

Helping teenagers be more active

Finding time to exercise can be hard, especially if it is not something that you enjoy. But being active will help you get fitter, sleep better and, together with healthy eating, reach and stay at a healthy body weight. And it can be a great way to unwind.

If you are not usually active, start with 5–10 minutes of easy exercise a day and increase that time a little each week. Aim to build up to at least 1 hour of activity each day – you can spread that hour over the day.

Find activities that you might enjoy, either with others or on your own, and that you can do regularly. Try joining a school or local sports team, dance, waka ama, kapa haka, Poly or martial arts group. Joining a group is a great way to meet people too.

Maybe you don't feel like being on a team, but how about coaching one, umpiring or being a referee, or even marshalling at an event?

Set yourself a goal, such as taking part in a team triathlon or fun run or going on a tramp with friends.

Or try biking or jogging, social tennis, skateboarding, hanging out at the beach or pool with friends.

Instead of getting in the car for short trips, like to and from school, try walking or biking there. Start by doing it once a week, and add more trips over time. It can also help you save money.

Limit the amount of time you spend watching TV or in front of a screen to less than 2 hours a day (outside school time). But if you're really attached to your screen, try active games, like Pokémon Go™.

See if you can take on some regular jobs around home or for the neighbours – like mowing the lawns or vacuuming, or get a part-time job delivering flyers. You'll be earning some money while you get fitter.



Find out more from the Ministry

Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Children and Young People (Aged 2–18 years): A background paper