



## Media Release - 15 July 2024 – ExerciseNZ

### **Boost Your Immunity This Winter: Move Your Body & Stay Social**

As we reach the midpoint of winter in Aotearoa, Exercise New Zealand emphasises the importance of staying active and socially connected to boost your immune system and ward off seasonal illnesses. With colder temperatures and shorter days, it's easy to fall into sedentary habits, but maintaining regular physical activity and social interactions are crucial for enhancing our body's defence mechanisms.

### **The Science Behind Exercise and Immunity**

A recent article published in the [World Journal of Biology Pharmacy and Health Sciences](#) highlights that engaging in regular moderate-intensity exercise can significantly improve your immune response and prevent a range of conditions. Activities such as brisk walking, cycling, and swimming enhance the function of various immune cells, helping the body fend off infections—an especially important consideration during winter when respiratory infections are more common. Here are three key factors to consider:

1. **Enhanced Immune Function:** Moderate exercise boosts the immune system by stimulating key immune cells that fight infections and reduce inflammation.
2. **Reduced Risk of Illness:** Regular physical activity lowers the incidence, severity, and duration of respiratory infections, improves vaccine response, and reduces the risk of death from infectious diseases like influenza and pneumonia.
3. **Balancing Exercise Intensity:** While moderate exercise enhances immunity, prolonged high-intensity workouts without adequate rest can suppress it. Balance is key to maintaining optimal immune function.

### **The Role of Social Interaction**

Staying active during winter is not just about maintaining physical fitness; it's about preserving overall well-being. [Research](#) has also shown that engaging in activities that include interactions with others, such as yoga classes, group fitness sessions, or gym visits with friends, provides immense social benefits that have been shown to improve immunity. Social interaction can reduce cortisol levels, improve sleep, and even lower the risk of dementia. According to Exercise New Zealand, group-based exercise activities remain highly popular in Aotearoa, with over 85% of exercise providers offering some form of group activities. These activities not only promote physical health but also foster a sense of community and support.

### **Stay Active, Stay Social, Stay Healthy**

Exercise New Zealand encourages everyone to stay active and socially engaged this winter. By incorporating regular physical activity and social interactions into your routine, you can boost your immune system and enhance your overall health.

*ExerciseNZ believes in bringing the benefits of exercise to as many people as possible, with a vision of everyone in Aotearoa exercising. One way we support this is by promoting exercise, in all its forms and modalities, through the New Zealand media, as well as advocating for the role of exercise in wellness and health.*

*For more information on this release or to arrange an interview, please contact Richard Beddie at [richard@exercisenz.org.nz](mailto:richard@exercisenz.org.nz) or P: 0800 66 88 11. M: 027-520-5744*