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New guidelines double the dose for recommended physical activity in adults

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New guidelines on physical activity are a “wake up call” for Australians.

(Medical Xpress)—New guidelines on physical activity that double the levels previously recommended are a "wake up call" for Australians, the lead author says.

Director of The University of Queensland's Centre for Research on Exercise, Physical Activity and Health (CRExPAH), Professor Wendy Brown, is the lead author of the new guidelines released on Tuesday by the Australian Government Department of Health.

The new Australian physical activity guidelines recommend adults should be completing between 150 and 300 minutes of physical activity per week, twice the amount of the previous government recommendations.

The guidelines draw on research which suggests that while the previous recommendation of 150 minutes per week of moderate activity was sufficient for general health benefits, a higher level is needed to prevent weight gain and some cancers.

Professor Brown said the new guidelines were a wake-up call for Australian adults to be more active.

"In Australia obesity is now contributing more than any other factor to the overall burden of disease," Professor Brown said.

"If we're serious about limiting weight gain Australian adults need to aim for that upper recommendation of 300 minutes per week."

However, for those who are currently inactive, one of the main messages of the new guidelines is that some activity is always better than none.

Professor Brown suggests working towards the recommended range by including a variety of activities.

Professor Brown said muscle-strengthening exercises were also important for general health benefits.

"The guidelines recommend that exercise which involves activities that use either body weight or other weights for resistance should be done on at least two days of the week," she said.

For the first time, the guidelines highlight the risks of sedentary

behaviour, recommending that adults break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

"If the average adult is sitting at their desk for seven hours a day, and in some cases up to 10 hours, this can lead to metabolic changes that affect health," Professor Brown said.

UQ Centre for Research on Exercise, Physical Activity and Health (CRExPAH) researcher Dr Nicola Burton also contributed to the new guidelines.

"It is exciting to see that the mental health benefits of physical activity are being recognised," Dr Burton said.

The new guidelines are for all adults aged 18 to 64 years, irrespective of cultural background, gender or ability.

Provided by University of Queensland

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