

First aid for...

BALANCED EXERCISE



Did you know?

About 80% of students are not physically active enough. Many students spend on average more than 8 hours a day on their seats. When you sit still for a long time, your muscles go into sleep mode; they consume little energy, your fat breakdown is inhibited as well as your concentration. Fortunately, we can learn to move in a balanced way which in turn has many health benefits!



Mental health benefits

- Better mood & emotion regulation
- Greater sense of calm
- Better concentration & memory
- Better sleep at night



Physical health benefits

- Strengthens your immune system
- Improves blood pressure
- Strengthens muscles, bones and balance
- Reduces risk of some diseases



Getting started!

The Physical Activity Triangle from the The Flemish Institute Healthy Living helps you to determine how long, how often and at what intensity you should best exercise.

- **Don't sit still for too long (< 30 min at a time)** and try to do **light intensive** movement for most of **each day (every half hour)**. E.g. step around while studying, work standing at your computer,....
- Try to do some **moderate-intensity** exercise **every day**. Preferably **at least 150 min per week**. Take the stairs more often, walk briskly to class, etc.
- Try to exercise **at high intensity every week**. Preferably **at least 75 min per week**. Go jogging, fitness, tennis, etc.



Do strength and stretching exercises 2 to 3 times a week.



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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TRIANGLE VLAAMS INSTITUUT GEZOND LEVEN



Tips & Tricks

- **Stand up straight for a moment every half-hour.** This way you'll wake up your muscles again!
- **Choose an exercise that you also enjoy doing!** This will help you take that first step faster and make it easier to keep up afterwards.
- **Vary!** The more variety of possible activities, the easier it is to keep moving regardless of the weather, your schedule, your company, ...
- **Adapt your environment** in such a way that you reach for the healthy choice first. For example, put your bike and walking shoes in sight. Make it difficult for yourself to choose the less healthy option.
- **Reward yourself** after a healthy day of exercise!
- **Respect your body's limits** and give it time to recover. Suffering is not necessary to improve your condition.
- **Be kind and gentle with yourself** when something is not yet fully succeeding as you would like.
- **Set concrete, achievable goals.** Start slowly, increasing frequency first (e.g. exercise more often) and then intensity (e.g. exercise harder).
- **Make a personal 'excuses list'.** What excuses do you use for not moving? But also look for stepping stones: what helps you move anyway? Some examples are:
 - No time
 - > Start with small changes in your day:
 - taking a call while walking, taking stairs instead of elevators
 - > Build exercise into social activities: go for a walk with your friends, ...
 - No nearby facilities
 - > Find exercise in your home activities: walking the dog, cleaning, ...
 - > Search via Sport Vlaanderen for new sports offers in your area.
 - Bad weather
 - > Strength or stretching exercises at your home to music, cleaning up, climbing stairs, ...

Get started: draw up your exercise plan.

Draw up **an exercise plan** and decide what you will do, where, when, for how long and with whom. Think about possible difficulties in advance and start looking for solutions already.

What will you do? How long will you do it?

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Where will you do this?

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When?

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Who are you moving with?

Do you exercise alone or with someone?

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If there is a problem, there is also a solution.

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