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Program of Resources, Information and Support for Mothers



Taking time to be active

Motherhood doesn't necessarily mean you have to abandon your hobbies or leisure interests. Making time for them can help you to relax. Some regular 'time out' for physical activity helps you to feel better about yourself and to cope more easily with the many demands of being a mother.

Advantages of Activity

Being physically active can also help you to manage common health problems in the first year after birth:



- easier recovery from pregnancy & birth
- prevents low back pain
- provides stress relief
- reduces anxiety and depression
- more energy
- better quality sleep
- helps weight management



Make time to be active - you deserve it!

Lots of women drop out of any regular activity when they become mothers.

In Australia, recent research shows that many women with young children are not getting adequate physical activity to maintain their health. This increases our risk of diabetes, being overweight, heart disease, some cancers, osteoporosis, anxiety and depression. Taking time to look after yourself is an important part of being a mum.

Now is a good time to foster the supports you'll need to make 'being active' easier and more enjoyable. Being active is something that can give you pleasure and health benefits for the rest of your life.

Getting started again

Getting back into activity can feel difficult at first - but it's well worth the effort! Being active doesn't have to mean a formal exercise routine or going to the gym. It can be as simple as a walk round the block, catching up with friends on a local walking track, playing sport, or joining a community group for a session of 'big T-shirt' exercise classes, dance, tai chi or belly dancing.

Most community houses offer low-cost child care and also welcome babies and toddlers in pushers into classes. Local leisure centres also cater for new mums.

Tips from other mothers



Making time

- ⌚ **Let go of the guilt!!** There are always things that need doing, but most can wait for a while. You just feel so much better when you get back.
- ⌚ **Encourage your partner and family to understand that some regular 'time out' helps you to be happier, more relaxed and fun to be around - it has benefits for the whole family.** Spend some time talking about your needs. Try to share some of your workload with your partner. Give him the chance to do things his way.
- ⌚ **Experiment with 'letting go'** Try leaving the baby with your partner, friend, family member or neighbour while you do one lap of the block. Drop in and see how things are going. Then build it up as you get more confident.
- ⌚ **Start off thinking small!** Try adding in a little activity in small ways. Remember, it's not all or nothing. Even if your plan for the day doesn't work out, try to fit in a 10 minute walk. Reward yourself for getting started.



"Sometimes we swim together, other times we take turns looking after the kids. It's good when you're feeling tired or flat. We keep each other going."

Support from other people

- ☺ **Don't go it alone** Trying out new activities is always easier and more fun with your partner, a friend, a neighbour. It also helps provide the motivation to keep at it.
- ☺ **Make the most of people around you** All mothers need support from other people. This might involve sharing the care of your baby or other parts of your workload to give you some time out. Involve your partner, other children, your neighbours. Try 'buddying up' with another mother. See if any women at your mothers' group are interested. Often you'll find people are just waiting to be asked!
- ☺ **You need a few different options** Try to be flexible and creative when you have days when it's hard to get out. Borrow an exercise video from the library. Play with the dog. Kick a ball around the back yard. Dig out that sheet of postnatal exercises from the hospital. Dance to your favourite CD. Be creative. It all helps bring balance back into

