Active Geelong & Barwon Health – event summary

CREATING THRIVING WORKPLACES THROUGH

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

**Take home messages from the presenters**

* 93% of Victorian adults thought workplaces should support employee wellbeing
* 87% believed healthy foods should be available and promoted at workplaces
* 86% believed workplaces should encourage employees to be physically active
* Business benefits:

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| * Increase productivity * Happier employees * Reduce sick leave * Reduce workplace injuries * Reduce compensation costs * Improve employee morale | * Improve health status * Improve retention * Safer workplace * Reduce absenteeism * Reduce presenteeism |

* 55% of Victorian adults did not meet the physical activity guidelines in 2017-18
* 67% of Victorian adults were overweight or obese in 2017-18
* **Physical activity** (PA) is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. It can be:
  + Incidental PA - movement as part of everyday activities
  + Light intensity PA - slow walk
  + Moderate intensity PA - brisk walk
  + Vigorous intensity PA - running
* **Sedentary behaviours** are characterised by low energy expenditure, and a sitting or lying posture during waking hours. It is associated with poorer health outcomes.

**Adult physical activity guidelines**

1. **Move more & be active - even small doses are effective**
2. **Find your 30-minutes - be active in your leisure and transport options**
3. **Sit less - reduce screen time, it’s linked to poorer mental health**
4. **Role model positive PA behaviours to your families and colleagues**

**Successes & ideas (taken from our group discussions and feedback forms)**

* Challenges & Competition
  + Competitions can engage and motivate staff/ teams
  + Create your own 6 or 12-week challenge
  + [Steptember](https://www.steptember.org.au/), [Heart foundation](https://walking.heartfoundation.org.au/#individual) walking challenge, [Premiers Active April](https://app.activeapril.vic.gov.au/),
  + [The Global Challenge](https://www.virginpulse.com/en-gb/global-challenge/?tr_cp_id=zkpZ&tr_a_id=jw6D&tr_pn_id=BnvB&tr_v_idx=4v&tr_redirect=1)
  + Find something that’s easy to coordinate
  + Incorporate a charity donation
  + Explore how you can maintain the effect after the event is over
* Meditation & Mindfulness
  + Once a week or before a team meeting do a short guided meditation using an app or You Tube video. Alternate who researches and leads the session
* Exercise
  + Lunchtime walking groups, track the distance via [Victoria Walks](http://www.victoriawalks.org.au/) website
  + Promote your local [parkrun](https://www.parkrun.com.au/) to your staff
  + 10-min fun warm up sessions before physical work
  + Yoga or Pilates classes – seasonal or short time period
  + Promote come & try/free trial sessions with local gyms or exercise providers
  + [Life Activities Club for 50+](https://www.life.org.au/home/) - physical activity classes for 50+ age group
  + Corporate gym memberships (negotiate a deal for your staff)
  + Onsite gyms / equipment (reduces some barriers).
  + 15-minute walking breaks (can be additional to the lunch break)
  + Promote Physical activity breaks / standing stretch breaks in meetings
  + Sponsor/part fund entry into events like Run 4 Geelong
  + Share cost with other organisations near to you
  + Use bikes for quick transport around large sites or between campuses
  + Break your 30-minutes into 10-minute blocks
* Reduce Sedentary time & embed it into practice/culture
  + Sit and stand desks & desk/photocopier exercises
  + Flexible work hours – use some time to walk in to work
  + Stand up desks or bar height tables in lunch rooms/ meeting rooms
  + Morning meeting make it a stand up or reduce chairs in meeting rooms (combine this with organisational messaging)
  + Walking meetings
  + Use ROI stats
  + Highlight the correlation between mental health & physical activity
  + Appoint a health champion/ambassador
  + Spread the message – newsletters, socials,
  + Email ‘free’ time – walk to deliver your message
  + Co-design – talk to your employees and collaborate on ideas

**Challenges to promoting physical activity**

* Time, especially lunch break length
* Separate/ individual offices can be isolating
* Mindset – sitting at desks, not taking lunchbreaks
* Funding / resources / $ investment
* Lack of facilities e.g. showers, bike storage
* Culture and leadership - especially during/after executive change
* Busy / competing priorities – work / family etc
* How to keep people engaged once the novelty wears off

**Actions**

1. Register [yourself](https://www.activegeelong.org.au/movement-champions/individuals/) with Active Geelong. Let’s make Geelong, Australia’s most active city
2. Register your [workplace](https://www.activegeelong.org.au/movement-champions/workplaces/) with Active Geelong for free resources and information
3. If you:
   1. want to find out about physical activity and sport in our region;
   2. run a workplace physical activity e.g. a walking group that others can join;
   3. or are a provider of physical activity classes or sports

then register yourself with the [Active Geelong powered by Playsport search tool](https://playsport.com/activegeelong?utm_source=ag&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=referral)

1. Sign your workplace up to [The Workplace Achievement Program](https://www.barwonhealth.org.au/services-departments/community-health-services/healthy-communities/healthy-workplaces)
2. [Register](mailto:workplacehealth@barwonhealth.org.au?subject=Please%20register%20me%20for%20the%20healthy%20workplace%20newsletter) to receive the Barwon Health healthy communities’ Workplace Achievement Program eNewsletter

**References & resources**

[Heart foundation](https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/main/Active_living/4769_HF_-_HWG-_Act_at_a_glance_A4_booklet_update_2016_FA_Web.pdf)

[Move more sit less Evaluation Toolkit](https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/publications/4729_HF_-_Move_More_Sit_Less_toolkit_FA_Web.pdf)

[Victorian Population Health Survey 2017, DHHS](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/population-health-systems/health-status-of-victorians/survey-data-and-reports/victorian-population-health-survey/victorian-population-health-survey-2017)

[Sedentary Behavior Research Network, 2012](https://www.sedentarybehaviour.org/what-is-sedentary-behaviour/)

[Department of Health physical activity guidelines](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines)

[Be up standing- toolkit for workplace champions](https://beupstanding.com.au/)

[Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2019–2023](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/victorian-public-health-wellbeing-plan-2019-2023)

[Exercise is Medicine Physical Activity in the Workplace Guide](http://exerciseismedicine.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/EIM_Workplace_PA_Guide.pdf)

[Deakin University – The Institute for Physical Activity & Nutrition](https://www.deakin.edu.au/ipan)

[Sedentary Work: Evidence on an emergent work health and safety issue](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1702/literature-review-of-the-hazards-of-sedentary-work.pdf)

[Healthy workplace guide: Ten steps to implementing a workplace health program](https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/main/Active_living/4669_HF_-_Healthy_Workplace_guide_booklet_update_2016_Web_Email_FINAL.pdf)

**Contact details**

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| Active Geelong overview | Dr Sarah Leach | Active Geelong Board member.  GMHBA General Manager Health, People and Community | [Movers@activegeelong.org.au](mailto:Movers@activegeelong.org.au) |
| What is physical activity? | Kylie Milward | Exercise physiologist & recreation therapist  Barwon Health | [Kylie.Milward@barwonhealth.org.au](mailto:Kylie.Milward@barwonhealth.org.au) |
| Keynote: Mental health and physical activity | Dr Megan Teychenne | Senior Lecturer, Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN), Deakin University | [Megan.teychenne@deakin.edu.au](mailto:Megan.teychenne@deakin.edu.au) |

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