

# national science week 2014

## Dean Picone

### Medical Researcher



Exercise is good for the body. We humans evolved as physically active beings and regular aerobic exercise is good for the brain, heart, lungs, blood vessels and is vital to a healthy lifestyle. Unfortunately, over half of all Australians do not do enough physical activity. For people with health problems, for example, type 2 diabetes (which is the fastest growing chronic disease in Australia and the world) – exercise may be very important to improving health and quality of life.

I was brought up living an active lifestyle and enjoyed trying lots of different sports. I remember my interest in science was first sparked in high school, I found it challenging and exciting. Around the same time I became interested in the human body as a machine and was particularly fascinated with the heart. The concept of this organ, pumping blood through a tangle of connected tubes to all corners of the body was very interesting to me.

I studied mostly science subjects in college, and enrolled in a degree in Medical Research at the University of Tasmania. This gave me a broad science education, with a strong background in laboratory science. I wanted to further my interests in exercise, the heart and the cardiovascular system so I did an Honours research project with the Blood Pressure Research Group at the Menzies Research Institute Tasmania.

I've just started a PhD project that will include studies of exercise hemodynamics (blood pressure and flow) in type 2 diabetes. Some of these studies will involve mimicking the cardiovascular stresses of normal daily activity (by studying people during light exercise). This may help uncover new information regarding health outcomes that would not be seen during resting measurements.

Despite the many challenges that come with scientific research it is a very exciting field to work in. I feel very lucky to be able to work every day in an area I am very interested in. Doing work that will hopefully lead to an improvement in people's health makes the work we are doing at Menzies all the more fulfilling and rewarding.



**For more information:** [www.menzies.utas.edu.au](http://www.menzies.utas.edu.au)

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