

Driving and your health - Think about it!



Tool Box Talk No.7 Facilitator's Notes Be Active Every Day

A. OVERVIEW

This briefing covers important information about physical activity including:

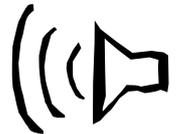
- how it can reduce the risk of lifestyle-related diseases and improve health and wellbeing; and
- how commercial vehicle drivers can include regular physical activity in their day.

B. DURATION

10 - 20 minutes

C. KEY MESSAGES

1. Regular physical activity improves your health in many ways and helps to prevent and manage a number of health problems including heart and blood vessel disease, diabetes, cancer and bone and joint problems such as sore backs.
2. Physical activity also helps to give you the energy, stamina and mental fitness you need to drive safely and comfortably.
3. Take every opportunity to be active. Aim for at least 30 minutes every day – even in blocks of 10 to 15 minutes.
4. Include activities such as walking to improve your overall fitness as well as stretching to help keep you flexible and to protect your back.
5. Be active on your days off – play with the kids, ride a bike or go for a swim.
6. More information is available from the Heart Foundation, your local fitness centre or health professionals.



D. HANDOUTS AND RESOURCES

- FACT SHEET – *Be Active Every Day*.
- Information Supplement – *Exercises for the Road*.
- Power Point presentation.
- Other resources – brochures and posters may be resourced through the health organisations listed on the NTC website (Useful Contacts section).





1. Why be active every day?

Being physically active is an important part of *living better and living longer*.



- **It helps you feel better** – with more energy, vitality and improved sleep, to help you stay alert on the road and help you get more out of life.
- **It helps you manage your weight** – not only do you look and feel better, you'll also reduce your chances of developing heart disease, diabetes, cancer and back pain.
- **It helps to strengthen muscles and joints** - building strength and flexibility is a sure way to reduce your chance of being off the road with an injury.
- **It helps you to clear away negative thoughts and have a healthier state of mind** – exercise is a great way to manage stress, and it improves concentration and self-confidence.
- **It helps you to experience better health** – through controlled blood pressure and cholesterol, which will reduce your chances of having a heart attack.

Commercial vehicle driving involves long periods of sitting and concentrating so it's important that you make time every day to have a break from driving - increase your heart rate and stretch.

The human body was meant to move. It's the only machine that breaks down if it isn't used!

(Source: Department of Sport & Recreation)

2. What sort of physical activity should you be doing?

To achieve the benefits listed above you need to include a variety of physical activity.

- For overall **FITNESS** and **STAMINA** you'll need activities that **get your heart pumping**, e.g. brisk walking, cycling or swimming.
- For **STRENGTH** you'll need to do activities such as **weights** or exercises that require you to **support your body weight** e.g. push ups.
- For **FLEXIBILITY** you'll need to do activities such as **stretching**.

You don't have to do all of these every day, just on a regular basis.

Even if you haven't exercised in the past, starting to do some form of activity now can set you on the road to improved health. The great news is that you don't have to strain at it - moderate activity such as walking and stretching is enough to provide health benefits and improve the way you feel.



*** Remember if you haven't been active recently, visit your doctor before starting a new physical activity program.**



3. How much activity should you be doing?

Some activity is better than none and more is better than a little.

Find just 30 minutes a day.

Aim for 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity, on all or most days of the week. You don't have to do it all at once. Blocks of 10 to 15 minutes are effective and may be easier to fit into your day.

As a start, try the *Exercises for the Road* in the handout. These can be done while you're having a break. Repeat a few times during the day and you'll have accumulated 30 minutes of exercise before you know it!

4. How can you be more active every day?

Note to facilitator - This is an opportunity to take participants through the exercise circuit.

The key to fitting more exercise into your day is to think of movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience!

★ On the road

- During breaks go for a brisk 10-15-minute walk (aim for 2 of these each day) – this will also clear the head and re-energise you.
- Use a pedometer (step counter) to motivate you – aim to walk 10,000 steps per day (you may want to start off with 5000 steps and build up).
- Choose active leisure activities when you're on your break – throw a frisbee or kick a footy with your mates.
- Try the *Exercise for the Road* a couple of times per day.

★ Stretch

Commercial vehicle driving requires long periods of sitting and concentrating which can contribute to back problems and stiffness, so it's important that you make time every day to break and stretch.

The *Exercises for the Road* include some easy stretches, which will help you maintain flexibility and relieve tight muscles.



★ Stay active with family and mates

It's much easier and more fun to stay active when you **exercise with someone else - even if it's the dog!** Being active together is also a great relationship builder:

- go for a regular bike ride, swim or walk with your family on your days off or in the evenings;
- play with the kids or take the dog for a walk; or
- go hiking with your mates or play footy, cricket or frisbee during your breaks - a great stress buster.

★ At home



It's tempting after long days on the road just to sit and veg, but you'll find you feel a whole lot better if you combine rest with exercise. Any movement is better than none so:

- get up and change the channel instead of using the TV remote control;
- mow the lawn or do some gardening; or
- walk to the shops instead of taking the car.



Question for participants:

What opportunities could you find to include more exercise in your day?

Remember:

- Find an activity you enjoy, that way you are more likely to keep it up!
- Stretch before and after exercise and wear appropriate footwear for the activity you're doing.

★ Set yourself a goal to be active

Setting yourself some goals to become more active is a great way to get motivated and keep on track. Goals need to be realistic and achievable. As a start you could aim to **walk 30 minutes a day, three times a week for one month**. Don't give up, especially in the early stages when you may not see results - the benefits will come. And if you do have 'one of those weeks' that's okay. Just begin again...and keep moving!

5. For more information

Contact:

- Your local fitness centre, e.g. YMCA.
- Heart Foundation – Heartline: 1300 36 27 87 www.heartfoundation.com.au.
- Government organisations, e.g. "Go for your Life" in Victoria – www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au.
- Your local doctor or other health professional.

For more information see www.ntc.gov.au

Looking after your health is like looking after your vehicle - regular care and maintenance pays off in the long run

The Driving and Your Health Campaign is supported by:

