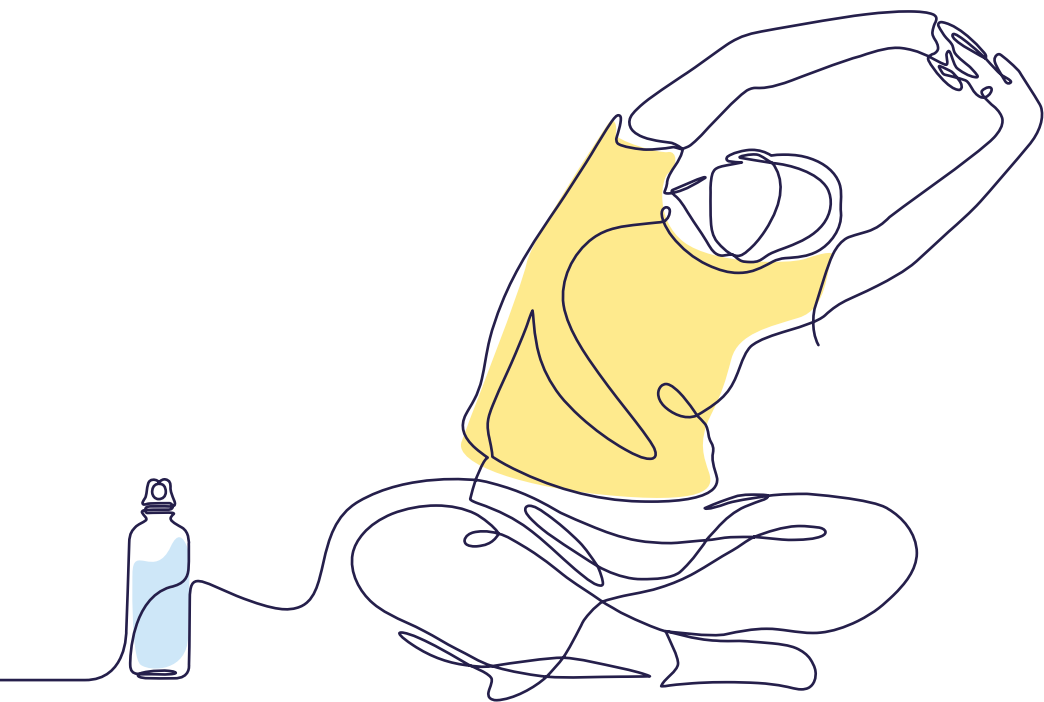


LIVING AN ACTIVE LIFE

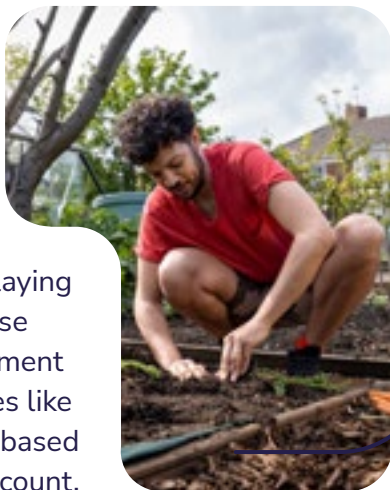
A guide to help you move more for cancer prevention



MOVEMENT IS FOR EVERYONE

At World Cancer Research Fund, we know that moving more can make a difference to your health. Being active in everyday life can help lower your risk of cancer and support your overall wellbeing.

Being active does not have to mean playing sport, going to the gym or doing intense exercise. Physical activity is any movement that uses your body. Everyday activities like walking, housework, gardening, chair-based movement, cycling and active jobs all count.



This booklet shares simple, practical ways to move more in daily life, at your own pace and in a way that works for you.



As a GP, I see firsthand the difference that being active can make to people's health and wellbeing.

Physical activity is one of the most powerful things we can do to improve our health, and it is never too late to start. This guide offers practical ways to move more in everyday life and take positive steps towards better health."

Dr Jennie Bee



THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF BEING ACTIVE

Being active in your daily life can help your physical and mental health, now and in the future.



In the short term, moving your body more often can help you:

- reach or keep to a healthy weight
- improve your mood and help with stress
- improve your sleep
- keep your muscles and bones strong
- avoid falls and keep you steady
- keep your immune system working well

In the long term, being active can help lower your risk of some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and dementia.

BEING ACTIVE AND CANCER PREVENTION

Research shows being active can lower your risk of bowel, breast and womb cancers. That is why moving more in everyday life is one of World Cancer Research Fund's Cancer Prevention Recommendations.

Being active can also help you reach or keep to a healthy weight. Being a healthy weight can help protect against many other types of cancer, including kidney, pancreatic and oesophageal cancers.

HOW DOES BEING ACTIVE LOWER CANCER RISK?

Being active in daily life can help keep your hormone levels healthy, control your blood sugar and reduce inflammation. It also helps keep your digestion working well. These all help keep your body healthy and lower your cancer risk.



Is what I eat more important than how active I am?

Eating well and being active are both equally important.

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is good for your overall health. That means eating plenty of fibre-rich foods like vegetables, fruit, beans and wholegrains (like brown rice), limiting red and processed meat and cutting back on alcohol, fast food and sugary drinks. Eating well and being active work best together and offer the best protection against cancer, along with not smoking and being safe in the sun.

Visit wcrf.org for more on diet and cancer prevention.

WHAT DOES AN ACTIVE WEEK LOOK LIKE?

The government recommends aiming for the following:

- about 20 to 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a day, or
- about 10 to 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity a day, or
- a mix of both

Try to include activities that make your muscles stronger on at least 2 days a week. It is also important to do activities that improve your balance and how flexible you are over the week, especially when you get older.

Find out what moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity means on pages 6 and 8.



If these guidelines feel too much right now, you do not need to reach them straight away. Start with what feels manageable, even a few extra minutes of movement each day. This can help you build confidence, feel stronger and improve your health over time.



If you need support, speak to a qualified health professional such as a GP, nurse or physiotherapist if you are unsure what is safe for you. They can help you find suitable activities or refer you to more support.

TYPES OF ACTIVITY TO TRY

Different types of movement help your body in different ways. Some activities get your heart beating faster, some make your muscles stronger and some help with your balance. Try to find activities you enjoy. You are more likely to keep doing them.



MODERATE-INTENSITY ACTIVITY

These activities make your heart beat and breathing a bit faster. You may feel warmer, but you can still talk.

Moderate-intensity activity is a great foundation for everyone. It can help you live a more active life, whether you do it on its own or alongside other activity. It is also a good place to start if you are new to exercise, pregnant, older or have a health condition.

Type of activity	Examples
Walking, stairs and moving around	• Brisk walking, with or without a walking aid • Walking down the stairs, with support if needed
Everyday tasks	• Gardening, such as planting, weeding or lawn mowing • Doing housework with energy, like mopping
Cycling or wheeling	• Gentle cycling, including on an adapted bike • Gentle hand cycling • Pushing yourself in a wheelchair
Water-based activity	• Gentle swimming • Water aerobics
Dance, movement and group activities	• Gentle dancing, seated or standing • Chair-based movements, such as seated marching, boxing or arm circles • Gentle fitness classes • Walking or seated football, rugby, tennis or netball



VIGOROUS-INTENSITY ACTIVITY

These activities get you moving more energetically and make your heart beat a lot faster. You may only be able to say a few words before needing a breath.

If you are not used to being active, you do not need to start with these. Instead, build up your fitness and confidence over time.

Type of activity	Examples
Walking, stairs and moving around	• Walking up stairs or a hill, with support if needed • Jogging, running or skipping
Cycling or wheeling	• Fast cycling, including on an adapted bike • Fast hand cycling • Pushing yourself fast in a wheelchair
Water-based activity	• Fast swimming
Sports and adapted sports	• Playing sports like football, basketball or badminton • Adaptive sports such as wheelchair basketball or tennis
Dance and group activities	• Energetic dancing, seated or standing • Energetic fitness classes



STRENGTH-BUILDING ACTIVITY

Making your body stronger keeps your muscles and bones healthy. It helps you with balance, daily movement and to stay independent, especially when you get older. Include activities that build your strength on at least 2 days a week.

You do not need to go to the gym to build strength. You can build strength at home or through activities that suit you.

Start here	• Carrying light shopping or laundry • Standing up and sitting down from a chair • Light housework like lifting and putting away things that are light
Build up	• Lifting and carrying children • Carrying heavier shopping bags or laundry • Bodyweight movements like sit-ups or push-ups against a wall or counter
Challenge yourself	• Heavy gardening like digging or shovelling • Pushing yourself in a wheelchair or pushing someone else • Using resistance bands or light hand weights • Yoga or Pilates



I now make most of my own bread for an upper body workout and I try to do press-ups against the kitchen worktop as the kettle boils.” **Judith**

FLEXIBILITY AND BALANCE

Keeping your muscles and joints flexible and improving your balance can help you move more easily. It can also help you with your posture.

Flexible muscles and joints can also help reduce your risk of falls and fractures, especially as you get older. Try to include these activities throughout the week to help you stay confident and independent.

Examples include:

- stepping up and down from a low step, using support if needed
- balancing on one leg, holding a chair if needed
- shoulder, neck, arm, back and leg stretches
- dancing, tai chi or mindful movement
- heel-to-toe walking in a straight line
- yoga or Pilates



THE POWER OF WALKING

Walking is one of the best ways to get more active. It is free and easy to fit into daily life. Research shows that brisk walking may lower the risk of some cancers. Brisk walking makes you feel warmer and breathe a bit faster. It can also help you reach or keep to a healthy weight and support your heart health.

Even short walks can help. Start with 15 to 20 minutes across the day, then slowly build up how long you walk for.

Ways to fit more walking into your day:

- get off the bus one stop early or park further away
- walk to the shops or post office
- walk around when you are talking on the phone at home
- take the stairs when you can
- walk around the block for a short break
- join a walking group or meet up with a friend

Find local walks and groups on page 21.

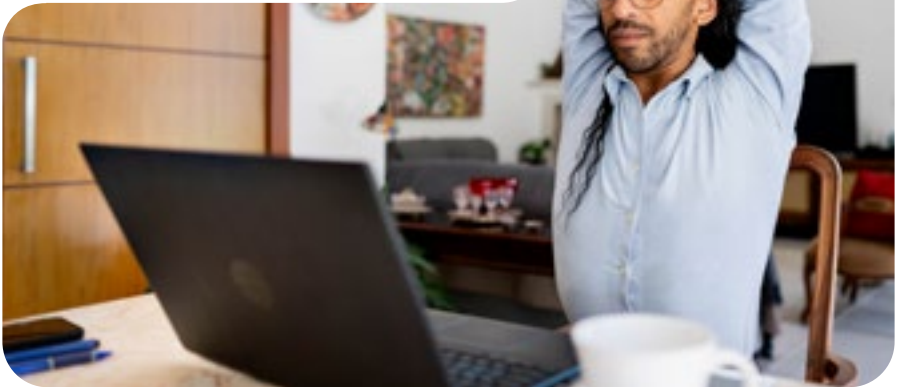


I love walking to help me stay active, and I even host walking tours around my local area, which is a great way to connect with people.

Everyone walks together, swaps stories and makes new friends. It has also inspired people to discover hidden corners of their locality, all adding to a sense of community and belonging.” **Geoff**

SITTING, SCREEN TIME AND CANCER

Many people in the UK spend around 9 hours a day sitting, at a desk, watching TV or travelling. Sitting still for long periods, especially while using a screen, is linked to putting on weight. This may be because people move less and snack more.



Breaking up long periods of sitting or staying still can help you move more often. Sitting less can support your overall health, help you reach or keep to a healthy weight and lower your risk of cancer.

Ways to break up sitting or still time, even if you are seated:

- change position every 30 to 60 minutes
- move during TV ads, such as seated stretches, arm circles or standing up
- move while talking on the phone, by wheeling or walking around

SHORT BURSTS OF MOVEMENT

It can be hard to find time to move more. Short bursts of vigorous movement during the day can be an easier way to get active.

Research shows that these short bursts of movement (sometimes called exercise 'snacking') can help improve your fitness and your health, even if they only last a few minutes. Aim for 3 to 5 minutes at a time, a few times during the day.

Try these:

- marching on the spot
- dancing to one upbeat song
- brisk walking around the block
- walking up the stairs or escalator
- sitting and standing from a chair
- doing housework with energy, like vacuuming



Around the house, climbing the stairs provides a handy, free mini workout. I also make a point of walking the 10 minutes into town at least once a day.” **Liz**

MAKING IT EASIER TO GET ACTIVE

Many people want to be more active, but everyday challenges can make it difficult. Feeling tired, living with pain, finding it hard to move around, money worries or low motivation can all get in the way. The good news is that small changes can help you move more, even at home.



I feel too tired or unmotivated

Feeling tired or unmotivated can make it hard to be active. Start small and try to be active when you have the most energy. Even a few minutes of gentle movement can help you feel better over time.

Try these:

- 3 to 5 minutes of gentle movement, such as arm circles or marching on the spot, seated or standing
- put on your favourite music and move along to it
- set a timer and spend 5 minutes tidying a room

It is too expensive or hard to access

Being active can feel harder if money, transport or local options are a problem. You do not need a gym membership, equipment or paid classes to move more. There are many ways to be active for free at home or in your local area.

Try this:

- use free online videos at home
- use household items, like tinned beans or water bottles, as light weights
- go for a walk with a friend, family member or neighbour

Ask your local council, library or community centre about free or low-cost activities. You can also find more ideas on page 20.



I do not have time

Life can be busy. You might be working long hours or balancing work and caring responsibilities. It can be hard to find time to be active, but you do not always need to set aside extra time. Look for ways to move more during activities you already do each day.

Try this:

- move while talking on the phone at home
- take the stairs or walk up the escalator where you can
- get off one bus stop early or park further away

I have a health condition or disability

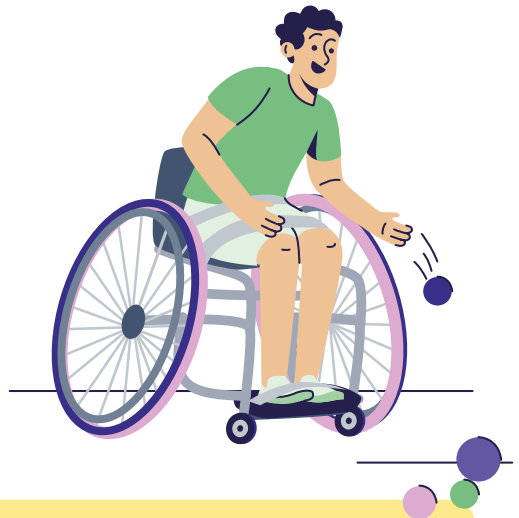
Everyone has the right to move their body in a way that feels safe and comfortable.

Being active can still work for you if you live with a disability, health condition or find it hard to move around. Start with what feels comfortable and build from there.

Try this:

- chair-based movements such as stretching, boxing, marching or arm circles
- gentle exercise videos
- try an adaptive sport or inclusive swimming session in your local area

Find inclusive activities and support for health conditions on pages 20 and 21.



If you need support, speak to a qualified health professional such as a GP, nurse or physiotherapist if you are unsure what is safe for you. They can help you find suitable activities or refer you to more support.

Being active does not feel like it is for me

Being active is for everyone. You do not need to play sport, join a gym or follow a strict exercise plan to live a more active life. The most important thing is finding ways to move that feel comfortable, enjoyable and right for you.

Try this:

- put on your favourite music and move along to it
- spend time in nature, such as gardening or walking in a local park
- try an activity with a friend, family member or community group

Ask your library, community centre or faith-based group about activities in your area.

I feel self-conscious or judged

Feeling self-conscious about being active is something many people feel. You might worry about how fit you are, not doing it right or what other people think.

Be kind to yourself. You do not need to be good at something straight away. Start with an activity (and clothing) that feels comfortable and build from there. Taking small steps can help you feel more confident over time.

Try this:

- try chair-based activities or online videos at home
- try a beginner-friendly class
- ask someone supportive to join you

Find activities you can try at home or with others on pages 20 and 21.

GETTING STARTED AND PLANNING YOUR ACTIVITY

You do not need to make big changes all at once. Start with a few extra minutes of activity and do more as your fitness and confidence grow. Making a simple plan can help you build healthy habits and stay active.



THINK ABOUT YOUR REASON

Why do you want to move more? This can help you stay motivated.

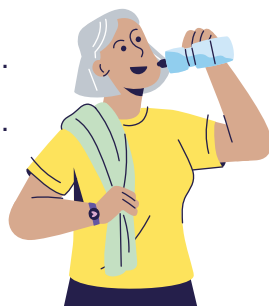
For example:

- to feel stronger or have more energy
- to help with stress
- to improve my health

My reason:

.....

.....



SET ONE GOAL THIS WEEK

Choose something you can easily fit in this week.

For example:

- go for a 10-minute lunchtime walk
- walk to the post office instead of taking the bus
- try chair-based movements during TV ad breaks



My goal this week:

.....

.....

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

Keeping track can help you stay motivated to live a more active life.

For example:

- creating a weekly plan
- ticking a box each day you move
- use an activity tracking app

How will I track my progress?

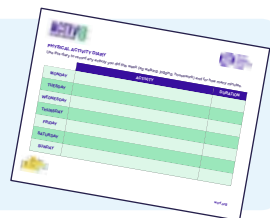
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Download our free physical activity diary

Keep track of your activities each week with our activity diary: wcrf.org/activity-diary



ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOU MOVE MORE

These organisations can help you find free or low-cost ways to move more, including online videos, local groups, classes and accessible activities.

Check the activity is suitable for your needs before taking part.



IF YOU WANT TO START AT HOME

NHS Better Health: Get Active

Free workout videos, apps and tips to help you move more at home or outdoors: nhs.uk/better-health/get-active

Couch to Fitness

A free online programme for beginners, designed to help you get active at home without equipment and at your own pace: couchtofitness.com/programmes

We Are Undeatable

Free support and exercise videos for people living with long-term health conditions: weareundeatable.co.uk

IF YOU WANT TO FIND SOMETHING LOCAL

Ramblers

UK walking groups with walks for different fitness levels and abilities: ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/ramblers-groups

Our Parks

Free outdoor fitness classes in local parks: ourparks.org.uk

Canal and River Trust Walk Finder

Local canal and riverside walks: canalrivertrust.org.uk

Age UK activity finder

Find local Age UK exercise classes and activities:
ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/exercise

IF YOU WANT INCLUSIVE OR ADAPTED ACTIVITIES

Every Body Moves

Find inclusive activities and disability sports, online and in person:
everybodymoves.org.uk

Activity Alliance

Information, resources and support to help people living with a disability move more: activityalliance.org.uk

We Are Undefeatable

Support, ideas and videos to help people living with a long-term health conditions move more: weareundefeatable.co.uk



Tell us what you think

We are always looking for ways to improve our health information. Please take a moment to share your feedback. Your input will help us create better resources for everyone. wcrf.org/activity-feedback



How can you help?

Will you help us build a world where fewer people every day get preventable cancers? Our work is funded solely by charitable donations. Your support will help us continue providing easy-to-access health information to help people reduce their risk of cancer and live well with cancer. wcrf.org/donate



CANCER PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS



Be a healthy weight



Be physically active



Eat a diet rich in wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and beans



Limit consumption of 'fast foods' and other processed foods high in fat, starches or sugars



Limit consumption of red and processed meat



Limit consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks



Limit alcohol consumption



Do not use supplements for cancer prevention



For mothers: breastfeed your baby, if you can



After a cancer diagnosis: follow our Recommendations, if you can

Not smoking and avoiding other exposure to tobacco and excess sun are also important in reducing cancer risk.

Following these Recommendations is likely to reduce intakes of salt, saturated and trans fats, which together will help prevent other non-communicable diseases.

To read our full Recommendations visit: wcrf.org/10ways



World Cancer Research Fund examines how diet, weight and physical activity affect your risk of developing and surviving cancer. As part of an international network of charities, we have been funding life-saving research, influencing global public health policy and educating the public since 1982.

While society continues searching for a cure, our prevention and survival work is helping people live longer, happier and healthier lives – free from the devastating effects of cancer.

For any enquiries or to request the information in large print, please contact us:

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wcrf.org



Preventing cancer. Saving lives

All information correct at time of print.

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