**Tailoring exercise to your life stage**

**JOHANNESBURG - Love it or loathe it, exercise has been part of human history for a very long time. In prehistoric times, fitness was achieved by a desire to survive through hunting and gathering.**

Today, our lifestyles have shifted dramatically. With reduced physical activity and unhealthy food choices, the modern world has ushered in a more sedentary existence. Research has shown that we lose up to 10% of muscle mass every year. In our golden years, keeping those muscles moving and maintaining them becomes even more critical. Therefore, regular exercise is crucial for maintaining flexibility, mobility and overall health.

**Benefits of regular exercise:**

* **Disease prevention**: Regular exercise can significantly reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer.
* **Weight management:** Exercise helps burn calories and fat, supporting healthy weight control.
* **Strong bones and muscles:** Physical activity enhances bone density and muscle strength, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and injuries.
* **Improved cardiovascular health**: Exercise strengthens the heart and improves blood circulation, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
* **Increased energy**: Regular exercise helps combat fatigue and boost energy levels.
* **Stress reduction**: Physical activity triggers the release of endorphins, promoting relaxation and reducing stress.
* **Improved mood**: Exercise can alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression, encouraging a more positive outlook.
* **Cognitive function**: Studies show that exercise can improve cognitive function, memory, and brain health.

While exercise is great for our overall health, achieving fitness is not a one-size-fits-all approach. As we grow, our bodies and fitness needs evolve, and what may have worked for us in our teens and 20s may not be ideal in our 40s, 50s, or beyond. That’s why a tailored exercise programme is essential - one that is designed with your individual goals, body shape, age and any previous injuries in mind.

**Finding your groove (20-40 years)**

At this stage, your body is at its most capable, characterised by high energy levels, quick recovery times, and the ability to take on more demanding physical activities.

Best types of workouts

* Building muscle mass during this period is essential. Incorporating compound exercises such as squats, deadlifts, bench presses, and rows helps build a strong foundation. Aim for 3-5 days of strength training per week.
* Your workout should incorporate 2-3 cardio days, such as running, cycling, or swimming.
* Incorporate yoga or stretching routines to maintain mobility and prevent injuries.

Nutrition tips

* Aim for 1.2-2.0 grams per kilogram of body weight, depending on your activity level.
* Complex carbs like oats, sweet potatoes, and whole grains are better choices than refined sugars.
* Omega-3 fatty acids from fish, flaxseeds, and walnuts are excellent for reducing inflammation and supporting brain function.

**Maintaining momentum (40-60 years)**

From middle age to retirement, metabolism starts to slow down, muscle mass gradually decreases, and we may notice age-related changes in stamina and flexibility. It is recommended to focus on maintaining strength, protecting joints, and balancing effort and recovery.

Best types of workouts

* Strength training is still essential for maintaining muscle mass and bone density. Your exercise regime should incorporate resistance bands, free weights, or machines 2-3 times weekly to help combat muscle loss and prevent osteoporosis.
* Focus on joint-friendly exercises to avoid wear and tear. Such activities include swimming, walking or biking.
* Consider functional movements like lunges, squats, and kettlebell swings, which improves balance and coordination.

Nutrition tips

* Aim for about 1.0-1.5 grams per kilogram of body weight.
* Include more fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants, like blueberries, spinach, and kale.
* Calcium-rich foods like yoghurt, cheese, and leafy greens, along with sufficient Vitamin D, can help protect against osteoporosis.
* Omega-3s and fibre-rich foods are crucial for heart health, as heart disease risk increases in this age range.

**Exercising wisely (60+ years)**

The goal at this stage is to focus more on maintaining independence, flexibility, and quality of life. Physical activity during this phase can reduce the risk of chronic diseases, improve mental health, and promote longevity.

Best types of workouts

* Focus more on endurance-based and functional strength workouts. Bodyweight exercises, light weights with resistance training 2-3 times a week, can help maintain strength without putting undue stress on the body.
* Simple activities like standing on one leg, Tai Chi, or using stability balls can improve coordination.
* Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity weekly aerobic activity. Swimming, cycling and walking are excellent options to keep the cardiovascular system healthy without overloading the joints.
* Gentle stretching, yoga, and Pilates are great for maintaining the range of motion in joints and keeping muscles supple.

Nutrition tips

* Aim for 1.0-1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight.
* Drink water regularly and consume hydrating foods like fruits and vegetables.
* Calcium and Vitamin D intake should remain a priority to prevent fractures and maintain bone health.
* Fibre helps digestion, and Vitamin B, especially B12, supports energy metabolism.

Exercise is a powerful tool for promoting health and well-being at every [stage](https://d.docs.live.net/2cce703870477a7c/Documentos/Exercise%20for%20All%20Ages%3A%20Tailoring%20Physical%20Activity%20to%20Different%20Life%20Stages) of life. Tailoring your fitness routine to match your life stage is key to maximising benefits and reducing risks. Whether you’re in your energetic 20s, navigating the responsibilities of adulthood, or savouring the golden years, Medshield as your trusted partner for life, offers a Wellness Benefit to support you in your wellness journey and a free online portal with exercise workout programmes and nutritious tips and menus at [www.medshieldmovement.co.za](http://www.medshieldmovement.co.za). We believe that your life's milestones aren't just yours; they're ours too.

**FIN**

(896 words)

**EDITORS NOTES**

**FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW REQUESTS**

* Stone issues this release on behalf of the Medshield Medical Scheme.
* For media enquiries or interview requests, please contact Willem Eksteen, CEO of Stone or a media liaison member of the Stone team at media@stone.consulting / 011 447 0168
* Alternatively, contact Lilané Swanepoel at Medshield at 010 597 4982 / lilanes@medshield.co.za

**MORE INFORMATION ON THE 2025 MEDSHIELD BENEFIT OPTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

Benefits and Contribution amendments are subject to CMS approval.

Please refer to the 2025 Product Page on the Medshield website at [https://medshield.co.za](https://medshield.co.za/).

You can review the benefit adjustments, and value adds and download the 2025 benefit guides by visiting <https://medshield.co.za/2025-products/2025-benefit-options/> or by scanning the relevant QR code:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Benefit package and descriptor** | **QR code to view more detail** |
| **PremiumPlus** provides mature families and professionals with unlimited hospital cover in a hospital of their choice, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at 200% Medshield Private Tariff, and the freedom to manage daily healthcare expenses through a comprehensive Personal Savings Account and extended Above Threshold Cover.  | A qr code with a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediBonus** provides mature families and professionals with unlimited hospital cover in a hospital of their choice, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at 200% Medshield Private Tariff, and the independence to manage daily healthcare expenses through a substantial Day-to-Day Limit. | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediSaver** is perfect for independent individuals and young professionals thinking about expanding their families. MediSaver offers unlimited hospital cover in the Compact Hospital Network, with the freedom to manage daily healthcare expenses through a generous Personal Savings Account. | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediPlus** provides middle to upper-income families with complete healthcare cover for major medical and daily healthcare needs. Unlimited hospital cover is provided through a choice of two hospital networks, Prime or the value-focused Compact Hospital Network. Daily healthcare expenses are covered through a generous Day-to-Day Limit. Benefits are identical in both categories, Prime and Compact, with care coordination and doctor referral mandated on MediPlus Compact.  | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediCore** is ideal for healthy individuals looking for comprehensive hospital cover, with daily healthcare expenses self-managed. This option offers unlimited hospital cover in the Compact Hospital Network, with In-Hospital Medical Practitioner consultations and visits paid at Medshield Private Tariff 200%. Day-to-day healthcare expenses are self-funded. | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediValue** is the ideal option for growing families. It offers affordable cover for major medical and daily healthcare needs. Unlimited hospital cover is provided through a choice of two hospital networks, Prime or the value-focused Compact Hospital Network. Daily healthcare expenses are covered through a sizeable Day-to-Day Limit. Benefits are identical on both options, MediValue Prime and MediValue Compact, with care coordination and doctor referral mandated on MediValue Compact. | A qr code with a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediPhila** is ideal for families seeking first-time access to affordable private medical cover. As a MediPhila member, you have full cover for Prescribed Minimum Benefit (PMB) treatment plus R1 million per family for non-PMB In-Hospital treatment in the MediPhila Hospital Network. Coupled with this is Day-to-Day cover for your essential daily healthcare needs. | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |
| **MediCurve** If you are tech-savvy, young and healthy, then MediCurve is the ideal first-time option for you! MediCurve provides generous hospital cover in the MediCurve Hospital Network combined with unlimited virtual Family Practitioner consultations and essential optical and dental cover through network providers | A qr code on a white background  Description automatically generated |

**MORE ABOUT MEDSHIELD MEDICAL SCHEME**

* You never know when you or your family member/s may require medical care or treatment, and most importantly, whether you will have funds available to cover the costs. Medshield is a healthcare fund where all members contribute to the fund every month to cater for medical coverage should the need arise. Medshield is a healthcare fund where all members contribute towards the fund monthly to cater for medical cover should the need arise.
* Medshield has been in operation since 1968, making us one of the most experienced, knowledgeable, and reliable medical schemes in South Africa. Our extensive experience in the healthcare sector guides our understanding of our members' needs. Our excellent cover and benefits and the best quality systems and services have resulted in our exceptional size and strength.
* Each of our options offers affordably priced benefits. We continuously review and improve the range of benefits in each option to bring you what you need.
* We partner with our stakeholders to enable access to sustainable and **affordable quality healthcare** through innovative products and benefits.
* Our impeccable reputation of prompt payments to hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and other medical caregivers guarantees approval from service providers when you present your Medshield membership card.
* Our extensive partner networks place us in the perfect position to offer exceptionally competitive rates to our members.
* Medshield is well-represented throughout all nine provinces and provides seamless access to service providers in your area. Our geographical spread provides convenience if it becomes necessary for you to have a personal discussion with one of our experienced consultants. We also have a streamlined online claim submission system and immediate contact centre assistance, making it easier to manage your membership and claims from the convenience of your home or office.
* Another distinguishing factor is our extensive range of additional benefits and services. These benefits and services have been designed to give members additional support when needed, for instance, in an emergency or when suffering from a chronic or life-threatening condition.
* Compared with other medical schemes, our trustworthiness, impeccable history, and exceptional service guarantee that we come out tops!
* As the interface between the Scheme and our members, Medshield staff are the backbone of our customer service delivery. The successful delivery of service depends entirely on the calibre of our people.