

Exercise is a vital part of the weight-loss equation. Fitness editor **Martha Lourey-Bird** finds your best fit with this kilo-by-kilo guide.

tailored **TO FIT**

KEEP UP THE PACE

As weight decreases, your exercise levels (duration and intensity) need to increase too. Heidi Schwartz, 2009 Healthy Life Awards Queensland winner, lost 69.8kg and was amazed at what her body could do. "In the beginning, I walked. When I could walk up a hill without feeling faint, I knew I was ready to take it to the next level. I joined a gym, going for an hour a day, then signed up for weekly personal training sessions. Exercise is now a part of my life forever."

50+KG TO LOSE

= INCIDENTAL EXERCISE

Any movement is better than none at all so at this stage it's all about increasing the amount of everyday physical activity you're doing. One way to achieve this is to reduce your amount of sedentary time. Add up the amount of time you spend sitting down, then replace 10% of that time with being physically active. For example, instead of sitting and watching an entire 60 minute TV show, get up during the ad breaks and accumulate six minutes of activities such as energetic housework, brisk walking or exercising on the floor. Walk more and drive less, use the bathroom farthest from you and use the stairs instead of the lifts.

30–50KG TO LOSE

= LOW IMPACT EXERCISE

In addition to increasing incidental activity, now's the time to undertake regular low impact exercise such as walking, swimming, aqua classes and cycling. Due to the additional pressure on joints when carrying 30–50kg excess kilos, low impact exercise is safest to prevent injury. Try these ideas:

- Buy a pedometer and count your daily steps, increasing your weekly total by 10% to up the challenge each time.
- Swim laps alternating strokes. Not a great swimmer? Do some water running forwards and backwards, swim sidestroke or even dog paddle – just keep moving!
- Try scenic walks or bike rides for the great views.
- Listen to music or download podcasts that keep you entertained as you exercise or find an exercise partner.

15–30KG TO LOSE

= MODERATE EXERCISE

At this point you can increase your exercise options, intensity and impact slightly so you have more variety. Remember it's always important to enjoy your exercise sessions and you certainly don't have to push yourself beyond what you can comfortably handle. You can still exercise at a level that allows you to chat to a friend on a bike beside you or during a walk but think about introducing new elements, such as yoga, Pilates, pump and/or circuit classes, into your weekly exercise regime. These new classes add strength and flexibility workouts to your regular cardio exercise. The flexibility training assists posture and mobility while strength training helps to maintain your all-important muscle mass, which is easily reduced when losing body weight. Muscle mass helps to maintain metabolism, strength and tone.

5–15KG TO LOSE

= HIGH INTENSITY EXERCISE

It's time to add some high impact and/or high intensity exercise into your workouts. High impact includes running, jumping and skipping, while high intensity means you're exercising at a level where you're huffing, puffing and can't talk. As you weigh less now, it doesn't take your body as much energy to move you around, so more effort is required to continue losing weight. Instead of just walking try jogging and running too. Introduce interval training into your exercise sessions, be it a sprint from one street to the next or adding regular hills to your stationary bike program. Interval training will not only add variety and challenge your cardiorespiratory system, it will help accelerate fat loss. As you lose weight you have many more exercise options open up to you so, when you get to this stage, go for it!

0–5KG TO LOSE

= VARIETY & CHALLENGES

To shift those last few kilos you've really got to up the exercise ante. Try things you've always wanted to give a go but never felt you could before, such as surfing, skating, skiing, boxing, running, pole dancing, tennis, netball and indoor rock climbing.

You could even train for a specific fitness event so you stay motivated and on track. There's plenty on offer including fun runs, bike rides, endurance swims or even triathlons or adventure races.

Over time, your body becomes more efficient at doing the same things so you burn fewer kilojoules from doing the same exercise. As such, variety is super important at this stage. Surprise yourself by introducing cross training so your body doesn't know what to expect next. Keep moving and tackle as many challenges as possible for best results. [www](http://www.weightwatchers.com.au)