

Regular exercise has been proven to reduce the risk of chronic illnesses. It can boost self esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy levels. It can improve mental as well as physical health.

Meanwhile, sitting can be bad for you. It is thought to lower the metabolism which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar, blood pressure and to break down body fat.

Here we focus on some of the key aspects of exercise not just to promote wellbeing with our apprentice groups but to remind us all why it matters to our long term health.

DID YOU KNOW

The NHS has a wealth of free information on diet and exercise, including suggested exercises, activities, useful links and recommended height to weight charts.

Go to www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise and you will find the associated links to their information, advice and guidance.

DID YOU KNOW

As a guide the average daily calorie intake to maintain a healthy body weight is;

- 2500 kcal for a man
- 2000 kcal for a woman

DID YOU KNOW

Regular exercise helps to maintain good mental health, and recent studies also suggest it can improve the brain in other ways.

Research suggests there is a link to an improved memory function and that increased blood flow and hormones stimulate the growth of new neurons in the brain.



HOW MUCH EXERCISE IS GOOD?

Each week the NHS recommend an average adult should undertake the following;

- 2.5 hours of moderate aerobic activity such as cycling or brisk walking.

or

- 1.25 hours of vigorous aerobic activity such as sport or running.

In addition an adult should undertake strength exercises on two or more days a week that work the major muscle groups in the body (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms).

You can vary the mix of moderate or vigorous activity; one minute of vigorous activity having the same health benefit as two minutes of moderate activity.

TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR ACTIVITY

- Try using apps that measure steps or light intensity activity. Active people are healthier than inactive people.
- Walk everywhere you can. Try walking short trips or just a part of your journey. Take a walk at lunchtime.
- Complete some strength and flex workouts. See the NHS website for free podcasts and videos.
- Cycle or walk to work if you can.
- Take the stairs not the lift. Stair climbing is a safe, low impact exercise.
- Volunteer with local charities or organisations working to improve outdoor spaces. Get out and active.
- Contact your local authority or local leisure centre for access to local facilities.
- Get your friends or family involved. You are more likely to stay active if you are with others.

WAIST SIZE MATTERS

The waist is a useful measurement and indicator of whether you should try to lose weight. It is recommended you try and lose weight if your waist is;

- 37 inches (94cm) or more for men.
- 31.5 inches (80cm) or more for women

Waist size indicates the amount of fat held centrally around the major organs.

There is some evidence to suggest that a lower "waist to height" ratio is an indicator for life expectancy and an indicator of those likely to be more susceptible to conditions like diabetes, stroke or heart disease.

So maintaining your waist circumference measurement to less than half your height is a useful and simple way to be mindful of your general health. See also the recommended chart for height to weight at www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/height-weight-chart.