

AUSTRALIAN 24-HOUR MOVEMENT GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (5 TO 17 YEARS)



Australian Government
Department of Health

**AN INTEGRATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY,
SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR, AND SLEEP**



PREAMBLE

These guidelines are relevant to all apparently healthy children and young people irrespective of gender, cultural or linguistic background, geographic location, or the socio-economic status of the family. Children and young people are encouraged to live an active lifestyle with a daily balance of physical activities, sedentary behaviours and sleep that supports their healthy development. These guidelines may be appropriate for children and young people with a disability or medical condition; however, a health professional should be consulted for additional guidance.

Children and young people should participate in a range of physical activities in a variety of environments (e.g. home/school/community; indoors/outdoors; land/water) and contexts (e.g. play; recreation; sport; active travel; hobbies; jobs). Limited time should be spent sitting. For recreational sedentary screen time, establish consistent boundaries (e.g. duration; content; quality). When using screen-based electronic media, positive social interaction and experiences are encouraged. Children and young people should establish and maintain healthy sleep patterns; this includes having a consistent bed time routine, avoiding screen time before sleep, and keeping screens out of the bedroom.

Following these guidelines is associated with better body composition, cardiorespiratory and musculoskeletal fitness, cardiovascular and metabolic health, academic achievement and cognition, mental health and quality of life, emotional regulation, and pro-social behaviours. Adhering to these guidelines may be challenging at times; however, the benefits of following them far exceed potential harms. For those not currently meeting these 24-hour movement guidelines, a progressive adjustment toward them is recommended.

These guidelines were informed by the best available evidence, expert consensus, stakeholder consultation, and consideration of values and preferences, applicability, feasibility, resource use (cost) and equity. More details on the guidelines, including the background research, and their interpretation and guidance on how to achieve them, are available at www.health.gov.au.

GUIDELINES

For optimal health benefits, children and young people (aged 5–17 years) should achieve the recommended balance of high levels of physical activity, low levels of sedentary behaviour, and sufficient sleep each day. A healthy 24 hours includes:

- Accumulating 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day involving mainly aerobic activities;
- Several hours of a variety of light physical activities;
- Limiting sedentary recreational screen time to no more than 2 hours per day;
- Breaking up long periods of sitting as often as possible;
- An uninterrupted 9 to 11 hours of sleep per night for those aged 5–13 years and 8 to 10 hours per night for those aged 14–17 years; and
- Consistent bed and wake-up times.

Activities that are vigorous, as well as those that strengthen muscle and bone should be incorporated at least 3 days per week.

For greater health benefits, replace sedentary time with additional moderate to vigorous physical activity, while preserving sufficient sleep.