

## **In Summary...and Getting Started!**

1. You don't always need high-intensity exercise to improve fitness and decrease health risks. Increasing the amount of moderate physical activity you do on most days (like walking or gardening) has clear health benefits for body and mind.
2. Remember – any activity is better than not doing anything - and you might even enjoy it!
3. Start with simple, everyday activities that are fun and easy for you to do. Brisk walking 10 minutes a day is a good place to start for most people and doesn't cost a thing! Pick a few activities that you can make part of your daily routine.
4. Slowly increase how often and how long you do an activity. Start with low intensity and slowly increase the intensity. Don't overdo it when you start out.
5. Make physical activity a priority – try to plan a time for focused activities. Develop a back-up plan for those things that sometimes happen, like family and work commitments or bad weather.
6. Find a friend to get active alongside you and you can motivate each other or join in a group activity or exercise class. Ask family members to plan a different activity for Saturday mornings. If one activity gets boring try switching to something else
7. Set realistic goals for yourself, like “Lose a couple of pounds,” “Lose an inch off my waist,” or “Be able to walk to my friend’s house without getting out of breath.” Set goals for what you plan to do in the next week, for example, “Walk 10 minutes every day and do two or three things on the daily activity list.”

Everyone slips off their plan now and then. Think about what triggered your slip and make a plan to avoid or cope with that trigger the next time. Don't just make excuses, though; get back to your plan!

### **Further help and information**

#### **Local leisure service numbers**

Lords meadow Commercial Rd Crediton, Devon EX17 1ER Tel:01363 776190

**Walk and Talk Tel:** 01392 824752

**Change for Life** [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

# Physical Activity and Exercise



**A Bow Medical Practice Publication**

## Physical Activity/Exercise

Doing regular physical activity (exercise) has a number of different benefits. These include the reduction in risk of developing heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, some types of cancer, osteoporosis and Type 2 diabetes. Regular physical activity also helps to control weight and may help to ease stress and make you feel good about yourself!

Current recommendations for adults suggest we should all aim for at least 30 mins of “moderate intensity” physical activity on at least five days of the week as well as doing some muscle-strengthening activities – but making any change in what you currently do is a great positive step!

Physical activity can include **every day activities** such as walking or cycling to school/college or work, gardening, DIY, housework or any active/manual work done as part of your job. It also includes **active recreational activities** such as dancing, walking or cycling for recreation and outdoor play for children. In addition it also includes **sporting/leisure activities** such as exercise or fitness training at a gym or as part of an exercise class, swimming, tennis, running or competitive sports such as football.

## How much exercise and what exercise do I need to do?

Adults should aim to do a mixture of **aerobic activities** (any activity which makes your heart and lungs work harder) and **muscle-strengthening activities** (see below).

Generally speaking activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) of moderate activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more, for example 30 minutes on at least five days each week. There are similar benefits from doing 75 minutes of vigorous intensity exercise spread across the week of doing combinations of moderate and vigorous intensity exercise.

- **30 minutes** is probably the minimum – but this can add up, for example a 15 minute cycle to and from work. Even less time probably has *some* health benefits – anything is better than nothing!
- **Moderate intensity** means that you get warm, feel mildly out of breath and a bit sweaty!
- **On most days** means that you can’t “store up” the benefits of physical activity and you need to do it regularly – hence the recommendation of being active on at least 5 days each week.

If you are at risk of putting on weight, building up to 45-60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days may help you manage your weight. If you are trying to lose weight you should ideally try and build up to 60-90 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most days.

## Muscle-strengthening Activities

Examples of everyday muscle-strengthening activities can include climbing stairs, walking uphill, digging the garden and carrying heavy shopping. Pilates, yoga and weight-training are other examples of muscle-strengthening and resistance exercises that use all the different muscle groups. As well as improving and maintaining your muscle strength, this type of physical activity can help to improve your flexibility and balance.

## Older adults and Exercise

Older adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits and should aim to be active daily and, if possible, aim for similar amounts of physical and muscle-strengthening activity as above, depending upon your ability. A particular goal for older people where possible, should be activities which help with flexibility and balance which can reduce the risk of falls. Examples of activities to help flexibility and balance can include simple household or DIY chores that involve bending and stretching but also dancing, keep fit classes, tai chi, pilates and yoga

Daily activities might include:

- Parking your car further away from work or from shops or the supermarket entrance.
- Getting off the bus one stop early and walking the rest of the way.
- Taking the stairs every time instead of the lifts or escalators.
- Walking upstairs every time you have something to carry up, instead of waiting for a pile.
- Walking to your local shop rather than driving.
- Going for a two-minute walk around the house or up and down the stairs during TV commercials (especially food ads!).
- Doing stretching exercises while watching TV.
- Standing up while you're talking on the telephone instead of sitting.