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Media Release – Is Your Teen Getting Enough Physical Activity & Exercise?

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



Is Your Teen Getting Enough Physical Activity & Exercise?

While physical activity and childhood goes together, more and more there is competition for getting active.

Nearly half of children aged 5-14 years (53%) usually watch two or more hours of television a day. This inactivity increases into the teen years with international studies suggesting up to 80% of teenagers are not meeting the minimum movement requirements for their health. The recommendation for teenagers is 60 minutes of moderate activity on most days.

We cannot just assume teenagers will maintain their childhood activity levels and keep moving. Just as we plan time to exercise and engage in physical activity, we need to make sure this happens for our teens as well.

At high school the competition for regular exercise includes using the internet and social media, study requirements, and time spent with friends. Transitioning into higher study and work means older teenagers heading into adulthood have a change in lifestyle, often leading to a loss of high school sports and other commitments. This then can lead to a further dip in planned activity.

Their relationship with exercise is also in transition, moving from school based activities such as school sports and teams which are led by parents and other adults, into self-directed activity. This is a period of risk for teens, as if they have had all of their physical activity planned on their behalf up until this stage of life, they may lack the skills to make space for it when it's no longer compulsory.

The risks for teenagers not exercising are the same for adults, however, with youth on their side, the major health effects are unlikely to be seen for a number of years. The more short term benefits of physical activity are the best way to promote getting moving to your average teen, including the important benefits of greater social interaction, and the impact on mood. While promoting aesthetic benefits shouldn't be a key reason, the fact that exercise changes body shape is likely to be a motivator as well.

While sport has been a traditional movement activity for a number of young people, it is no longer the only answer to getting active, especially in teenage years. Enabling teenagers to join the 'adult' world of exercise opportunities is one step to keep them engaged with movement and physical activity. This also means they don't have a big gap between ceasing school and associated activities, and taking up regular exercise as a means of staying healthy for the rest of their lives.

Fortunately there are a range of other options with many more young people choosing gyms and exercise classes as their way of keeping active and healthy. A number of facilities offer youth and student discounts so financial barriers are reduced.

Other ideas to help your teenager get active include:

- Involving your teenagers with your own exercise options . Let them share an exercise session or come along to your gym with you.
- If your teen has been involved in sport, help them find adult clubs or leagues.
- If your teen is not sporty or struggles with physical activity, let them know that they are not alone in this.

Contact details for further information about the exercise industry:

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "warrant of fitness check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver safe exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

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Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

