



Why exercise can't wait

Amanda Davey

CURL Curl-based exercise scientist Martha Lourey-Bird says it is extremely difficult to lose weight without exercising.

"If you just eat less but don't exercise it can lead to disappointment," she said.

"Exercise maintains your metabolic rate so eating less and not moving will slow your metabolism so you hold on to the weight rather than losing it.

"When exercising you are burning up the kilojoules even when at rest."

With a master's degree in sport science, Ms Lourey-Bird has a depth of knowledge on the subject of health, exercise and fitness.

She is mindful that many women want to lose weight for aesthetic reasons but points out that the psychological and health benefits of being a healthy weight are also important.

"Exercise helps maintain muscle mass and muscle tone so you will look better; more toned and defined, but it also makes you

stronger, more powerful and more able," she said.

"That links into the psychological benefits for women in that it stimulates feel good hormones, elevates mood and reduces anxiety.

"The health benefits include protection against obesity, diabetes, stroke, coronary heart disease and osteoporosis. In fact exercise could save your life."

Notwithstanding, women today are notoriously time poor, especially those who are in paid work and concurrently running a busy household.

For these individuals, exercise is often on the bottom of the to-do list and considered a low priority.

Ms Lourey-Bird suggests that time-poor people need to be inventive and find ways to factor exercise into the daily routine.

"Where there's a will there's a way and whatever your lifestyle you can incorporate exercise into your day. Think,

'how can I look for more opportunities to be active?'

"Push the pram, park further away from the mall, walk to the kids to school, use the stairs, walk in your lunch hour; it all helps."

However, this incidental exercise, while beneficial may not be enough in the long term, she warns.

"We should be taking 10,000 steps daily and that equals 30 minutes of walking.

"The second thing to do is to reduce your sedentary time or bottom business as I call it.

"See if you can reduce sitting on your bottom by 10 per cent and then start incorporating some planned exercise down the track."

But enjoyment is the real key to maintaining a healthy exercise program, she says.

"Living here on the northern beaches provides so many opportunities to exercise.

"We're very lucky."



Martha Lourey-Bird is the chief exercise guru for Weightwatchers.

Picture: ANNIKA ENDERBORG