

June 2010 – Get Active

Why do you need to be active?

Research shows that 7 out of 10 adults do not get enough physical exercise.

Everybody, young and old, needs to be active to keep healthy – our bodies are designed to be active and without physical activity they don't perform to their best capacity.

If you and your family aren't very active at the moment, increasing your physical activity levels could have an immediate and positive impact on your lives. You'll find that you:

- feel good about yourself;
- have more energy;
- sleep better;
- cope with stress and anxiety better;
- lose weight and fight obesity.



What is enough exercise?

For good health and well being, adults need at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week and 60 minutes every day for children. Physical activity is especially important for children if they are to grow into healthy adults.

Why is being active important?

Approximately three out of five men and women are overweight or obese, which poses a serious risk to their health. Even more worryingly, many children are overweight or obese, putting their health at risk.

Regular physical activity is essential if you want to lose weight and keep it off in the long term – healthy eating alone is often not enough.



By taking more physical activity you will also reduce your risk of a wide range of health conditions, both now and in the future. These include:

Coronary heart disease or stroke

Inactive people are nearly twice as likely to develop heart disease as active people. It is estimated that a quarter of all strokes could be avoided if people were more active.

Diabetes

Physical activity helps to prevent or delay the development of Type 2 diabetes, and can help you to manage the condition if you have already developed it.

High blood pressure (hypertension)

Regular physical activity may help to prevent blood pressure rising as we get older. It can also lower blood pressure in around three quarters of people who already have hypertension.

Osteoporosis

Regular activity in childhood and early adulthood will help ensure higher bone mineral density throughout life, while regular activity in middle and older age slows the rate of age-related bone loss.

Some types of cancer

Physical activity has been proven to reduce your risk of developing colon cancer. Some studies have suggested that it can also reduce your risk of other types of cancer including breast, prostate and lung cancer, but this is still being investigated.

Depression and anxiety

Inactive people are more likely to experience depressive symptoms. Physical activity helps reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and raise self-esteem.



The most important thing to remember about physical activity is that whatever you can manage to fit in, it all adds up!

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Tips for fitting exercise into your life

- * Use the bus and walk instead of driving.
- * Cycle instead of driving.
- * Limit the time you and the family spend watching TV or playing computer games.
- * Remember doing nothing makes you tired; doing something gives you more energy.



- * Join a local community sports group.
- * Exercise does not always cost money; a walk in the fresh air is free.
- * Remember exercise helps many illnesses like depression or arthritis.

New Ideas

- Getting around (e.g. walking or bike riding)
- School or family activities
- Dancing
- Sports
- Take your own or your neighbour's dog for a walk.
- Learn a new skill – skating, skipping, surfing, bike riding, frisbee or snorkelling... can you do all of them?
- Try a new sport with friends or family... ever tried volleyball? football?
- Take a gymnastics or martial arts class.
- Learn a dance-style, like hip-hop.
- Check out the activities at your local recreation centre, club or youth centre.



For further information see:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/treatments/healthy_living/fitness/active_fitness.shtml
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/exercise/Pages/Introduction.aspx>