

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

### **A guide for getting the most out of being active**

This leaflet provides information on:

1. The health benefits of being active
2. The different types of physical activity
3. The recommendations for physical activity
4. Practical tips on how to increase your physical activity

#### **Before you read on ...**

If you have been advised to limit your physical activity for medical reasons, or you have any doubts as to how much or what type of physical activity you can safely do, contact your Doctor before making any changes.

#### **When doing any physical activity make sure you:**

- warm up properly by doing some gentle activity and stretching.
- wear appropriate, comfortable clothing and shoes.
- make sure you drink enough to keep you hydrated.

### **1) The health benefits of being active**

**Tick all the points below which you would like for yourself:**

- Sleep better at night and feel more alert during the day
- Meet new people and socialise
- Relieve stress
- Feel slimmer and more toned
- Keeps your joints mobile and bones strong
- Lower your blood pressure
- Lower your blood cholesterol level
- Reduce your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes
- Maintain good blood glucose control if you have diabetes
- Reduce your risk of developing heart disease
- Reduce your risk of dying from a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart attack
- Reduce your risk of having a stroke
- Reduce your risk of developing osteoporosis
- Reduce your risk of developing bowel cancer
- Increase your stamina and general level of fitness

**Great news! By taking part in regular physical activity it can help you to achieve all of the things listed above!**

**Regular activity can increase your quality of life and keep you happy and healthy.**

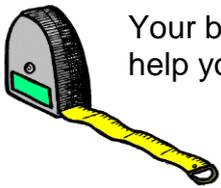
## Being active to help your weight

**Doing regular physical activity is important for achieving & maintaining weight loss.**

Weight loss is achieved when the amount of energy you burn up is greater than the amount of energy you take in (from food and drink).

Increasing your physical activity whilst reducing your energy intake from food and drink is the most effective way of losing weight

Regular physical activity is just as important for keeping weight off once you have lost it.



Your body shape may change as you become more active. Taking measurements can help you monitor this.

You could use string instead of a measure tape, marking or cutting where the string meets round your waist, hips, upper arms and chest. As the weeks/months go on, you may find the string gets smaller and smaller.

## 2) Does it matter what type of activity you do?

Whilst all forms of physical activity are good for you, different types of activity will benefit different areas of your fitness.

**Aerobic activities** will improve cardiovascular (heart and blood circulation) health to help you become fitter and able to do day to day activities. Aerobic activity can help with weight loss as it encourages your body to burn more energy.

This type of exercise should make you feel warm, out of breath and get your heart beating quicker!

Below are some examples of aerobic activities -



Brisk walking



Swimming (this is not weight bearing)



Cycling



Dancing



Running



Tennis, badminton, squash



Stair climbing



Gardening e.g. digging

**Weight bearing activities** can improve muscle tone and change the shape of your body. Activity that you do whilst being on your feet can help to improve the strength of your muscles and bones.

A mixture of both aerobic and weight bearing activity across the week is best. Aim to be active for at least **10-15 minutes** at a time and at a level which makes you get slightly out of breath and causes your heart rate and body temperature to rise slightly. This level of activity is known as **moderate intensity activity**.

## How much energy will I burn doing different physical activities?

The table below shows on average how much energy 15 minutes of activity will burn off. If you are trying to lose weight, then try **not** to reward yourself with food after exercise!

| Activity             | Calories used per 15 minutes |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Ambling walk         | 30                           |
| Walking briskly      | 35                           |
| Golf                 | 35                           |
| Gardening            | 55                           |
| Digging              | 65                           |
| Badminton            | 70                           |
| Hill walking (brisk) | 70                           |
| Running              | 85                           |
| Cycling              | 85                           |
| Swimming             | 85                           |
| Keep fit exercises   | 85                           |
| Weight training      | 85                           |

### 3) The recommendations for physical activity

The amount of physical activity recommended depends on your age and what you want to achieve.

#### **For all adults – it is recommended that:**

You are active daily

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Totalling at least 2½ hours of **moderate intensity activity** each week

(e.g. 30mins on at least 5 days of the week)

Similar benefits can be achieved by 1¼ hours of vigorous intensity activity a week\*

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Avoid sitting / not moving for long periods in the day. If you have a sedentary job, set an alert on your PC or mobile to remind you to get up, stretch and move around every hour.

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Do some activity that improves muscle strength at least twice a week.

\*vigorous intensity exercise increases your heart rate a lot. You know you are exercising at this level if you're breathing hard and fast and you're unable to talk without needing to pause!

#### **For older adults**

Also do activities to improve balance & co-ordination on 2 or more days a week:

Activities such as Tai-Chi and Yoga.

Exercises such as: lunges, leg raises and wall push-ups.

#### **To help weight loss**

45-60 minutes of moderate intensity activity on 5-7 days of the week

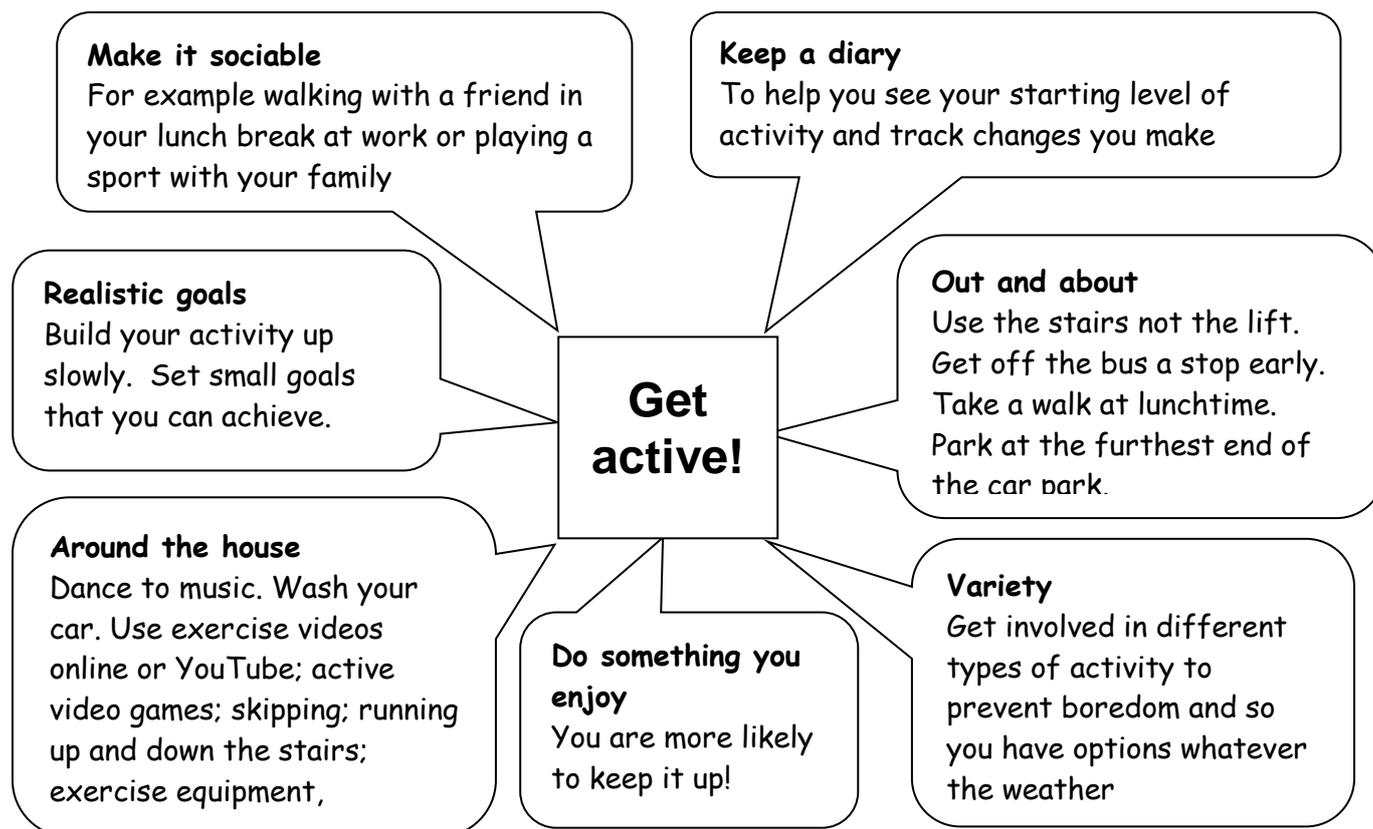
#### 4) Do you have difficulties increasing your physical activity?

Try to do **light intensity activities** to start with e.g. gentle walk, light housework.

If you spend a lot of time sitting, then try to at least stand up, do some stretches or walk about several times an hour.

Building activity into your daily routine can help it to become part of your lifestyle.

**Pedometers** are small gadgets that can help you count the number of steps you take. They are easy to use and by setting yourself small targets to increase the number of steps you take in a day you can start to make a difference to how active you are. Pedometer apps are now available on your smart phone too.



#### Local activity schemes in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

Contact your local council, Leisure Centre or GP surgery for information on what's available in your area.

You can also visit [www.lrsport.org](http://www.lrsport.org) to search for activities local to you.

#### **Activities may include:**

- Walking for Health Groups
- Seated exercise classes
- Outdoor gyms
- Taster sessions e.g. dance, Zumba, martial arts, Pilates, dodgeball, golf
- Subsidised and supported activities for individuals who have a health condition
- Eco-Active Lifestyle (participate in a wide range of conservation projects)