

## Extra Fitness Benefits for Teenagers

Most people know that there are lots of health and lifestyle benefits that come with being physically active on a regular basis. These include:

- reduced incidence of heart disease
- improved cholesterol ratios
- reduction in high blood pressure
- improved efficiency of the heart
- weight management and improved body composition
- improved insulin sensitivity and reduced risk of diabetes
- reduced risk of osteoporosis
- reduced incidence of some cancers, and
- improved mental health.

This is a long list of very good reasons to get fit and keep fit.

For teenagers, the list of good reasons for being physically active is even longer. For teenagers, there are all these benefits and more. If you are a teenager or you have a teenager in your family think about these additional benefits of regular physical activity:

- Physical activity helps teenagers to be fit and strong, and to feel this way. This in turn leads them to feel energetic and positive about themselves, life and the future.
- Physical activity is a great way to channel energy - both positive (e.g., restlessness) and negative (e.g., anger).
- Physical activity can be a lot of fun. The activity itself can be enjoyable and doing it with a team, friends or others who like the same activity can add to the fun.
- Physical activity can expand social and sporting friendships so that teenagers have different friends in different places, or so they can do different activities with different people.
- Physical activity can help teenagers develop both physical and social skills – eg, coordination, balance, cardio fitness and strength, as well as teamwork and leadership skills.
- Physical activity can help to improve concentration and academic performance.
- Physical activity can help healthy bone growth and muscle development.
- Physical activity in adolescence can lead to ongoing physical activity throughout adulthood and all the health and lifestyle benefits that go with that.

You can never be too young to start regular physical activity and the benefits of it can be reaped both now and throughout life. Whether you are a teenager or have a teenager in the family, keep fit and encourage others to keep fit also.