

MEDIA RELEASE

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Beat the chill with VicHealth's 10 tips for staying healthy and happy this winter

Winter is well and truly upon us and the temptation to hide away in our pyjamas drinking hot chocolates and watching Netflix is high.

While the wind, rain and dark skies can dampen your motivation, there are plenty of ways to keep active, eat well and stay happy without going into total hibernation.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said winter could be a time to mix up your workout.

“While it can be a little harder to get out of bed and more tempting to reach for high-fat and sugar-loaded comfort foods, winter can be an excellent way to shake up your routine while ensuring you remain happy and healthy,” Ms Rechter said.

“As the cool weather sets in its easy to lose motivation to exercise and eat well but there are plenty of ways to combat the winter blues and look after your health and wellbeing all year round.”

Check out VicHealth's tips below:

1. Get your skates on!

It might sound crazy given how cold it is outside but ice skating is a great way to get your heart rate up and is so much fun you'll forget you're even exercising! If you're not game to take the ice, try roller blading. There's a great roller skating rink in Sunshine worth checking out- visit <http://www.rollerskating.com.au/>

2. Head indoors

Sign up to an indoor sport, like netball, volleyball, soccer or cricket. There are some great, relaxed and social indoor competitions around and committing to a regular time every week, where your teammates are counting on you, makes you more likely to get off the couch and get to your closest stadium or recreation centre. If you can't commit for a whole season, programs like [Rock Up Netball](#) that offer pay as you play sessions are worth checking out.

3. Get your togs on

Hit your local indoor heated pool. Swimming can be a lovely and relaxing way to start or end the day and it's a great for improving blood circulation during cooler months. Do a few laps to get your heart rate up, then wind down with a dip in the spa. If you're not a big swimmer, walking laps can also be a great, gentle way to exercise.

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4. Unearth your inner foodie

Winter calls for comfort food. Think soups, stews and bowls of hearty pasta. Processed foods like pasta sauces and tinned soups are loaded with salt, which increases your risk of high blood pressure and the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Put the heater on, get the apron out and whip up your own comfort foods using fresh herbs and spices to get your flavour hit instead of salt. Your heart will thank you for it...and your tummy! For more info on how to reduce your salt intake visit www.donttrustyourtastebuds.com.au

5. Step away from the computer

Resist the urge to email your colleague on the other side of the office. Get up, stretch and walk over to have a conversation. Better still, take the stairs instead of jumping in the elevator to get to your next meeting. Prolonged sitting (more than 30 minutes continuous sitting) is a risk factor for chronic illnesses, including type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and for early death.

6. Let the water flow

Use the cooler months as an opportunity to review and cut back on sugary drinks and alcohol. There's plenty of initiatives out there if you need some encouragement and support including [Dry July](#), [Sober Selfie](#), [Hello Sunday Morning](#) and [Ocober](#). Instead, knock back some H2O. It's practically free, good for your health and will reduce your risk of tooth decay.

7. Unleash your downward facing dog

People have been enjoying the benefits of Yoga for more than 5,000 years. It's social, suitable for a range of fitness levels and will increase your flexibility, grow muscle strength, improve posture and boost your mental health.

8. Walk this way

There are so many fun runs and walks out there so why not sign up to one to give you something to work towards. If you can, grab a buddy to train with you. You're more likely to stay committed if you have a friend working towards the same goal. Proceeds from a number of fun runs also go to charity so you'll feel extra good for taking part. Among those coming up are [Run Melbourne](#), [Connor's Run](#) and [Sweat Vs Steam](#).

9. Get 'appy

Download a healthy lifestyle app. If leaving the house isn't an option for you, there's a huge range of fitness apps on the market that can help you work out in the comfort of your own home without any equipment or machines. Check out VicHealth's [Healthy Living Apps Guide](#) to help determine which apps are right for you.

10. Hit the shops

If you're looking for an excuse to go shopping then we've got you sorted. Walking around a shopping centre is an easy way to get your recommended daily 10,000 steps in. It's warm, gets you off the couch and out moving, and it will help reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease. Need we say more?

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