epidemiological data suggest that people with modifiable risks of chronic lifestyle-related diseases such as obesity, heart disease, hypertension and type 2 diabetes are profoundly more at risk of death from this virus.<sup>1</sup> While it is also true of the elderly and those with immune deficiencies, these risks are more difficult to modify.

Even before COVID-19, the medical world was aware of the public health emergency created by a lack of physical activity.<sup>2</sup> The increase in hypertension, type 2 diabetes and obesity in the western world has been profound. We have developed a population 'at risk' due to underlying comorbidities, many of which can be improved with exercise. The reality, however, is that most populations simply do not meet the minimum requirements for basic physical activity. In Australia, around 55% of adults do not meet the minimum of 150min of moderate activity per week recommended by WHO.<sup>3</sup> This is reflected around the world.<sup>2</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the lives of millions of people worldwide. It has brought with it 'lockdowns' and 'physical and social distancing' measures that have forced millions of people into relative isolation, bringing further inactivity and frustration. Many countries have recognised the vital role physical activity plays in public health, both physical and mental, allowing citizens to exercise as a part of the lockdown restrictions, for example, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. There has been limited guidance as to how to help people exercise within the restrictions.

In this rapidly changing landscape, patients, their general practitioners, specialists and health organisations are suddenly faced with the need to assist patients adapt to exercise in these restrictive conditions. The Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians in collaboration with Exercise and Sports Science Australia, the Australian Physiotherapy Association, Sports Medicine Australia, the Australian Medical Association and Sport Australia has developed an infographic toolkit to help



Figure 1 Infographic.

with exercise prescription during the pandemic. The toolkit has three sets of advice related to children, teenagers and the adult population.

Being physically active improves well-being by reducing anxiety and mental illness. It improves concentration, helping those working or studying to improve their

output while 'working from home'. It boosts the immune system, reduces weight, blood sugars and blood pressure and reduces cardiovascular disease.<sup>4,5</sup> From a practical perspective, it improves energy levels and fills in time in a long day in isolation.

Every step you take leads to better health!

Links to resources to download free and share widely:

Children: <https://t.co/m0MVjn82vu?amp=1>

Teens: <https://t.co/1npHVSZzU?amp=1>

Adults: <https://t.co/fiejpdJoyC?amp=1>

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