

# Life Skills Program Digital Resource

## Physical Health



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This resource kit is a guide to improve your physical health. Here, our focus is on 3 elements: Sleep, Nutrition & Exercise!

## How a good night's sleep can affect your physical health?

There is no doubt that sleep is beneficial. But only a few know the various benefits of having a good sleep. Research shows people 18 years and above should sleep at least 7-8 hours a day.

### Why getting a good sleep is important?

- It helps us generate new cells/clean out waste and releases important hormones.
- It helps our learning (converting short-term memories into long-term memories) and makes us more mentally alert. If we don't sleep, our working efficiency and concentration decrease drastically. We don't want that in our exam time, do we?
- It helps to have a healthier immune system - that means you get sick less often. It is a great way of saving money, isn't it?
- You will wake up active, and you will be more productive and happier.
- Not having a good sleep can make driving extremely dangerous.
- Not having adequate sleep can make you stressed, leading to anxiety and depression, and long term diseases.
- We tend to crave and eat unhealthy foods, leading to weight gain.

If we can charge our phones to 100%, we should put effort to charge ourselves too! Being an international student and coming to a new country with a lot on your plate can be challenging and stressful. The independence to make our own choices is a big responsibility!

Choose wisely: it can cost you your wellbeing!

### Tips for getting a good night's sleep

- Let sunlight enter your apartment/room as our body naturally sets a sleep-wake cycle according to sunrise and sunset.
- Avoid drinking coffee after lunch time (it disrupts our REM sleep, which is vital for mental health).
- Stick to a routine - even on weekends.
- Avoid alcohol before bed if you want a good night's sleep (alcohol also disrupts our REM sleep).
- Avoid bright lights an hour before bed (this includes being in a bright room or being on your phone/laptop). The artificial light tricks your brain into thinking it is daytime.
- Avoid eating too late at night as digesting food heats up our body, and disrupts sleep as you are more prone to snoring.
- Avoid exercising too late at night as it over-stimulates our nervous system.

#### Learn more:

- **TED Talk: Sleep is your super power**  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/matt\\_walker\\_sleep\\_is\\_your\\_superpower?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/matt_walker_sleep_is_your_superpower?language=en)
- **Best apps for Sleep Meditation**  
<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/best-apps-for-sleep-meditation>



# Nutrition and Exercise: the impact on physical health



## Nutrition: Fuels the body and mind

- Nutrition means a balanced and wholesome diet.
- Try to eat 'whole foods' wherever possible and avoid processed foods.
- Try buying fresh vegetables and produce, and prep meals for the week.
- Avoid sugary drinks (eg. Coca-Cola or energy drinks) wherever possible. Try buying a fresh juice instead!
- Keep take-away foods (pizza, fish, chips, etc) as a treat. Do not make it a regular thing.
- You will save more money if you cook rather than order take-aways. It costs around \$15 per meal if you buy food from outside, and it may not even be healthy!

- **Try new recipes:**  
<https://studentrecipes.com/>
- **Fresh juice place in Victoria** (buy 10 drinks and the next one is free):  
<https://www.boostjuice.com.au/>
- **Free vegetarian food:**  
<http://www.khalsafoundation.org.au/>
- **Healthy eating on a budget:**  
<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eating-well/tips-eating-well/healthy-eating-budget>
- **How to meal prep:**  
<https://www.budgetbytes.com/meal-prep-101-a-beginners-guide/>

## How often should you exercise?

- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise per week.
- **Flexibility and Balance:** Incorporate activities that enhance flexibility and balance, such as yoga or tai chi, into your routine.
- **Consistency is Key:** Regular, consistent exercise is more beneficial than sporadic intense sessions. Gradually increase intensity and duration to avoid over exertion.



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## Planning to start exercising?

- **Consult a Professional:** Before starting a new exercise regimen, consult with a healthcare professional or fitness expert, especially if you have pre-existing health conditions.
- **Start slow, like running and walking, to get into the groove of exercising:** Avoid excessive intensity or duration when starting a new exercise routine.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink water before, during, and after exercise to maintain hydration.
- **Warm-up and Cool-Down:** Always include warm-up and cool-down sessions to prepare the body for exercise and aid in recovery. Rest is crucial for muscle repair and overall well-being.
- **Listen to Your Body:** Pay attention to your body's signals. If you feel pain, dizziness, fatigue, or discomfort, modify or stop your exercise. Please seek professional advice, as every human body is different and unique in its own way. So do not compare your routine with anyone else!

- **Find running groups in Victoria:**

<https://www.timeout.com/melbourne/sport-and-fitness/best-running-clubs-in-melbourne>

- **Find walking groups in Victoria:**

<https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/WomenWalkingGroups/>

- **Meet new people to socialise, walk, run or just go for a picnic together, via this app!:**

<https://apps.apple.com/au/app/meetup-social-events-groups/id375990038>

- **Find a professional doctor on call:**

<https://www.doctorsondemand.com.au/>

- **Find events related to cooking, exercise, and other fun activities to socialise:**

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/>

- **Support health services in Australia:**

<https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/en/life-in-australia/student-support-services/health-and-wellbeing#:~:text=are%20contagious%E2%80%8B.-,Using%20your%20OSHC,there%20are%20any%20waiting%20periods>

## VicWISE Top Tips:

- Combine social activities with physical exercise, eg, walk to the market, go for a run with a friend, download a free walking tour of the city where you live.
- Enjoy a cooking class, and attend events related to cooking, socialising, exercising, photography, cycling, hiking, etc.
- See if your university has any exercise classes or sports clubs where you can meet other students.
- Try using the university gym as it will be free for students.





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