EXERCISE & *Men's Health*

An eBook by

ESSA
Exercise & Sports Science Australia

WHO IS ESSA

ESSA

Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) is the nation's leading voice on exercise and sports science. We govern and represent approximately 10,000 degree-qualified professionals who support Australians to reach their health and performance goals.

EXERCISE RIGHT

Exercise Right is a public awareness campaign powered by ESSA. Our goal is to help Aussies to live more active lives and to understand where to get the "right" advice for their individual needs (regardless of age or health status).

Find your local accredited exercise professional: www.essa.org.au/find-aep/

Editor: Camella Brightman | **Designer:** Melissa Williams

Peer reviewed by Daniel Berkelmans, Accredited Exercise Physiologist

We thank all ESSA accredited professionals who contributed their time and expert knowledge to this publication, through chapter contributions and testimonials.

ESSA

P 07 3171 3335 **E** info@essa.org.au
www.essa.org.au
A Locked Bag 4102, Ascot QLD 4007

Current as of 11/6/2021

CONTENTS

THE HEALTH OF AUSTRALIA'S MEN

In 2018, there were 12.4 million men in Australia—making up 49% of the country's population. In 2016, the estimated resident population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men was nearly 400,000 (3.2% of the male population).

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) offers a snapshot of their health from 2017–18.

OF AUSTRALIAN MEN (AGED 18+) RATED THEIR HEALTH AS **EXCELLENT** OR **VERY GOOD**

OF AUSTRALIAN MEN HAVE 1 OR MORE OF THE **10 SELECTED CONDITIONS**

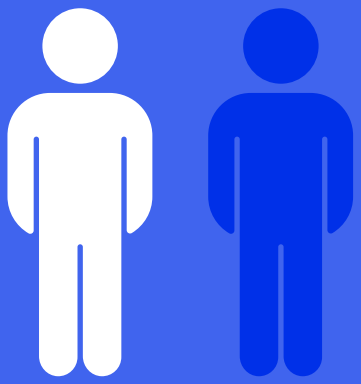
1. Mental and behavioural problems
2. Back problems
3. Arthritis
4. Asthma
5. Diabetes
6. Heart, stroke, and vascular disease[a]
7. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease[b]
8. Cancer
9. Osteoporosis
10. Chronic kidney disease

Of these men, **28% have one, 11% have two,** and **7.1% have three or more.**

THE PREVALENCE OF HAVING AT LEAST ONE OF THESE CONDITIONS VARIES WITH AGE

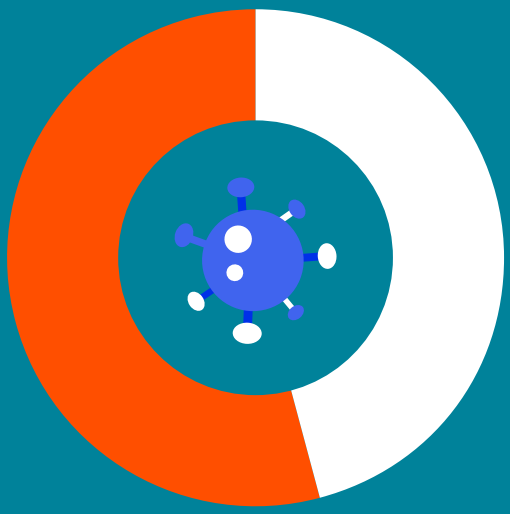
of men aged 65 and over have at least one

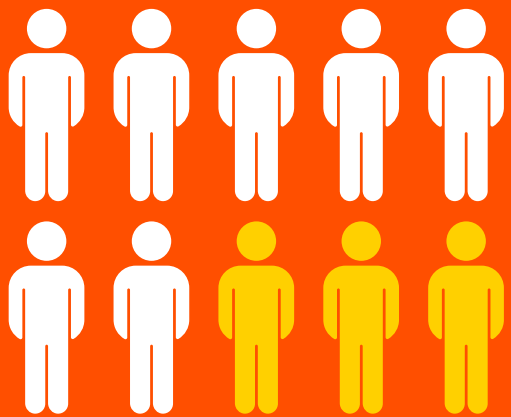
of aged men under 45 have at least one



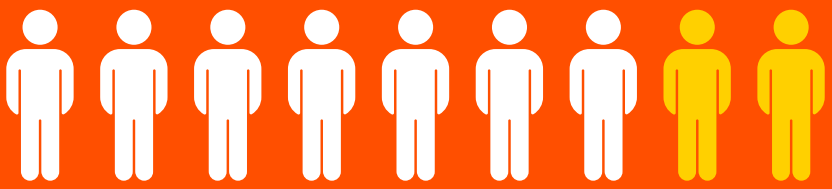
Nearly 1 in 2
Australian men have experienced a mental health problem in their life

It is estimated that men account for **54%** of all new cancer cases





7 in 10 Australian men are overweight or obese



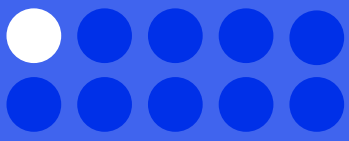
According to Beyond Blue, men make up an average 7 out of every 9 suicides every single day in Australia.

MORE THAN 1.6 MILLION

OF AUSTRALIAN MEN (14%) RECEIVED A MENTAL HEALTH RELATED PRESCRIPTION

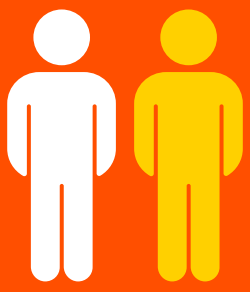
Around 1 in 5 Australian men (18%) are estimated to have a current mental or behavioural condition that has lasted, or is expected to last, 6 months or more.

The most common mental and behavioural conditions are **anxiety related problems (62%)** and **mood (affective) disorders (56%).**



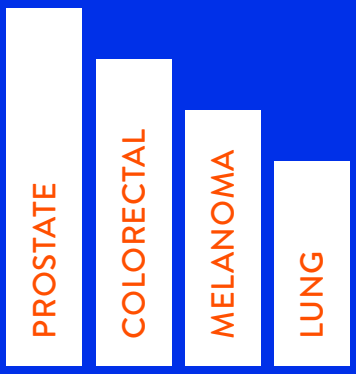
Around 1 in 10 men aged 18 years and over (11%) were estimated to have experienced a high or very high level of psychological distress in the last 12 months.

1 in 2 Australian men are at risk of being diagnosed with cancer



before their 85th birthday

The most common cancer diagnosis in men



The most common cancer diagnosis in men varies by age

UNDER 35
Leukaemia and testicular

OVER 35
Melanoma, prostate and colorectal

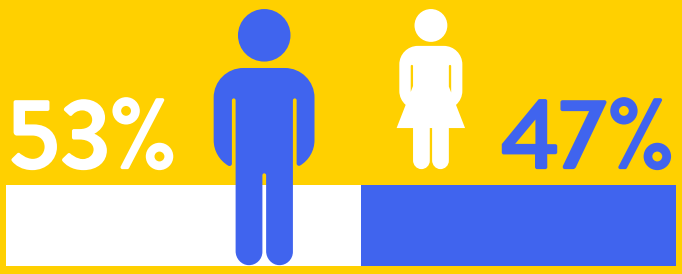
EXCESS WEIGHT, ESPECIALLY OBESITY, IS A MAJOR RISK FACTOR

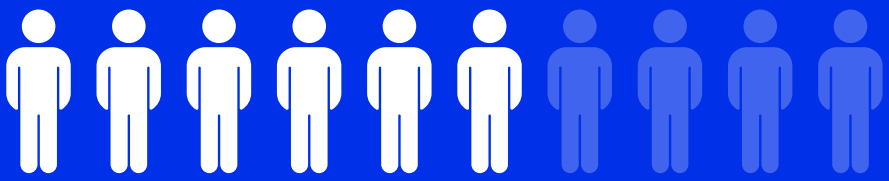
FOR **CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, TYPE 2 DIABETES,** SOME **MUSCULOSKELETAL CONDITIONS,** AND SOME **CANCERS**

As the level of excess weight increases, so does the risk of developing these conditions

DISEASE BURDEN

In 2015, men experienced a greater share of the total disease burden (53%) than women (47%). A larger proportion of the total disease burden for men was from dying prematurely.





More than 6 out of 10 (62%) of people who die prematurely in Australia are men.

IN MAJOR CITIES, **50%** OF THOSE PREMATURE MALE DEATHS ARE POTENTIALLY AVOIDABLE

COMPARED WITH VERY REMOTE AREAS WHERE **64%** OF MALE DEATHS COULD BE AVOIDED.

THE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH FOR MEN VARIES WITH AGE

	For men aged 18–24	For men aged 25–44	For men aged 45–84
1ST	Suicide	Suicide	Coronary heart disease
2ND	Land transport accidents	Accidental poisoning[c]	Lung cancer

(a) Includes angina, heart attack, other ischaemic heart diseases, stroke, other cerebrovascular diseases, oedema, heart failure, and diseases of the arteries, arterioles, and capillaries.

(b) COPD here refers to self-reported current and long-term bronchitis and/or emphysema.

(c) Some agents from which poisoning may occur include alcohol, narcotics (for example, heroin or methadone), sedatives, psychotropic drugs (for example, antidepressants), antiepileptic and anti-inflammatory drugs.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR: THE IMPORTANCE OF A CHECK-UP

Men are known for bottling things up. But when you're feeling unwell or down, taking action to call in extra support is the responsible thing to do.

The good news is that most Australian men over the age of 35 visit their doctor three to four times a year, more often if monitoring pre-existing conditions.

> ***However, a study of over 13,000 Aussie men found that only 39% reported having an annual health check at their GP and only book an appointment once an illness or condition has progressed.***

This highlights a gap in men visiting their doctor for a general check-up which can discover overlooked symptoms and provides an opportunity to discuss other concerns.

Men can take the risk out of their health by having regular check-ups with their doctor.

There can be a variety of reasons why men opt to not book regular health check-ups. This includes lack of time, cost, fear of diagnosis or medical procedure, and the common "she'll be right" attitude. However, as Healthy Male explains: Would you skip a car service?

» Knowing when to have your car checked is no different to keeping your body in peak condition. Visiting your GP is like a maintenance check on your own machinery — better to catch a timing belt rattle, a wheel bearing rumble or a sudden drop-off in your vehicle's performance before it leads to worse problems, takes longer to solve or becomes too worn out to fully fix.

Here are some helpful tips to ensure you get the most out of your GP appointment:

» **Find a doctor you trust.** You don't have to stick with your childhood GP for life.

» **Book a non-negotiable, yearly check-up**, whether or not you have issues to discuss.

» **Ask for a longer appointment** so you can go through each concern on your list.

Source: Healthy Male

WHY IS EXERCISE IMPORTANT FOR MEN?

There is a wide range of benefits for being active and including exercise or physical activity into daily routines. Exercise plays a vital role in keeping Australian blokes healthier, happier and alive for longer.

Some of the health benefits for men who exercise include:

- Lower risk of diabetes
- Lower cholesterol
- Reduced depression and anxiety
- Lower risk of high blood pressure
- Healthier blood vessels
- Weight loss
- Improved testosterone levels as you age
- Lower risk of cancers such as colon or prostate cancer

Flexibility is also an important benefit for keeping active. To improve their range of motion and be able to extend further than what they can do now, it's important that men don't ignore flexibility work. Flexibility can give men the ability to use the full potential of their muscles which will then help with muscle growth.

The great news is that men don't need to be "gym junkies" in order to gain access to these benefits. While working out in a gym environment might suit some people, it's not necessarily for everyone. There are a variety of ways to meet the physical activity guidelines and still gain the above benefits.

Plus, the most effective way to stick to an exercise routine is by choosing movement that you enjoy and works the major muscle groups – whether it be playing cricket, going surfing, heading to the gym, running with music, or going on a long hike.

A MESSAGE FOR MEN

Watch this video to hear from a range of everyday Australian men and their thoughts on exercising.

The Exercise is Medicine® Australia factsheets and resources are a great source of information that provide detailed information on the role of exercise in the prevention, treatment and management of most chronic diseases and conditions, including some listed in this eBook.

THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS OF AUSTRALIAN MEN

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that in men aged 18 and over:

17%	Were sufficiently physically active and met the muscle strengthening guideline
25%	Did strength or toning activities on two or more days
50%	Were sufficiently physically active (includes workplace activity)

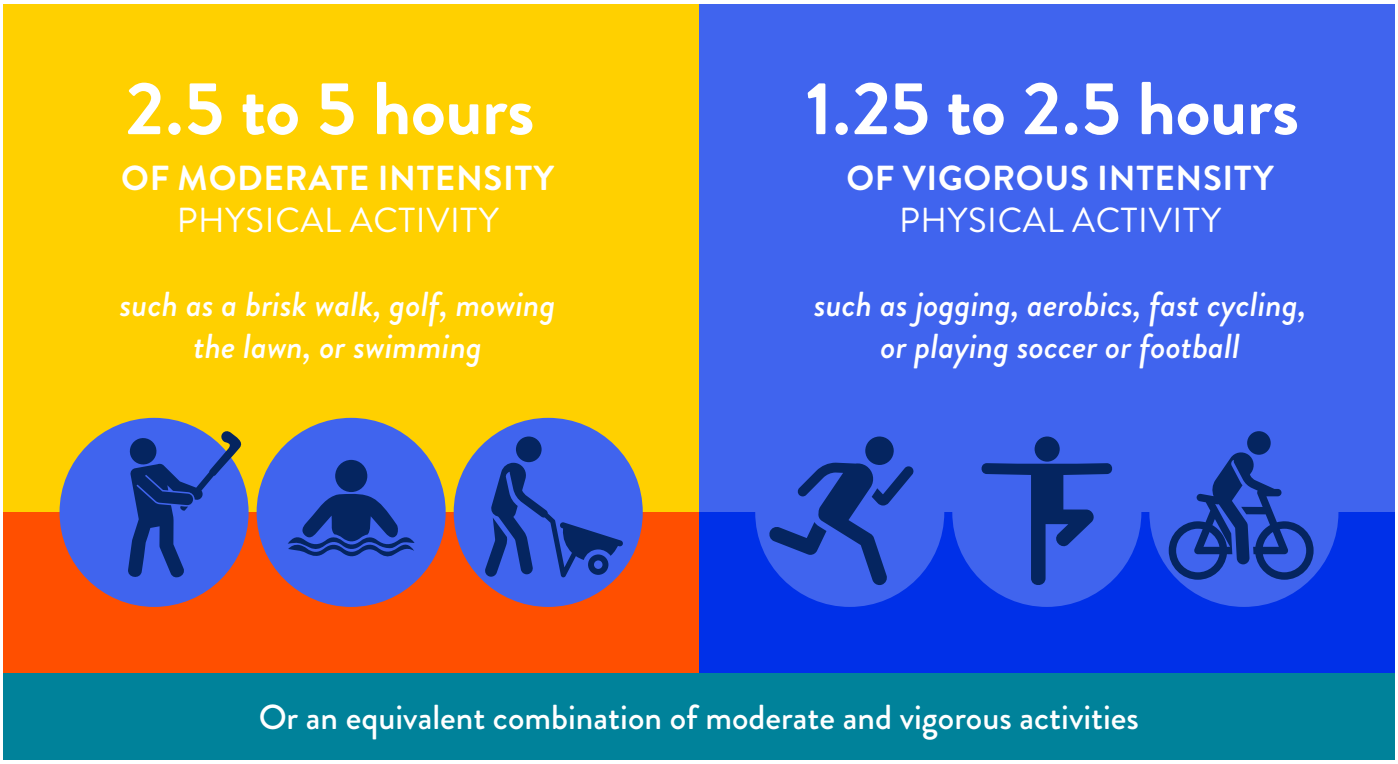
While the most common reasons given by men for not being physically active are insufficient time because of work or family commitments, lack of interest, age, or ongoing injuries or illness, it's important to remember that any physical activity is better than no physical activity!

WHEN TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION AGE, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS:

WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES?

Australia has developed Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines which outline the minimum amount of physical activity required for all ages, including older Australians.

Adults (aged 18–64) should be active most days, preferably every day. Each week, adults should do either:



It's important to also include muscle-strengthening activities as part of your daily physical activity on at least two days each week.

Doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you do no physical activity right now, start by doing some, then slowly build up to the recommended amount.

It's important to remember that if you are re-engaging in physical activity after an injury, commencing an exercise program for the first time or living with a chronic/medical condition, you should consult with an accredited exercise professional or your GP. You will be encouraged to start at a level that is easily manageable and then gradually build up to the recommended amount, type, and frequency of activity.

TIP

HOW CAN I IDENTIFY THE INTENSITY OF THE EXERCISE I AM COMPLETING?

A quick way to test your exercise intensity is using the talk test. When exercising can you:

» Talk comfortably and 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, vacuuming, etc.*

» Talk comfortably but not sing? This is likely to be **moderate intensity** exercise. *Examples include brisk walking, water aerobics, leisurely riding a bike, doubles tennis, hiking, etc.*

» Neither talk nor sing comfortably? You're working hard at a **vigorous to high intensity.** *Examples include jogging or running, fast swimming, singles tennis, riding a bike or hiking up hill, etc.*

MEET THE EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

Sometimes it can be hard to know who the exercise professionals are. There's a lot of people who claim to be "experts", but in the exercise world, ESSA accreditation is a handy way to ensure your exercise professional is suitably qualified to assist you.

WHAT DOES "ACCREDITED" MEAN?

Accredited means the professional is registered with Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) and as such have been approved for meeting all of the requirements necessary to be considered an exercise health professional, as well as undertaking regular professional development to ensure their knowledge and skills are up to date.

WHICH EXERCISE EXPERT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

In Australia, there are three types of accredited exercise and sports science experts who can support men in many ways, from looking after their general health and fitness, to using exercise to manage and treat chronic conditions, to those working with sporting teams and athletes.

- **Accredited Exercise Physiologists (AEPs)** complete a minimum 4 years of study at university in order to specialise in prescribing and supervising exercise for people who have complex health conditions. The work with clients living with cancer, diabetes, heart conditions, mental health conditions, any other chronic condition, or a disability or injury.
- **Accredited Exercise Scientists (AES)** complete a minimum 3 years of study at university, providing them with a high level of training in exercise and sports science. They use exercise to improve the health, well-being, and fitness of their clients, and assist in the prevention of chronic conditions.
- **Accredited Sports Scientists (ASpS)** complete a minimum 3 years of study at university and are highly trained professionals who provide sports science services and conduct research relating to sport in an elite environment such as the Australian Institute of Sport, state academy or professional sports club. They use exercise to improve sporting performance for individual athletes or teams.

TIP

HOW CAN I FIND AN ACCREDITED EXERCISE PROFESSIONAL?

Currently there are over 7,000 ESSA-accredited exercise professionals throughout Australia. You can find one close to your home by looking at the online directory provided by Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA), the accreditation body for exercise and sports science professionals: www.essa.org.au/find-aep.

CONDITIONS

The Australian culture of toughness and stoicism surrounding men speaking up about their feelings needs to change.

MENTAL HEALTH

Currently on average, seven out of every nine suicides each day in Australia are men.

This tragic statistic can be attributed to mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety which increase a man's risk of self harm or suicide. The current statistics in Australia show that one in eight men will experience depression, and one in five will experience anxiety at some stage in their lives.

These men are our brothers, fathers, sons, husbands, partners and mates and we all need to do our bit to look out for them. We can do this through education, increasing our awareness of men's mental health issues, and gaining greater knowledge of the tools and resources that can help these men.

THE BIG ISSUE

The Australian culture of toughness and stoicism surrounding men speaking up about their feelings needs to change. Boys and men of all ages need to feel comfortable about speaking to someone when they are not feeling 100% so that the issues can be unpacked before it becomes a greater issue.

Warning signs of poor mental health may include:

- Feeling sad or down
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt
- Extreme mood changes of highs and lows
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Inability to cope with daily problems or stress
- Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping
- Trouble understanding and relating to situations and to people
- Problems with alcohol or drug use
- Excessive anger, hostility or violence
- Suicidal thinking

However, not only is it important to recognise the symptoms and signs within us, but also to do our part to check in on those close to us.

Utilising resources made available through organisations such as Beyond Blue can be useful in knowing what to say to our male loved ones and colleagues, as well as making those aware that help is available from places like Lifeline and other medical allied health professionals like general practitioners and psychologists.

> ***It's important to make sure that the men in our lives know there is no shame in speaking up and getting help.***

When experiencing a crisis

Lifeline - call 13 11 14 or chat online

Suicide Call Back Service - call 1300 659 467

THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Exercise has been shown to be another helpful tool in alleviating the symptoms of anxiety and depression, in addition to other mental health conditions. Exercise interventions also have lasting effects on those living with these conditions with research demonstrating that patients with symptoms of depression, on follow-up after an exercise intervention, showed long-term improvements in their mental health.

There a several mechanisms in which exercise can reduce the symptoms of poor mental health and mental health conditions. Some of the benefits of exercise are:

1. **Feeling relaxed and reduced muscular tension post exercise.** When we exercise we increase our core temperature (become hot and sweaty) and this increase in temperature effects specific regions of the brain, including our brainstem which can lead to an overall feeling of relaxation and reduce any tension our muscles may be holding.
2. **Increased release of endorphins.** Endorphins are associated with positive mood and overall sense of well-being. Several studies have shown that endorphin levels increase following both single and multiple exercise sessions.

> ***Exercise can also be used as a great tool to start those tough but important conversations with your mates about their mental health and how they're doing. Whether it's a kick of the football, a game of cricket in the park, a hike or an afternoon run, exercise and sport can give you a chance to have a chat in a relaxed environment.***

TYPES OF EXERCISE RECOMMENDED

Research has shown that those who are more physically active will have reduced incidence and severity of symptoms of depression, so the most important thing to do is to start.

To get started, it's recommended to do the form of exercise you enjoy the most, whether this be aerobic exercise in the form of walking, cycling, running or swimming, or resistance exercise including bodyweight or weight training. The outcomes for aerobic and resistance exercise to alleviate mental health symptoms are similar, so do what you enjoy!

Once you get going, the goal is to build the amount of physical activity you complete over time to reach the physical activity guidelines, which recommend to accumulate 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week, including muscular strengthening activities on at least two days per week. This will ensure you not only improve your mental health but improve other aspects of your health and reduce your overall disease risk.

SPEAK TO THE EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

This is all easier said than done when you're experiencing poor mental health which can lead to a lack of motivation, reduced interest in activities, and trouble concentrating. So, once you have started, how do you stay on board? How do you continue to improve? How do you know what to do?

This is where an accredited exercise professional, such as an Accredited Exercise Scientist or an Accredited Exercise Physiologist, can help. An accredited exercise professional is qualified to prescribe you a tailored exercise program that considers your current mental health state and existing medical history (this may include old or current injuries, any medication you take as well as your exercise likes and dislikes). They can also assist in giving you the support you need to stick with your physical activity regime long term to keep you moving forward with both your mental and physical health.

If you haven't started undertaking some physical activity or completing an exercise program, now is a great time to start! Reach out to an accredited exercise professional for some extra support to help you get the best possible results, long term!

For further resources, download the Exercise is Medicine® Australia factsheet on depression.

Expert Contributor: *Mitchell Vautin, Accredited Exercise Physiologist at Exercise Healthcare Australia*

TESTIMONIAL

A 31-year-old male ex-police officer was referred to an Accredited Exercise Physiologist for complex PTSD through WorkCover. The client had been in the police force for 10 years and was historically very fit for the job, training at least five days per week. His work, however, included highly stressful counter terrorism work which inevitably led to not only his mental health declining but also his overall function and ability to do everyday activities such as feeling comfortable to leave the house.

The client then turned to addiction and self-medicate using alcohol. With his weight increasing from 96kg to 130kg in 6 months and feeling like a train heading towards a wall, the client spoke with a GP who works frequently with police offers, who referred him to a psychologist. Once his medical and mental health felt catered for, the client felt his physical health was missing the link, so his psychologist referred him to an Accredited Exercise Physiologist (AEP) in September 2020.

Although the client was initially nervous about undertaking exercise, he felt that the AEP was genuine in their quest to help, was highly specialised, and would tailor the intervention for his goals and where he was at now. After a couple of months, the client noticed a direct correlation between mental health improvements and exercise. He felt 'a sense of accomplishment' and like he had a 'healthy headspace'.

Since March 2021 (within 6 months), the client is now seeing the AEP once per week (20 mins cardio/30 mins strength), is hill walking again and has signed up to a gym. He credits his progression largely due to working with the AEP, 'a catalyst in improving my overall health and well-being'."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED ANONYMOUSLY BY A CLIENT OF AN ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

Exercise is wonderful for the heart, both to prevent cardiovascular disease in the first place, and to 'rehabilitate' a man after a heart attack.

HEART DISEASE

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) – often called 'heart disease' – is an umbrella term that includes diseases and conditions which affect the heart and blood vessels: coronary heart disease (the common cause of a heart attack), heart failure, arrhythmias, angina, and others.

Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death worldwide and in Australia. Approximately 26% of all deaths and 11% of all hospitalisations are attributed to CVD in Australia, with more than 80% of hospitalisations being for people aged over 55 years.

Very high rates of CVD exist for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those living in remote areas (including farming communities).

HEART DISEASE IN MEN

Heart disease kills around 40% more men than women and more men are admitted to hospital for CVD each year. Men are also about twice as likely as women to have a heart attack.

> *Please call triple zero (000) immediately and ask for an ambulance if you suspect that you or someone else is having a heart attack.*

Heart disease is strongly linked to risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, physical inactivity, overweight/obesity, and depression.

Unfortunately, men can sometimes neglect their health ("it can't happen to me") or they may ignore the symptoms of CVD which includes:

- difficulty catching your breath after moderate physical exertion, like walking up a flight of stairs, or shortness of breath
- a sense of discomfort or squeezing in your chest that lasts for 30 minutes to a few hours
- unexplained pain in your upper torso, neck, and jaw
- a heartbeat that is faster, slower, or more irregular than usual
- dizziness or fainting

Men often put off going to their doctor or other health professional, however, a simple visit to a doctor or health professional can set a man
on the road to better health and the avoidance of a heart attack.

THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Exercise is wonderful for the heart, both to prevent CVD in the first place, and to 'rehabilitate' the heart after a big event such as a heart attack. The National Heart Foundation of Australia has a range of information on exercise for people with CVD.

Increasingly, exercise has been shown to be beneficial for the heart for men experiencing cancer or mental health issues. The heart is a muscle and like any other muscle, it benefits from exercise. With exercise, it will become slower but stronger, and often reduce blood pressure. Exercise can also help the body to process cholesterol, sugars, and fats which improves overall physiological health.

It's important to remember that there are many smart fitness devices on the market now (watches, smartphone apps) that can be very helpful to monitor your heart rate, but these often need to be adjusted for people with CVD. For example, it is often inappropriate or even unsafe to use the heart rate guides on these smart devices if you have CVD. If you need assistance monitoring your cardiovascular health, an accredited exercise professional is optimally placed to provide you individualised advice.

TYPES OF EXERCISE RECOMMENDED

The main forms of exercise that are known to improve heart health in men are aerobic exercise and strength exercise. Aerobic exercise includes walking, jogging (if you are able), cycling and swimming, and any variations of these such as golf or tennis. These modes of exercise can also be done in a gym using a treadmill or gym bike, aiming for at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity.

Strength exercises include lifting weights, using machines, rubber bands, balls, or simple equipment such as a park bench or a wall, or even using your body-weight as the 'resistance'. It is important for people with CVD that your exercise program is designed based on an appropriate assessment prior to commencement.

SPEAK TO THE EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

If you are someone who already has cardiovascular disease, then your doctor or other health professional should have recommended some form of exercise to you. The first thing to do is to get proper advice and a personalised exercise plan by an Accredited Exercise Physiologist. ESSA has an online directory of more than 6,500 Accredited Exercise Physiologists around Australia who are highly trained to support you to develop and implement a safe, effective and personalised exercise plan.

Accredited Exercise Physiologists will understand the nature of whatever CVD you may have, and be able to properly assess you, design a plan suited to your needs, and then support you through not only the good times, but other times that can be challenging.

It is important that you monitor any symptoms that you may experience during or immediately after exercise and convey these to your exercise professional as soon as possible. In that way, any new or worsening of your condition can be dealt with appropriately so that you can quickly get back to exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

For further resources, download the Exercise is Medicine® Australia factsheets on various heart conditions. Also available is the Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) position statement on exercise training and chronic heart failure.

Expert Contributor: Professor Steve Selig, Accredited Exercise Physiologist and ESSA Fellow

TESTIMONIAL

"In August 2014, I was in a Perth hospital with a major blockage in my heart with a cardiologist saying I needed either a risky stent procedure or an open-heart operation. I had to give him a decision there and then because of the severity of the blockage so that the necessary arrangements could be made to save my life. I asked him what he would do. He said if it were him, that he would try the stent, but I needed to understand that open-heart surgery was the gold standard when it came to alleviating blockages such as mine. The prospect of a long period of rehabilitation after having major heart surgery did not thrill me one bit so I chose to go with the risky stent.

Five days later I was released from hospital with my life extended and full of determination to do something about the cause of all my health problems. I was 140kg and getting bigger. In addition to my heart disease, I also had fatty liver disease, problems with my joints and back, and my blood sugar was too high, as was my cholesterol. The stent in my heart had only brought me some extra time. If I did not lose the extra kilos, one of my comorbidities was going to take me out before my time and I was not enthusiastic about dying prematurely.

For the next three years I dabbled with cutting back my food intake and getting a little exercise. By the time 2017 rolled around, I had managed to drop 19kg. I still needed to jettison another 43kg, but I was at a loss as to how to do it and keep it off. I went to my GP for help, and he referred me to an Accredited Exercise Physiologist, David who specialises in metabolic health.

David showed me how I could stop living to eat and start eating to live and how to shed the excess weight by combining smart food choices with regular exercise. Following David's weight loss strategy, I did not have to starve myself. I did not have to give up any of the foods I liked. I just had to be cognisant of not eating more than what my body needed to function. David gave me all the resources and encouragement I needed to succeed.

Today I am 78 kilograms. I have reversed my fatty liver disease. I still have heart disease, but last year I was able to stop taking one of my heart medications and this year my cardiologist was so impressed with my weight loss that he now only wants to see me every two years instead of at 12 monthly intervals. My blood sugar and cholesterol levels are normal. I cycle six, sometimes seven, days a week.

My Accredited Exercise Physiologist gave me the tools to get back a lot of years of life that would have otherwise been lost. If it wasn't for David's weight loss strategies and vast knowledge and experience in the field of metabolic health, I would not be enjoying life as much as I now do."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED ANONYMOUSLY BY A CLIENT OF DAVID BEARD, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

DIABETES

One Australian is diagnosed with diabetes every five minutes, a staggering statistic that has a huge impact on our community and the health care system.

Diabetes is a chronic condition in which a person has high blood sugar, either because the body does not produce enough insulin, or because cells do not respond adequately to the insulin that is produced. There are two main types of diabetes:

- **Type 1 diabetes,** which is characterised by the autoimmune destruction of the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas.
- **Type 2 diabetes,** which is the most common form and is characterised by a reduced production of insulin and an inability of the body tissues to respond fully to insulin.

As there is currently no cure for diabetes, the condition requires lifelong management.

In the case of type 1 diabetes, this means keeping blood glucose levels within safe levels through multiple daily insulin injections or a continuous infusion of insulin through an insulin pump.

For type 2 diabetes, blood glucose levels are managed through medication, diet, and exercise – or a combination of these. People with diabetes frequently also require treatment to lower cholesterol and blood pressure levels.

It's important to highlight that Indigenous Australians are 3 times more likely to have type 2 diabetes compared to non-Indigenous Australians. This statistic then increases for those Indigenous Australians living in remote areas.

DIABETES IN MEN

In 2017–18, the occurrence of diabetes was higher for males (5.0%) than females (3.8%), with the gap increasing significantly from the age of 45 onwards.

Almost 1 million Australian adults had type 2 diabetes specifically, with it more commonly found in males than females (6.1% and 4.6%, respectively).

Men seem more susceptible than women to diabetes due the consequences of sedentary lifestyles and obesity, possibly due to differences in insulin sensitivity and regional fat storage.

Many factors can increase the risk for diabetes and its complications in men, including:

- smoking
- being overweight
- avoiding physical activity
- having high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- being older than 45

Diabetes can also cause symptoms in men that are related to sexual health.

- **Erectile dysfunction:** Erectile dysfunction (ED) is the inability to achieve or maintain an erection. Men with diabetes are at risk for ED. According to a review of 145 research studies, over 50% of men with diabetes experience erectile dysfunction.
- **Damage to the autonomic nervous system:** Diabetes can harm the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and lead to sexual problems. The ANS controls the widening or constricting of your blood vessels. If the blood vessels and nerves in the penis are injured by diabetes, ED can result.
- **Retrograde ejaculation:** Men with diabetes can also face retrograde ejaculation. This results in some semen being released into the bladder. Symptoms may include noticeably less semen released during ejaculation.
- **Urologic issues:** Urologic issues can occur in men with diabetes due to diabetic nerve damage. These include an overactive bladder, inability to control urination, and urinary tract infections (UTIs).

THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Exercise and keeping physically fit is a highly effective way to both prevent the onset of diabetes, as well as manage any current diabetic symptoms.

On top of the wide range of benefits that exercise provides, for men with diabetes, exercise lowers blood glucose levels and boosts the body's sensitivity to insulin, countering insulin resistance. Exercise also improves cardiorespiratory fitness and strength, which helps insulin work more effectively.

By exercising regularly and managing your blood sugar within your exercise schedule, this can allow you to get the full benefits of a workout without feeling shaky, tired, dizzy, or anxious.

TYPES OF EXERCISE RECOMMENDED

All forms of exercise – aerobic, resistance, or doing both (combined training) – are equally good at lowering HbA1c values (average blood glucose or sugar levels) in men with diabetes. It's important to remember that although a combination of aerobic and resistance have the best overall effect, there may be modifications to each individual.

- For individuals with diabetes, it is recommended to perform **aerobic exercise** – this includes walking, cycling, swimming or even dancing – on most days of the week, aiming for 30 minutes each session to improve your cardiorespiratory function.
  - *Remember, if you're just starting out, you may only be able to manage 10 minutes. Aim to gradually progress over a few weeks to reach the goal of 30 minutes continuously.*
  - *It's also important to avoid too much walking/running if you have neuropathic symptoms, such as the gradual onset of numbness, prickling or tingling in your feet or hands, or foot ulcers.*
- **Resistance exercises** can be performed using your body weight, light hand weights or resistance bands, various machines and free weights found in a gym setting. Moving your muscles under a greater resistance promotes an increase in muscle mass and therefore greater glucose uptake.
  - *For people with diabetes, it is recommended to participate in resistance training 2-3 x per week with a range of large, functional muscle groups being used.*

THE BEST TIME TO EXERCISE WITH DIABETES

The type of diabetes you have and the medication you may be using should be a consideration when deciding on the best time to exercise.

If you're taking insulin, it's important to avoid exercise during peak insulin action as this could result in unwanted "lows". It is also recommended to avoid exercise close to sleeping.

When you eat, your blood glucose levels go up. But remember, research has shown that if you exercise for 10 minutes immediately after eating, your blood glucose levels could be up to 5mmol/L lower than if you just sat on the couch watching TV. This is because exercise has a lasting effect; glucose continues to be removed from the blood stream by the muscles themselves (from being active) but also, ongoing training has been shown to improve insulin sensitivity.

Remember to see your doctor or accredited exercise professional prior to commencing a new exercise program to ensure your safety. As with all exercise, it's important to avoid training if you're unwell or if the weather is extremely hot. Be sure to start at a light intensity and gradually progress with the help of your health professional.

GET THE RIGHT SUPPORT

See an Accredited Exercise Physiologist: Whether you're currently inactive, at risk of diabetes or have been diagnosed with diabetes, exercise can help. But it's important to get the right advice. Accredited Exercise Physiologists are specially trained to understand the complexities of this condition and can help you to exercise safely with diabetes. Find one near you!

> *Visit your GP: Can't remember the last time you had your blood glucose checked? Now's the time to make an appointment with your doctor for a blood test, especially if you're experiencing ED or other potential complications.*
>
> *If diagnosed with diabetes, your doctor may also refer you to a urologist or endocrinologist to treat the effects of low testosterone which is a common result of diabetes in men.*

When managing your diabetes, it's important to complete an annual cycle of care with your GP to identify any health concerns early and discuss the best treatment with your doctor and diabetes health professionals. Your level of physical activity will be reviewed as part of your annual cycle of care.

For further resources, download the Exercise is Medicine® Australia factsheet on Type 1 diabetes, Type 2 Diabetes, and Aboriginal Health: Type 2 Diabetes. Also available is the Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) position statement on exercise and diabetes.

Expert Contributor: *Elise Edwards, Accredited Exercise Physiologist and Credentialed Diabetes Educator at BallyCara*

TESTIMONIAL

"Jim, 63 years old, was originally referred to see an Accredited Exercise Physiologist for borderline type 2 diabetes. However, during the initial interview it was uncovered that much of Jim's decline in health and energy levels began following bowel cancer treatment 2 years prior. While Jim was considered to be 'cancer free', he reported many of the common ongoing side effects from the chemotherapy treatment such as fatigue, loss in strength and weight gain post treatment. Jim's goals were to improve his energy levels, lose weight (approximately 10kg to lose), and begin to engage in activities he did prior to his cancer diagnosis like bike riding.

Jim was able to participate in a group exercise program ran at his local gym by an Accredited Exercise Physiologist. The program ran over 4 weeks and involved aerobic and resistance exercise that varied between self-paced and group circuit training. Jim also reported to be walking 15-20 minutes on alternative days. Over the course of the program, Jim reported to gain confidence in his ability to perform different exercises and learnt strategies to continue to remain active. So much so, that during a three-month follow-up phone call, Jim reported to have reached his initial goal weight and was now bike riding 10-15 km."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY PHOEBE ROBERTS, EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

CANCER

In 2016, there were a total of 135,133 cancer diagnoses in Australia, with 74,003 of those diagnoses being male. Cancers that men are most effected by are prostate, lung, bladder, melanoma and colorectal.

Exercise, as is well known now, has profound positive effects on us physically, emotionally, psychologically, and socially. Strength and aerobic exercise has been found to:

- Provide increases in blood flow which allows more blood with oxygen to diffuse into the site of the tumour offsetting the current hypoxic environment (area lacking oxygen)
- Send more of the body's own immune system properties to the infected area of the tumour.
- Help offset the effects of fatigue, sarcopenia, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular fitness parameters.
- Improve overall range of motion, mobility, strength, capacity and balance which can aid in the performance of activities of daily living.

Research has shown that patients who undertake an exercise program during treatment have been able to tolerate a greater percentage and frequency dosage of treatment in the group that performed exercise during its treatment cycles, which highlights that patients may be able to tolerate a greater percentage of their outlined treatment plan.

EXERCISE & PROSTATE CANCER

In 2019, it is estimated that the risk of a male being diagnosed with prostate cancer by his 85th birthday is 1 in 6, making it the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men. It's characterised by an uncontrolled rate of cell growth within the prostate that has the potential to metastasize (spread) to other parts of the body.

The prostate gland is situated within the pelvis and underneath the bladder. It's responsible for producing the fluid needed for ejaculation. Other conditions that involve the prostate include prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) and benign prostate hypertrophy (non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate).

THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Exercise is safe and effective in assisting in the treatment of prostate cancer when suitably prescribed. Research indicates that prostate cancer patients with higher physical activity levels experience a lower rate of death from both prostate cancer and overall.

EXERCISING DURING ADT

Prostate cancer needs male hormones (androgens such as testosterone) to thrive. This means that one of the main types of drug therapy for this disease is androgen deprivation therapy, or ADT. These medications aim to reduce or block the effect of these hormones. Whilst it can be an effective treatment, reducing the amount of testosterone in a man's body has significant side effects. Symptoms can include weight gain, loss of muscle mass and menopause-like symptoms.

It's not all bad news. Research has shown exercise can help to reduce side effects of ADT, without influencing the effectiveness of the drug. This includes treating fatigue, improving strength and endurance, improving body composition, keeping bones strong, and reducing the risk of other diseases.

SPEAK TO THE EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

Exercise is medicine for those with prostate cancer, but it's important to get the right advice. The 2019 ESSA 'Exercise medicine in cancer management' position statement encourages cancer patients to be guided through an individualised exercise prescription that is specific to them, their cancer, and their needs.

There is no "one best exercise program" for prostate cancer patients. Targeted exercise prescription, which includes behaviour change advice and support, is needed to ensure the greatest benefit for the patient is achieved, with very low risk of harm.

This is why seeing an Accredited Exercise Physiologist, in consultation with the cancer care team, is the first and most important step in starting an exercise program. Every patient will deal with prostate cancer differently and an Accredited Exercise Physiologist will understand the complexities of this condition and can help to make one's treatment journey easier.

For further resources, download the Exercise is Medicine® Australia factsheets on Prostate Cancer and other cancers. Also available is the Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) consensus statement on the role of AEPs in the treatment of cancer.

Expert Contributor: *Adam Luther, Accredited Exercise Physiologist at Absolute Health & Performance*

TESTIMONIAL

"In 2009, Robert was diagnosed with prostate cancer, which then was followed by a radical prostatectomy operation with all reports saying it was successful. Three months later, after needing to go to the toilet several times a night, he returned to the doctor who told him that, at 76 years old, he has had a pretty good innings. After Robert started attending his local prostate cancer support group meetings, he was then introduced to our team at Aspire Health Rehab this year and the benefits exercise could have on his health.

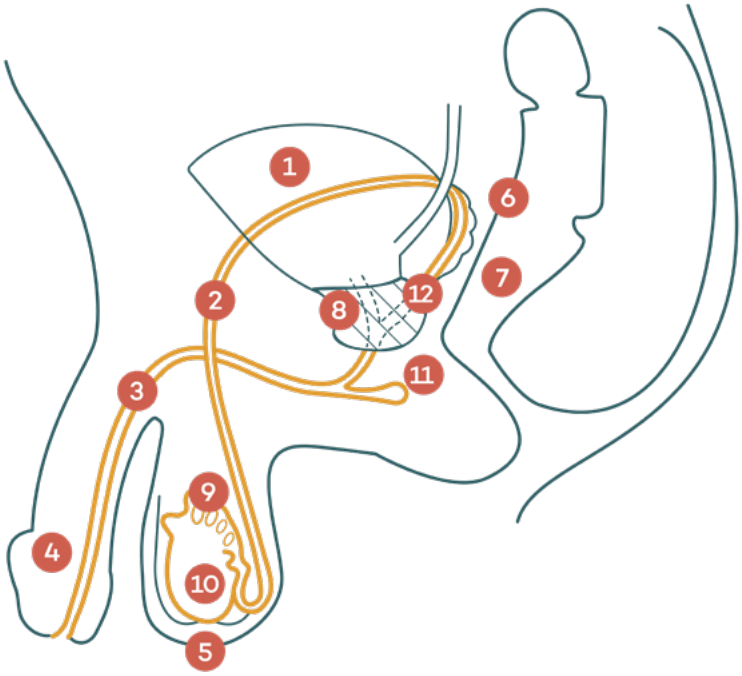
After just the first one hour exercise session, Robert only had to get up for the toilet three times that evening; now at the end of the eighth session, his trips are around the 2-3 mark maximum per night. Originally presenting with balance difficulties and issues rising from chairs too, Robert's work within his weekly exercise sessions has been successful all round. Robert claims that if only he had been introduced to exercise prior to his operation than life would have been much easier, and that his Accredited Exercise Physiologists have helped him, and others, to live better and enjoy their life through exercise."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY KIM CHAPPEL, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION & INFERTILITY

Your reproductive and sexual health plays a key role in your well-being. Knowing more about your body, how it works, and the conditions that can affect you is important – this helps you make decisions about how you can look after your health and where to seek help when you need it.

The male reproductive system is made up of many individual organs acting together. Some are visible, such as the penis and the scrotum. Some are hidden inside your body. The brain also has an important role in controlling your reproductive function.



1. Bladder
2. Vas deferens
3. Urethra
4. Penis
5. Scrotum
6. Seminal Vesicle
7. Rectum
8. Prostate gland
9. Epididymis
10. Testicle
11. Cowper's gland
12. Ejaculatory duct

Did you know?

Every day your body makes around 70 million sperm!

Image attributed to Healthy Male

KEY PARTS OF THE MALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

» **The penis** is made up of two erectile cylinders (corpora cavernosa) that swell with blood during erection. Chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and mental health conditions can all affect penis function.

» **The urethra** is the tube that runs from your bladder to the end of your penis. It carries urine and semen from your bladder to the outside of your body. The urethra can be affected by prostate conditions.

» **The scrotum** is a loose pouch of skin that hangs outside your body, between your penis and anus. Your scrotum holds your testes (sometimes called testicles) in place and helps to keep them cooler than your core body temperature.

» **The testes** are a pair of egg-shaped glands that sit in your scrotum. You need testes for your reproductive system to work normally. The testes have two related, but separate rolest to make sperm and to make testosterone.

The testes develop inside the abdomen when you're an unborn baby. They then move down (descend) into your scrotum before or just after birth. The descent of your testicles is important for your fertility because your testicles need to be kept cooler than your core body temperature to make sperm and to work normally. In the scrotum, your testes are about 2°C cooler than normal core body temperature. This is why, in cold weather, the scrotum contracts and brings the testicles closer to the body and relaxes in hotter weather.

WHAT IMPACTS MALE SEXUAL HEALTH?

There are many things that can impact male sexual health and well-being. Sometimes men may be a bit reluctant to talk to a health care provider about reproductive and sexual health because it can be a bit sensitive. Rest assured, the difficulties you may be experiencing are more common than you think.

> ***There are things you can do to look after yourself, but it is also important to seek help from your health and medical professionals early. Your health care team play an important role. The Spanner in the Works? resource gives you a guide of the different things to keep an eye on at different ages and stages in life and who's out there to help.***

COMMON CONDITIONS

MALE INFERTILITY

Often, men can be shocked to be told that they are the reason why they and their partner are having problems conceiving. But, in fact, about one in 20 men in Australia are infertile. Male infertility can have many causes, but problems with the number or quality of sperm is the most common. Sometimes treatment can restore natural fertility, but often doctors cannot find a reason for sperm not being made properly. This can make coping with male infertility difficult. Fertility specialists can treat some male infertility problems using assisted reproductive treatment. For men without sperm, couples may consider donor sperm, adoption, or foster parenting.

PROSTATE ENLARGEMENT

Most common in older men, about one in seven Australian men over 40 years of age have problems with their prostate. The most common prostate disease is a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). While not usually life-threatening, for some men BPH can have a major effect on quality of life because of problems with urination. However, not all urination problems are caused by the prostate, so it is important to see your doctor to find the cause. Medicines, and sometimes surgery, can help improve the symptoms of prostate disease.

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

Sexual problems in men are more common than you might think. About one in five Australian men over the age of 40 have problems getting or keeping an erection (erectile dysfunction or impotence). In some cases, erectile dysfunction is a sign of a serious health problem such as diabetes or heart disease. There are many treatments for erectile dysfunction, including medicines, but talking to your partner and your doctor is the most important first step. Even if the cause of erectile dysfunction is a physical one, getting some counselling or emotional support is an important part of treatment.

ANDROGEN (TESTOSTERONE) DEFICIENCY

Lower energy levels, mood swings, bad temper (irritability), poor concentration, reduced muscle strength, or a lack of interest in sex can be signs of androgen deficiency (low testosterone levels). About one in 200 men in Australia have androgen deficiency, but not all are diagnosed. Androgen deficiency affects men of all ages and can be caused by a genetic or medical problem, or by damage to the testicles. In some men, testosterone levels fall with older age most often due to illness or weight gain. Androgen deficiency is diagnosed by a doctor such as your GP, or by another specialist (usually an endocrinologist).

THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Medical research shows links between chronic disease such as heart disease and diabetes and male reproductive and sexual health. In fact, erectile dysfunction can be an early warning sign for future heart disease and/or type 2 diabetes. If you have erectile dysfunction, you have a similar risk of having a heart attack to someone with a family history of heart disease or a cigarette smoker, especially if you are young.

Erectile dysfunction and heart disease have some of the same causes and risk factors, including being physically inactive. It's a good reason to focus on exercise for its many benefits.

Some studies have shown a link between increasing levels of physical activity and lower rates of benign prostate enlargement (BPH) or irritating and painful urinary symptoms (LUTS, or lower urinary tract symptoms). Physical activity may help prevent these prostate problems. It can also be good to check in on the health of your pelvic floor muscles. The Continence Foundation of Australia have some great resources specifically for males to understand the importance of the pelvic floor and some tips on how to get started with pelvic floor exercise.

If you are planning for a family, it is important to remember that the health of sperm at conception is affected by the three months prior to conception. If you're overweight, you're more likely to have low testosterone levels, experience erectile dysfunction, and are likely to be less fertile than someone within an average weight range.

Being overweight also increases the chance of developing type 2 diabetes. If you have type 2 diabetes, you are about twice as likely to have erectile dysfunction as someone without diabetes.

If you are overweight, with or without diabetes, losing weight could help your reproductive health. However, not putting on weight in the first place is the best way to lower your chance of reproductive health problems. Along with changes to your diet, physical activity is very important in either keeping a healthy weight or losing weight and maintaining or regaining reproductive and sexual health.

SPEAK TO THE EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

It is important to find opportunities for physical activity every day in as many ways as you can. A variety of exercises including resistance/strength training and cardiovascular/aerobic activity is important. An Accredited Exercise Physiologist can help you get started and support you to stay on track.

It is particularly important to seek support of an exercise professional if you have chronic conditions. Appropriate exercise will play a big part in positively managing your health and well-being. Well managed chronic conditions can lead to improved sexual function!

Expert Contributor: *Vanessa Jones, Accredited Exercise Physiologist, Health Promotion Manager at Healthy Male (Andrology Australia)*

Exercise is emerging as an innovative way to improve the recovery for those living with substance use disorders.

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

The consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is a major cause of preventable disease and illness in Australia.

Recurrent use of alcohol and/or other drugs that leads to significant clinical and functional impairments may result in a diagnosed substance use disorder (SUD). It's also called substance abuse, substance dependence or addiction.

Substance use disorder affects 1 in 20 Australians and notably, 1 in 10 young people (aged 16-24) and a greater percentage of men than women. Whilst there is a statistically higher prevalence of SUDs in men, along with difference in types of substances used (e.g., male young adults are more likely to be dependent on marijuana or alcohol), some of these differences are linked to gender/cultural environment (e.g., access to substances) rather than sex or biological factors.

Reasons for initiating drug use also vary between men and women, with men usually influenced by peers or sensation-seeking and influenced at a younger age.

Continuing to use substance/s leads to further dysfunction, which reinforces drug taking behaviour and increase the vulnerability for treatment relapse. Furthermore, there are sex differences in the physiologic effects and pharmacokinetic properties of different substances, which contribute to different effects and outcomes in SUDs for men.

TREATING SUDS

Whilst SUD treatment programs vary, they generally focus on the primary goal of abstinence or harm minimization. This is commonly achieved by treating the physiological, psychological, and sociological problems contributing to SUD in each individual. Unfortunately, for both adults and young people, rapid relapse is the norm. Low rates of continuous abstinence and recurrent relapse are associated with substantial health and economic burden for both the individual and communities.

Treatment is a complex process for numerous reasons, included is an increased risk of at least one other mental health condition, with higher rates of comorbid antisocial personality disorder seen in men. In the same way sex and gender can influence the course of substance use initiation and addiction, it can also influence the recovery outcomes and treatment processes. There is limited research exploring gendered aspects of recovery, however, research has demonstrated worse treatment outcomes for men (e.g., retention rates) despite greater representation of men in treatment populations and distinct recovery journeys in relation to physical health.

THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Exercise interventions are emerging as an innovative approach to improve recovery for those living with SUDs. Research has demonstrated feasibility and effectiveness in terms of both physical and mental health benefits in varied SUD groups. Exercise programs should be low-cost, readily accessible, enjoyable and tailored to participants' preferences. Importantly, they should consider the individual's addiction and recovery experience, along with biology, gender, and sociocultural context, in order to motivate and encourage initiation and ongoing participation.

Unsurprisingly, given the well-established benefits of exercise more broadly, improvements in physical and mental health have also been reported. These include improved well-being and sleep quality, reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, and elevated quality of life, mood, and motivation.

There are likely multiple factors leading to the beneficial impact of exercise including: behavioural factors (e.g., substituting exercise for unhealthy behaviours such as substance use); psychological factors (e.g., improved well-being); and neurobiological factors (e.g., activation of reward pathways in the brain).

SPEAK TO THE EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

If you want to know how to safely incorporate physical activity into your life in line with your SUD treatment, talk to an accredited exercise professional. An Accredited Exercise Physiologist (AEP) can use exercise to help improve your mental health and physical well-being in an environment that is safe and well supported.

Despite the well-established health outcomes and emerging evidence of specific SUD recovery related outcomes, tailored exercise programs aren't currently part of standard care within SUD treatment. If there isn't an AEP currently part of your SUD treatment team, you can find one in your area using the online directory.

Expert contributor: *Dr Bonnie Furzer (PhD), Accredited Exercise Physiologist, Senior Lecturer at the University of Western Australia (School of Human Sciences), and Director of not-for-profit Thriving in Motion*

TESTIMONIAL

"[Exercise] sort of stopped the cravings, you know they are still there, but it just makes me not think about them as much."

"Well, I'm going to [exercise], I can build that energy up and then just use it all here you know, and when you leave it's just like you've got nothing, it's almost like a counselling session I suppose, but it's counselling where you don't need to say anything...actions speak louder than words."

"Definitely after [the exercise] I do feel happier with myself, knowing that I'm doing something good for myself and it's helping my organs and body, makes you happier afterwards... you've achieved something, you've done something good for yourself."

"[Exercise] helps you know, it's part of the routine, and then the whole thing of rehab is to get yourself into realising drugs aren't the routine."

"[Exercise] makes you feel a lot better about yourself. Gives you self-esteem, boosts your self-esteem from ground level all the way up to sky high, in one training session, so it's been pretty good."

"When you work out you look better and you feel better, and [exercise] gives you more self-esteem, exercise has done that for me... just makes you feel good, makes you feel better about yourself."

"Feels good when you're doing a workout, blocking away all the bad memories, all the thoughts and that, you're just getting into it, you know what I mean?"

TESTIMONIAL QUOTES PROVIDED BY PARTICIPANTS OF AN EXERCISE PROGRAM RESEARCH TRIAL FOR YOUTH WITHIN A DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT SERVICE

EXERCISE FOR NEW DADS

The decision to start a family is life-changing and should focus families' attention on health. The health system justifiably focuses on the needs of mothers and babies, but the needs of fathers, as equal parenting partners, can often be overlooked. Engaging dads and prospective dads to be involved and proactive parents as early as possible is important and will positively impact growth and development of their children.

Before a child is born it is important to recognise the importance of lifestyle decisions on preconception health and well-being. The health of sperm at the time of conception is determined three months prior to conception – so making healthy choices for your unborn child starts before they are even conceived.

Take the time to learn what you can do to positively impact sperm health and fertility to help you make good decisions about preconception health. There's more information on this and other male fertility topics on the Healthy Male website.

AUSTRALIAN FATHERS AT A GLANCE

- 1 in 5 Australians are fathers – that's 5 million fathers
- 1 in 20 fathers experience depression while their partner is pregnant
- Men's preconception health affects fertility and the health of their children
- For infertile couples, the male contributes to infertility in around half of all cases
- After a miscarriage or stillbirth, men often hide their grief to support their partners
- Father-child bonding contributes to healthy child development
- Up to 1 in 10 fathers experience post-natal depression
- The risk of suicide is higher for men during pregnancy or the first year or their child's life than at any other time in their lives
- 38% of new fathers worry about their mental health
- 1 in 5 fathers report feeling totally isolated in the first year of fatherhood
- 45% of fathers are not aware that men can experience postnatal depression
- Most men report finding real joy in being a father

PREPARATION IS THE KEY

When preparing to become a dad there are lots of things to think about and do – attending formal prenatal and parenting programs and classes can be a great way to learn some things. There are some great resources online and in the community, to assist dads in many different situations including:

- MensLine Australia
- Raising Children
- Dads Group

There are many changes that new dads can expect including shifting relationship dynamics, demands on time, financial changes, and balancing your own needs with that of your family. All these changes can impact physical, social, and mental health. Learning to balance these needs is important.

Building a good support team around you is essential – this might include:

- Your partner
- Family members
- Friends
- Work colleagues
- Community/sporting/hobby groups
- New parent programs
- Health and medical professionals

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health can be impacted as you navigate parenthood. Up to one in 10 new dads struggle with post-natal depression. If you find you are feeling down and struggling with difficult emotions, there are specific services to support fathers. PANDA offers support and services specifically for dads that complement healthy exercise habits.

HEALTHY DADS ENCOURAGE HEALTHY CHILDREN

Dads are important role models and facilitators for good eating habits and physical activity levels. Overweight fathers are more likely to have overweight children and yet, men are less likely to attempt weight loss than women. Taking a positive step early to maintain or regain a healthy weight through good exercise and nutrition habits is important. Fathers who are active and play in a physically active way are more likely to have children who are also physically active.

> ***It's not uncommon to find that focusing on your own health and fitness becomes a lower priority when you become a dad. But it doesn't have to be that way! Finding a balance between self-care and role modelling the healthy behaviours you want to see in your children is important.***

There are a number of ways that you can look after your own health and fitness and be a positive role model for your children. Here are some suggestions to help you get started:

- Plan your time – make time for activity with your children AND on your own
- Meet other dads locally and share the care with your partner, friends or family
- Find a family activity – weekly events like parkrun are inclusive and welcoming places for families and individuals
- Set up a home exercise space (safely) – check out the Exercise Right home workouts
- Find out if there are parent-friendly exercise programs / facilities in your local community
- Chat with your local Accredited Exercise Physiologist or Accredited Exercise Scientist to get additional support

Expert Contributor: *Vanessa Jones, Accredited Exercise Physiologist, Health Promotion Manager at Healthy Male (Andrology Australia)*

TESTIMONIAL

"Turning 40 was a big milestone for Jason as he thought to himself, 'I don't want to be over the hill'. Jason felt as though he had let his health slip – he was overweight and his fitness had dropped to almost zero. His "dad bod" had taken over and his 9-year-old daughter was beating him in a running race which he couldn't even finish.

Something had to be done. Under the guidance of an Accredited Exercise Physiologist, Jason was exercising 30 minutes a day and eating healthy, helping him to shed 15kg in 90 days and his Bio Age dropping from 48 to 31. For the first time in a long time, he was becoming healthy and feeling fitter every day. Jason says that his daughter still beats him in a race but he's happy that he can at least make it to the finish line."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY STEVEN ROBERTS, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

EXERCISING RIGHT FOR WORK

In Australia, there are over 13 million workers, with 56% of them being male.

Although 30% of the workforce is made up by tradies, this sector represents 58% of serious claims for worker's compensation. The most common injuries for tradies include traumatic joint injuries, wounds/lacerations, musculoskeletal disorders, and fractures.

Furthermore, additional risk factors such as poor diet associated with early morning starts, long hours of work and limited food options are a significant contributor to a tradie's health at work.

Weight gain, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes are the most common cardiovascular complications observed amongst trade workers, and although some of the workers are very physically active within their jobs, others are extremely sedentary by operating machinery for long hours at a time or working in an office.

The most common injuries for working men (both blue and white collar) are:

- Traumatic joint, ligament and muscle and/or tendon injury
- Wounds, lacerations, amputations, and internal organ damage
- Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases

Given the high cost of worker's compensation claims associated with the male work-related injuries, programs focused on injury prevention have become significantly more important.

THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

It is easy to assume that if your job is physically active, you do not require any further exercise during the day. This misconception is believed by many, and it is important to explain that different exercises elicit different results within the body.

Whilst being active at work is very important and beneficial, planned moderate/high intensity exercises are fundamental in order to:

- Reduce stress levels
- Keep muscles and joints healthy
- Manage your cardiovascular risk factors

If you have a physically demanding job, exercises focusing on muscle strengthening are recommended. Resistance training (weights) will improve your muscle and bone strength, reducing your risk of sustaining musculoskeletal injury at work.

If you have a sedentary job, focusing more on your cardiovascular exercises (such as walking, running, riding a bike, rowing, etc.) is more important. However, a mix of cardiovascular exercises and resistance training is the ideal recipe for optimum injury prevention amongst white collar workers.

TYPES OF EXERCISE RECOMMENDED

To get the most benefit from exercise right for work, it is important to tailor the exercises to the duties you perform in the workplace. For example:

- If you work as a tradesman using primarily your upper body (lifting, carrying, using power tools, etc.), exercises aimed at upper body strengthening should be considered.
- If you are an office worker who is sitting for most of your day, exercises aimed at your core and legs will be more beneficial.

Matching the exercises with the functionality of it is fundamental to successfully maintaining your body healthy at work. Below are some examples of exercise programs specific to your job physicality.

TRADIES

LAT PULLDOWN		
BENCH PRESS		
SHOULDER PRESS		
SINGLE ARM ROW		
LUNGES		

OFFICE WORKERS

CARDIO		
LAT PULLDOWN		
BENT OVER ROW		
SQUATS		
HIP RAISES		

SPEAK TO THE EXERCISE PROFESSIONALS

An Accredited Exercise Scientist (AES) or an Accredited Exercise Physiologist (AEP) can assist you with identifying suitable exercises that you can do in your own preferred environment, being a gym, home, park or even at work. They can help you with tailoring the exercises to your capacity and intended goals, giving you a unique exercise program that you truly enjoy.

Click here to find your nearest AES.

An AEP is also qualified to provide service to anyone with a chronic medical condition, injury, or disability therefore, you can be sure that you are being looked after by a professional that is specialised in providing safe and effective treatment to anyone.

Click here to find your nearest AEP.

Expert Contributor: *Aline Patrick, Accredited Exercise Physiologist at Pro Fit Rehab; in collaboration with Sam Rooney, Accredited Exercise Physiologist at Pro Fit Rehab*

Playing sport provides a wide range of benefits for the physical and mental health of adult men.

PLAYING TEAM SPORTS? HOW TO AVOID INJURIES

As we get older, playing sport still remains an integral part of some men's lifestyles, whether it be recreational, weekend sporting competition, or competing at a semi-professional or even an elite level.

In 2020, 89% of adults (aged 15 and over) participated in sport or physical activity, with 69.6% of men participating in at least some sport related activities.

Australia's most common team sports played by adult men include cricket, AFL, rugby league and rugby union, either played casually on weekends or in professional/elite settings.

THE BENEFITS OF PLAYING TEAM SPORTS

Playing sport, just like engaging in exercise and physical activity, provides a wide range of benefits for the physical and mental health of adult men, whether it be played at a recreational or more professional level.

- Physical health benefits for men include a stronger heart, improved lung function, and better sleep. The mental health benefits include alleviated symptoms of anxiety and depression, whilst also helping to manage life stresses.
- Playing sport can also improve men personally by developing better time management skills, boosting confidence and self-esteem, increasing discipline, and stabilising emotions.
- The social aspect is also significantly important when participating in team sports as it not only provides an opportunity for men to make new connections, but it can also offer a "safe place" to have important conversations about their mental health, family and work stresses, and other typically tough topics. Team sports plays an integral role in providing men with a sense of camaraderie or mateships.
- For those men who have children in their lives, participating in sport provides a positive role modelling service for the younger generations to look up to. Children are more likely to be involved in sport and physical activity if an adult in their life is engaged in it also.
- Team sports aren't restricted to just those in 20s – 40s either, older adults can still play too! In older age, sport can be engaged in either recreationally or competitively and can provide numerous health benefits for active ageing.

HOW TO PREVENT INJURIES

Team sports, and sport in general, have a high rate injury occurrence. Some injuries will be unavoidable with contact sports, but chronic or adaptive injuries can be addressed through a number of factors:

- Warm-ups: Warming up effectively before training is important to allow your body time to function correctly and prepare for the physical and physiological demands of the sporting activity.

- **Training:** If time allows, an easy way to avoid injury is by using proper and correct techniques on game day. Setting time aside for training can not only improve these skills but ensure you're in good shape to avoid injuries.
- **Protective gear:** It's there for a reason and it's not just for those who are "weak", it's for everyone. A simple way to avoid being hit at an alarming speed by a cricket ball or football is to wear the protective pads, mouth guards, helmets, gloves, and anything appropriate for the relevant sport.
- **Avoid the heat:** A lot of Australian men are playing recreational team sports on a weekend, and sometimes this in the middle of the day which can be the hottest. Avoiding the heat may be tricky in Australia when you're a weekend sportsman, so make sure to stay hydrated with lots of water to avoid fatigue which can lead to an injury.
- **Get some sleep:** A good night's sleep gives the body a chance to repair and regenerate from the day to help prevent overuse injuries. Sleep also helps to improve performance by assisting with reaction time, which is integral in most sports.
- **Eat regular, healthy meals:** Maintaining a strong, healthy body is the most effective way to avoid common sports injuries. Experts recommend eating small meals or healthy snacks at regular intervals throughout the day to keep your body and mind going strong.

AVOID THE RISKS

If returning to sport after a long break, whether it be due to an injury or other commitments, it's important to take it easy to avoid injuring yourself (potentially again!). Ensure that you have undertaken some training before returning as you may have lost some of your strength or mobility due to the period of inactivity. It is better to take it slow and steadily to build your strength back up than to do too much too fast and sustain an injury before you've had a chance to hit or kick a ball again.

It's important to rest and consecutive days of training can increase your risk of injury. Whether you're currently injured or playing team sports regularly, opportunities for appropriate rest will allow your body a chance to recover and keep your body healthy.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

You should see a doctor for your sports-related injury if you experience the following:

1. Consistent pain during or after sports
2. Persistent or new swelling around a joint
3. Recurrent instability - joints "give way"
4. Painful pops (nonpainful pops are OK)
5. Pain that does not respond to a period of rest

Playing competitively and look for some coaching or strength and conditioning training? Contact an Accredited Sports Scientist. Sports Scientists use exercise to improve sporting performance and can optimise preparation for both teams or individual athletes.

Want to improve your general fitness to help get in shape for an upcoming event? Then an Accredited Exercise Scientist or an Accredited Exercise Physiologist can provide you with guidance and an easy-to-follow exercise program designed just for you. Find an accredited exercise and sports science professional in your area.

FITNESS TIPS FOR OLDER MEN

Research tells us that keeping fit and maintaining their health and well-being can add years to a man's life.

For men aged 65 years and over, at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity is recommended on most, preferably all, days. Some strength training is also beneficial as is incorporating flexibility and balance exercises too.

If you find 30 minutes difficult right now, start with just 10 minutes once or twice a day. After 2 weeks, increase to 15 minutes twice a day.

TO GET THE BALL ROLLING, HERE ARE 20 EASY TIPS FOR OLDER MEN	
First, have a chat with your GP	As we get older, it's always a good idea to check in with our GPs for regular health check-ups. GPs can check your blood pressure, cholesterol and heart health and also measure your waistline to ensure you're in a healthy condition before kick starting any new fitness programs.
Cut down on alcohol	As you get older, different health issues may develop as you age that alcohol can affect in different ways. Cutting back on alcohol consumption means you're at less risk of developing long-term health problems such as cancer, heart disease or liver cirrhosis (scarring). You might even lose weight, have more energy, and feel better.
Motivate yourself	Need a reason to stay fit? How about a longer life? For men, fitness level can predict length of life even better than body mass index (BMI) can, according to a study of more than 14,000 men. As a man's fitness improved, his risk of death from all causes dropped 15% and his risk of death from heart disease was reduced by 19%.
Try and stick to the exercise guidelines	It's recommended that older adults do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days. If 30 minutes seems too much to you, don't worry, as some activity, however light, is better for your health than none at all. This could be walking around the block, doing some gardening, or even playing some backyard cricket.
Don't be afraid to ask for help	Not too sure where to start when it comes to exercising? No worries! Speak to an accredited exercise professional. Basically, an ESSA accredited exercise professional specialises in designing and delivering safe and effective exercise programs for all populations. Having a chat with one before undertaking any exercise is a smart move.

Put the pedal to the metal	Cycling is mainly an aerobic activity, which means that your heart, blood vessels and lungs all get a workout. You will breathe deeper, sweat, and experience increased body temperature, which will improve your overall fitness level.
Take the stairs	Stair climbing burns more calories than a traditional walk and increases your chance to achieve weight loss. It can help to improve your energy, increase the function of your immune system and lower your risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, osteoporosis and heart disease.
Keep the weights on	No equipment, no worries. Bodyweight exercises like squats, push-ups, or step ups will help to increase muscle tone, maintain sound strength, build bone density, maintain a healthy weight, optimise metabolic function, and reduce the risk of injury, falls and fatigue. It is recommended a minimum of two sessions per week be conducted to achieve the benefits of this training.
Resistance is key	Resistance training is one of the most effective ways to maintain muscle mass as we age. There's a wide range of benefits of engaging in resistance training, and we listed 22 of them here.
Keep it social	A social exercise group class may not immediately ease your arthritis or make your shoulder range amazing but if you have a good time doing it, you'll feel better. Feeling better means you'll be more likely to go back again to help kick start those health benefits. Even exercising with a buddy can help keep you accountable ensuring you both get your body moving and heart pumping.
Just keep swimming	Hydrotherapy is a type of exercise therapy done in a heated pool. It has a wide range of benefits and is used to target and treat a variety of conditions. The use of gentle, controlled movements in warm water (heated up to 31-35 degrees) allows people to steadily progress their range of movement. It's also a safe, comfortable, and often enjoyable environment.
Don't neglect the core	Core strength is more than just working on the six-pack. These muscles support the spine through flexion, extension, and rotation, and incorporate the pelvic floor. Learning how to properly engage and activate these muscles daily will help to prevent injury during daily activity, prevent incontinence, boost sexual health, and improve pelvic stability.
Don't forget nutrition	Good nutrition plays a key role in healthy ageing and quality of life, especially when there are many physiological changes associated with the ageing process. When it comes to providing adequate nutrition, making every mouthful count is key, and speaking with an Accredited Practising Dietitian can sometimes be the best option if you have any concerns.

Aim for the green	Did you know that simply by playing golf you can extend your life by 5 years in comparison to non-golfers? The research is piling up on the wide range of health benefits you receive from playing golf including improved longevity and cardiovascular fitness, reduced risk of chronic conditions, positive mental health and boosted strength and balance.
Stretch in front of the TV	Can't make it to a gym class or out for a run? Stretch in between your favourite tv show or footy game. Resistance stretching (also known as power band stretching) allows you to increase your range of motion and keeps your body moving correctly.
Hold one-ear and stand on one leg	Balance exercises are important for older men over the age of 55 to help enhance proprioception awareness, coordination, maintain muscle activity and tone, and prevent against falls and the resulting injuries.
Try new things	There is no one perfect workout or exercise; everyone is different. There's a wide selection of exercise or physical activity you can undertake from swimming, dancing, cycling, walking the dog, the list goes on! Creating an exercise habit is difficult but finding one you enjoy can make it easier to come back to – and more likely you'll stick to your program.
Don't worry about running giving you bad knees	The reality is that running is hard on your body but that's why it can impact our health in such profound, positive way. Our body adapts and evolves to physical stress if it is dosed out appropriately and investing some money in the right pair of shoes helps too. However, it's important to remember that if you experience any pain in your knees to speak to an exercise professional first.
Listen to your heart (rate)	Exercise is a great way to keep your heart happy and healthy and it's a good idea to pay attention to your heart rate during exercise. For adults, moderate intensity exercise is about 50%-65% of your age-predicted heart rate maximum. Your maximum age-predicted heart rate is calculated: Age-predicted HR max = 220 minus your age For example, if you're 50 years old, your maximum HR would be approximately 170 (220 – 50).
Remember to take time to recover	Your body won't recover quite as quickly as it once did when you were younger, so it's important to take it easy and to allow yourself some recovery time. Whenever we exercise, the body undergoes change to adapt to the stress that we place on it. The by-product of these adaptations can include muscle soreness and fatigue and reduced muscle strength and power. Resting your body is essential by getting plenty of sleep and staying hydrated.

TIPS ON HOW TO START EXERCISING MORE

In a recent Exercise Right survey, 'motivation' was the key excuse for why Australian men aren't exercising. This was echoed in the 2020 AusPlay Survey that said the following were barriers for adults not engaging in physical activity or sport:

1. Not enough time/too many other commitments
2. Poor health or injury
3. Increasing age/too old
4. Don't like sport or physical activity
5. Too lazy

So, if you're wanting to start exercising, or you'd like to increase your exercise levels, but you're coming up against these common barriers, here's some simple tips to help you combat them:

Not enough time/too many other commitments? When you want to be active but feel you don't have time, setting small goals can sometimes be the best way to sneak some sort of exercise into your schedule: *go for a run for just one song; stick to 10s – 10 push-ups and 10 sit-ups every day; involve your kids with a walk in the park* – then try to increase these goals each week.

Poor health or injury? It can sometimes be daunting to exercise while living with a health condition or injury, but a way to overcome that fear is reminding your that physical activity may help to improve or manage it. However, it's recommended you speak to an Accredited Exercise Physiologist before undertaking any exercise to ensure your safety.

Increasing age/too old? Exercise is for everyone of all ages, and there's a wide range of benefits specifically for older adults who incorporate movement into their lives. You don't need to be able to run a marathon but keeping active is still important. Check out our Exercise Right for Older Adults eBook for more details.

Don't like sport or physical activity? Sometimes it can be hard to find a type of exercise that you enjoy but there are online resources that can show you what's available in your area! PlaySport is a handy, online directory that allows you to search for sporting experiences near you. It's inclusive of all abilities and ages with 300+ sport and activity types from Abseiling to Zumba.

Too lazy? Getting your mates involved in a weekend game of footy or cricket can be an easy way to not only keep active without it feeling like a chore, but connecting with friends too – two birds, one stone!

The number one motivator for men to participate in physical activity or sport was for their health and fitness. By overcoming these barriers and increasing your exercise levels, even if you start small and work your way up, you're going to be improving your health and fitness in a large variety of ways.

It's important to remember that any information you find online in videos, factsheets and other resources should be viewed as just a guide. If you need extra support or have any concerns, talk to your local GP or accredited exercise professional where possible.

Each person is different, and their exercise prescription should be individualised by an accredited exercise professional to suit any health conditions they may be living with.

REMEMBER, AN ACCREDITED EXERCISE PROFESSIONAL CAN HELP MOTIVATE YOU!

Currently there are over 7,000 ESSA-accredited exercise professionals throughout Australia. You can find one close to your home by looking at the online directory provided by Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA), the accreditation body for exercise and sports science professionals: www.essa.org.au/find-aep.

TESTIMONIALS

Watch this short video of how David and Alex worked together to improve David's life through the power of exercise.

DAVID

David is a 39-year-old who decided to visit Alex, an Accredited Exercise Physiologist to help prepare for his knee replacement surgery. Whilst he was also concerned about his body weight due to living with hypertension, David was looking for help for his PTSD and poor mental health.

Struggling to adapt to his new life after his service in the army, David was at the point where he could only walk 15 minutes before needing to sit down. He was distressed about not being able to help his wife around the house or at the shops – they'd go shopping and he wouldn't even be able to push the trolley. David explains that it was also "constant no's to the kids" and being unable to play with them, turning him in to a very angry person.

Post-operation, about 1-2 weeks after his surgery, David went to see Alex in crutches where they began to work on improving David's range of motion, before moving on to fine-tuning his strength. Since then, David has come a long way and believes the best part of his experience with Alex has been the challenge and how Alex has pushed him.

I had heaps of hesitation [at the start], it's just not something I am used to doing, like asking for help. If I didn't come and see Alex, I wouldn't be anywhere near where I am now in my journey – I don't know where I'd be without him. I have been able to go further than I thought I could, and he's made it fun. I've become a better husband and a better father – I can now freely do things with the kids and wife.

Watch this short video of James' journey which highlights just how exercise and Leona have changed his life.

JAMES

In 2017, James (who was 19 at the time) experienced a traumatic rugby injury that resulted in a severe brachial plexus injury to his left arm. The diagnosis entailed damage to all of the five nerves that powered his left arm. The medical prognosis was permanent paralysis of his arm and hand, without invasive surgery, and regardless he would only regain limited functional strength and movement with significant neuropathic pain on top of this.

The inability to perform daily living activities whilst experiencing neuropathic pain took James' mental state to an all-time low which led to poor body image and grieving the idea of "giving up the use of the hand". He battled with depression and negative thoughts and had difficulty coming to terms with permanent disability and not accepting the 2-year time frame for recovery.

Four weeks after his injury, James was referred by his mum to see Leona, an Accredited Exercise Physiologist. Now, 3.5 years later, James continues to make inspiring results.

TESTIMONIALS

Watch this short video of Brett opening up about his journey with exercise and how his Accredited Exercise Physiologist has turned his life around.

BRETT

Brett is a 42-year-old above-knee amputee who initially came to see Carl, an Accredited Exercise Physiologist to work on his golf strength and abilities to allow him to play for a longer time. However, Brett's mental health wasn't in a great place either. When he first had his amputation, Brett was really struggling to cope and turned to alcohol.

In the beginning, Carl and Brett worked on improving his strength and walking patterns. More recently their sessions have focused on strength and power specifically in a golf setting as Brett is going for a world ranking in the amputee category. Brett has learnt a lot about what he's capable of doing – breaking personal bests, having recently deadlifted 260kg, as well as being able to walk 18 holes of golf, when he could only walk 3 holes when he first started seeing Carl.

Brett believes that exercise has definitely changed his life for the better: "I was pretty unfit and overweight and wasn't able to do half of what I can do now due to what Carl and the team have done over the last year and a bit with me.

I probably wouldn't be here, with the way I was coping with what happened, I probably would have been gone a long time ago."

Watch this short video of the role exercise has played in Matt's life with the support of his Accredited Exercise Physiologist, Jessica.

MATT

After a crush injury at work, originally on the top of his foot, Matt became a single, below-knee amputee due to infection. The first time he put on his new foot, all Matt could think about was how he was going to walk on it due to his lack of strength.

Since working with Jessica, his Accredited Exercise Physiologist, they have seen huge improvements in his lower limb strength alone, as well as a huge improvement in self-confidence and the confidence to engage in more challenging exercises.

Since 2018, exercise has changed Matt's life, claiming that seeing an Accredited Exercise Physiologist has helped him both mentally and physically.

TESTIMONIALS

"A family members illness woke **KELVIN** up from the reality that he can't keep taking his health for granted. Kelvin, aged 43, had lost all incentive to look after himself and to exercise, and he fell into the usual rut: work, home, eat, sleep, repeat. This was his reason for deciding to act and joining a 90-day program led by an Accredited Exercise Physiologist.

The program reignited all Kelvin's attributes that he was craving and had lost since leaving school when playing competitive sports. Not only did Kelvin lose 10.5 years off his initial Bio Age, he also shed 6kg and got himself back to where he was a much happier being."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY STEVEN ROBERTS, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

"Over the past four years, **PETE** had experienced significant functional decline due to a major stroke in 2017 and numerous uncontrolled seizures prior to Pete reaching out for support in exercise in April 2019 for his functional capacity, health and well-being. Pete was reliant on a four wheeled walker for walking and due to his balance impairments and lacked confidence in: talking to people, working in the shed at home, going out in public, or attending the men's shed.

Upon initially engaging in exercise, Pete experienced significant complications during exercise sessions associated with epilepsy and postural hypotension which resulted in dizziness, light-headedness, absent seizures, and balance impairments. In addition to these symptoms, Pete also experiences high blood pressure, ischaemic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus, peripheral arterial disease, and emphysema.

Despite the complications, Pete persisted in attending weekly exercise sessions for the past 17 months which involved exercises aimed at improving Pete's strength, fitness, balance, proprioception and mobility. Since commencing sessions with an Accredited Exercise Physiologist, Pete reported that due to exercise he has gained the confidence to be able to attend the men's shed three times each week, complete more of his daily activities at home, spend time in his shed working on the tools, and engage in independent exercise and group exercise classes.

Pete now walks independently, has not experienced an absent seizure in well over six months, has reduced the medications required to manage his high blood pressure, and reports significant improvements in his mental health and his ability to do his activities of daily living around the home and the shed. Due to Pete's experience in exercise, he is now a passionate and active advocate for the importance of exercise and can often be heard reminding the fellas down at the men's shed."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY DAVID DALL'ALBA, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

"**BRIAN** is a motivated 81-year-old with Parkinson's Disease who has recently commenced seeing an Accredited Exercise Physiologist in March 2020. Brian is currently on a Level 2 Home Care Package and has funding to see an Accredited Exercise Physiologist to help reach his goals to lose weight, build confidence, prevent falls and help improve strength, balance and function. Brian was originally referred after he had three falls in six months and his wife and care coordinator were concerned for his declining health.

Brian has always led an active life, in particular he loved playing AFL for Geelong. Even after he retired from high level football, Brian has continued to try and keep active by walking his dog and occasionally bike riding. Unfortunately, since his diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease 10 years ago, Brian has struggled to keep up his desired level of activity noticing increased freezing on his right side.

Over the last few months, Brian has been continuing to walk his dog while incorporating a home program of his own with assistance from his wife and participating in weekly home visits with his Accredited Exercise Physiologist. Brian's Accredited Exercise Physiologist has been incorporating a range of strength, balance and specific exercises adapted from the LSVT program to assist him to reach his goals. Brian loves his weekly home visits from his Accredited Exercise Physiologist saying it 'brings a ray of sunshine into his home during trying times'. Brian has noticed improvements in his mobility and strength."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY ELISE HOYER, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

TESTIMONIALS

"After more than five years of living with back pain, **DENNIS** was referred to an Accredited Exercise Physiologist through a friend. Pain was dominating his life. He was having frequent episodes of 8 out of 10 pain in his lower back and found himself limiting his daily activity for fear of causing further injury or pain.

When he first started working with the AEP, he had doubts about where it was going, and because Dennis was feeling stiff and tight, those first sessions were a bit difficult for him. But through the work he did with his AEP and knowing that research has shown that pain can be reduced, especially for people with chronic back pain, this gave Dennis incentive to keep going. Now, after three years of training, Dennis is mostly pain free! He is less focused on the pain and able to manage his normal daily recreation and work activities."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY DR JOHN BOOTH, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

"**ALEX** was formerly diagnosed with diabetes during a hospital stay in October 2019. He was suffering from depression, sleep apnoea, heart disease and he weighed 125kg. At the time, Alex was taking a handful of pills for depression, he was on a sleep apnoea machine, he had no energy, he used to sleep during the day and therefore couldn't sleep at night, and he was taking tablets for his heart. Essentially, he was sick of being sick.

Alex spoke to his GP and was referred to an Accredited Exercise Physiologist to prescribe him with an exercise program individualised just for him and his health. By July 2020, Alex had lost 25kg, his blood sugar returned to normal, his heart was 'perfect' according to his doctor, and his psychiatrist said that he seemed the calmest he'd seen him in 10 years. Alex claims that exercise was simply the missing part of the team – 'I could go see my psychiatrist, I could see my heart surgeon, I could see somebody about sleep apnoea, but that was the missing link, the exercise'."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY TANYA BARNETT, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

"**SCOTT** saw his GP in regard to his weight going 'up and up' over the previous four years. Scott's blood pressure was high, he had mixed hyperlipidaemia, and his fasting blood glucose was on the rise. Scott had a family history of cardiovascular disease, and he was going to become a father for the first time that year.

His doctor made a referral to an Accredited Exercise Physiologist and Scott set himself a goal to wear size 34 pants, down from his size 38 at the time. After just two months, Scott noticed his health change from the inside out. In between appointments, the use of a wearable activity tracker allowed Scott to stay accountable, and at last check he was averaging between 11,000 and 12,000 steps every day!

As a result, Scott's outcome measures told a totally new, healthy story. He lowered his BMI from 34 to 28, and his waist came down from 110cm to 91cm. His resting blood pressure normalised, and a submaximal aerobic fitness test revealed a shift from 'Above average' to 'Good' for his age-matched peers. Those size 38 pants no longer fit, and he needs a belt on his size 36s now!

The best news is that exercising right is now a huge part of Scott's life; a sentiment which has hopefully continued into Scott's next chapter: parenthood."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY JENNIFER SMALLRIDGE, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

"**BLAIR** is an 88-year-old gentleman who experienced unfortunate timing during COVID-19 lockdowns as he was forced to self-isolate and was confined to one room for a two-week period without any physical activity or therapy, and nil social contact with others. Unfortunately, this contributed to significantly increased pain and functional decline upon his return home after lockdown restrictions were eased.

Blair's primary concern upon his return to home following respite was the recurrent pain he experienced in his hips and lower back, which he reported as 10/10, with 10 being the worst pain imaginable and his strength and mobility limited. Due to the amount of pain Blair experienced on a daily basis, he experienced low mood, frustration and significant difficulties

TESTIMONIALS

associated with walking, personal care, and transferring in and out of chairs or bed. In addition to Blair's persistent pain, he has been through, and currently experiences numerous health concerns associated with osteoporosis, residual weakness from multiple strokes, dementia, dizziness, numerous cardiac complications, prostate cancer, balance impairments, falls and fractures, renal impairment, vision impairment, hearing impairment, a left hip replacement and bilateral knee replacements.

Despite the significant pain, precautions, risks and difficulties in engaging in exercise, Blair wholeheartedly committed to engagement in weekly sessions with an Accredited Exercise Physiologist in late June 2020 with the support from his wife, Robyn, who assisted Blair in completion of his exercises on a daily basis.

Since commencing exercise physiology sessions three months ago, Blair reported that due to exercise, he no longer experiences any pain in his hips or lower back, feels more comfortable throughout his day, moves more easily, and is able to be more active. Six months ago, Blair was unable to walk with his four-wheeled walker more than 15 metres due to pain and he now is walking on a daily basis 10-15 minutes with the assistance of his four-wheeled walker.

At Blair's most recent cardiology review, his Cardiologist indicated that due to improved blood pressure management and a healthier heart, he no longer needed ongoing cardiology reviews. Due to Blair's newfound function, he plans to continue daily engagement in exercise to keep the cardiologist and his pain away, and build upon his strength, mobility and fitness."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY DAVID DALL'ALBA, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

"JOHN is an energetic 81-year-old who has been living with Alzheimer's disease since 2018. John and his wife, Joy moved into assisted living in 2019 and never looked back. Through the assistance of a home care package, John is able to see his Accredited Exercise Physiologist twice weekly along with other daily care needs.

John has always been an active individual. Even after losing his left leg in a workplace accident in 1959 (5 weeks after he met his lovely wife, Joy of 59 years), John continued to coach AFL, and play cricket and golf in Victoria. When John and Joy moved up to the sunny Gold Coast in 1991, John started to play lawn bowls at his local club. It is here that John has made connections lasting a lifetime and found a real sense of community with his team.

The activities John participated in slowed down after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Joy said he used to spend lots of time on his own at home and rarely left. It wasn't until John's package coordinator suggested for him to start seeing an Accredited Exercise Physiologist to assist with maintaining his strength, balance and fitness. In the last year, with the help of his Accredited Exercise Physiologist, John has restarted playing golf in his village and continues to see improvements in his balance, strength and fitness. John says he enjoys 'keeping his mind and body active'."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY ELISE HOYER, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

"LEO was diagnosed in 2016 with prostate cancer that had infiltrated his bones. After starting chemotherapy and hormone treatment he was experiencing fatigue, nerve pain, muscle aches, weight gain and mood changes. Seven months after his diagnosis, Leo booked into the exercise physiology clinic to help regain his strength and fitness, reverse his expanding waistline, and improve his energy levels. Together with his Accredited Exercise Physiologist, a tailored exercise plan was devised: he would attend the clinic for weekly supervised exercise sessions, along with a home program which incorporated walking, strength and balance activities, and stretching.

Two and a half years later, Leo credits exercise with changing his life. Though he still experiences pain and fatigue, they are at much lower levels. His strength and fitness have greatly improved over the duration of his treatment, and his weight is gradually decreasing."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY KATE WILLIAMS, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

TESTIMONIALS

"SIMO joined the Moving Beyond Cancer exercise physiology group in June 2016, where he attended the group exercise class once per week on Monday mornings. The class is targeted for men dealing with prostate cancer which Simo was diagnosed with in 2013.

The classes consisted of exercises tailored towards improving strength, balance and aerobic fitness. Whilst a lot of the exercises can also be done at home, Simo found it more useful to attend in person once a week. He appreciated that the experienced and knowledgeable instructors ensured Simo was undertaking the exercises correctly and prevented him from slipping into any bad habits. He also enjoyed the varied program which helped to keep it interesting.

Simo shared that he has enjoyed the camaraderie that develops during these group classes, especially since they all share similar experiences in managing their health issues. Simo credits the enormous positive increase in his physical and mental well-being to attending Moving Beyond Cancer."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY DALE ISCHIA, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

"TERRY is a 56-year-old living with Friedreich ataxia – a progressive, degenerative neuromuscular condition that presents primarily in poor balance and coordination. Evidence exists that regular, varied exercise is associated with slower progression therefore Terry swims, cycles on a recumbent trike and visits an Accredited Exercise Physiologist regularly at the gym to achieve that.

Terry is fortunate and can still drive and live independently in his own home even with the use of a wheelchair full-time.

The exercise programme Terry follows involves strength and resistance training and works every muscle group from his shoulders to his toes. Through it, Terry maintains strength, stability and control. There's encouragement to push himself combined with an understanding of the limits his condition forces upon him and Terry says it's that combination that keeps him engaged.

Terry says that cycling and swimming are easily managed but the range of equipment and exercises possible at the gym can be both bewildering and unsafe. He's happy to work with his AEP who understands his needs and limitations and can design a programme to ensure the benefits Terry receives are comprehensive and ongoing."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY TONI TRINCA, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

"RICHARD is a 51-year-old who decided to stop procrastinating and contact Steve, his local Accredited Exercise Physiologist.

Richard hoped this could be his 'Fitter After 50' shot at getting healthier, dropping some weight, and reversing the abuse he had put his body and mind through over the years. Weighing 127kg, Richard's Bio Age was 66 and he felt like he was driving himself into an early grave.

After 60 days of hard yakka that Richard loved in his rugby days, and some tears, he was able to lose a massive 20kg, double his strength, and gain back 21 years of his Bio Age (now 45).

'Mentally I feel so much better about life, work and play' says Richard, adding that working with an Accredited Exercise Physiology has been a revelation for him – 'If your undecided, scared, unsure – don't be, it's worth it'."

TESTIMONIAL PROVIDED BY STEVEN ROBERTS, ACCREDITED EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

NEED EXTRA SUPPORT?

When experiencing a crisis	Lifeline - call 13 11 14 or chat online Suicide Call Back Service - call 1300 659 467

MENTAL HEALTH

Beyond Blue

Australia's most well-known and visited mental health organisation, focused on supporting people affected by anxiety, depression, and suicide.

Head to Health – Men

Provided by the Australian Department of Health, a collection of digital mental health services such as apps, online programs, online forums, and phone services, as well as a range of information resources.

Male Suicide Prevention Australia

Established to pursue an evidenced based approach to male suicide prevention, it provides programs, services, and resources.

PANDA

For 35 years PANDA has been supporting individuals and families to recover from perinatal anxiety and depression.

GENERAL HEALTH

Australian Men's Health Forum

The centre of a diverse network of individuals and organisations working together to tackle the social factors that shape men and boys' health.

Healthy Male

A national organisation that provides easy access to the latest scientific and medical research on male reproductive and sexual health.

Movember

Australia's leading charity changing the face of men's health.

Spanner in the Works

Provides you with a service and maintenance schedule for your body and some key health messages in a way that's easy to understand and achievable.

Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

A broad-based community organisation and the peak national body for prostate cancer in Australia.

PROSTMATE

A personalised, support system for those dealing with prostate cancer.

COMMUNITY

Australian Men Shed Association

The peak body supporting almost 1,000 Men's Sheds – one of Australia's largest male-based community development organisations.
Find your local Men's Shed here.

blOKes

Provides men (16+) with a safe, supportive, and non-judgemental platform to open up about their mental health, connect with others and tell a #MaleTale

Dads Group

Dads. Their kids. Coffee. And maybe a playground. A simple formula that provides new fathers with the connection and support they desperately need.

Dads in Distress

A charity that supports separated dads experiencing trauma related to family breakdown and separation.

DVConnect Mensline

A free, confidential telephone counselling, support service for people identifying as male, and who may be experiencing domestic and family violence.

The Fathering Project

Delivers resources, programs, and events specific to the engagement style and needs of dads and father-figures.

Livin

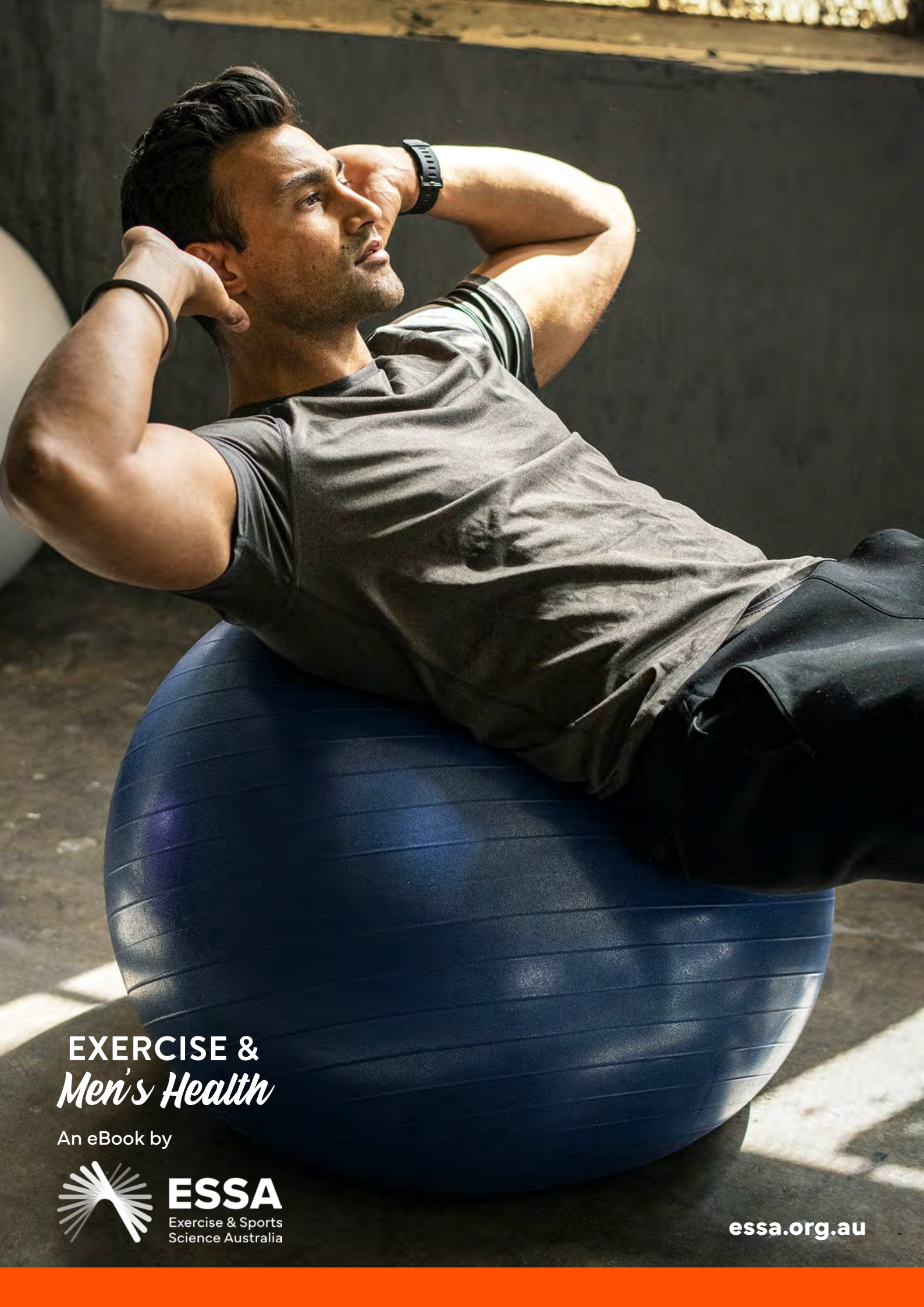
LIVIN is all about living your life at the top and breaking the stigma around mental health.

MensLine Australia

A national telephone and online support, information, and referral service for men with family and relationship concerns.

Top Blokes

Raises awareness about male issues and strategies that can be applied to improve the development of young male health and well-being.



EXERCISE & *Men's Health*

An eBook by

ESSA
Exercise & Sports Science Australia

essa.org.au