

# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)



## WHAT IS POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)?

PTSD can develop after exposure to a potentially traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious injury or sexual assault. PTSD may occur after one traumatic event, or after repeated exposure to potentially traumatic events. Evidence from Australia suggests more than half the population will be exposed to a traumatic event, with around 12% developing PTSD. However, occupations including first responders (e.g. fire, ambulance and police) and military personnel are at high risk of developing PTSD.

Symptoms include nightmares or flashbacks, avoidance of people, places or things associated with the trauma, heightened reactivity, and changes in mood. While PTSD is a recognised mental health condition, it also can impact someone's physical health including an increased risk of heart disease and diabetes.

## HOW DOES EXERCISE HELP WITH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)?

Regular physical activity in addition to usual care offers a number of benefits including:

- » Decreased symptoms of PTSD
- » Improved sleep quality
- » Improved quality of life
- » Decreased risk of physical health comorbidities (e.g. diabetes)

## WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE IS BEST FOR POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)?

Research shows that many types of exercise are beneficial for people with PTSD including mind-body exercises (yoga), aerobic, or resistance exercise. However, the best type is the one that you enjoy. The amount of activity you should do really depends on your current activity levels, exercise and health history, and goals. The Australian Physical Activity Guidelines below provide excellent guidance on recommended activity levels for people with PTSD.

- » Accumulate 150-300 min of moderate intensity physical activity or 75-150 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous activities each week.
- » Do muscle strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week.

Seek the advice of an Accredited Exercise Physiologist who can create a tailored exercise program.



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