Life begins at 40
Health tips for men
Introduction

Life begins at 40. This isn’t just a line to make you feel better - if you look after your mind and body, you can enjoy staying fit and active well into later life.

This booklet explains how easy it is to build healthy behaviour into your lifestyle. You don’t have to spend a fortune, stop socialising or give up the pleasures in life. If you make even minor changes to your lifestyle you will see the results fast.

A healthier lifestyle can:
- protect you from disease and dangers to your life
- give you more energy
- make you look better and feel more alive.

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Good news on smoking

If you smoke, giving up is the single best thing you can do for your health.

More than 1,000 people give up every day.

This is good news because if you smoke you are:

- twice as likely to die prematurely
- 2-3 times more likely to have a heart attack.

You also put yourself at risk of lung cancer - the top cancer in men - and harm those who breathe your smoke, including children. When you stop, the benefits begin from day one:

- blood pressure and pulse start to fall straight away
- 24 hours - chances of a heart attack start to fall
- 72 hours - breathing is easier and energy levels improve
- 1-3 months - you have improved erections and sperm count
- 5 years - your risk of lung cancer halves.

Kicking it
Many people try several times before they succeed. If you fail at first, try again. The first few days are the worst. Get over those and you're winning.
Enjoy a drink

It's good to enjoy a drink with friends - it can help you relax and enjoy yourself. But you need to know where the benefits end and the risks begin.

Don't drink at all if you are going to:
- drive
- operate machinery
- swim or take part in sport
- take certain medicines
- if your doctor advises you not to.

One unit of alcohol =
- half a pint of ordinary strength lager or cider
- a single pub measure of spirits
- a small glass of wine.

The benefits of alcohol
If you are over 40, drinking one to two units of alcohol a day can protect you from heart disease.

But how much is too much?
You can drink up to three to four units a day with no significant risk to your health.

Putting your health at risk
If you regularly drink four or more units a day you risk high blood pressure, liver damage, mouth and throat cancers and depression.

Putting your life at risk
If you get drunk you are far more likely to be involved in an accident at home, at work or on the roads.

Top Tip
Enjoy a drink, but be sensible.
Exercise and eat well

Taking regular exercise helps keep your weight down, helps you relax and feel full of energy. Not only will you feel better, you will look better too.

What to do
Choose something you enjoy, such as cycling or swimming. If these don’t appeal, then make sure you build activity into your life:

- use the stairs instead of the lift
- walk instead of using the car
- take the dog out every day
- do the gardening or some DIY.

A healthy diet
You are what you eat. Too much fat will make you fat and put you at risk of heart disease. Too much salt can increase your blood pressure.

A healthy diet means eating a wide variety of foods.

- eat plenty of bread, pasta, rice and potatoes
- eat more fruit and vegetables
- go easy on fatty foods and try not to add salt at the table
- trim the fat off meat and use low-fat spreads
- cut down on biscuits and cakes.

Top Tip
Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity five days a week.

“Im knackered. It must be that pie and chips I had at lunch.”

“Salad? So that’s why you run like a rabbit.”

Being overweight is bad for your heart - nearly two thirds of adult men are overweight or obese. Heart disease is a major killer of men. Exercise and a good diet cut the chance of heart disease by half.

Top Tip
Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

“They said at school too many chips are bad for you. They've put baked spuds and salads in the canteen now.”

“And that's why you're a couch potato.”