



mecc
making every contact count

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Staying active is fun and energising

*MECC is a joint initiative of Meals on Wheels SA,
Aged and Community Services and SA Health.*

Living a healthy and active lifestyle is important for us all, and it gets significantly more important as we age.

If living independently, taking part in social activities and spending time with your family is important to you, staying mobile and active will help.

We all benefit from being active, whether it is walking around the house or garden, taking part in an exercise class or swimming laps. All forms of movement assist with not only our general health, but also our strength and flexibility, ultimately helping us to find movement easier.

Regular physical activity can assist with:

- Giving you more energy each day
- Getting a better night's sleep
- Muscle and joint strength for everyday activities
- Improved balance
- Reducing stress
- Improving blood pressure and cholesterol
- Improving concentration, memory and mood



Once you've decided to start new physical activity there are some important steps to take.

1. WRITE A PLAN

Start by writing down some achievable goals and leave these in a place where you'll see it to remind yourself of your goals.

Ask your GP, or a friend or family member, for their feedback.

2. MAKE IT EASY

Modify everyday activities

Why not park a little further from the shopping centre or do a lap of the mall before shopping. These little extra bits of activity can make a big difference.

Multi task

While waiting in line, or watching TV practice your balancing skills by standing on one foot and then the other. Stand and/or walk while talking on the phone, or even try some leg raises or toe stands to strengthen your legs.

3. MAKE IT SAFE

Speak to your GP before starting any new form of physical activity. It's important to know about any exercises or movements you should avoid. And wear the right shoes to help prevent you from falling or injuring yourself.

It's very important to warm up and cool down properly. Try marching on the spot and stretching.

4. MAKE IT FUN

The best activities are those you enjoy doing; everyday activities like gardening, walking, dancing and swimming will all get your heart pumping and your muscles moving. And, why not ask a friend or family member to join you, having someone to be active with will help you stick to your plan.

WHERE TO START

There are many different ways people can be physically active. Your physical health will determine the type of activity you can do and how often you can do it. But, don't worry, all forms of activity will assist with your overall health and mobility.



Incidental activities

These are routine activities you do as part of your everyday life: housework, walking to the shop or gardening.

Leisure pursuits

Including: lawn bowls, bocce, woodwork, dancing etc. These hobbies include physical activity in some way, and you may already be taking part in more activity than you realise.

Structured activities

These are pre-organised activities such as walking groups, Tai Chi, yoga, aqua aerobics etc. Speak to your local council to find out about structured activities taking place in your area.

Heart Foundation Walking is Australia's largest free walking network. There are community walking groups led by volunteer walk organisers or a community of walkers who track their physical activity online. To find out where your nearest group is or to start your own visit walking.heartfoundation.org.au or call **1300 362 787**.

Supervised physical activity

If you have moderate health conditions you may benefit from doing exercise under the watchful eye of a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist, particularly when beginning. Speak to your GP about programs running in your area.

Fitness activities

Where a major emphasis is on increasing demand on the heart and lungs, ie. brisk walking or swimming.

Strength activities

Where the key emphasis is building muscle strength.

Balance, mobility and flexibility

These activities will focus on balance, walking, turning and muscle flexibility.

Mix up your activities to work different muscle groups.



TOP TIP

If you would prefer to do your exercise under the supervision of a trained instructor you may be interested in the Strength for Life program. Funded by SA Health, Strength for Life assists people over 50 to improve balance and mobility, allowing them to continue to be active and prevent falls.

For more information visit cotasa.org.au/programs/life or call **08 8232 0422**.

If you are using this booklet without attending a supervised exercise session please consult with your GP to check if this is suitable for you.

Strength exercises

Strengthening your muscles will make it easier to do everyday activities like getting up from a chair, carrying shopping bags and playing with your grandchildren.

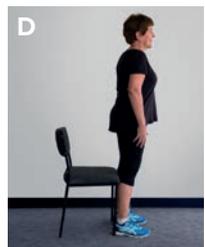
The exercises below can be done in the comfort of your own home and should be done 2 to 3 times a week, every second day; avoid doing these on consecutive days.



Sit to stand

- A.** Sit comfortably on the chair, feet hip width apart. Lean slightly forward.
- B/C.** Stand up slowly using your legs and try to not use your arms. Keep looking forward, not down.
- D.** Stand full upright before sitting down carefully, bottom first.

Aim for 5 repetitions - keep control by moving carefully.



Calf raises

- A.** Stand upright with your hands holding on to the back of a chair or solid furniture.
- B.** Push up to raise both heels from the floor as far as comfortable.
- C.** Lower yourself so your feet are flat on the floor.

DON'T FORGET

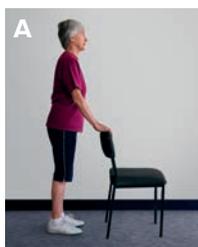
Warm up and cool down properly. Marching on the spot and stretching before and after your exercise can help to avoid muscle soreness or injury.



Aim for 5 to 10 repetitions - move slowly to get maximum benefit.

Mini squats

- A.** Stand upright with your hands holding on to the back of a chair or solid furniture
- B.** Keeping your back straight and feet hip width apart bend your knees to lower yourself.
- C.** Move downwards to a comfortable point then come up keeping your back straight.



Aim for 5 repetitions - don't go too low but keep control of the movement.

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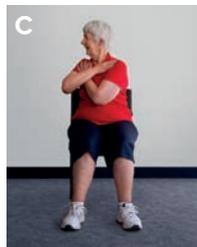
Flexibility exercises

Improving your flexibility will make it easier to do everyday activities such as getting dressed and reaching for objects in high or low places.

Upper body twist

Aims to improve and maintain your upper back flexibility

- A.** Sit upright with your feet flat on the floor and arms crossed to reach your shoulders.
- B.** Keep your hips in place and turn your upper body left as far as possible.
- C.** Hold for 5 seconds then repeat by turning to the right.



Repeat
5 times
each way.

**DON'T
FORGET**

30 minutes of activity each day is recommended, however, if this feels like too much try breaking it up throughout the day into 10 minute blocks.

Chest stretch

Aims to improve your posture

- A.** Sit upright and slightly away from the back of the chair.
- B.** Pull your shoulders back and slightly down. Extend your straight arms to the side.
- C.** Gently push your chest forwards and up until you feel the stretch across your chest.



Hold each for 5 to 10 seconds and repeat five times.

Calf stretch

Aims to improve and maintain your calf and ankle flexibility

- A.** Stand straight with your arms extended to allow your hands to touch the wall.
- B.** Keep your right leg forward, with bent knee and left leg back and extended straight.
- C.** Keeping both feet flat on the floor gently bend your arms slightly to allow the stretch on your calf muscles.



Hold each for 10 seconds and repeat 3-5 times.

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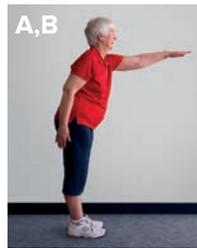
Balance exercises

Improving your overall balance will greatly reduce your risk of having a fall. Try the below activities at home with a chair or bench and wall.

One arm reach

Aims to improve your dynamic balance

- A.** Stand upright with your left arm outstretched.
- B.** Lean forward to a comfortable position while keeping your back straight.
- C.** Hold for 5 seconds and then return to a standing straight position.



Repeat 5 times per side.

Two arm reach

Aims to improve your dynamic balance

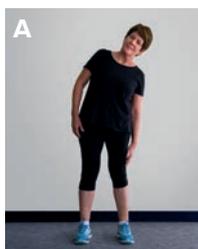
- A.** Stand upright with your arms outstretched about 25cm from a wall.
- B.** Lean forward while keeping your back straight to touch the wall with your finger tips.
- C.** Hold for 5 seconds and then return to standing straight.



Repeat 5 times.

Side reach

- A.** Stand upright with your hands at your side and feet hip width apart.
- B.** Lean to your left by sliding your arms down your hips and legs in a stable position.
- C.** Return to the upright position and then repeat to the right side.



Repeat 5 times per side. Keep stable and remember to not stretch too far!

TOP TIPS

- 1.** Check with your doctor before starting any new exercise or activity.
- 2.** Start with a warm up and finish with a cool down.
- 3.** Vary your exercises to improve your strength, balance and flexibility.



MECC: MAKING EVERY CONTACT COUNT

MECC is about embracing opportunities to talk to people about their health and wellbeing using the skills of asking and listening. MECC recognises the importance of good health and wants to support you to live independently.



Making Every Contact Count (MECC)
SA is a joint initiative of Meals on Wheels SA Inc,
Aged and Community Services SA & NT and SA Health.

MECC SA is based on the UK model, find out more at
makingeverycontactcount.co.uk.

