

Health

The best time to exercise



Kathryn Borg

We all know that exercise is vital for a healthy lifestyle and to benefit our bodies. However, so many people ask, 'when is the best time to exercise?' Some people, for example, swear by their early-morning workout, while others like to visit the gym after a full day's work.

New evidence has shown that keeping fit leads to better mental health, less stress and helps to stave off biological ageing by 10 years or more. However, is there an optimal time of day to begin your exercise regime?

Athletes tend to drag themselves out of bed at the crack of dawn to get in a gruelling exercise regime before the day begins. Lesser mortals can

be seen jogging the streets before going to work, while even more people can be seen doing their daily jog at the end of the day or heading for the gym.

The answer to optimal timing for exercise lies in our own circadian rhythms. I have written about how these affect us in the past, especially those of us working shifts, and how vital it is to listen to your body. Circadian rhythms are the daily cycles that regulate our physiological processes, such as body temperature, metabolism and blood pressure.

According to the American Council on Exercise (ACE), body temperature is important for getting the

most out of your workouts. It is lowest at one to three hours before waking up in the morning and peaks in the late afternoon. Later in the day, muscles are warmer and more flexible, and reaction times are quicker, which means less injury and better performance. It is also likely that exercise will seem easier at this time of day too.

In fact, studies consistently show that physical performance is better in the afternoon and evening than in the morning. In male physical education students, their strength, energy production and aerobic contribution increased from morning to afternoon along with the rise in body temperature.

A similar trend was seen in swimmers, suggesting that swimming trials are best held in the evening and not in the early morning.

It also appears that we exercise harder, and for longer, later in the day rather than first thing in the morning, which means we are likely to burn more calories. In high-intensity exercise tests with both men and women, the total work performed and time to exhaustion was nearly 10 per cent greater in the afternoon than in the morning.

A greater tolerance for more intense exercise is also related to body temperature, although increased levels of cortisol, which boost the amount of energy available for muscle activity, may also play a role.

Lung function is better in the afternoon too. Research has shown that although we associate the end of the working day with feeling tired and less motivated to do exercise, our bodies are, in fact, geared up for physical exertion at that time.

However, everyone has their own rhythm and if beginning the day with exercise makes you feel good then stick to it.

Another pro-morning study showed that those who did so, slept better. This study in post-menopausal women found that evening exercisers had more trouble falling asleep than those who exercised in the morning (Sleep 2003). A possible explanation is that morning exercise aligns the body clock, while evening exercise upsets it. However, a study in fit male cyclists found that vigorous exercise before bedtime had no effect on their sleep.

"The optimal time is the time that makes you exercise regularly and consistently"

In addition, if you exercise outside, air pollution levels are typically at their lowest in the morning, so you are less likely to be exposed to pollutants. Ultimately, it is important to find the time of day that works for you. The optimal time is the time that makes you exercise regularly and consistently.

To determine your own daily peak in body temperature, record your temperature every few hours for five consecutive days. It will usually fluctuate by about 1.5 degrees throughout the day. Try exercising during the three hours before and after your highest temperature. If you are training for an event, research shows that it is best to train consistently at the same time of the day to coincide with the time you will be competing.

If you haven't established a routine, try working out at different times of the day, then ask yourself which you enjoyed the most and which made you feel good.

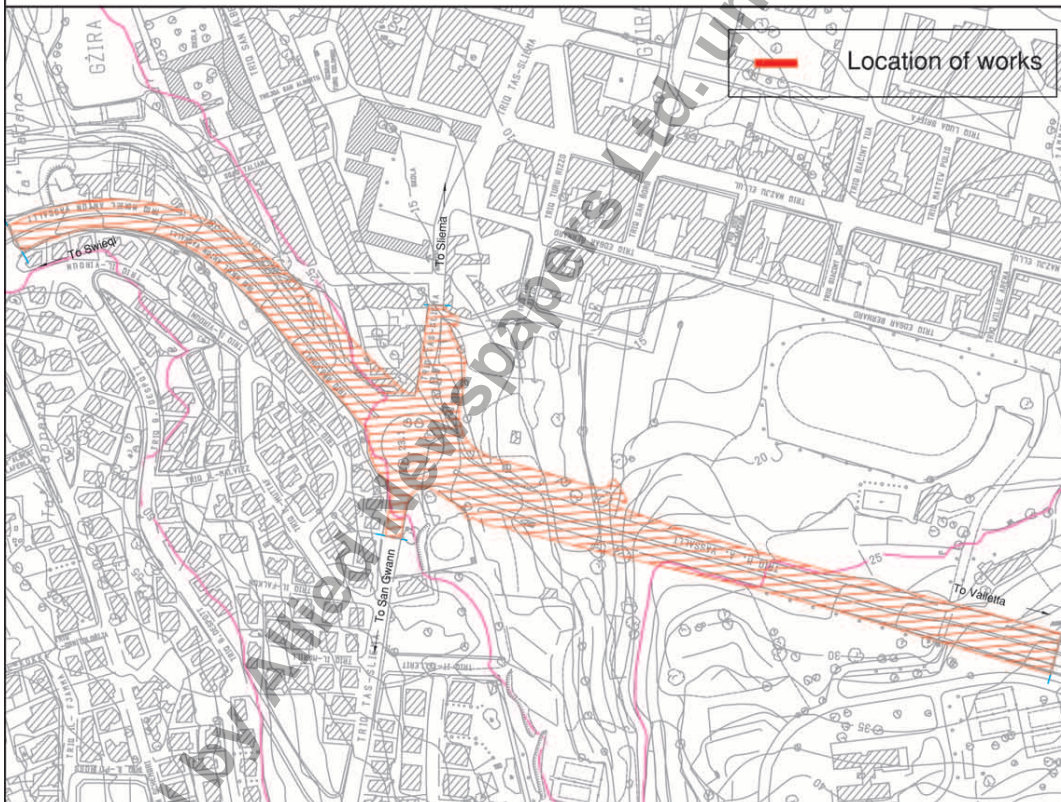
Finally, warm up properly. If you enjoy early workouts, make sure your warm up emphasises stretching to ensure that your body is thoroughly warmed up and ready for action.

kathryn@maltanet.net

NOTIFICATION TO UNKNOWN LAND OWNERS IN TERMS OF ART 4(2) OF L.N. 71/07

LOCATION: Mikiel Anton Vassalli Road, Kappara

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:
Construction of a Grade Separated Junction in
Mikiel Anton Vassalli Road, Kappara (Junction EA14 to EA16)**



The Malta Transport Authority intends to submit a Full Development Application to Malta Environment and Planning Authority for the Construction of a Grade Separated Junction in Mikiel Anton Vassalli Road, Kappara (Junction EA14 to EA16).

This notice is being made to inform owners of affected properties about the proposed application. For more details, owners may contact the Network Infrastructure Directorate on the telephone number indicated below and may view the plans at its offices located at Triq Agius de Soldanis, Birkirkara by not later than 15 days from the date of this advert.