

BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

It is widely acknowledged that participating in physical activity produces a range of physical, mental, social, environmental and economic benefits for both individuals and the community.

Physical benefits

The physical benefits of physical activity include:

- a reduced risk of premature death from cardiovascular disease and stroke
- a reduced risk of developing high blood pressure and high cholesterol
- a reduced risk of developing some cancers such as colon and breast cancer
- a lower risk of developing non-insulin dependent diabetes (type 2 diabetes)
- achieving and maintaining a healthy weight
- an improved quality of life for those individuals managing chronic conditions
- increased muscle and bone strength
- increased energy and improved sleep.

Mental benefits

The mental benefits of physical activity include:

- reduced feelings of stress, anxiety and depression
- improved concentration, enhanced memory and learning
- improved confidence and self-esteem
- improved overall mental awareness and psychological wellbeing.

Social benefits

The social benefits of physical activity include:

- increased family and community connectedness
- improved community networks and social capital
- reduced sense of isolation and loneliness
- enhanced social skills and self-esteem.



Environmental benefits

The environmental benefits of physical activity include:

- reduced traffic congestion
- reduced air pollution and greenhouse emissions
- reduced noise pollution
- a reduced need for large spaces to drive and park motor vehicles.

Economic benefits

The economic benefits of physical activity include:

- reduced healthcare costs
- improved workplace productivity and reduction in absenteeism
- lower-cost transport methods.

References

Department of Sport and Recreation 2007, *Facts and stats: Benefits of physical activity*, Government of Western Australia, Perth.

Queensland Government, *Benefits of physical activity*, www.health.qld.gov.au/npag/benefits.asp

Premier's Physical Activity Council 2011, *Tasmania's plan for physical activity 2011-2021*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart.

National Public Health Partnership 2005, *Be active Australia: A framework for health sector action for physical activity*, NPHP, Melbourne, Victoria.