



## Media Release - 31 July 2024 - ExerciseNZ

### New Research Highlights the Positive Impact of Evening Exercise on Sleep Quality

There is a growing awareness for the importance of getting a good night's sleep with a plethora of scientific studies shown to support its validity. The general recommendation for adults is that we should be getting in between [7 to 9 hours of sleep each night](#) to fully reap the rewards of high quality sleep. Despite this growing awareness, recent survey results from the Ministry of Health show that over 25% of adults in Aotearoa still do not get the recommended amount of sleep each night.

Recent studies from the University of Otago examined the significant benefits of integrating regular physical activity into evening routines. While exercise before bed has previously been discouraged, this study provides compelling evidence that evening exercise can substantially enhance sleep quality and duration, an essential component for overall health and well-being.

The findings of [recent research published in BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine](#) revealed that short, regular activity breaks significantly improved subsequent sleep duration compared to prolonged sitting. Key findings from this research showed the following:

- **Increased Sleep Duration:** Participants who performed regular evening exercise breaks experienced an average increase of 29.3 minutes in sleep period time and 27.7 minutes in total sleep time.
- **No Negative Impact on Sleep Quality:** The study found no significant effects on sleep efficiency, wake after sleep onset, or the number of awakenings.
- **Health Implications:** Improved sleep is associated with better diet quality and reduced risks of cardiometabolic diseases, including coronary heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

The studies' results have significant implications for public health recommendations and sleep quality guidelines. With the prevalence of evening sedentary behaviour, especially due to screen time, integrating simple resistance exercises could be an effective strategy to improve sleep and overall well-being. Notably, this research challenges the traditional belief that evening exercise disrupts sleep. Instead, incorporating short, manageable bouts of activity can enhance sleep quality and contribute to overall health. These findings are especially important as we continue to promote physical activity as a key component of a healthy lifestyle.

*Exercise New Zealand is committed to fostering a healthier nation through the promotion of physical activity and exercise. This latest research reinforces the importance of incorporating regular exercise into daily routines, even in the evening, to reap substantial health benefits. We urge everyone to take a proactive approach to their health by staying active and prioritising good sleep.*

*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.*