

Easy Exercise Guide

A LITTLE A DAY, THE EASY WAY



Physiotherapists explain how you can build easy effective exercise into your daily routine

Taking regular exercise and following a balanced diet can have enormous benefits for your overall health, now and in the future, and being more physically active can be easy and inexpensive.

Physiotherapists understand that being active isn't easy for everyone. Many people have injuries or conditions that stop them from exercising easily. Others simply struggle to find the time, energy or motivation. Whatever your circumstances, here is some simple physiotherapy advice about how to get started and improve your health in a way that's right for you.

So that you can really feel the benefits, physiotherapists recommend that adults exercise for 30 minutes a day at moderate intensity, 5 times a week.

'Moderate intensity' means that both your heart and breathing rates should increase, and you might break a sweat, but you should still be able to hold a conversation.

Depending on your age and mobility, moderate intensity exercise can range from vacuuming and bowling, to walking, digging in the garden and jogging.



Before y

Set goals

Start exercising 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.

Where to start

- ▶ If you're generally healthy, you're already in a great position to do more daily exercise
- ▶ If you're recovering from

TOP TIP! IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME



For a 30 minute session of exercise each day, break it up into smaller chunks. Aim to be active in three or four 10 minute bouts throughout the day, if this suits you better.



DID YOU KNOW?

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

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

ou start easy exercise

illness or injury, or have restricted movement, take it easier – physiotherapists recommend aiming for 10 minutes each day to start with.

If you have any of the following conditions, here is some physiotherapy advice:

- ▶ Back pain – avoid standing or sitting still for long periods of time

- ▶ Stiff/sore knees – avoid hills as they can place extra strain on your knees
- ▶ Recent injury – low impact exercises like gentle walking, swimming or cycling, are best.

The right kit

The equipment you use is important to make sure you're comfortable

while you exercise, and can help you avoid injury, so kit yourself out with appropriate shoes and clothing.

Positive attitude

It will help you reach your goals if you're in the right frame of mind for physical activity. Being prepared at the outset will help you stick with it.



Ready, steady, go!

How to fit more physical activity into your day

Walking

Exercising outdoors is beneficial for both your body and mind, so take a brisk walk for as long as you can – 30 minutes is a good target to work towards.

There are lots of ways to build more walking into your daily routine, or to make it more interesting.

For example:

- ▶ Walk to a corner shop, post office or post box further away than usual

- ▶ If you have a music player, take your favourite music along with you – especially something with an energetic beat
- ▶ Set a good example and take someone walking with you. Your good habits can help make others healthier too!

Where possible, walk up and down stairs, instead of taking the lift or standing still on an escalator. Stair climbing is an



TOP TIP! KEEP AN EXERCISE DIARY

Noting down what activities you have done, for how long, how you felt afterwards, and any goals you reached. Keep challenging yourself and reward yourself for progress.

Dancing is an effective and fun way to stay fit, increase stamina and flexibility, strengthen and tone muscles, and help weight loss. You don't have to be going out to hit the dance floor – turn up your favourite tunes and dance around your home!

effective workout – it gets your heart rate going, burns calories, and can increase the strength in your legs and buttocks. If you don't have access to stairs, you can gain similar benefits from marching on the spot.

At work

Many people spend the majority of their working day sitting at a desk. Combat the inactivity caused by a sedentary office job by using the following tips:

- ▶ Instead of using the equipment in your office, walk to a water fountain or photocopier on a different floor. Moving regularly can also help you think clearly and be more efficient.
- ▶ Stretching lengthens a muscle in one position. Try to hold the stretch so that you feel a gentle pull in the area:
- ▶ 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. Do the same on the opposite side**
- ▶ Loosely grasp your hands behind your neck. Push your elbows back, your >

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. For example, progress from walking to a slow jog, or do something that uses the upper and lower body, like tennis.

POSTURE NOTE

Maintain good posture by using your core muscles: stand tall with your shoulders back, pull in your lower tummy and pelvic floor muscles a little way whenever you're standing or walking.



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. For instance:

- ▶ **When loading** and unloading the washing machine, stand with your feet hip-width apart and your back straight, hold in your tummy muscles, bend your knees in a squat, then straighten them again
- ▶ **When vacuuming**, use long drawn-out movements and use the whole body instead of just your arm
- ▶ **Time yourself** to see how long it takes you to dust all the furniture in a room, then when it needs to be done again try to get it done faster.

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.

At home

When settling down to eat, sit on your chair and stand up again 10 times before you start your meal. This will burn calories and strengthen your thigh muscles, which help protect your back

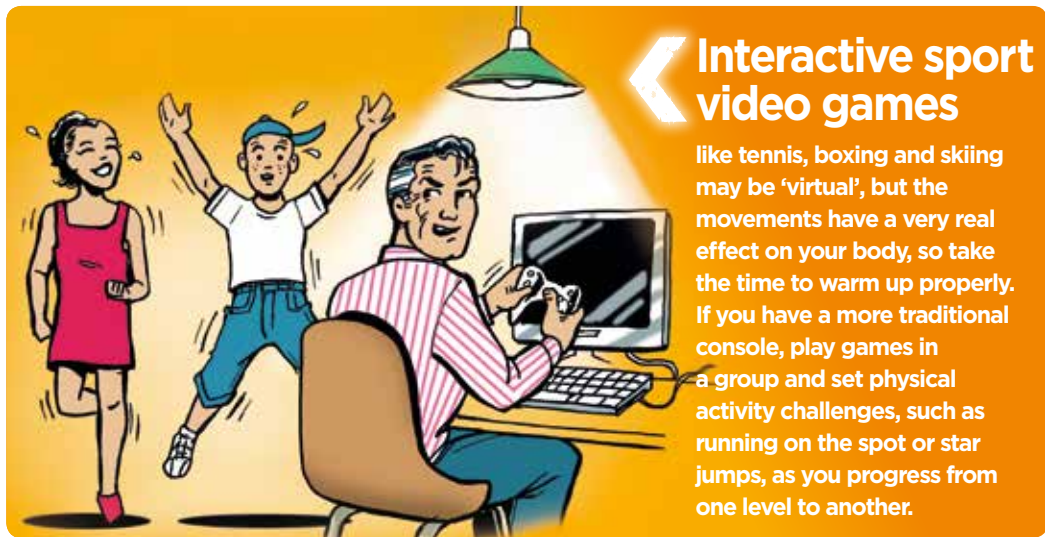
when you need to do some lifting. Use advert breaks as a reminder to get up and move around or change position. Instead of using the remote control, walk to the TV and change the channel or volume.

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. Gardening can be hard work so make sure you warm up with a few simple stretching exercises.

TOP TIP! HOW TO STRETCH WELL



Avoid bouncing back and forth. You should hold a position for up to 30 seconds when stretching.



Interactive sport video games

like tennis, boxing and skiing may be 'virtual', but the movements have a very real effect on your body, so take the time to warm up properly. If you have a more traditional console, play games in a group and set physical activity challenges, such as running on the spot or star jumps, as you progress from one level to another.

Do It Yourself gym

Keep your muscles toned and flexible and your body will be more able to cope with physical stresses. Your body will be stronger and more stable - making you less prone to injuries and illness

- ▶ 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.** This will help tone your buttock muscles
- ▶ When you're sitting down, march on the spot for 2-3 minutes. Do this as many times as you can throughout the day to burn calories and maintain good circulation in your lower limbs. 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.**

Now you know how to safely add some extra, easy exercise into your day you can choose what works best for you and increase your activity levels significantly to help improve your health. Get into the habit now and you'll find exercising easier over time.



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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.