

## Cricket - health benefits

Cricket has been an established team sport for hundreds of years and is one of the most popular sports in the world. It originated England and is today very popular in countries such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Australia, the West Indies and South Africa.

Competitive cricket is essentially a bat and ball sport. It is played by two teams on a pitch and involves batting, fielding and bowling. There are 11 players a side and a game can last anywhere from several hours to several days.

### Suitable for all ages

Cricket can be played both socially and competitively, by males and females of all ages. While competitive cricket is mostly played on a pitch on an oval field, cricket just for fun can be played in backyards, parks, streets or on the beach.

### Health benefits

Although there is some standing around, to play cricket you need to be fit and strong, and have good hand-eye coordination and ball-handling skills. Cricket involves sprinting between wickets and running to stop balls, as well as bowling and throwing. Health benefits include:

- Endurance and stamina
- Balance and coordination
- Physical fitness
- Improving hand-eye coordination.

### Other benefits

As well as physical health benefits, cricket can also bring other benefits and opportunities such as:

- Eye-hand coordination
- Team skills
- Social skills like cooperation, communication and learning how to cope with winning and losing
- Social interaction – it's a great way to meet new people and make new friends.

### Getting started

To play backyard cricket you just need some friends, a bat, a ball and wickets. To play competitively, consider joining a local club. To learn the skills, try participating in a clinic.

### Competitive cricket – is it right for you?

There are over 1,000 cricket clubs and more than 100,000 registered cricketers in Victoria. So playing competitive cricket is a popular way to keep fit and have fun. Before you decide whether competitive cricket is right for you, there are some factors to consider:

- Cricket is a team sport. It's important you are up for some company and for communicating with others.
- Cricket clubs will mostly hold matches on the weekends, both Saturdays and Sundays.
- Playing competitive cricket usually involves committing to regular matches or practise sessions.
- Umpiring and scoring are other ways to become actively involved in competitive cricket.

### Competitive cricket – costs and equipment

If you want to start playing competitive cricket, you'll need to join a club. This will often mean you will have to pay club membership and competition fees. For competitions you will also need to buy pants and shirts to play in (cricket whites) and cricket spikes (shoes with spikes) for playing on the turf.

## Avoiding injury

Some tips to avoid injuries when playing cricket include:

- Drink water before, during and after play.
- Wear broad-spectrum sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat, even in cloudy conditions.
- Always warm up, stretch and cool down.
- Good technique and practices will help prevent injury.
- Pace bowlers should restrict the number of overs bowled during play, taking into account their physical maturity and fitness.
- Wear the right protective equipment. While batting, wear body padding including gloves, leg pads, boxes and forearm guards. When wicket keeping, batting or fielding in close, also wear a cricket helmet with a faceguard.
- Seek professional advice on footwear.

## Where to get help

- Local cricket club
- Cricket Club Finder – to find a club in your area
- Cricket Australia Tel. (03) 9653 9999
- Smartplay Tel. (03) 9674 8777
- 'Go for your life' Infoline service Tel. 1300 73 98 99

## Things to remember

- Cricket can be played for competition or for fun.
- Cricket is a good sport for developing overall fitness, stamina and hand-eye coordination.
- Cricket uses a hard ball, so protective gear should be worn to avoid injury.

**This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:**

Smartplay

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