

Tradie Health Month Health and Wellbeing



Tradies Health Month, which runs throughout August, places a firm focus on the health of tradies.

During this month, take the time to think about your health as a tradie and refer to the following tips to help you look after your health and wellbeing.

What to eat?

Try to eat more natural foods. Packaged and processed foods are often full of sugar, salt, unhealthy fats, artificial additives and calories. Eat more of the following foods which are packed full of the nutrients you need;

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole-grain products, such as brown rice and whole-grain breads
- Fibre rich foods, such as beans and leafy greens
- Lean cuts of meat and poultry such as skinless chicken breasts and lean ground beef
- fish

Stay active

After a long day at work we often just want to collapse onto the couch, however, it's important for your physical and mental wellbeing to keep up the exercise. Try to get at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic exercise each week or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic exercise. Your exercise regime may be as simple as a 30 minute walk 5 times a week. Greater amounts of exercise will provide greater health benefits however even small amounts of physical activity are helpful.

Look after your mental health

Especially for men, the tradie work culture often encourages superhuman toughness and resilience which can mean that tradies don't acknowledge or seek help when they need it. Your mental health is just as important as your physical health and it's important to make it a priority. Some things you can do to look after your mental health include:

- Get plenty of sleep
- Exercise regularly
- Spend time with your friends and family
- Talk about how you feel with people you trust
- Take time out to do activities you enjoy and also to relax

Problems with mental health are common, and not a sign of weakness.

In fact, it can take courage to admit there's a problem, and to find some help. If you do need further support, Programmed's Employee Assistance Program is private and confidential and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In Australia call **1300 687 327** and New Zealand call **0800 666 367**.

Other support services are also available such as Lifeline Australia **131114** and Lifeline New Zealand **0800 543 354**.

Protect you skin

Many trades involve working outdoors therefore it is important to protect your skin. Wear protective clothing, spend time in the shade and use sunscreen. Check your skin monthly for any changes such as to existing moles or where new moles develop.

Break unhealthy habits

Smoking is one of the worst things you can do for your health and second-hand smoke is also very dangerous. Apart from lung cancer, smoking and second-hand smoke exposure can cause other health conditions such as emphysema and heart disease and also increase your risk of many types of cancer.

Excessive alcohol consumption is also damaging to your health. In the short term, drinking excessive amounts of alcohol can affect your moods, concentration and quality of sleep, and long term health risks include liver and heart damage, high blood pressure, mental health issues and many types of cancer. The recommended guidelines for healthy individuals are to drink no more than 10 standard drinks in a week, and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day. Drinking less frequently, and drinking less on each day or occasion, further reduces the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol.

Check-ups

Schedule periodic check-ups with your doctor who can help monitor cardiovascular risk factors such as your weight, blood pressure and cholesterol. Be sure to schedule in regular skin checks too.