

Movement is medicine for men's mental health

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It's Men's Health Week, and Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) is once again highlighting the importance of exercise and physical activity for men's mental health.

Currently in Australia, one in eight men will experience depression, one in five will experience anxiety and six men a day will die by suicide. With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to affect the day-to-day lives of so many Australians, mental health experts are warning that the prevalence of these mental health conditions could increase substantially over the coming months and years.

"With COVID-19 putting extra strain on the mental health of Aussie men, it's never been more important for blokes to stay active," says ESSA board member and mental health researcher, Simon Rosenbaum.

"We know that as little as one hour of exercise a week can help to protect against depression and that living an active lifestyle is one of the best ways to improve your mental well-being."

Regular exercise can help to improve sleep patterns, help individuals to manage stress, reduce the risk of mental illness and improve mood. It is also vital for those who are living with mental health conditions, like depression and anxiety, as it can help to manage the severity of symptoms and to reduce the risk of future incidences.

Despite the health benefits of exercise, only [17%](#) of males aged 18 – 64 meet the national Physical Activity Guidelines. ESSA is urging Aussie men that now is the time to work together to increase their physical activity levels and make both their physical and mental health a priority.

"We can all work together to help improve men's mental health" says Simon.

"By turning to friends, family and the local community for support, and by working with an accredited exercise professional, every Aussie bloke has the ability to live a healthier and more active lifestyle, regardless of their age, fitness level or health status".

ESSA's ["Exercise Right" website](#) offers a range of resources to help get men of all ages and fitness levels active, including free home exercise video, factsheets and expert tips for getting started. ESSA also offers a [free, downloadable eBook](#) to help educate Australians about the vital link between exercise and mental health.

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