

## Active Canterbury News

*We're Getting Through Together - Whāia E Tātou Te Pae Tawhiti*  
March/April 2022



# The Power of Play!

**Languishing.** It's a term that might describe how you are feeling right now!

[Languishing is a state of apathy, a sense of restlessness or feeling unsettled](#) or an overall lack of interest in life or the things that typically bring you joy. "The constant mental workout of living through a pandemic and coping with the effects of that begins to take its toll", says Dr Dougal Sutherland – a clinical psychologist at Victoria University of Wellington.

The good news is there are many simple things we can do to boost our mental wellbeing. One great way is to incorporate **more play and fun** into each day!



Play and fun adds joy to life, relieves stress, and connects us to others. It can also make work more productive and pleasurable.

[Experts say that taking time away from your troubles to play or laugh](#) can go a long way toward making you feel better even in the most difficult of times. **“Highly playful adults feel the same stressors as anyone else, but they appear to experience and react to**

them differently, allowing stressors to roll off more easily than those who are less playful,” says Lynn Barnett, Professor at the University of Illinois.

## Ways to add more play to your day

- **Schedule time in a park or at the beach** to throw a frisbee, fly a kite, hang out with friends, play on the swings, or climb a tree.
- **Play with a pet.** Dogs are naturally playful. Go for a walk on the beach, play in the surf or simply throw a ball.
- **Surround yourself with playful people.** They'll help loosen you up and are more likely to support your efforts to play and have fun.
- **Attend a Laughing Yoga class.** [This form of yoga is believed to help you better manage stress through controlled breathing.](#)
- **Play with children.** Goofing around with kids helps you experience the joy of play from their perspective. If you don't have young children, arrange a play date with your grandkids, nephews, nieces, or other young relatives.
- **Make time for social activities** like bowling, playing pool or mini golf. Having a fun time with friends or work colleagues is a great way to unwind and have fun.

[Get more ideas on how to develop your playful side.](#)



## Ideas for activity providers and group exercise instructors

There are some easy ways to include more fun and play into your classes, groups and programmes. Here are some ideas you might to try...

1. Build in some partner activities. Buddying people up can be a great way to build social connection and for everyone to have a good laugh together.
2. Add in the use of some new equipment. Balls, bands, and throw bags can add variety and fun to a session. Set a range of challenges that require team work.
3. Put together a playlist of favourite songs. Invite participants to submit a track they love and come up with some moves to teach to the group.
4. Dance! [Research shows that dancing along to music even for five minutes can boost happiness](#) and improve creative-thinking patterns.
5. Include some brain-gym activities. Brain gym activities are fun and easy to include in a class or group. They are good for developing coordination and will result in lots of laughs!  
[View some brain-gym activities ideas on YouTube.](#)
6. Add in a silly song. [A track like the Superman Kid's Party Dance](#) can add some fun to the session.
7. Have a theme each week. It could be as simple as wearing a certain colour, or something like an 80's Dance Fitness Party or Way Back Wednesday (pre-2000 songs and costumes by decade).

## **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 changing COVID-19 situation, we cannot guarantee that the training opportunities listed on the Active Canterbury website will go ahead as scheduled. Please check with the course organiser for latest updates.**

### **Autumn Activity Providers Workshop \*NEW DATE\***

**This workshop has been rescheduled – due to the upswing in Omicron cases. It was originally scheduled for Saturday 12th March. All other details remain the same.**

**Date:** Saturday 14th May 2022.

**Time:** 12.30 to 4.30pm.

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

**Cost:** FREE, but registration essential.

**CPDs:** You will earn 2.5 CPDs if you attend the entire workshop.

Join us for an action-packed afternoon of guest speakers and practical sessions. Register online by **Friday 6th May** at: [www.activecanterbury.org.nz/training/autumn-activity-providers-workshop](http://www.activecanterbury.org.nz/training/autumn-activity-providers-workshop).

This workshop will be delivered under the COVID-19 Protection Framework.



## [Mark the Date! ExerciseNZ on Tour](#)

**Date:** Friday 20th May 2022.

**Time:** 9am to 2.30pm.

**Location:** Online.

**Cost:** From \$50 for members of ExerciseNZ, YogaNZ and REPs.

This half-day workshop is designed for Facility Managers and Exercise Professionals. It includes guest speakers, industry updates, your choice of 3 elective sessions, plus Q&A.



## **Walk your Way Waitaha**

This is a newly developed campaign that will replace the Walking Festival in 2022. It is not viable to run the Walking Festival in its usual format under the Red light setting. So, the planning committee is offering an alternative that will focus on encouraging Cantabrians to get out and try a variety of local and self-guided walks in and around Christchurch.

[Keep an eye on the Walking Festival Facebook page for the latest updates](#) – coming in late March. The campaign will run from the start of April to mid-May.



Sport NZ has launched **#itsmymove** – a campaign to help young women get and stay active their way. It has been developed to address declining physical activity levels in teenage girls.

Chief Executive Raelene Castle, says the aim of the campaign is to create awareness around the reasons why many young women stop participating in structured sport and recreation and support them in finding activities they love to do.



While research shows that most young women want to be active and understand why physical activity is important, there are clear contributing factors to the decline in participation. These include body image, judgement, time pressures, motivation and loss of fun.

Visit [www.itsmymove.org.nz](http://www.itsmymove.org.nz) to find out more about the campaign, and get advice, tips or guidance to help encourage young women to be more active.



### [Parks Week is on now!](#)

It's about organisations across New Zealand and Australia holding events to celebrate the vital role parks play in creating liveable cities and thriving communities.

It has a focus on how **spending time in our parks and open spaces**



### **Catherine Price believes we should make more room in our lives for fun!**

She has just written a book called: [The Power of Fun: How to Feel Alive Again.](#)

Price defines true fun as the combination of three



### **Regular exercise can help with early-stage Parkinson's disease**

[A new study suggests that 1 to 2 hours of moderate exercise twice a week](#) for people with early-stage Parkinson's disease, may mean less trouble balancing, walking and doing daily activities later.

**positively influences our wellbeing.** If you would like to run an event, you can add the details to the website and it will get promoted on social media.

[Find out more about Parks Week.](#)

Like to read more about the benefits of spending time in parks?

[Check out this article on the importance of parks and open spaces.](#)

states – **playfulness, connection and flow** – and encourages everyone to do a 'fun audit'. "Make a note of activities and people who you consistently enjoy being with", she says. "Then prioritise these things on your calendar and set aside time for them."

[Listen to an RNZ National interview with Catherine Price.](#)

"Our results are exciting, because they suggest it may never be too late for someone with Parkinson's to start an exercise program," said study author Kazuto Tsukita.

Physical activity levels at the start of the study were not associated with the progression of Parkinson's later. Instead, it was more important to maintain physical activity over time.



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We welcome your feedback and comments.