



# Getting Started



It's never too late to gain benefits from being physically active. The greatest benefits are seen in those that move away from their sedentary lifestyle. Being physically active does not only involve doing

sessions of brisk walking or playing a sport but it also includes putting in more effort in everyday activities such as walking to work or climbing the stairs. Your health risk will decrease as soon as you do more.



## Everyday activities

Everyday activities that last for at least 10 minutes can be combined to reach the recommended amount per day.

You could try to:

- Walk more each day –walk to the shops and work instead of using the car or bus
- Park well away from your final destination or schedule your travel time so that you can get off the bus or train station one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way.
- Look for opportunities to use the stairs or walk up an escalator instead.

- Do your normal daily tasks faster and make them last longer, e.g. dog walking.

### Being sedentary is bad for your health.

Sitting down too much seems to affect the way our body works. Avoid this by having standing meetings, standing breaks or taking a phone call whilst standing up. Take regular breaks from your desk for a few minutes every hour. Don't spend hours sitting in front of the television - get up during the adverts and keep the remote out of arms reach!



## Physical Activity Sessions

- **Regular structured exercise sessions** can help those with busy lifestyles. Set goals but be realistic. It is normal to struggle when starting but it takes a few failed attempts before it becomes easier and more enjoyable.
- **Brisk walking**, in comfortable shoes, is the best way to get started. You don't need to buy expensive equipment.
- **Start gradually.** If you have been inactive for a long time, start by doing low intensity activities for a shorter duration (e.g. 10 minutes).
- **Increase slowly.** When you feel comfortable at your level of activity, gradually increase the number of minutes per session (duration) and the number of days per week (frequency). Then increase the intensity (how hard you work) as needed. Most of us lead busy lives so starting with shorter sessions will make prioritising activity easier. Shorter to more sustained sessions will increase your fitness while reducing any potential injuries.
- **Consider age, level of fitness and past experience.** When increasing the rate of activity, you need to consider your age (older adults appear to require more time to adapt to new levels of activity), *current level of fitness* (less fit adults require longer time to adapt and recover) and *past experience of the activity* (adults with prior

experience of doing an activity will be able to increase levels quicker, and avoid injury, compared to someone who has not).

- **Setting goals**, keeping a diary and having targets are great ways of maintaining physical activity levels. One such way of doing this is recording the number of steps that you make by using a small device, usually worn on a belt, called a pedometer.
- **Variety is the spice of life.** If one type of activity becomes boring, switch to another to stay motivated.
- **Activity can give you that private time to ponder things over** or listen to your favourite music.
- **Activity sessions can also be sociable** and can be a great way to catch up and spend quality time with the people that are most important to us.
- **Use reminders** so that you don't forget to do your activity (e.g. keep your walking shoes near the door)
- **Warm up and cool down.** Start sessions slowly for the first few minutes and build up gradually, to prepare your heart and body for physical activity. When you come to the end of the activity, take time to slow down, and make sure you don't stop suddenly.

## Safety Considerations

- Stop exercising if you feel dizzy, sick, unwell or very tired.
- See a doctor if you are having dizziness, black outs, breathlessness on mild exertion or chest pains.
- Avoid walking alone at night and keep to well lit areas
- Wear reflective clothing and a helmet whilst cycling.



# Activity Log



Setting goals, keeping a diary and having targets are great ways of maintaining physical activity levels. Physical activity is anything that gets your body moving. Aerobic and muscle strengthening activities are recommended by the UK Physical

activity guidelines. Do not worry if you can't meet the recommendation straight away because by trying to become more active, you are still gaining some health benefits

## Goals and Weekly Log

Use the tables below to monitor your progress



**In order to gain substantial health benefits, the time spent on physical activity for adults, should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more over a week<sup>1</sup>.**

Alternatively, comparable health benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or combinations of moderate and vigorous intensity activity.

*Aerobic activity is any type of body movement that makes your heart and lungs work faster – it may make you feel warm, mildly out of breath and mildly sweaty. The 'talk test' is a simple way to measure moderate intensity. This means that you can still talk, but not sing, during the activity.*



**Adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.**



**Daily stretching exercises are a good way of keeping joints and muscles supple thereby preventing injury**

*Individual physical and mental capabilities should be considered when interpreting the above guidelines.*

**Aerobic Goals:** To do a total of \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. 100 minutes) of aerobic activity this week

**Strengthening Goals:** To do \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. 2 days) strengthening activities this week.

Day	Type of activity (e.g. walking)	Effort (e.g. moderate)	Total minutes
Mon			
Tues			
Wed			
Thurs			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			
<b>TOTAL:</b>			

Day	Type of strengthening (e.g. arms or legs)
Mon	
Tues	
Wed	
Thurs	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	

1. UK Physical activity guidelines (2011), Department Of Health.