

The Get Active Guide

Building activity into your daily routine

LOVE HATES
ACTIVITY EXERCISE

Do more of what you love with physio



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Being active can have enormous benefits for your overall health and doesn't need to be difficult or expensive. However, physiotherapists understand that it's easier for some than others.

Many people have injuries or conditions that stop them from doing as much as they would like. Others simply struggle to find the time, energy or motivation.

Whatever your situation, here is some simple advice about how to get started and improve your health in a way that's right for you.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I DO?

Aim for bouts of 10 minutes of brisk activity throughout the day, working towards 150 minutes over a week.

Do specific exercises to strengthen muscles at least twice a week.



Starting out



Find something you enjoy

Chances are, you'll stick with a new activity that you enjoy. So don't worry if it's not the most taxing to start with - the best activity is the one you actually do.

Set goals

Start gradually and give yourself goals to build up to. Set realistic targets and you'll soon see the positive effects of exercise, without overdoing it.

The right kit

Get comfortable by kitting yourself out in appropriate shoes and clothing.

It's ok to ache

You may feel sore after starting a new activity - and that's fine. But if pain persists, perhaps slow down and build it up again.

DID YOU KNOW?

Being active can help you prevent and/or manage over 20 medical conditions, including:

- ▶ coronary heart disease
- ▶ type 2 diabetes
- ▶ cancer
- ▶ back pain
- ▶ osteoarthritis
- ▶ depression.

Every little step

There are many ways to fit activity into your daily routine. Making small changes can add up to a big difference in your quality of life. The following advice should help you on your way.



At home

Gardening is a great form of alternative exercise.

► **Some vigorous green-fingered activity** such as pruning, planting, digging and weeding, will improve both physical and mental health.

Dancing is a fun, effective way to stay fit and increase stamina, flexibility and strength.

► **You don't have to hit the dance floor** – put on your favourite tunes and dance around your home!

Housework is a perfect way to combine a little exercise with your usual activities.

► **Turn chores into a workout** by speeding them up or being more energetic.

At work

Many people spend the majority of their working day sitting down. **But there are lots of ways to ensure you keep moving throughout the day:**

► **Walk to get a drink** or use a photocopier on a different floor.

► **Park further away** or get off the bus or train a stop early.

► **Hold walking meetings** instead of sedentary ones.

► **Set up a lunchtime** or post-work activity club with co-workers.

► **Change your posture at work regularly** by taking opportunities to move around whenever possible.

DESK-BASED EXERCISES TO TRY

► **Sitting slightly forward** in your seat, rotate your upper body to the right, holding on to the backrest of your chair with your left hand. **Hold for 5 seconds then switch sides**

► **Loosely grasp your hands** behind your neck. Push your elbows back, your shoulder

blades squeezing together. Avoid pressing into the neck. **Hold for 5 seconds**

► **Gently interlock your fingers** Push your palms away from your body, gently stretching the forearm muscles, fingers and shoulder blades. **Hold for 5 seconds**

Move on up

There are lots of fun ways to take the next step and push yourself to be more active.

Walking

Exercising outdoors is beneficial for mind and body so take a brisk walk.

- ▶ **Make it more interesting** by taking a friend or listening to music.
- ▶ **Motivational apps**, such as Couch to 5K, are a great way to progress to jogging for those who wish.

Swimming

Strengthen your muscles and boost your cardiovascular fitness with a swim at your local pool.

- ▶ **Be realistic** about how far you can swim at first, then build up.
- ▶ **You're in water**, but don't forget to stay hydrated!

Cycling

Hit the open road or simply get round the park for a great way to boost your long-term health (with a helmet on).

- ▶ **Pace yourself** and plan your journey so it's within what you can do.
- ▶ **Look to go that bit further**, or that bit faster each time.

THE FITT PRINCIPLE

There are four ways to progress the amount of activity you do:

Frequency

increase the number of times per week that you are active

Intensity

walk that little bit faster, cycle that little bit harder, or dig harder in the garden

Time

increase the amount of time you spend on each session of exercise

Type

if you're comfortable with the exercise you're doing, try something a bit more demanding.



The No-Gym Workout

Try these simple exercises anywhere, anytime.

- ▶ **Holding a small bottle of water**, sit down or stand with your feet hip-width apart and your back straight, bend your arm at the elbow in a bicep curl. Keep your elbow close to your body. **Repeat 10 times, then swap arms**
- ▶ **For your triceps**, hold the bottle above your head with your arm straight. Bend at the elbow to lower the bottle towards your shoulder, then straighten again. **Repeat 10 times, then swap arms**
- ▶ **Facing a wall and placing your hands** palm-down on it for support, raise one leg out to the side and lower it again. **Repeat 10 times, then switch legs**
- ▶ **When you're sitting down**, march on the spot for 2-3 minutes. This can be done at your desk, on the sofa, at the dinner table, on the bus.
- ▶ **Reach over your head**, bending to the side at your waist and then straighten up. **Swap sides and repeat 10 times.**

YOU'RE ALL SET!

Start making changes today that could produce benefits for the rest of your life.



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THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

is the professional, educational and trade union body for the United Kingdom's 57,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and support workers.

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DISCLAIMER: The activities suggested in this guide have been designed to cover a range of abilities and should not cause any harm. Consult a chartered physiotherapist or your GP before embarking on any new fitness regime, and if you do experience pain or discomfort as a result of any of the exercises, stop immediately and speak to a health professional. If the exercises here are not suitable for your specific capabilities, a physiotherapist will be able to provide you with a personalised programme of activity, tailored to suit your needs and lifestyle.

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