

Physiotherapy Service

# Benefits of Exercise and Physical Activity



Service provided by

Although it is widely acknowledged that any activity is better than none, it is a common belief that domestic 'chores' is an activity that counts towards this 150 minute per week target.

However, it is really important that we make time to undertake moderate physical activities in our lifestyles, other than just 'household chores'.

Setting a specific time aside to do exercise increases peoples likelihood of actually keeping up with it, we are all human afterall!

## Current weekly guidelines for exercise and physical activity are:

- 150 mins of moderate intensity activity or 75 mins of vigorous activity (that's about 20–30 minutes a day!)
- Two Strengthening activities a week.
- Being physically active daily.

## What is classed as physical activity?

**Moderate activity** will raise your heart rate, and make you breathe faster and feel warmer. One way to tell if you're working at a moderate intensity level is if you can still talk, but not sing.

## Examples of moderate intensity activities:

brisk walking  
water aerobics  
riding a bike  
dancing  
doubles tennis  
hiking

## The benefits of exercise and physical activity:

**Improved mental health:** Physical activity can boost your mental health. It can release chemicals in your brain which act a bit like antidepressants and can help ease anxiety and depression. This can help you concentrate and leave you feeling better about yourself.

**Improved quality of life:** Increasing your physical fitness can mean that you are more able to take part in physical activity and social activities. For example, joining a sports club can be sociable or it might mean you can get out and about with greater ease and do things you enjoy/love, like seeing friends and family.

**Lower blood pressure:** Regular physical activity makes your heart stronger. A stronger heart can pump more blood with less effort. This means there is less pressure on your arteries (the blood vessels that take blood to your major organs), which helps your blood pressure stay at a healthy level.

**Lowers cholesterol:** Physical activity raises your levels of good cholesterol which carries away the bad cholesterol, so it is less likely to clog up your arteries and cause a heart attack or stroke.  
**Reduces risk of Type 2 Diabetes:** Physical activity helps you use up the extra glucose (sugar) in your blood. This can gradually lower your blood glucose levels.

**Weight management:** If you need to manage your weight, being more physically active is important. Being active increases the number of calories you burn, which will help you lose weight.

**Overall joint health:** By increasing the overall strength of the muscles around surrounding joints can help with stiffness and joint pain.

## What counts as vigorous activity?

**Vigorous intensity** activity makes you breathe hard and fast. If you're working at this level, you will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for breath.

In general, 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity can give similar health benefits to 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity.

Most moderate activities can become vigorous if you increase your effort.

### **Examples of vigorous activities:**

jogging or running  
swimming fast  
riding a bike fast or on hills  
walking up the stairs  
sports, like football, rugby, netball and hockey  
skipping rope  
aerobics  
gymnastics  
martial arts

### **Online resources:**

Try the aerobic workout videos in the NHS Fitness Studio.

For a moderate to vigorous workout, try 'Couch to 5K', a 9-week running plan for beginners:

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/couch-to-5k-week-by-week](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/couch-to-5k-week-by-week)

## What activities strengthen muscles?

There are many ways you can strengthen your muscles, whether you're at home or in a gym.

### Examples of muscle-strengthening activities:

yoga

pilates

tai chi

lifting weights

working with resistance bands

doing exercises that use your own body weight, such as push-ups and sit-ups

## What are reps and sets?

Some workout plans that you might have seen, include information about reps and sets etc.....but what do these terms mean?

### Reps:

A repetition (rep) is one completion of an exercise.

### Sets:

A set is a series of repetitions performed sequentially. For example, eight repetitions can be one set of press ups.

**Frequency:** refers to how often you train a particular muscle group or exercise, per week. these terms can be daunting and confusing at times, so a good starting point is counting how many repetitions of an exercise you can manage without pushing into high pain levels!

**As a general rule, the heavier the load you are using in strength training the less repetitions are required**

# Physical activity for adults and older adults



Benefits health



Improves sleep



Maintains healthy weight



Manages stress



Improves quality of life

Reduces your chance of

Type II Diabetes

-40%

Cardiovascular disease

-35%

Falls, depression etc.

-30%

Joint and back pain

-25%

Cancers (colon and breast) -20%

Some is good,  
more is better

Make a start today:  
it's never too late

Every minute  
counts

## Be active

at least

**150**

minutes

moderate intensity  
per week

Increased breathing  
able to talk

OR

or a combination of both

at least

**75**

minutes

vigorous intensity  
per week

breathing fast  
difficultly talking



to keep muscles, bones and joints strong

**Build strength**

on at least  
**2**  
days a week

Gym

Yoga

Carry heavy bags



## Minimise sedentary time

Break up periods of inactivity



For older adults, to reduce the  
chance of frailty and falls  
**Improve balance**  
2 days a week

## What to expect when you start exercising?

Your muscles may ache, this is normal and is a sign you are challenging your body. You will find this happens less frequently as your body becomes more accustomed to the exercises.

You may start to sleep better: Research has shown that exercise during the day encourages a better quality of sleep at night. There is a strong correlation between your pain levels and your energy levels, so improved sleep after exercise can also help to improve your pain.

You may start to feel like you have more energy: once you start to exercise, the body changes to make it more efficient at processing energy, therefore you feel like you have more energy, which can also help to improve pain levels.

If at any point you experience sharp pains or the exercise is aggravating any pain please stop and discuss this with a Physiotherapist or exercise professional for further advice. Do not be put off though, it may be that the exercises need changing or tweaking to suit your needs.

# Community Wellbeing Hub:

Email: [bathnes.thehub@virgincare.co.uk](mailto:bathnes.thehub@virgincare.co.uk)

Telephone: 0300 247 0203

12 week discounted access to local leisure centres with ongoing support\*



Dragonfly Leisure

## HEALTHWISE

Physical activity referral scheme

hcrq  
Care Group

**Free support to achieve a healthy weight**

Contact us to find a free and effective option to suit your lifestyle



**SECOND NATURE**



Other services available from the community wellbeing hub include;

Stop smoking support



**Other Useful links:**

[www.bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk](http://www.bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk)

[www.wellbeingcollegebanes.co.uk](http://www.wellbeingcollegebanes.co.uk)

**Get in touch**

**Physiotherapy central booking office:**

Keynsham Health Centre

**t: 0300 247 0063**

**Website: Physiotherapy Outpatient Musculoskeletal Service - Bath and North East Somerset Community Health and Care Services ([bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk](http://bathneshealthandcare.nhs.uk))**