

How much should I do?

That is up to you, do as much or as little as you can depending on time available and fitness. The NHS' Physical Activity Guidelines suggest that people aged 19-64 should engage in at least two and a half hours of moderately paced aerobic activity such as cycling or fast paced walking per week on order to keep their body healthy (both physically and mentally).

Light	Moderate	Intense
Gardening	Hill walking	Tennis (singles)
Walking	Cycling	Circuit training
Golf	Swimming	Running

Ideas for incorporating physical activity into your everyday life

- Cycle or walk to work
- Use the stairs not the elevator
- Go for a walk on your lunch break

Such simple ideas will keep your body active during the day and help you in reducing stress and anxiety levels and in managing your mood.

Our team of Clinical and Counselling psychologists provides services to address the psychological and mental health needs of children, adults and families.

We are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the British Psychology Society (BPS) and are a registered provider to BUPA. We have professional and public liability insurance cover and enhanced DBS checks.

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Physical Activity

Release the tension in your body, relieve the symptoms of stress, clear your thoughts and feel relaxed through the power of exercise.



Information Leaflet

Stress and Physical Activity

What is stress?

Stress is described as a state of mental or emotional strain/tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. *Simply, we are not able to cope with the demands placed upon us.*

What is physical activity?

Physical activity describes anything that raises the heart rate above its resting rate. This could be a forest walk or a game of tennis.

Potential symptoms of stress:

Emotional	Behavioural	Physical
Mood swings	Poor work	Tiredness
Lack of enthusiasm	Poor sleep	Weight gain
Anger	Accident prone	Weight loss
Feelings of guilt	Irritability	Recurring illness
Increased worrying	Overeating	Infections

What does stress do to the body?

Short term or “Acute” stressors, such as holding a presentation at work, do not affect the body in a negative way. Adrenaline will be released and the body’s fight or flight system will be activated; a normal, non-harmful reaction. However, long term or “Chronic” stressors such as marital problems and being a victim of bullying will release corticosteroids into the body. The net effect of these is a drop in health. The body’s natural killer cell production will drop resulting in a less effective immune system. Therefore people are more susceptible to ill-health. Furthermore, peoples’ blood pressure will rise as will their heart rate resulting in a greater chance of hypertension and heart disease.

Why choose Physical activity as a lifestyle choice?

Physical activity combats the chances of contracting heart disease and hypertension, by lowering cholesterol and blood pressure. At the same time physical activity helps to tackle stress. Therefore, physical activity contributes to greater health in two ways at the same time, while also making you fitter. So the real question is why wouldn’t you choose physical activity?

How does it help?

Endorphins - Physical activity helps increase the production of your brain's ‘feel-good’ neurotransmitters, called endorphins. Although this is often referred to as a runner's high, anything that raises the heart rate above resting rate will work.

Moving meditation - After a fast-paced game of tennis or a forest walk, you may often find that you've forgotten the day's troubles. Physical activity enables you to focus your attention on yourself and it increase your energy level and makes you more positive; thereby, it can help you remain calm and clear in everything you do.

Mood - Regular exercise can reduce the symptoms associated with mild depression and anxiety. Exercise can also improve your sleep, as it takes away worries and stress and uses up your energy, making your body wanting to rest afterwards.