

# *Physical Activity*



**Practical ways to keep active**

Most people believe that exercise is good for them and that they do enough to be healthy.

The reality is that up to 70% of the population do not carry out sufficient activity to benefit their health...

## Are you one of these people?

### Am I active enough to benefit my health?

**Ask yourself the following questions:**

- Do I do any activity for a continuous period of 30 minutes daily that causes me to breathe more heavily?
- Can I walk up a flight of stairs without breathing more heavily?
- Do I weigh the same as I did five years ago?
- Do I ever make a conscious effort to be physically active?

**If you answer 'no' to any of the above questions then it is more than likely that you are *not active enough* to benefit your health.**

**People who do less than 30 minutes of moderate activity five times per week:**

- double their risk of heart attack
- triple their risk of stroke
- are more likely to gain weight
- significantly increase their risk of becoming diabetic
- are more likely to get high blood pressure

### What is the best type of activity for health?

The health benefits of physical activity are accrued from **regular moderate activity**. The benefits of exercise last as long as you are living an active life. Therefore, pick something that you enjoy, that fits into your lifestyle and that you can stick to. For example:

## Structured Exercise

- Brisk walking
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Gym work
- Exercise class
- Dancing

## Active Daily Living

- Walking to the shops
- Walking the children to school
- Gardening
- DIY
- Housework

Very few people have enough time to do 'Structured Exercise' five times per week as this exercise often involves getting changed, having a shower or getting to an exercise facility. A good combination, however, is to pick two activities from the 'Structured' list and three from the 'Active Daily Living' list.

**Remember, any combination will do as long as the activity gets you breathing more heavily for 30 minutes or so.**

## Getting started

- If you have not been active in the last year, or longer, aim to increase your activities from two or three times per week up to five times per week. It is important, when starting, to have rest days between sessions.
- Don't forget that you must be able to *maintain* any changes you make to your lifestyle. No matter how enthusiastic you are, don't go at it 'like a bull in a china shop'.
- Another tip is don't start when you know that you have a break in your routine coming up, e.g. a holiday, Christmas, children off school, etc. Breaking your routine is likely to cause you to go back to your inactive lifestyle. If possible, wait for a good period of 'normal' routine.
- Don't forget, 1lb weight loss per month for 12 months is better than a '30lb in 30 days' approach, as some intensive weight loss programmes claim!! This approach is difficult to maintain and will inevitably lead to complete weight regain.
- Being organised about your activity will help you to stick to it, so fill in the timetable overleaf and set realistic targets that fit into your way of life.

Using the key below, decide which activities you are going to do (and for how long) and fill in the appropriate boxes to remind you what you need to do.

e.g. If you planned to go for a 30min walk on Monday of Week no. 1, then write 30W in that box.

Try to do as many sessions as the 'Weekly target' suggests, e.g. Week no. 1 - two sessions per week.

Don't worry if you miss a session, fit it in later in the week. Try and be flexible with your activity.

At the end of each week fill in how many sessions you successfully completed in the 'No. completed' box to monitor your success.

If you want to see how much weight you lose over the first 12 weeks, weigh yourself at the beginning and again at the end.

A combination of sensible eating and sensible amounts of exercise, sustained for long periods, is the most effective way of losing weight and, more importantly, maintaining it.

Date	Week no.	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Weekly target	No. completed	Weight
	1								2		
	2								2		
	3								3		
	4								3		
	5								3		
	6								4		
	7								4		
	8								4		
	9								5		
	10								5		Weight
	11								5		
	12								5		

W - Walking      S - Swimming      C - Cycling      GW - Gym work      EC - Exercise class  
 G - Gardening      DIY - DIY      D - Dancing      HW - Housework

Once you've completed this timetable go back and get another timetable for another three months. After six months you probably won't need to remind yourself to exercise, **you'll have the exercise habit!**