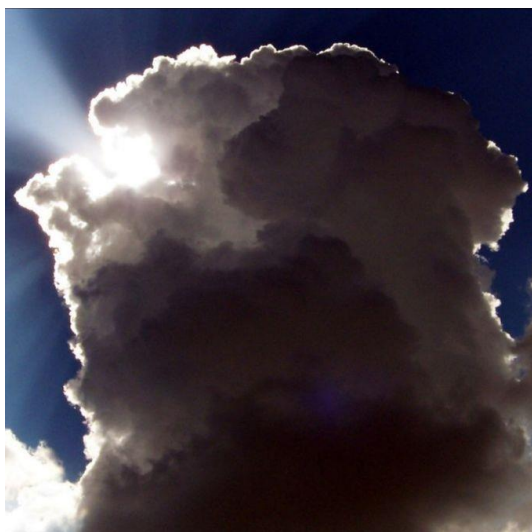




## The way we think about physical activity has changed



Every cloud has a silver lining, so the saying goes! And it appears there have been a number of positives to come out of the current Covid-19 pandemic in regard to physical activity and exercise. In many cases, living in lockdown and learning to adjust to alert levels has altered our **feelings towards physical activity for the better**. Daily exercise became the one constant, providing structure and routine against a backdrop of an ever-changing news cycle.

Not only has the way we feel about physical activity changed, but so has the way we think about it. Let's take a closer look at how the pandemic has altered attitudes and the implications this has for activity providers in future.

### Exercise anywhere

Many people have experienced significant disruptions (and still are!) to their usual activity routines because of the pandemic. During lockdowns gyms closed and many exercise classes were not able to go ahead. As a result, people got creative and came up with new and innovative ways of being active at home. The popularity of walking and cycling exploded, and backyards were transformed into outdoor workout areas. Gardening, vacuuming and cleaning out the garage became new forms of exercise! Many Kiwis

realised for the first time, that with a bit of thought, it was **possible to be active in a whole myriad of different ways**.



*"Covid-19 has presented many people with the unique opportunity to exercise more, because, practically, people have fewer reasons not to"*

Dr Charlotte Hilton – from the British Psychological Society.

## Technology is here to stay

Virtual exercise opportunities were turbocharged by the pandemic. Many exercise professionals, councils, gyms and activity providers started offering online classes and activities during the 2020 lockdown and have continued to do so. Les Mills on Demand boosted its sign-ups last year by 800%! The online shift is contributing to what experts are saying will be a **permanent change** to how the industry works. A recent US survey found that while 75% of consumers said they will eventually return to pre-pandemic routines and the actual gym, many indicated they will retain a virtual component - a phenomenon with broad implications for the sector.

*"I don't believe people even realised the part exercising played on mental health until it was taken away from them. It's certainly something we've been taking for granted."* Michael Ramsey – founder of the workout Strong.



## Mental health, not just physical health

The pandemic has put mental health and wellness into sharp focus! People have become much more aware of their mental wellbeing. Interestingly, researchers have found that the pandemic has created a **paradox where mental health has become both a motivator for and a barrier to physical activity**. People want to be active to improve their mental health but find it difficult to exercise due to stress and anxiety. While some people will find it hard to break through these barriers, there is no doubt that mental health is now considered an important part of overall health.



## Implications for Activity Providers

Here are some ideas to help make your classes, groups and activities future focused – in light of these changing attitudes:

### 1. Create a strong sense of community.

With so many people being active at home during lockdown, you might be wondering if structured exercise (classes, groups and programmes) is a thing of the past! Latest trends suggest this is not the case. One industry leader commented, "Most of us who started working out at home or in the park did so because we had no other choice – and when our gyms reopened, we rushed back". It appears the social benefit of exercise is a huge drawcard.

[Aim to build a sense of community](#) as this will keep people connected and committed, plus attract newbies.

### 2. Plan for a future that includes online options.

The online fitness boom is here to stay! Many fitness experts, trainers and instructors that started their streaming services or apps before Covid-19 have seen unprecedented growth since 2020, while others have quickly shifted their strategies to keep up with the demand. A recent gym survey found that people wanted to "maintain a hybrid experience as a part of the 'new normal' rather than simply returning to in-person classes.

[Now is a great time to get the knowledge to be able to offer online options](#) and also to upskill (if you haven't already).

### 3. Start talking about mental health.

Classes, groups and programmes offer crucial components of mental wellbeing: community and social inclusion. Activity providers can provide opportunities for people to socialise, build community, and find belonging and support.

[You could try adding a mental health education component](#) into your activities if you're not already. You could also add in some meditation or relaxation exercises to provide a calming, reflective aspect to your sessions.



## [Education, Training and Development](#)

The Active Canterbury website is a great place to go to find out about upcoming education and training opportunities. Click on the link above to view resources and see what's coming up over the next few months.

**IMPORTANT: Due to the current COVID-19 situation, we cannot guarantee that the training opportunities listed below and on the Active Canterbury website will go ahead as scheduled. Please check with the course organiser for latest updates.**

### [Spring Activity Providers Workshop](#)

**Date:** Saturday 27th November 2021.

**Time:** 12.30 to 4.30pm.

**Location:** Pioneer Recreation and Sport Centre (75 Lyttelton Street).

**Cost:** FREE

**CPDs:** 2.5 CPDs points if you attend the entire workshop.

Cardiac conditions, events and interventions will be the key focus at this workshop. Highly experienced cardio-thoracic nurse specialist, Anne Caldwell will explain what happens when common cardiac conditions and events like heart attack, atrial fibrillation, angina and stroke occur, as well as available treatments and interventions, and the common rehab pathway that follows. The workshop will also cover:

- Line Dancing! Discover how this fun style of dancing is great for fitness, coordination, brain training and building social connections.
- Reflexology: Learn all about this fascinating alternative therapy from experienced reflexologist Mel Horswell.
- Behaviour Change: Find out about common models of behavioural change such as stages of change and decisional balance to gain a better understanding of what motivates your participants and clients.

[Register online to attend this Spring Active Canterbury workshop](#)

Registrations close at noon on Friday 19th November. A waitlist will be in place.

### [Hauora Yoga Conference](#)

**Date:** Sunday 7th November 2021.

**Location:** Mount Pleasant Community Centre (3 McCormacks Bay Road).

**Cost:** \$299 per person. Discounts available for YogaNZ members and REPs registered yoga teachers.

**CPDs:** 10 points.

This year's Hauora Yoga Conference will be held in Christchurch. This is the only Yoga event of its type in New Zealand, and the organisers look forward to bringing together some of the most respected teachers in Yoga, both local and international, together with New Zealand's Yoga community.

### [2021 FitEx Conference](#)

**Dates:** 19th to 21st November 2021.

**Location:** Online.

**Cost:** From \$195 early bird and REPs registration, ExerciseNZ Membership, or YogaNZ Membership.

**CPDs:** 10 points for attending each day of the Main Conference (Sat/Sun).

With over 80 sessions including lectures, master classes and practical sessions plus all new and longer Deep Dive mini workshops. FitEx is the conference for the exercise industry in New Zealand. Held over three days FitEX has something for everybody in the exercise industry – from facility owners through to exercise professionals.



The **Activities Directory** is continuing to grow! It's a great way to promote your classes, groups and activities. Click above to view our new promotional video!

[Jump online and fill in the form to add your details](#) – it's easy and free.



A new study has found that keeping fit and healthy, and exercising at least 30 minutes five times a week **strengthens the immune system** and **decreases the risk** of catching or dying from COVID-19.

[This study was led by professor Sebastien Chastin from Glasgow Caledonian University](#), and found that if people are physically fit, they are a third less likely to catch a disease or fall ill from one. Physical fitness also changes how the body responds to vaccine. The study found that being physically fitter increases the effectiveness of vaccines.

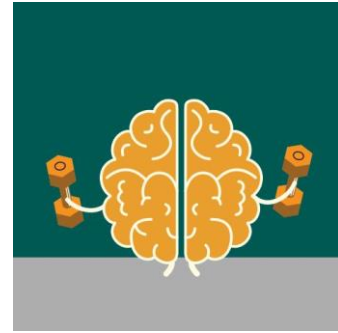


[Get Outdoors Week](#) is about safely and easily exploring New Zealand's great outdoors.

A key focus is encouraging people who have always wanted to give it a go, but don't know where to start, the tools and support they need to head outdoors safely.

#### **Help spread the word!**

You can get involved by encouraging participation, running an event or learning during the week! Logos, web banners and social media tools are available free from the website or get in touch with the organising team for further support.



[The dual beneficial effect of physical activity in depression is confirmed by a new study.](#)

People with depression often withdraw and are physically inactive. Physical activity not only reduces depressive symptoms, it also increases the brain's ability to change.

**"The results show how important seemingly simple things like physical activity are in treating and preventing illnesses such as depression,"** says study leader Dr. Karin Rosenkranz.



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**To get in touch with Active Canterbury please contact:**

Nadine Milmine - Active Canterbury Network Coordinator  
Pegasus Health (Charitable) Ltd  
Phone: 0274 621 262  
Email: [nadine.milmine@activecanterbury.org.nz](mailto:nadine.milmine@activecanterbury.org.nz)

We welcome your feedback and comments.