



MEDIA RELEASE

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The importance of exercise this festive season

It's the most wonderful time of the year, but it's also a very busy time, full of family, eating delicious food and having a few drinks, and sometimes our health and well-being can fall to the way side.

"Although Christmas is a time of celebration, we can't ignore serious health concerns. Obesity is a real problem in Australia, with more than two thirds (67%) of adults being overweight or obese," says Accredited Exercise Scientist, Nardine Presland.

Consuming more food than normal and indulging in one too many festive cocktails can have a negative impact on our waistlines. Research shows that Christmas is the time of year you're mostly likely to put on weight, with the holidays commonly associated with a weight gain of up to 0.4kg.

"While a little Christmas weight gain might not seem like a big deal, if we don't make time to move and be physically active over the holiday season and in the new year, it can add up over time and start to negatively impact your health."

Christmas can also have an impact on our mood. Changes to diet, activity levels and sleep patterns can all contribute to poorer mental health. Other factors such as financial stress, family conflict, busy calendars and long to-do lists can also add stress to the festive season. It's not all bad news though, with regular exercise helping to improve your mental health.

"Physical activity releases feel-good chemicals, called endorphins, which can help you to relax and boost your mood," says Ms. Presland.

"The great news is, you don't have to do hours of exercise for it to have an impact... In fact, just an hour a week can help to protect against depression. This can be an hour of something you love that gets you moving too, including swimming, walks with your dog, or even some gardening."

Exercise Right's tips for keeping active this Christmas:

- **Exercise in the morning** – As the day progresses, there's more temptation to ditch your workout. Try to get up and move before the festivities kick off!
- **Move when you can** – You don't need hours to do a work out. Make the most of your time by doing shorter, more frequent bursts of exercise.
- **Get incidental exercise** – Exercise doesn't need to be structured. Go for a walk to the corner store instead of taking the car or take the stairs instead of the lift... Every little bit counts!
- **Involve your family** – Whether it's a spirited game of backyard cricket or taking a hike, making exercise social not only means you're more likely to do it, but it's also much more fun!



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If you're new to exercise or are living with a chronic condition, we recommend you get advice from your GP or an Accredited Exercise Physiologist (AEP) before commencing exercise. [Exercise and Sports Science Australia](#) can help you to find an AEP near you.

For more exercise tips and advice for surviving the festive season, visit the [Exercise Right](#) website.

For more information:

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About Exercise Right

Exercise Right is the public awareness vehicle of Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA).

Exercise Right aims to inspire and educate all Australians to be healthier and more active. Exercise Right is expertly compiled by professionals and thought leaders in the field, making it a trusted source of information amongst consumers. www.exerciseright.com.au

About Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) and its members

Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) is the peak professional body for exercise and sports science in Australia, ESSA provides national leadership and advocacy on key issues and supports its members and the community through fostering excellence in professional practice, education and training, and research. www.essa.org.au