



Being an  
active partner  
in your care

[veteransmates.net.au](http://veteransmates.net.au)



## HELPING YOU STAY ACTIVE

Staying physically and socially active are two of the most important things you can do to be fit and healthy, maintain your independence and improve your quality of life. With the recent COVID-19 restrictions, you may have spent more time at home and found it difficult to be physically and socially active. Getting active again and reconnecting with family and friends as restrictions change might be a bit challenging. But there are things you can do and supports available to help you get moving again, even if you need to stay at home.

The side effects of some medicines such as drowsiness, dizziness or feeling unsteady on your feet can also make it difficult to be active. If you feel this way, talk with your GP and together you can work out if any of your medicines need adjusting and the best way to help you return to being active.

### Why be active?

The benefits of being active are clear. You may:

- have more energy, and better strength and balance
- concentrate better
- sleep better
- feel calmer
- have improved mood
- have improved general health.

### This brochure:

-  gives you tips on what you can do to get active again and stay active, no matter your age, state of health or abilities
-  explains how the side effects of some commonly used medicines can affect your ability to be active
-  lists resources to help you stay active

## ? What could improve my ability to be active?

Your ability to do everyday activities can be made easier if you:



are more active



eat nutritious food



maintain your weight within a healthy range



sleep well



have your eyesight checked and wear your glasses



have your hearing checked and use your hearing aid



wear footwear that makes walking safe and comfortable



have your medicines reviewed by your GP and pharmacist.



Your ability to be active can also be improved if you **limit your alcohol consumption.**



To help you track your drinking and learn about other aspects of managing your alcohol consumption, download The ON TRACK with The Right Mix app available through Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling at: [www.openarms.gov.au/resources/apps-and-online-resources/right-mix-app](http://www.openarms.gov.au/resources/apps-and-online-resources/right-mix-app)

## ? What type of activities could I do?

**Find ways to be active that are enjoyable to you. See page 4 of this brochure and the insert for ideas that might suit you.**

**If you can, reduce the length of time you spend sitting and avoid sitting for long periods.**

Your GP can assess your mobility and refer you, where clinically indicated, to other health professionals such as a physiotherapist, an exercise physiologist

or occupational therapist to help develop a physical activity plan that suits your needs, abilities and home setting.



**If you need help getting active again or advice about a new exercise program, or if you are concerned about whether being active is safe for you, talk with your GP.**

## ? What type of activities could I do? cont.

By including these types of exercises in your activity routine, you will get the best health outcomes:



**Fitness activities for your heart, lungs and circulation such as walking**



**Strength activities such as lifting manageable weights**



**Flexibility and balance activities such as tai chi**

**See the accompanying insert for more ideas**

## ? How could medicines affect my ability to be active?

As we get older, we tend to have more health problems which often means we may need to take more medicines. Changes in our bodies also mean we could become more sensitive to the side effects of some medicines, even those we have been taking for some time.

Side effects of some commonly used medicines include drowsiness, light headedness, dizziness, poor concentration, difficulty thinking clearly, memory loss and blurred vision. These side effects may make it harder to do the things you enjoy and need to do each day. Medicines with these side effects are used to treat many conditions including:

- respiratory conditions such as airways diseases
- allergies, coughs and colds
- some pain conditions, including migraines
- depression and anxiety
- sleeping problems
- stomach and digestive problems, including heartburn and nausea
- high blood pressure
- bladder control problems
- epilepsy
- Parkinson's disease.

**Always talk with your GP before starting, changing or stopping any medicine.**

## ? How can a medicines review help my ability to be active?

A medicines review can help identify problems with your medicines that may be making it difficult for you to be active, such as feeling dizzy or sleepy during the day. A medicines review can be especially helpful if you have recently started a new medicine or have had the dose of a medicine changed.

Talk with your GP if you feel sleepy, dizzy or unsteady on your feet, or you are finding it difficult to get moving during the day. Your GP might suggest that you have a Home Medicines Review. In this service, a pharmacist reviews all

your medicines. The Home Medicines Review may be conducted face-to-face or via telehealth (a telephone or video consultation); your GP will check this for you. Together with your GP and pharmacist, you can work out if any of your medicines need adjusting.

It's also a good idea for you to keep an up-to-date list of your medicines, making sure to include medicines you buy from the pharmacy, health food shop or supermarket, and medicines that you take only occasionally.

### Useful resources

- > **Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and Sports Medicine Australia: Choose Health: Be Active – A physical activity guide for older Australians:** This website links to a brochure with information and ideas on how to achieve sufficient physical activity for good health and well-being, at: [www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-physical-choose-health](http://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-physical-choose-health)
- > **Day Club programs:** Day Clubs provide opportunities for people to participate in social activities outside the home such as sports, fitness programs, games, and arts and crafts. To find a Day Club in your local area and to check whether its activities are re-starting as COVID-19 restrictions change, go to: [www.dva.gov.au/health-and-treatment/work-and-social-life-programs/day-club-programs](http://www.dva.gov.au/health-and-treatment/work-and-social-life-programs/day-club-programs)
- > **Support organisations or groups:** These may include Legacy, Australian Men's Shed Association, the Returned and Services League, Mates4Mates, Cooking for One or Two, and the War Widows' Guild of Australia. To find out about these groups, go to Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling at: [www.openarms.gov.au/living-well/be-social](http://www.openarms.gov.au/living-well/be-social)
- > **Active Ageing Australia:** This website provides information on how to achieve physical activity for good health and well-being, at: <https://activeageing.org.au/>
- > **Safe exercise at home: Information on physical activity and exercise for older people,** at: [www.safeexerciseathome.org.au/](http://www.safeexerciseathome.org.au/)