

Strengthen your immunity

Staying active during the COVID-19 pandemic

There is evidence that lockdown has resulted in people sitting more and moving less. If these activity levels continue to be low, then our bodies' ability to fight off infections may be weakened.

This leaflet provides some practical suggestions for you to keep yourself fit and active during lockdown.

This leaflet was developed with the involvement of nursing staff, service users and other stakeholders and is in line with NICE PH 44 Physical Activities Guidelines.

Regular physical activity can improve immunity in adults*

by increasing:

- your body's ability to produce antibodies
- the detection of cancerous cells
- wound-healing and blocks the entry of bacteria and viruses into the body



by reducing:

- the risk of developing long-term health conditions
- the risk of infection
- the frequency of infections
- the severity of infections

Stay active and keep COVID-19 at bay

Make exercise a habit (the 'magic 150')	Spend less time sitting and try to do about 150 minutes of moderate activity every week (20-30 minutes every day). Taking regular, shorter bursts of activity each day could also benefit your immune system.
If you are vulnerable (shielding or at a higher risk)	Build up home-based activities that you can achieve. Try some strength and balance activities such as controlled sitting-to-standing movements or heel-and-toe raises.
Avoid exposure to the virus	Adhere to government guidance on social distancing and personal hygiene.
Prioritise your health, not your performance	When restrictions ease, be careful not to exercise too much, too hard or without proper recovery. Keep in mind these five lifestyle choices that you can control:



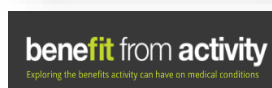
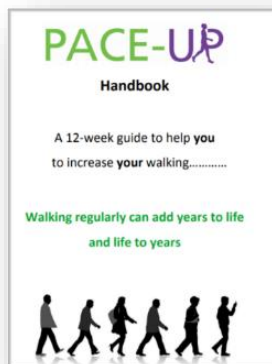
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Some ideas to stay active and to spend less time sitting

The COVID-19 pandemic with lockdown has made it difficult for many of us to be physically active. Here are some ideas for you to stay active:

Aerobic activities	Good for your heart and lungs and help your immune system
Indoor activities	Climbing stairs Dancing to music Swimming Exercise videos Active housework, such as hoovering
Outdoor activities	Walking Walking the dog or 'borrow a dog' to walk Cycling Swimming Gardening or sweeping leaves
Strength and balance activities	Good for your muscles and bones
Indoors	Online strength videos Online Pilates, yoga and Tai Chi exercises Using weights and resistance bands Gym classes (if gyms are open)
Outdoors	Carrying shopping bags DIY Park workouts



Help is at hand

Try to make walking a habit. A good starting point is the **PACE-UP** walking programme with its free walking handbook, diary and planner to encourage you to get moving more.

<http://www.paceup.sgul.ac.uk/materials>

And if motivation is sometimes difficult for you, try using a simple pedometer or an activity-tracker app on your phone.

Do you want to know more about how physical activity can improve your general health and help your immune system?

Do you have a particular medical condition that's preventing you from being active, such as recent surgery or asthma?

Here's a useful website that will answer questions like these:

<http://www.benefitfromactivity.org.uk/>

*Wadley A, Physical Activity, Exercise and Immune Function, RCN Factsheet
You can find the factsheet [here](#)

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