

# A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

HEALTH ADVICE FOR  
AUSTRALIAN MEN  
ISSUE 7 // NOVEMBER 2008

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# QUESTIONS FOR THE QUACK

with Professor Gary Richardson

In response to feedback from readers, we have decided to start a new column where you can throw questions at me and I'll attempt to answer them. Email me at [admin@49.com.au](mailto:admin@49.com.au)

Welcome to the latest edition of *A Whole New Ball Game*. Enjoy the read and, as I always say, book-in for your annual health check – take control so you live long and live well.

**Robert, 35, asks: Women have a well-known list of questions to ask their mothers about their health history. What should I ask my dad or uncle?**

Good question. It's worth asking:

**Has anyone in our family had prostate cancer?** According to the *Journal of Urology*, men with a family history of prostate cancer are more likely to develop it and die from it at a younger age. If you're one of them, speak to your GP about screening before the age of 40.

**Who in the family has had heart disease?** Heart disease kills more people than any other condition – but it's possible to avoid if you manage your blood pressure and cholesterol. Remember, an annual health check is the way to go.

**Do we have a history of diabetes?** OK, so you can't change your genes but you can change your lifestyle to avoid diabetes. If you have one parent with type 2 diabetes, you have a one in seven risk if they are diagnosed before the age of 50. If both parents have it, your risk is about one in two.

**Does anyone have depression?** Unfortunately, if there's a history of depression or bipolar in the family, offspring are two to three times more likely to develop these as well. It's an illness, not a character flaw. Sometimes people who feel prolonged sadness, drink heavily or have gambling problems and some have an untreated mental illness. Help is available. Visit [www.beyondblue.com.au](http://www.beyondblue.com.au)

**Richard, 51 asks: I live with constant back pain. I sit at a desk all day, pounding the keyboard – I guess that could be the problem. What should I do?**

Back pain is one of those things that comes from wear and tear through ageing. But there are things we can do to protect our backs:

**Stay fit** – A 45-minute walk each day is a good start – strengthening your back and abdominal muscles.

**Keep your weight down** – Being overweight or obese will slow recovery from a bad back and the heavier you are, the greater the load your spine must carry. Weight-control advice is available through your GP.

**Quit smoking** – Sounds weird but research quoted by Harvard Medical School has shown a link between smoking and back pain. Nicotine hampers the flow of blood to the vertebrae and disks and smokers lose bone faster than non-smokers leading to osteoporosis.

**Lighten your load** – Do you use a backpack or carry a briefcase? Carry heavy loads wisely – over both shoulders to distribute the weight and put heaviest items closest to the centre of your back. And remember – bend from your knees when picking-up something heavy.

Remember the value of a good physiotherapist. You can find a local physio at [www.physiotherapy.asn.au](http://www.physiotherapy.asn.au)

As well as asking questions, let us know what you think of the mag at [admin@49.com.au](mailto:admin@49.com.au)

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
**GARY RICHARDSON**  
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LIVE LONG. LIVE WELL.  
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Foundation 49 is an initiative of Cabrini Health. Thanks to Cabrini for its ongoing support.



# Granted a wish – to watch his kids grow up

PARAMEDIC, CRAIG MUNNS VISITS THE MT EVELYN KINDERGARTEN WHERE HE DISCOVERED HE HAD A FEW PROBLEMS WITH HIS TICKER AT A MEN'S HEALTH-CHECK BREAKFAST FOR DADS.

## Foundation 49's national Men's Health Community Grants have opened up the way for men to speak-up about their health and wellbeing.

The team at Foundation 49 has been inundated with stories of Aussie blokes benefiting from a sensational range of events following this year's round of grants. All around Australia, men have attended community gatherings where they have taken-on the message that they need to look after their physical and mental health. Here, we meet a paramedic who received a life-saving wake-up call during a Foundation 49 funded health-check.

Craig Munns, 38, is a strapping six-foot-four and 110-kilos. He describes himself as good-natured and caring – great skills for an ambulance paramedic. As a husband and father of two young children Rylie, 7, and Cartier, 4, he is also vice president of the children's kinder in Mt Evelyn.

When the local township committee ran a healthy breakfast for dads from three different local kinders back in June, Craig was in there, helping to set-up as one of the Pirates from the 'Good Ship Hale and Hearty' – a fun morning of play for the kids and food and conversation for the dads.

The breakfast was funded by Foundation 49 and organised by the Mt Evelyn Township Improvement Committee, for International Men's Health Week. A range of health workers were asked to speak.

Craig's talk began with: "I would not be here today if I had not attended this breakfast last year". According to Jan Simmons, CEO of Morrison House, the room of fathers fell silent. Craig told the men that at a similar breakfast a year earlier, also funded by Foundation 49, a GP took his blood pressure and both agreed it was very high. "But being a bloke, I just didn't get around to going to the doctor," Craig says, "though it alerted me to a potential problem." Craig's reluctance to seek a further check-up seems extraordinary, given his professional knowledge. Looking back to this time, he shakes his head at his stupidity.

Four months later, he suffered a critical incident. In October 2007, he experienced a strange "feeling like a hot rod running through the elbow". He knew "something was not right".

A few days later he was in theatre, receiving a stent that fixed an almost completely blocked artery. He was considered extremely lucky to have avoided a heart attack.

"I got home on Melbourne Cup Day, I was just 38 years old and saw Rylie's sixth birthday cards lined up and realised that I might not have made it."

When Craig spoke to the fathers this year, eight months after his surgery, he had lost 12 kilos and had a new philosophy and a deep appreciation of life and his role as a father. Several men were deeply moved and committed to book a GP check-up on the Monday morning.

"If I've reached just one man, it was worth telling my story. It's particularly meaningful for me as I wasn't in uniform speaking as a paramedic. I was telling my own story," Craig says. "Men need to let it go, be open-minded and talk. Don't wait for wives to be mind-readers. Just listen to someone like me; learn from it and spill the beans – don't wait. It could be the difference between life and death."

Interested in applying for a Foundation 49 Men's Health Community Grant? See the next page for a range of highlights from the 2008 community health grants like the one mentioned in this story.



## Foundation 49's community grants – some highlights from 2008

Foundation 49's Men's Health Community Grants were a hit in 2008. Events were held in local communities around the country, with most happening during International Men's Health Week from June 9 to 15, 2008.

Here are a few highlights from this year demonstrating practical ways communities are looking after their men.

Why not grab an idea, make it your own and apply for a 2009 grant? Application forms will be on [www.49.com.au](http://www.49.com.au) from January.

### **Aboriginal health**

Griffith Aboriginal Medical Service offered health checks to their local indigenous men, sending each man home with a showbag of health information. Some men were offered comprehensive care plans with an emphasis on self-control of chronic conditions. A selection of blokes joined in a music workshop held by 'Musicians Making a Difference' and received a DVD music filmclip at the end.

### **Prisoner health**

Mobilong Prison in South Australia offered 50 prisoners the opportunity to train for eight weeks, leading up to a footy match against inmates from the Cadell Training centre.

Preparation included advice on healthy lifestyle choices and fitness regimes as well as hammering home the value of physical activity. On the big day, 215 spectators watched and learned from invited health organisations who set up info booths around the oval, offering advice on physical and mental health. A determined Mobilong side won the match by a healthy margin.

### **Father and son relationships**

Gascoyne Family Health in Carnarvon in Western Australia invited fathers and sons to receive a voucher to their local hardware store for a billycart pack. After building the billycarts together, fathers and sons raced other teams before enjoying a family BBQ together, pictured above. It was a great day when fathers, many of whom work shifts and are often absent, celebrated their relationships with their sons.

### **Rural heart health**

Corrangamite, Moyne and Warrnambool have the highest incidence of cardiovascular disease in Victoria. The ongoing drought has also caused immeasurable stress to farmers and too many have been lost to suicide. A 'Men's Stuff' evening was held. Australia's most famous gumleaf player, Uncle Herb Patten, visited and spoke of his ongoing heart condition and diabetes.

He encouraged the audience not to take their health for granted. Regular health checks were the name of the game.

### **Binnaway blokes**

Legendary rocker, Angry Anderson, came along to the Binnaway Memorial Hall where half the town's population had gathered. In his own special way, Angry urged the overflowing hall of men to have regular health checks, particularly for prostate cancer. His message was supported by local GPs and members of the community who shared their health stories.

### **Multilingual message**

The Newtown Neighbourhood Centre used their community grant to have a 'Men's Health: Live long, Live Well' poster translated into seven community languages. This ongoing resource is now displayed in the local area at health centres and neighbourhood centres. It is also available as a free download to other health services around Australia. Attendees at the launch also received a fridge magnet reminding them to book an annual health check when it was their birthday. To download the poster, visit [www.newtowncentre.org/](http://www.newtowncentre.org/) and look under 'programs'.

PHOTO: DADS AND KIDS IN CARNARVON WA RACE THEIR BILLYCARTS

# Limelight versus family life – a fine balance

Known for his TV roles as brow-beaten Brett on *Kath and Kim* and host of *Can We Help?*, Pete Rowsthorn juggles a hectic family life with his comedy and acting commitments.



## Does family life keep you on your toes?

Gabrielle and I have four children, Maggie, 13, Ned, 11, Francesca, 5 and Billie who's 20 months. The family keeps me busy and happy. I think being busy is a real key to keeping happy. We also have a dog that I walk a couple of times a day – a good half hour walk each time. Life is full of just keeping track of the kids, doing stuff with them. I used to play footy twice a week as well, but since the fourth child came along that's pretty hard. Once she gets a bit older I'll get back into that.

## How demanding is TV work?

It's more the mental stress. It's a confidence game, so the more confident you are the easier it feels, and the easier it feels the more enjoyment you get out of it. It's always exciting, it's always a big adrenaline thing, but once you're on top of something or feel that you are, you tend to enjoy it so much more. Now I'm older, I really grasp those jobs and appreciate them while I've got them because in this game, it doesn't last forever.

## How do you spoil yourself?

I love beer, I love wine and I love food, so I'm in trouble really. I've got a funny metabolism in that I get sick of things. If I have too much junk, I crave something good for a while. When I drink, I don't like getting drunk. I don't drink to get drunk and I never really have. I enjoy a sweet but not as much as I used to. I used to eat bucket-loads of chocolate but I don't do that anymore. Now instead of eating a family block of chocolate, I'll eat a small, good-quality one.

## How is your sleep pattern?

I don't have trouble sleeping, but I have a 20-month-old who wakes up, and the five-year-old generally wakes up every night. They'll end up in different beds – I'll bring the baby to our bed. So I have broken sleep and probably have had for 13 years. Sleep doesn't rank highly on my agenda of things to do. If I get six or seven hours, that's good. I used to get about 13 before the kids!

## What sort of things take you to the doctor?

I have to be sick to go to the doctor. That's a male thing. My dad had prostate cancer so I know I have to get checked-out and keep an eye on it.

## When it comes to sport, are you a spectator or a player?

I like to play. I like football. The family head down to the beach a lot every summer, so I swim every day then. I like running. I'm not mad for exercise, but I'll do a bit. If I feel a bit sludgy, I'll do exercise to keep on top of things and to stay fit.

## How do you de-stress?

I like to go on the balcony for five minutes and do some deep breathing. Just to have five minutes to myself. I make sure I do that every day. I get that time alone if I'm walking the dog by myself, too. I also like to just lie on the couch and read.

THE REAL BRETT: PETE ROWSTHORN,  
FATHER OF FOUR KIDS

# Get down!

Blood pressure is the pressure of your blood in the arteries as the heart pumps it around the body. And too much of that force – high blood pressure – is not a healthy thing to be carrying around with you.

If you've ever said to yourself that an annoying person "makes my blood boil" you may know more about blood pressure than you thought.

Advisor to Cabrini Health's Foundation 49 and director of cardiology at Epworth Medical Centre Dr Ron Dick says many people's blood pressure literally rises when they start interacting with people after waking.

"For some people with high blood pressure, during sleep it goes down and when they wake and talk to people it goes up again," Dr Dick says.

"That happens to all people in a smaller way, but some people have this very reactive blood pressure and they need to think about how they're coping, and they need to stress-manage."

If you have persistently high blood pressure it contributes to the development of vascular (blood vessel) disease which can lead to heart attack and stroke. Another threat is peripheral vascular disease when a person will experience problems when walking because he has blockages in the arteries in his legs.

High blood pressure is generally a silent threat to our health – most people don't know they have it and show no symptoms. Those who do get a warning, though, are generally alerted by headaches, problems with vision, a sense of being unwell and lethargic.

Because of the lack, or vagueness, of symptoms, the only sure way to check if you have high blood pressure is to head to the GP.

"Most routine clinical examinations include a blood pressure assessment and most GPs take blood pressure and discuss it with the patient at the time."

Causes for high blood pressure, or 'hypertension', belong in two camps. Essential hypertension occurs without any obvious cause. "It's just something in your genetic makeup or it's something that gets worse as you get older."

While this is the most common reason for high blood pressure, others experience it because of some secondary cause such as certain elevated hormones in the system, or a kidney problem. In these cases, treat the cause and you also treat the high blood pressure.

It will usually take a couple of blood pressure checks to verify that high blood pressure is an ongoing problem, rather than a one-off experience that day.

## Ever wondered just what the numbers that represent blood pressure mean?

Those figures, for instance 120 over 80, tell your doctor how healthy your blood pressure is.

The first number is the upper of the two and is the 'systolic pressure' – the pressure in your arteries as the heart squeezes blood out during each beat. Australia's Heart Foundation guidelines say that figure should be no higher than 120.

The bottom number is the 'diastolic pressure' – the pressure in the arteries as the heart relaxes between beats. This figure should be no higher than 80.



"GPs generally get people back again and check it to make sure the high blood pressure wasn't just because they ran over their neighbour's dog that day and they're really upset, or something like that," Dr Dick says.

He says some patients won't accept they have high blood pressure and attribute elevated levels during a visit to the doctor to the fact they are a bit stressed at being there in the first place.

That's when the clever 24-hour blood pressure monitor is useful. It tracks levels over a longer period, showing the continual nature of the high blood pressure.

If it remains high, the GP will most often prescribe medication.

"The big bogeyman" in the past, Dr Dick says, was the side effects so many blood pressure tablets had. But with more than 50 different types of tablet now on the market, keeping blood pressure to normal, healthy levels is easily done.

Because of the link between genetics and high blood pressure, those with a family history of high blood pressure should have regular checks.

Lifestyle factors can also help or hinder treatment, so it's a good idea to monitor your weight and keep those extra kilos off, and to find time to exercise regularly.

"If people can maybe start exercising 45 minutes a day, walking, and if they can lose some weight and look at their diet and eat more appropriately – not so many take-away foods, more fruits, more vegetables – they'll be in better shape," Dr Dick says.

## It's worth giving your heart a helping hand when you realise it beats 100,000 times a day.

Keeping body fat and stress levels down and fitness levels up will make the heart's job more efficient. Loading up on fatty food, excessive alcohol, stress at home and work, and hours on the couch won't do your heart any favours.

If it's time to get some balance happening in your food, alcohol and exercise arena, knowing where to start – and then how to stick to new eating and fitness goals – can be the hardest part. That's where a tried and tested program that encourages both healthy diet and achievable exercise can help.

Local and workplace gyms offer support as do local footy and cricket clubs.

There are countless books offering advice and there are numerous on-line advice sites offering weight-loss suggestions, recipes, menu tips, fat and calorie calculators, and exercise ideas. You can find help and encouragement while remaining anonymous, and you can choose the time and place that suits you to hit the computer and follow the program of your choice.

Weight Watchers Online, for example, has calculators to help you work out your healthy weight range and a questionnaire to determine how ready you feel to lose weight. See [www.weightwatchers.com.au](http://www.weightwatchers.com.au)

Other online services with similar tools include [www.calorieking.com.au](http://www.calorieking.com.au) and [www.fitness2live.com.au](http://www.fitness2live.com.au)

**Remember, eat more food out of the ground and less out of a packet!**



# Here comes the sun...

Summer means long days, warm nights, beach trips and cricket matches, whether you watch from the stands or play in the backyard. With a little preparation, you could be fired-up and ready to make the most of this summer. So just as you'd clean the barbie and check the gas bottle, prepare your body for a fit and active summer.

OK, so you are prepared to read this.... that's a good start. Just take it in small steps, one at a time. Nothing too scary. Just 45 minutes' of brisk walking and a few more fruit and vegies in your diet are great ways to make a difference.

Aim for at least two alcohol-free days a week and get to know how much fat and calories are in various meal serving sizes so you start thinking about the food you are putting away.

Benefits of these simple steps include:

## An increase in energy levels

Exercising in the fresh air and filling the body with good fuel instead of fatty or high-sugar foods allows vital organs such as the heart, lungs and liver to function at their best. Instead of working hard at clearing the residue from fat, cigarettes and alcohol, they can run on a clean engine. You'll feel less lethargic and have more grunt in the engine.

## Endorphins rise

Cardiovascular exercise – exercise that makes you sweat and gives your heart and lungs a workout – increases the body's level of 'feel good' chemical endorphins, as well as triggering the release of adrenaline, serotonin and dopamine. All work together and lead to less stress and a better mood.

## Weight loss

It's an easy formula: energy out must balance or be greater than energy in, to keep weight off. In other words, you need to burn off more than you consume in food and drink. Remember, the more exercise you can manage, the more energy you will burn and the more chance you will have of weight loss.

## Control of blood pressure

While high blood pressure isn't caused by lifestyle factors such as poor exercise levels or diet, getting fit will improve blood pressure problems and help any prescribed blood pressure medication do its job efficiently.

Again, a heart that's not fighting against the effects of a high-fat diet, high-alcohol intake and lack of body movement is free to do the job it was designed to do. (see page 4 for more tips on controlling blood pressure)

## Avoid diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is also known as adult-onset diabetes or non-insulin dependent diabetes, but all names refer to a disorder of sugar metabolism that affects growing numbers of Australians.

As this form of diabetes is strongly linked to obesity, reducing fat and sugars in the diet, reducing the amount of weight you are carrying on the body and a solid exercise program can help to prevent and treat the disease.

## Time to yourself

What better way is there to have a break from the worries of day-to-day life than simply walking away from them all? Even if only for 45 minutes a day. The chances are that clearing your head, stretching your limbs and exercising will make you more alert and productive than pushing through a stressful situation or slogging through a work problem at your desk for the same amount of time.

## Watch your back

It's no surprise back injuries account for one third of workplace injuries. Most jobs involve some sort of lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling or other activities that can strain your back. And after a year of sitting in front of the computer, the rolling of your arm in a game of beach cricket could see you flat on your back. Not a good look.

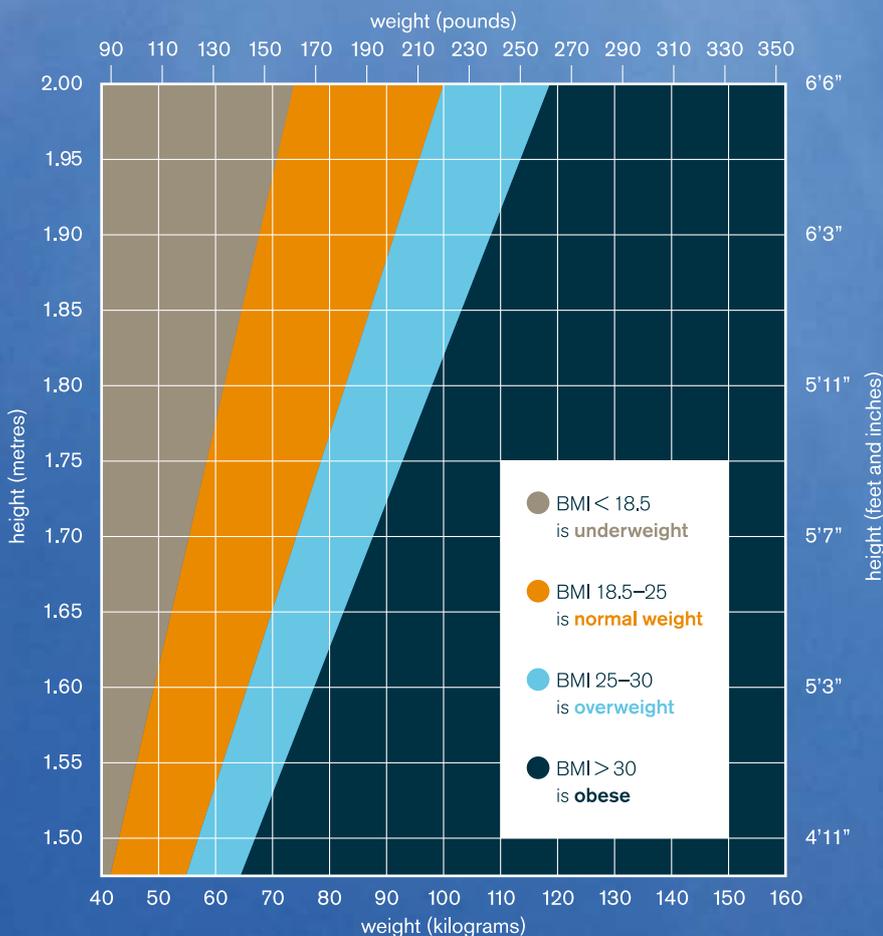
Correct back care can help you avoid fatigue, stress or injury to the back and other parts of your body. Take care of your back with regular exercise, correct posture and safe heavy lifting techniques, especially in awkward spaces. Stretch regularly.

Most back injuries are a result of incorrect posture or weak soft tissues (muscles, ligaments and tendons) surrounding and supporting the spine. Strengthening exercises can help to reduce the risk of injury.

Being overweight places excessive pressure on the spine and increases the risk of back problems. Your workplace safety officer and doctor can give you advice about correct back care.

The Australian Physiotherapy Association offers resources to help with back problems. You can find them at [www.apa.advsol.com.au](http://www.apa.advsol.com.au)

### How do you shape up?



$\frac{\text{your weight}}{\text{your height}^2} = \text{your Body Mass Index (BMI)}$

(your weight in kilograms, and your height in metres)

**A girth over 100 centimetres increases your risk of diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.**

Instead of working hard at clearing the residue from fat, cigarettes and alcohol, your heart, lungs and liver can run on a clean engine.

# Yeah, no, but, maybe

David Rackham is a mediator and trainer who works in the area of family relationships. Here, Dave shows us how differently people make decisions – and how maddening it can be when our partner’s brain works in a way we just don’t get! There is a way to make it work.

When a bloke called Jeremy\* came to see me recently, he took no time to sound-off about his partner’s decision-making skills.

“I can’t stand the way she takes forever to make a decision. She consults every friend and every website and still can’t commit. We are renovating our house and I can really understand why some relationships don’t survive the effort,” Jeremy said.

He was clearly very frustrated and angry. I explained that there are clear differences in approaches to decision making.

There are two main decision making strategies. One is to gather information, make comparisons and finally come to a logical, thought-out decision based on the evidence. Once the decision is made, it needs very important new information to change it. The other strategy is to make a ‘gut feeling’ decision and then check some information to validate the feeling. This decision is more flexible and can be changed quite easily.

Jeremy immediately recognised his wife, Sue, as belonging in the first category and he put himself in the second.

I asked him what he thought the strengths and weakness were of each strategy. He listed having a firm information base as the strength of the first and speed and flexibility for the second. He thought the weakness of the first was that it could take too long in some situations and the second’s weakness was that there might not be enough information to make a well-based decision.

Jeremy sat back in his chair and spent some time thinking before realising he had been stuck, wanting Sue to be like him. “Maybe I could be pleased that she is different and that we can both contribute something useful.”

Some people are outgoing and need lots of friends and plenty of contact with them, others like lots of peace and quiet and their need for contact with others is very moderate. People also differ on how positive or negative their average emotions are; how conscientious, how agreeable, compassionate and cooperative they tend to be and how they react to emotionally charged situations.

Jeremy acknowledged there were many differences in his and Sue’s personalities: “I’ve always thought we suited each other and belonged together because we were almost the same. Now you are saying we are different and our partnership can be better because of that. That’s a big change.”

It is not that your partner is different to you that’s important. It’s what you do with the differences. If you assume that what you do is right and what they do is wrong, you’re in trouble. Instead, you can accept the differences and use them to make the most of your partnership.

\*not his real name

## When you are getting frustrated with your partner

1. Consider whether it’s because you approach things differently. Your partner’s approach is not wrong. It’s just different.
2. Try to look at the issue without emotion, in a neutral way – write a list.
3. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each approach
4. Consider how you can turn this difference into a strength – if your partner likes to be organised – let them go for it and reap the benefits. If you are the talented map reader, don’t ask them to do it!

**RUTH RICHTER**



We asked Simon Turchett, Foundation 49's new sales and business development manager, why he left the high-powered world of rapid promotion and competitive sales, to join Foundation 49, based at Cabrini Health, a not-for-profit organisation committed to men's health.



## Trading-in all the stuff for time with family

When I was a police recruit, one of the driving instructors would sit in the back of the car and coach me whilst training. "Drive with a purpose. Always make headway," he would say. "Look ahead of the traffic, plan your next move, and keep looking for a better lane." Like many men, I was always on the look-out for the fast lane.

This advice unintentionally became the driving force behind my career long after I had left the police force and entered the world of healthcare sales. A literal driving force that would see me enjoy rapid promotion in a cut throat industry but at what cost?

Like many men today, I was striving to 'get ahead'. A small mortgage became a big mortgage, then a pet dog became kids, the family car needed upgrading – you know the drill. Achieving all this stuff is fine but for me it was becoming a yard stick through which I was measuring my worth. Unfortunately I was never fully satisfied with the answer when I did the sums. My wake up call came on one of the many red eye special flights back from Perth. I had caught this flight so I could catch my eldest son's first nativity play.

I hit the airport in Melbourne at 7.00am, drove straight to my son's school to see the play (he was an outstanding Joseph I might add), then back to the airport for a midday flight to Adelaide.

And so after much thought and many sleepless nights – not to mention a generous helping of support and belief from my partner – I decided to make some significant changes. Not all rapid ones, just some small and strategic ones at first. I changed company and job before deciding on a few bigger changes: scaled down the house, decided to work part-time, took-on a long-held dream to renovate.

Work-life balance it's called. I used to think it would be difficult to achieve. But, with the luxury of a relaxed mind to plan my future – thanks to a four-day week – I asked myself "what is important?". I was prepared to sacrifice income to be able to have time with the boys each night and to be able to leave behind all thoughts of work in the office. Yes it meant a drop in income and it also required tough choices to be made regarding household expenses. Some luxuries had to go. You can survive without Foxtel.

A complete change of career direction means I am now flogging men's health instead of pharmaceuticals. I chose to come to Foundation 49 because I believe that men undervalue their health. When we are young and healthy, we tend to put a modest price on our health, but once it is gone, I'm sure that our lost vitality is considered to be priceless.

Scary? Yes. Rewarding? Absolutely. And I use the term in the most literal and exacting sense. Not only are there the many, many pluses of being able to do more with my family and be there in mind as well as body for them. There is also a deep and satisfying sensation that it's ok to take my foot off the accelerator from time to time and enjoy the ride.

PHOTO: SIMON WITH HIS PARTNER, DANIELLE AND THEIR SONS LINKIN, 5, BAXTER, 10 MONTHS AND FLYNN, 7.

## Fast facts

- Foundation 49 is an initiative of Cabrini Health
- It aims to help all men over 20 years of age – of all cultures and socio-economic backgrounds
- Widespread screening and health promotion are key goals
- We believe supporting men to take control of their health is vital.

## Men at work

Call us to find out about a straightforward and practical health assessment program catering for *all men* in the workplace. We provide individuals and employers with valuable feedback on health risks, recommendations on well-being initiatives and useful health information. Each participant receives an individual health report. Call Simon on 0430 387 744.

Foundation 49.  
Promoting Health  
Awareness in Men

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Foundation 49  
a Cabrini Health Initiative



# Five minutes with... Matt Welsh



Olympic medallist Matt Welsh retired from a sparkling swimming career this year at age 31. Hanging up the goggles and putting an end to training means the backstroke and butterfly whiz now manages the odd sleep-in and more time with wife Lauren Newton and their 9-month-old son, Sam.

### What indulgences did you enjoy when you were training?

I didn't really have a strict diet like 'no chocolate' or making sure I had a certain type of food all the time. I had a healthy diet and a big variety of foods. I didn't try to have lots of one thing or nothing of something else, for a number of reasons. One, so I didn't get bored or get frustrated and two, when you're competing, it's often overseas and you don't have as much control over your diet as you do at home.

### Do you put success in the pool down to one thing in particular?

I've never had the upper body strength for swimming or the shoulder make-up for it, so the mental side was definitely my strength. Also, in racing, getting out what I needed at the right time. There were a lot of races where I did better than I probably should have, where I exceeded my expectations. Without the mental side I would never have got close to the success I did have.

### Do you feel the effects of ageing?

I probably don't feel the difference now that I'm not swimming, but when I was 18 and in my early 20s my recovery was so much quicker. I could literally recover during the day between a morning

session and a night session ... By 28 and getting over 30, I could really feel the difference physically. It took me days longer, not hours longer, to recover.

### Are you an early riser?

Lauren and I are very much stay-up-late and sleep-in people and that really doesn't go well with swimming. For my entire career it was always a battle getting up in the morning when the alarm would go off, but as long as I found a reason to do it I could. When I was too tired and sore to get going, that's when it really got tough.

### Are you the sort of person who has health checks?

I've got very good body awareness and I know when things aren't quite right and I'll usually try and fix them. I'll see a physio or a doctor. A regular health check is a great idea – especially when I think about Sam and wanting to be around to see him grow up.

### How do you wind down?

It doesn't matter how annoying or stressful or bad things go, as soon as I look at my son's eyes and he smiles, it makes me laugh. He totally puts everything into perspective.