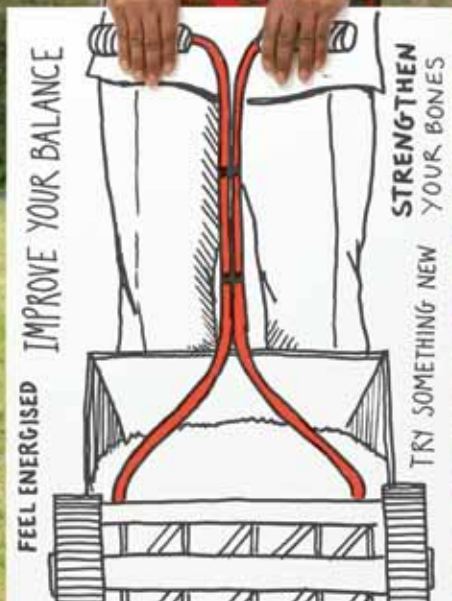


Be active for life

Over 50? Keep your heart healthy
with physical activity



Be active – a little effort makes a big difference

Whatever your age, size or physical condition, you are likely to benefit from being more active. The people who benefit the most are inactive people who start to take regular, moderate activity. You can be active without ever slipping into lycra or joining a gym.

You'll benefit as much from brisk walking, or activities like gardening and climbing stairs. The information, practical tips and questions and answers in this guide will help you understand more about physical activity and how you can be active.

As you get older, it's especially important to stay active.

We understand that it may seem difficult to fit physical activity into your daily life due to time and other constraints. We've produced this guide to help you succeed in living your life as actively as possible, for the rest of your life. You can fill in the sections as you go along. If you are under 50 or interested in walking, see our other publications on page 86.

If you have a heart condition or you are at high risk of developing heart disease – for example because you have high blood pressure – we suggest you read our booklet called *Physical activity and your heart*. See page 86 for more information and how to order the booklet.

Many health problems can be helped by regular physical activity, but if you have a health problem, check with your doctor about the amount and type of activity that is suitable for you.

This guide does not replace the advice your health professionals may give you based on their knowledge of your condition.

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Get active. Top tips to get you started

Getting started is easier than you think. Changing a few daily habits can soon add up to a more active lifestyle. **Be active as often as possible.**



Move more often

Recognise the activity that you are already doing and build on this.

Start small and progress at your own rate

Don't be over-ambitious. Make sure you set yourself targets that you can easily achieve – things that you can keep doing and can become part of your everyday routine.

Get into the habit

No matter how small, plan an activity routine for yourself. Plan a time in your day when you will do your activity. Use your diary or a calendar if it helps. If you're a morning person, why not get up that bit earlier and fit some activity in before you start your day?

Walk more each day

Walk all or part of the way to the shops or to the local leisure centre, or go out at any time to get some fresh air. You can walk socially with your friends and family, and if you have a dog you can take the dog for a walk. If you're still working, go for a lunchtime walk with your colleagues.

Climb more stairs

Look for every opportunity to use the stairs instead of the lift or escalator, or walk up the escalator. Walking up and down stairs makes your muscles and bones stronger, and prevents thinning of the bones (osteoporosis).

Active travel

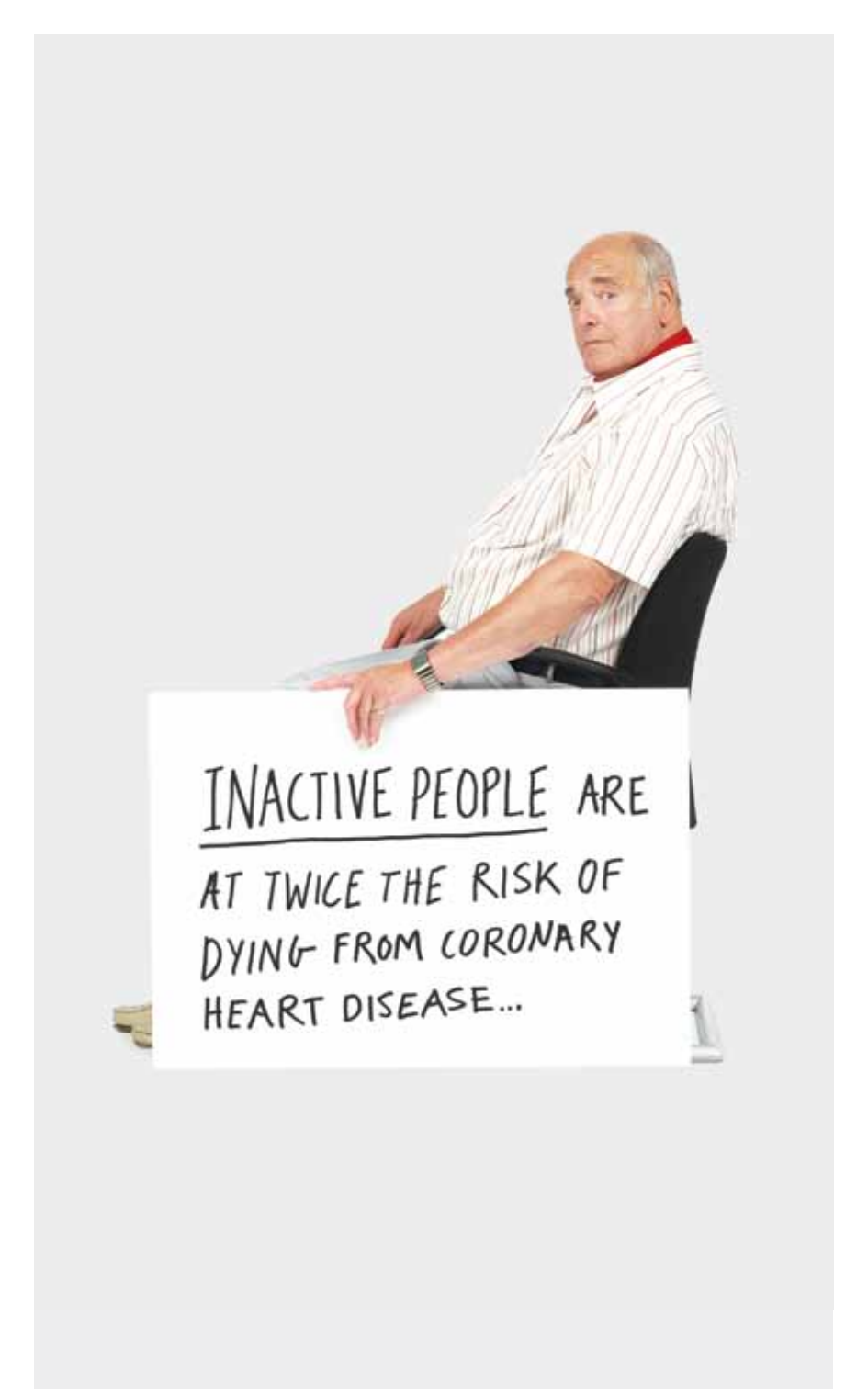
Walk or cycle part or all of the way to the shops or to meet friends, get off the bus a stop earlier, or park your car further away from the entrance to where you are going.

Avoid sitting for long periods

Break up sitting periods every 30 minutes – for example, while watching TV, reading a book, at the computer, or when you are driving.

Make an active date

Arrange to meet with a friend on a regular basis to be active together. Keeping each other company will keep you both motivated. Put some dates in your diary!

A middle-aged man with thinning hair, wearing a white and red striped short-sleeved shirt and a watch, is sitting in a black office chair. He is looking back over his right shoulder towards the camera. He is holding a large white rectangular sign in front of him with both hands. The sign has handwritten text in black ink. The background is a plain, light grey color.

INACTIVE PEOPLE ARE
AT TWICE THE RISK OF
DYING FROM CORONARY
HEART DISEASE...

Why is it worth being active?

The facts...

- Physical inactivity is a major health risk and one of the main causes of death and disability in the developed countries of the world.¹
- Coronary heart disease is the most common cause of death in the UK. Around one in five men and one in seven women die from the disease.²
- Physical inactivity is responsible for over one in five people in developed countries getting coronary heart disease.¹
- Inactive people have twice the risk of dying from coronary heart disease compared with active people.³
- Physical activity levels are low in the UK. About six out of ten men and seven out of ten women are not active enough to give themselves protection against coronary heart disease.⁴

Did you know?

Four in ten people with coronary heart disease die because of physical inactivity.⁵

The benefits of being active

The health benefits of being active are well established. Physical activity can help prevent and manage a variety of health conditions and improve the way you look and feel on a daily basis, protecting your health both now and in the future.³

The long-term and short-term health benefits of physical activity are listed below. **Tick which ones are important to you.**



Physical activity helps to prevent illness in the long term by reducing the risk of:

- coronary heart disease and stroke
- high blood pressure
- type 2 diabetes
- some cancers (such as colon cancer)
- obesity
- dementia and Alzheimer's disease

It helps to manage and control:

- coronary heart disease, including angina
- weight (and body fat)
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol levels
- type 2 diabetes
- arthritis

It has beneficial effects on the health of the bones and muscles, reducing the risk of:

- osteoporosis
- osteoarthritis
- back pain
- falls and injuries

As you get older, regular physical activity also helps you to stay in touch with friends and neighbours – for example, going to the shops or visiting family or friends.

And it also:

- maintains joint mobility and suppleness
- improves balance, posture and co-ordination
- makes it easier to carry out your everyday activities
- helps you stay independent and mobile in later life.

Being active will make a difference to the quality of your life – that means how you feel, both physically and mentally, on a daily basis.

You can expect to see many of these short-term health benefits within weeks of starting to be more active:

- more energy
- less stress and anxiety
- more relaxed
- better body shape and appearance
- that you sleep better
- that you can concentrate more easily
- increased enjoyment – activity can be great fun and something you can do with other people.



How much should I do?

To keep your heart, lungs, muscles and bones in good working order and to experience the health benefits of physical activity, you should do a total of **at least 30 minutes of at least moderate-intensity physical activity a day, on five or more days a week.**³

Moderate-intensity physical activity means working hard enough to make you breathe more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer, but not so hard that you are unable to talk and exercise at the same time, or that you become exhausted. If you are very unfit or overweight, or if you have a health problem, you may only have to walk up a slope to experience these feelings. But if you are very fit, you may be able to run quite fast before the feelings become noticeable.

If you want to lose weight or manage your weight, see pages 13–15 to find out how much activity you should do.



If 30 minutes a day sounds a lot, don't worry

You can split the 30 minutes up into two bouts of 15 minutes, or three bouts of ten minutes. For your heart to benefit from the activity you do, the activity needs to be continuous for at least ten minutes.

If you're not used to doing 30 minutes a day, start by doing five minutes at least three times a day and **build up gradually** towards the 30-minute target. See pages 29–33 for ideas on how to build activity into your daily life. Remember that any extra activity you do will make a difference to how you feel on a daily basis.



Did you know?

The people who benefit most from starting to do regular, moderate-intensity physical activity are those who are currently inactive.



If you want to manage your weight

Forty-three per cent of men and 32 per cent of women in England are now overweight, and an additional 24 per cent of men and 24 per cent of women are obese.⁶

Weight can creep on over the years. As we get older, we use less energy and we often become much less active. Being overweight – and in particular having lots of fat around your middle – greatly increases your risk of developing coronary heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes. It can also lead to problems with the bones and muscles – such as osteoarthritis and low back pain – all of which make it more difficult to remain active.

The most effective way to manage your weight is to combine regular physical activity with healthy eating habits. You're unlikely to lose weight successfully in the long term just by reducing calories. And doing more physical activity will not only help you lose weight but also has lots of other benefits for your health.



It's never too late to try to lose weight or to keep weight gain at bay. If you would like to lose weight, or maintain the weight loss you have achieved, **aim to do more than 30 minutes activity a day.** If this seems like a lot, build up the amount you do gradually and try to fit more activity into your daily routine. See pages 29–33 for ideas on how to do this.

The more physical activity you do, the more success you will have in losing weight or maintaining your current weight.

Activities that keep you moving at a constant, moderate pace are best. See examples on page 19. Make sure you go at a comfortable level and build up both the time and your pace gradually. **If you are very overweight, you should talk to your doctor before you start.**

For more information on losing weight, see our list of other booklets on page 86.

Did you know?

A person who walks 10,000 steps a day burns between 1,750 and 2,450 extra calories a week (about 250 to 350 calories a day), compared with the average person who takes between 3,000 and 5,000 steps a day. This is the energy equivalent of gaining or losing half a pound (0.25 kilos) each week. Why not treat yourself to a pedometer to see how many steps you walk in a day? See if you can add steps to your day to help you lose weight.





What sort of things should I be doing?

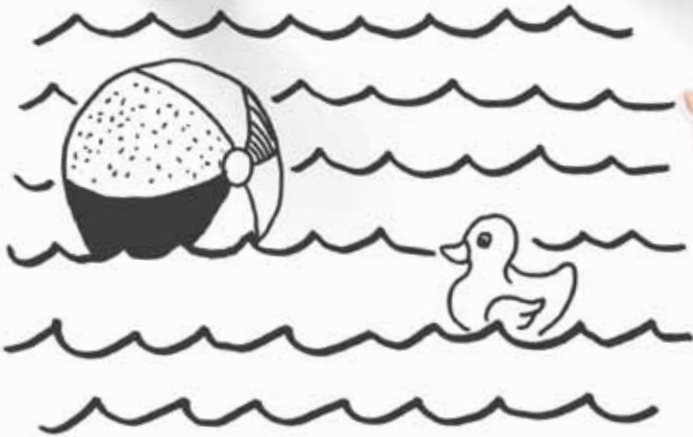
To benefit your health you need to do aerobic activities and activities for strength, flexibility and balance. We explain more about these types of activities on the following pages. **As you read along, think about the activities you already do or would like to try.** Page 27 gives an overview of different types of activities and how they benefit your health.

Did you know?

If you spend 30 minutes swimming at a moderate intensity, you will burn the same amount of calories as you would if you spent 16 minutes running.

Aerobic activities

Aerobic activity is any **repetitive, rhythmic movement** that involves large muscle groups such as the legs, shoulders and arms. Examples of aerobic activities include brisk walking, cycling or swimming.



Aerobic activity is the best type of activity to improve the health of your heart and reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

When you do aerobic activity, your body needs more oxygen and so your heart and lungs have to work harder. This will make your heart and circulation more efficient over time.

Aerobic activities also help to develop your stamina. They use up calories too, helping you to control your weight and stay in shape.

Try to do aerobic activities for at least 30 minutes at a moderate intensity on five or more days a week. For your heart to get the benefits, you need to do the activity continuously for at least ten minutes at a time.

Think about the aerobic activities you already do to improve your stamina and write them down below. Also, write down some aerobic activities that you might want to try. For examples, see page 27.

Aerobic activities you already do:

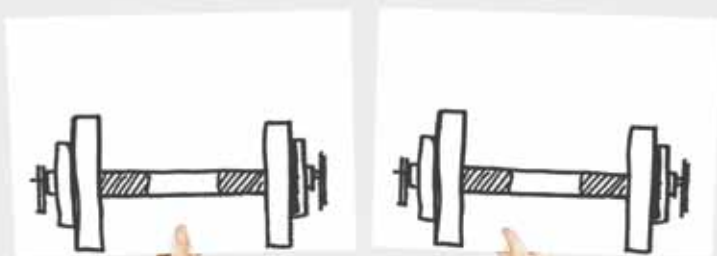
Aerobic activities you might want to try:

Walking is the nearest activity to perfect exercise.

You can walk at any time, anywhere, and it's free and easy to do. Start slowly and build up gently, increasing the pace as you walk, and gradually walking longer distances over a period of a few weeks.

Strength activities

Strength activities are activities which make your **muscles work harder in order to make them stronger**. Examples are carrying shopping, resistance training in a gym, or walking up the stairs.



Strength activities are important to maintain muscle and bone strength. As you get older, they also help you with daily tasks such as climbing the stairs, getting out of a chair easily, or opening jars. **Stronger, larger muscles:**

- burn more calories so can help you keep to a healthy weight
- will help with good posture and balance
- will help with better body shape, improving the way you look and feel.

Strength activities also prevent thinning of the bones (osteoporosis). You should aim to do activities that put pressure on the bones, such as walking down the stairs, running, jumping, skipping, or weight training in a gym. (Activities such as swimming and water aerobics don't put pressure on the bones, so they will not prevent osteoporosis.)

Try to do strength activities two or three times a week.

Think about the activities you already do to improve your strength and write them down below. Also, write down some strength activities that you might want to try. For examples, see page 27.

Strength activities you already do:

Strength activities you might want to try:

Flexibility activities

Flexibility activities are activities that help stretch your muscles in order to **maintain or improve the range of movement in a joint or in a series of joints and muscles**. Examples are gentle bending and stretching, T'ai Chi, yoga and pilates.



Flexibility exercises help you to maintain a full range of movement, and to **stay independent and move more easily** as you get older. Retaining flexibility will mean that, as you get older, you'll still be able to put on your shoes and socks, reach for something on a high shelf, get in and out of the bath, wash your hair, or turn your head easily to look behind when parking the car.

Try to do some flexibility exercises for a few minutes every day.

Think about the activities you already do to improve your flexibility and write them down below. Also, write down some flexibility activities that you might want to try. For examples, see page 27.

Flexibility activities you already do:

Flexibility activities you might want to try:

Balance activities

Balance activities are activities which **challenge your ability to maintain your balance**. Examples can be as simple as standing on one foot, to more complicated activities such as yoga, T'ai Chi and pilates.



Balance activities improve and maintain your balance, give you confidence in moving, and **help to prevent accidental falls.** Always exercise close to a wall.


Activities such as yoga, pilates and T'ai Chi not only help to improve your posture, balance, suppleness and strength; they also help to relax your mind.

Try to do some balance exercises for ten minutes every day.

Think about the activities you already do to improve your balance and write them down below. Also, write down some balance activities that you might want to try. For examples, see page 27.

Balance activities you already do:

Balance activities you might want to try:



I've never been keen on exercise for its own sake, but I love a challenge. I needed a goal to work towards, so I got together with some workmates and we signed up for the 10k Great North Run to support the BHF. We started off by mountain biking before running training. The Run itself was fantastic, but it was the cycling I really enjoyed, and we're still riding together in the hills.

I'm much fitter, and it's given me more zest for life. The important thing is to find something you enjoy doing. Just try it – you'll feel better for it!

Kevin Troughton
51, Rosendale Valley

Some activities have more than one benefit, for example:

Activity	Aerobic/ Stamina	Strength	Flexibility	Balance
Aerobic classes in a gym	✓	✓		
Badminton	✓		✓	
Brisk walking	✓	✓		
Canoeing	✓	✓	✓	
Climbing stairs	✓	✓		✓
Cycling	✓	✓		✓
Dancing	✓		✓	✓
DIY		✓	✓	✓
Football	✓	✓		
Mowing the lawn	✓		✓	
Pilates		✓	✓	✓
Resistance training		✓	✓	
Sweeping	✓		✓	
T'ai Chi		✓	✓	✓
Vacuuming	✓		✓	
Walking uphill	✓	✓		
Washing the car		✓	✓	
Water aerobics	✓	✓		✓
Yoga		✓	✓	✓



Building activity into your day

Becoming more active is easier than you think. If you think you couldn't possibly squeeze anything else into your busy day, see if you can **reduce the time you spend sitting and free up some time to be active.**



Finding ways to reduce the time you spend sitting can be your first step to being more active.

How much time do you spend sitting down during the day? Make a rough estimate in the box below. Some of the examples below are great ways to relax, but being inactive for long periods of time is not good for your health.

Inactive time spent sitting	Amount of time (in minutes)
Watching TV	
Browsing the web	
Reading	
Listening to music	
Chatting with friends	
Knitting	
Playing cards or board games	
Driving	
Sitting at a desk or work station	
Other:	
Other:	
Total	

An active day

It's easier than you think to build activity into your day. Here are some examples of how you can be more active.

In the morning:

- Get up early and go for a walk, cycle, run or swim.
- Get off the bus a few stops early and walk the rest of the way to your destination – for example, to your local shops, or to see friends.
- Visit your local leisure centre.
- Do some vacuuming or mop the floor.

At lunchtime

- Pick some dining spots 10 minutes away and do a walk at lunchtime.
- Arrange to meet a friend to go for a walk, cycle or swim.

In the afternoon

- Do some gardening – raking leaves, digging, or mowing the lawn.
- Wash the car.
- Play with your grandchildren at home in the garden, or at the park.
- Get up and move about regularly – make a drink or get some water.
- Do your active indoor chores briskly.
- Bend, stretch, move, lift, or carry whenever the opportunity arises.

In the evening

- Visit your local leisure centre: use the pool or the gym, or do an activity class.
- Dance to music or a routine on the TV, or on a DVD or video.
- Be active with family or friends before you settle down for the evening. Go for a walk, or play ball or racquet games.
- Do some stationary cycling while watching TV. Or try reading while you're on the exercise bike.
- Try an activity you have always wanted to do.
- Join an activity group or club.
- Meet with a friend and do an activity you both enjoy.
- Go dancing with friends instead of sitting in and talking. Try any kind of dancing – line dancing, ballroom dancing or disco dancing!
- Explore an area by walking, cycling or jogging.

Throughout the day

- Use the stairs instead of the lift.
- Walk as often as possible.
- Park at the furthest end of the car park.

If you're still working, there are a number of ways to be active in the workplace

- When you can, walk to talk instead of using the phone or email.
- Walk or cycle all or part of the way to work.
- Set up a lunchtime walking group.
- Take part in a lunchtime activity class, either at work or at a local leisure centre.
- Take a walking meeting to brainstorm ideas with co-workers.

At the weekend

Walking and cycling can be done starting from home, and you can go swimming at a local leisure centre. You need very little equipment and you can do all these activities either on your own or with friends. Your local park or leisure centre may also offer other activities such as badminton, tennis, bowls, football, table tennis or squash.

Dancing (line, square, ballroom, jazz or modern dance) can be wonderful for relaxing and socialising. You can dance at home, at a social event, or at a local dance studio or leisure or community centre.

Be active for a day – take a trip out to the country or seaside, or go for a long walk or cycle ride, or go on an adventure day. An active day out is a good way to relax, stay healthy, try out new skills and meet new people.

There's something out there for everyone. Find an activity you enjoy and start today. You can use the Activity diary on pages 36–37 to see how active you are, plan your activities and record your progress.



I NEED TO
GET OUT
MORE!

How active am I?

Nearly eight out of ten adults in England believe they are active enough to benefit their health, but **the truth is only about four out of ten men and three out of ten women are active enough.**⁴

Think about how much moderate-intensity activity you did each day over the last week. Try to remember what you did at different times of the day – morning, lunchtime, afternoon and evening. Fill in the Activity diary on the next page to see what you are doing now and how much counts towards your daily target for moderate-intensity physical activity. **Are you doing enough?**

Activity diary

Write down all the moderate-intensity activity you did over the last week and how much time you spent doing each activity. **Only write down any times when you spent ten minutes or more continuously doing the activity.**

At the end of the week, add up the total time you spent on moderate-intensity activity each day and then work out your total for the week. **For health benefits you should be doing a total of at least 30 minutes of at least moderate-intensity physical activity a day, on five or more days a week.**

Remember that, to improve the health of your heart, you need to do aerobic activity at a moderate-intensity, for at least ten minutes at a time.

Day	Moderate-intensity activity Activity that's hard enough to make you breathe more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer	Time (in minutes) spent doing each activity	Total time (in minutes) spent being active each day	Tick the box if you reached the 30-minute target for that day
Example	WALKED THE DOG CYCLED TO TOWN AND BACK	19 22	41	✓

Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thur			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			
Total time I spent being active, this week, in minutes:			
Number of days when I was active for 30 minutes or more per day:			

Go to pages 64–67 to see if you were active enough this week and then go to page 39.

Decision time. **Are you ready to start doing more?**

We have looked at how much activity you should be doing and the types of activity you should do. From filling in the Activity diary on pages 36–37, you will have found out if you are active enough.



So, are you ready to commit to being more active and experiencing all the benefits of a healthy lifestyle?

Answer the three questions below.

1. Write down the three benefits of regular physical activity that are most important to you. Go back to page 7 and look at the boxes you've ticked.

To me, the most important benefits of becoming more active are:

2. Go back to 'How active am I?' on pages 35–37. Did you reach the target of a total of at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on at least five days a week?

Yes No

3. Would you like to be more active, and fit more moderate-intensity activity in your daily life?

Yes No

If your answer to question 3 is Yes, go to page 32 to see how you can build activity into your daily life, and page 45 to help you get started.

If your answer to question 3 is No, go to page 40 to try to find out what's stopping you and ways to overcome these barriers.

What's stopping you?

Sometimes getting started can be the hardest part. We can all come up with an excuse for not being more active. If something is stopping you from becoming more active, **try to work out what the barriers are and think of ways of overcoming them.**



Make a list below of all the things that stop you being active.

Then, read on to see if you can find some ways to overcome these barriers on page 42. Fill in your ideas in the right-hand column below, to help you remember what you can do.

Things that stop me from being active	Ways I can overcome these barriers

Hopefully, after completing the box above and looking at pages 29–33 ‘Building activity into your day’, you will be ready to get started. If you are ready, go to ‘Get active – make an action plan’ on page 45.

If you’re still not ready to be active and would like some more tips on how to get started, call the BHF Heart HelpLine on 0300 330 3311 and speak to a heart health adviser.

Most common excuses for not being active... and some friendly advice

Do any of these excuses sound familiar to you?

I don't have the time

Make physical activity your priority and plan to make time for some activity every day, even if it's just for a few minutes. **Find a certain time each day to do some activity.** For example, stretch whenever you're waiting for the kettle to boil or during a TV break, walk more briskly than usual, or always use the stairs instead of a lift or escalator.

I'm too tired

You may be surprised that, **once you start being more active, you'll have more energy**, and feel less tired and more relaxed. If you find that you're very tired and unable to perform simple exercises, check with your GP that there's no underlying physical reason for this.

I'm getting too old.

You're never too old to make a start and you will still feel the benefits, perhaps sooner than you think! **Many clubs and groups are organised for people of all ages.**

I HAVE NO-ONE TO DO IT WITH

Invite a friend, relative or neighbour or, if you're still working, ask some work colleagues to go for a lunchtime walk with you. **If you join a class or group, you will meet new people and make new friends.** The BHF has a range of fantastic fundraising events all over the UK which will help you to get active (see bhf.org.uk/events). Most attract hundreds of participants, so you don't have to do it alone.

I've never been the sporty type

You don't need to be sporty to live an active life. There are many other activities – like walking, gardening, dancing, or doing an exercise to music class. **Why not accept a challenge and try something new?**

my health isn't good enough

Physical activity can help with most health conditions. Ask your doctor for advice on what sort of activity would help you. If you have a heart condition or you are at high risk of developing heart disease see our booklet *Physical activity and your heart*.

It's too expensive

Walking is free and so are many other lifestyle activities – such as walking up and down the stairs several times a day, or bending and stretching at home. Find out about local groups and opportunities, as some offer discount rates for particular groups or ages of people.

There's nothing to do where I live!

If that's the case, be more active around your home. And **walk to and from local places whenever you can** – for example, when you go to the shops, or to a friend's house.

I might injure myself

Whenever you do any activity, **start slowly and work at your own pace**. There's no need to overdo it. If you take part in moderate-intensity activities like walking or swimming, it's unlikely that you'll get injured. Please see page 53 on how to stay safe.


I'm too embarrassed ;)

You don't have to go to a gym dressed in sportswear to get active. You could do some brisk walking wearing your normal clothes. You might find it easier if you start by doing some physical activity with a friend.

I'M NOT FIT ENOUGH, AND I'M OVERWEIGHT

You have everything to gain and only weight to lose. Combining healthy eating with activity is a far more effective way to lose weight than by diet alone. **However unfit you feel, it's never too late to start being more active.** Take it easy, build up gradually and enjoy a new you – fitter and stronger and with much more energy. See page 13 for more information on managing your weight.

No more excuses. There are many different ways and opportunities for you to be active. Think ahead and plan your activity time.



My family have always enjoyed being out in the fresh air. I walk with my group twice a week and every fortnight we do anything up to ten miles in the hills.

Walking keeps me fit and I meet new people, so it's social as well as exercise. I also walk the two miles into Inverness, unless the weather's really bad.

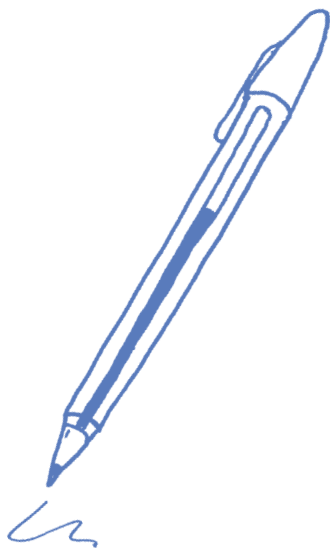
Being active as you get older is so important. It keeps your muscles and bones in good shape as well as your heart and makes you feel good. And mentally it gives you a boost, even in winter.



Rachel Goddard
63, Inverness

Get active – make an action plan

Making a start is the most important step you can take. **To help you decide what activities you will do to be more active,** and to set realistic goals to aim towards, use these pages to make a personal action plan.



Action plan

1. Choose your activities.

For your heart health, think about the aerobic activities you already do and any other aerobic activities you would like to do (see page 19).

The aerobic activities I enjoy and would like to do more of in my daily life:

Now think about what other activities you will do to become more active. Go back to An active day on page 32 and see which boxes you ticked. Make a list of the things you'd like to start doing to become more active in your everyday life.

Things I'd like to start doing to become more active in my everyday life:

2. Set a date to make a start.

You might want to start straight away. Or you could plan to start in a few days or next week. Write your start date below, and put this date in your diary.

I will start on: _____

3. What else do you need to do before you start?

Think of things that will make it easier for you to get started.

For example:

- Talk to a partner or friend about what you would like to do. It might be easier if you are active together and support each other.
- Talk to friends to find out what they do to stay active.
- Check with your doctor or a health professional if you have any concerns about how much or what type of activity you can do.
- Find out where you can be active locally – for example, your local swimming pool, health and fitness suite, or open spaces. Visit your local library or see page 84 to find out about local places where you can be active.
- Find out what facilities and classes are on offer at your local leisure centre.
- Find a local club or group you are interested in joining – for example, a walking group. See page 84 for where to find local walking groups and a list of sports and clubs. Remember that many clubs have recreational teams for all ages.

Things I need to do before I start:

Doing activity with your family, friends or people you work with can help you get started and make it more fun.

4. Goal setting

Setting a personal goal is another important key to success. So, ask yourself "What do I want to achieve?" Set yourself a long-term goal and some short-term goals, and write them below. Here are some points to think about when you are deciding on your goals.

Make your goals specific.

Instead of saying "I want to become more active," set yourself a specific goal – for example "I will walk for 15 minutes at lunchtime and another 15 minutes in the evening."

Be realistic.

If you're not very active at the moment, don't set yourself a goal of walking for an hour a day on five days a week, as that's a very big change. Instead, set yourself a realistic goal that you can achieve – for example, "I will walk for 10 minutes, twice a day, for the next two weeks." Once you've achieved that goal you can set yourself a new goal.

Think about what simple, achievable but important changes you could make.

For example – walking some or all of the way to work, the pub, the shops or a friend's house instead of taking the bus or driving, or always using the stairs instead of the lift.

Are there any specific opportunities that you could take advantage of?

For example – walking to the newsagent's every day, or taking your grandchildren to the park. Or how about deciding to join a walking group or learning to swim?

Some examples...

Here are some ideas for long-term and short-term goals, to get you started and help you with setting your own. Once you have set your long-term goals, you can set short-term goals to motivate yourself and help you achieve them.

Long-term goals

- I will go for a walk at lunchtime on at least three days a week.
- I will cycle to work on at least four days a week.
- I will do a 5-kilometre run on ____ / ____ / ____ (set a date).
- I will learn to swim.

My personal long-term goals are to:

Short-term goals

- I am going to spend five minutes every day, after I get up, doing some stretching.
- I will always use the stairs instead of the lift or escalator.
- I will always wash and wax the car myself instead of taking it to the car wash.
- I am going to find a friend to be active with and will make a date to be active within the next two weeks.

My personal short-term goals are to:

Dancing is really important to me. It's part of my life and culture, something I was born with and have loved since I was a child. It charges my batteries, keeps me fit and relieves my stress.

I do traditional Gujarati and Punjabi dancing. The groups are great – you meet people and it's like a club. It's not difficult.

You can start at any age, but I think it's even more important to keep active by doing something you enjoy as you get older. And there's another bonus – people are amazed when I tell them I'm 54. They think I'm in my 40s!

Kala Shah Paresht
54, London

5. Rewarding yourself

Once you have set your own goals, think of something to reward yourself with after you've achieved your goal(s). Write your ideas below.

The rewards I'm going to give myself after I've reached my goals:

Once you've filled in your personal Action plan, use the weekly Activity diary on page 54 to plan your activity and record your progress.

STOP!



Making it safe and enjoyable

You will want to make sure that your first steps into activity are safe and enjoyable. **Here's how you can achieve this.**

- Don't take part in physical activity if you have a high temperature or feel unwell.
- Build up your activity level gradually – both the amount of time you spend doing the activity and the intensity. Start off slowly and progress gradually at your own pace. There's no rush.
- Wear comfortable clothes, and shoes that give you good support.
- When you're doing any activity, start slowly for the first few minutes and build up gradually. At the end, spend some time slowing down gradually.
- Remember to drink water before, during and after your activity. Don't wait until you're thirsty.
- Stop exercising if you feel pain, discomfort or dizziness, or if you feel unwell or very tired, and get advice from your doctor.
- Do some stretching exercises after your activity to help avoid muscle stiffness the next day.
- Avoid walking alone at night, and keep to well-populated and well-lit areas.
- If you're cycling, wear a helmet and reflective clothing. Use lights if you're cycling at night.
- If you prefer to exercise at home, you might want to try using an exercise DVD or video. To get the most out of it, first learn from an experienced teacher at your local leisure centre. Try classes in body conditioning, aerobics or circuit training. This way you will learn the proper techniques and gain confidence to do the exercises at home.

If you have any condition or are taking medicine, check with your doctor before doing any new activity. Or, if you have any concerns about your health or fitness, talk to your GP.

Activity diary

Week 1

Use this Activity diary to plan the activity you will build into your daily life and the moderate-intensity activity you plan to do, and to record how much activity you do each week. **Remember your short-term goals on page 49.**

What I will do this week to build more activity into my daily life:

At the end of the week, put a tick in the box if you did the activity.

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use the box below to plan and record the amount of moderate-intensity activity you do this week.

You should be building up to a total of at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a day, on five or more days of the week. Remember that, to benefit the health of your heart, you need to do aerobic activity in bouts of at least ten minutes at a time.

Day	Moderate-intensity activity	Time (in minutes) spent doing each activity	Total time (in minutes) spent being active, each day	Tick the box if you reached the 30-minute target for that day
	Activity that's hard enough to make you breathe more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer			

Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thur				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				
Total time I spent being active, this week, in minutes:				
Number of days when I was active for 30 minutes or more per day:				

Go to pages 64–67 to see how well you have done and set yourself new goals for next week on page 56.

Activity diary

Week 2

What I will do this week to build more activity into my daily life:

At the end of the week, put a tick in the box if you did the activity.

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use the box below to plan and record the amount of moderate-intensity activity you do this week.

Day	Moderate-intensity activity Activity that's hard enough to make you breathe more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer	Time (in minutes) spent doing each activity	Total time (in minutes) spent being active, each day	Tick the box if you reached the 30-minute target for that day
------------	---	---	--	--

Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thur				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				
Total time I spent being active, this week, in minutes:				
Number of days when I was active for 30 minutes or more per day:				

Go to pages 64–67 to see how well you have done and set yourself new goals for next week on page 58.

Activity diary

Week 3

What I will do this week to build more activity into my daily life:

At the end of the week, put a tick in the box if you did the activity.

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
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_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use the box below to plan and record the amount of moderate-intensity activity you do this week.

Day	Moderate-intensity activity Activity that's hard enough to make you breathe more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer	Time (in minutes) spent doing each activity	Total time (in minutes) spent being active, each day	Tick the box if you reached the 30-minute target for that day
------------	---	---	--	--

Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thur				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				
Total time I spent being active, this week, in minutes:				
Number of days when I was active for 30 minutes or more per day:				

Go to pages 64–67 to see how well you have done and set yourself new goals for next week on page 60.

Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thur				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				
Total time I spent being active, this week, in minutes:				
Number of days when I was active for 30 minutes or more per day:				

Go to pages 64–67 to see how well you have done. Look at the progress you have made over the last four weeks. Are you building towards your long term goals on page 49? Set yourself new goals for next week on page 76.

Because both my parents had hip replacements, I was worried about the future, and as my partner Sheg (59) suffered from a bad back, we knew we had to get more active.

Luckily, one of our neighbours is a yoga teacher and about three years ago she got us into it gently – first with short sessions and then building up to an hour and a half every fortnight. It's really helped. I cycle and walk more as well and I'm much more flexible now.

Being active as you get older is really important – because the less you do, the less you can do.

Jane Leggett
58, London

How am I doing so far?

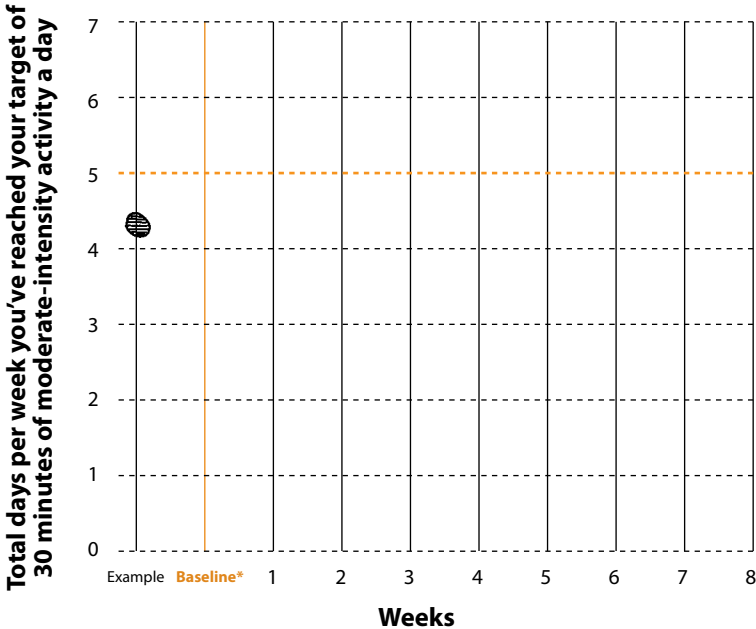
After a few weeks, you may have had **some successes as well as some difficulties**. It's important to work out to what extent you've reached your goals and why.



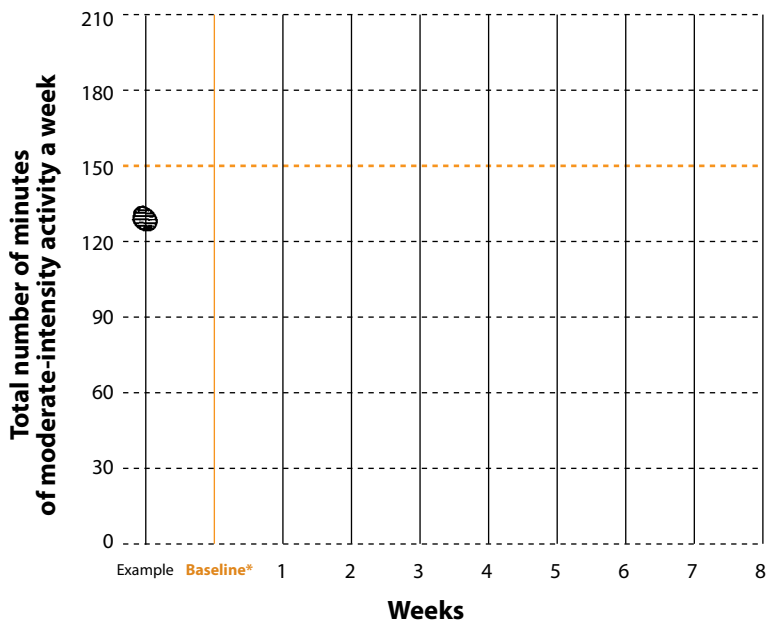
Use the charts below to record your total time spent (in minutes) being active per week, the number of days when you were active for at least 30 minutes a day, and your total minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week. Compare the amount of activity you do each week and see if you are making progress.

In the charts below we have shown an example for someone who was active for 130 minutes and who reached the 30 minutes target on four days in the week.

Put a mark against the total days per week you've reached your target of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a day. Do the same for each week you've been doing activities.



Put a mark against the total number of minutes of moderate-intensity activity you've done a week. Do the same for each week you've been doing your activities.



Now you need to combine these figures in the chart on page 66, to see how well you are doing each week.

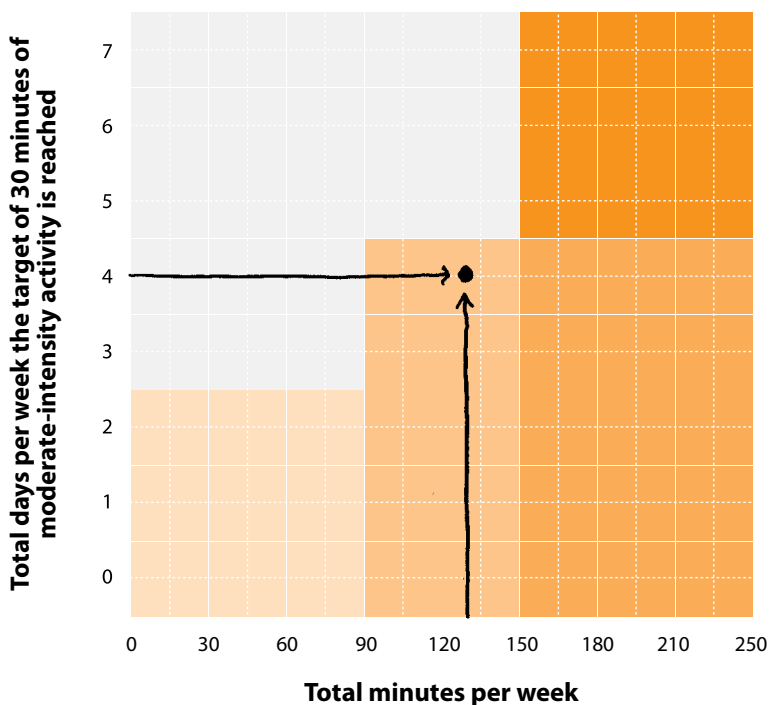
*See page 37 for numbers in your baseline week.

How well did you do last week?

Use the chart below to see how well you do each week. Take a straight line across from the number of days last week on which you reached the target of at least 30 minutes activity.

Then take a line up from the total number of minutes of activity you did last week. Put a mark where the two lines meet. **Which colour box are you in?** To find out how you're doing, check your colour on the page below.

The example shown here is for someone who reached the 30 minutes target on four days last week, and who did a total of 130 minutes of activity during the week.



How well are you doing?

You are very active.

You've reached your 150 minutes target*. Great! You're really working hard to improve your health. Don't stop now. Try to be active every day and build on the amount of activity you are already doing. Keep setting new goals, have fun and stay healthy. See our tips to keep going on pages 73–75.

You are nearly there.

You've nearly reached the 150 minutes target*. But while you managed 150 minutes of activity this week, you didn't manage to spread the minutes out, doing at least 30 minutes on at least five days a week. Regular moderate-intensity activity is better than occasional very long bouts of activity. Try to divide your time over different days. Think of ways you can build on what you are already doing, to reach the 30-minute target on at least five days a week.

You're taking steps in the right direction.

You're almost hitting your 150 minutes target*. You're nearly achieving 150 minutes of activity a week, and nearly exercising five days a week. Set yourself a higher target per day to aim for next week. See pages 29–33 for more ideas on how you can build activity into your day, and pages 69–71 to help you set a new activity goal for next week.

You're not active enough.

Go to page 7 to see what the main benefits of physical activity are for you. Try to find out what's stopping you on pages 40–43 and think of ways to overcome these barriers. For more ideas on how you can build activity into your day, see pages 29–33. To help you set a new activity goal for next week, see pages 69–75. Set yourself a target of adding at least 30 minutes of activity next week.

See pages 69–75 if you haven't achieved your goals.

*** The '150 minutes target' is made up of 30 minutes activity a day on at least five days a week.**

I miss our
regular Wednesday
night workouts



If you haven't achieved your personal goals

Sometimes we don't succeed with our activity plans. Something may crop up unexpectedly, or the weather may be too bad to go out and enjoy walking. If you find that you lose interest and become bored, or find that the activity you are doing is too difficult or not rewarding enough, **this may be the time to re-visit your Action plan** on pages 46–51 and make a fresh start, looking for new ways of getting started again.



Here are some common examples of things that can get in the way:

Common disruptions	How to get back
After a holiday or illness	Take it easy when you begin again. Start with small amounts of activity and gradually build up how much you do.
Made a start but not active every day.	Find ways to incorporate activity into your daily routine. See pages 29–33.
It all seems like too much effort.	Are you trying to do too much? Set some new short-term goals and reward yourself when you achieve them.
Family and home responsibilities are getting in the way.	Plan how to deal with your other commitments, but also plan to do some different activities that you can fit around them.
You find it's no fun doing things by yourself.	Invite a friend to join you so you can support each other. Or join a group or club.
Long spells of bad weather make outdoor activities unpleasant.	Switch to indoor activities at home or at an indoor leisure centre until the weather gets better.

If you have not achieved your goals, ask yourself why, and look at what you can do to get back on track. Make sure the goals you set yourself are realistic, and start planning your next week's activity. Just set a day and time to re-start and get back into the activity habit.

“

I was overweight and depressed after my parents died within six months of each other, but I realised I needed to do something to change my life before I turned 50.

Then by coincidence a letter arrived from the BHF inviting me to take part in a sponsored trek in Brazil. I'd never walked before, and it was an amazing experience.

I've joined the Ramblers, made lots of new friends, lost weight, and I'm off to Petra for my fourth BHF trek soon. My quality of life is great now and I feel – and look – much better too – and so can you!

”

Julie Gordon, 53

Stay active – top tips to keep you going

Making a start is a big step but staying active is an even bigger challenge and is very important. Use the weekly Activity diaries in this booklet to help you plan ahead and set yourself new goals. Keep a log of your progress and reflect back on what you have achieved and how far you have come since you started. **Here are our top tips to keep you going...**



**TOP
TIPS**

Choose activities you enjoy

We're all more motivated if we're doing something we enjoy doing.

Be creative and vary your activities

If you're bored, think of changing the time and place where you do your activity, or try a new activity.

Use reminders

Put a note to yourself, or your Action plan, where you will see it – by the front door, on the fridge or by the kettle – to remind you to do some activity.

Be social

Involve a friend, neighbour, relative or 'activity buddy' in your activity routine. You can support each other and you will have company while you're doing your activity too.

Be ready to go

Put your walking shoes near the door. If you sometimes go swimming or to the gym, keep your bag packed and ready to go.

Choose a role model

Do you have friends who are already regularly active? Talk to them and use them as a role model and to support you.

Remember the positives

If you're struggling for motivation, think of how physical activity makes you feel – fitter, energised, relaxed, self-confident, toned and happy.

Don't give up

If you miss a day – just start again tomorrow. Your health is worth working for.

Activity diary

Week 5

What I will do this week to build more activity into my daily life:

At the end of the week, put a tick in the box if you did the activity.

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
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_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use the box below to plan and record the amount of moderate-intensity activity you do this week.

Day	Moderate-intensity activity Activity that's hard enough to make you breathe more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer	Time (in minutes) spent doing each activity	Total time (in minutes) spent being active, each day	Tick the box if you reached the 30-minute target for that day
------------	---	---	--	--

Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thur				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				
Total time I spent being active, this week, in minutes:				
Number of days when I was active for 30 minutes or more per day:				

Go to pages 64–67 to see how well you have done and set yourself new goals for next week on page 78.

Activity diary

Week 6

What I will do this week to build more activity into my daily life:

At the end of the week, put a tick in the box if you did the activity.

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Use the box below to plan and record the amount of moderate-intensity activity you do this week.

Day	Moderate-intensity activity Activity that's hard enough to make you breathe more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer	Time (in minutes) spent doing each activity	Total time (in minutes) spent being active, each day	Tick the box if you reached the 30-minute target for that day
------------	---	---	--	--

Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thur				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				
Total time I spent being active, this week, in minutes:				
Number of days when I was active for 30 minutes or more per day:				

Go to pages 64–67 to see how well you have done and set yourself new goals for next week on page 80.

Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thur				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				
Total time I spent being active, this week, in minutes:				
Number of days when I was active for 30 minutes or more per day:				

Go to pages 64–67 to see how well you have done and set yourself new goals for next week on page 82.

Activity diary

Week 8

What I will do this week to build more activity into my daily life:

At the end of the week, put a tick in the box if you did the activity.

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
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_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
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_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use the box below to plan and record the amount of moderate-intensity activity you do this week.

Day	Moderate-intensity activity Activity that's hard enough to make you breathe more heavily than normal and become slightly warmer	Time (in minutes) spent doing each activity	Total time (in minutes) spent being active, each day	Tick the box if you reached the 30-minute target for that day

Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thur				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				
Total time I spent being active, this week, in minutes:				
Number of days when I was active for 30 minutes or more per day:				

Go to pages 64–67 to see how well you’ve done. Look at the progress you have made over the last eight weeks and set yourself new goals for the future.

Useful contacts

Walking

Let's Walk Cymru

(Dewch I Gerdded Cymru)

Phone: 02920 338357

www.lets-walk-cymru.org.uk

Paths to Health (Scotland)

Phone: 01259 218855

www.pathstohealth.org.uk

Ramblers

Phone: 020 7339 8500

www.ramblers.org.uk

Walk Northern Ireland

Phone: 028 9030 393

www.walkni.com

Walking for Health

Phone: 0300 060 2287

www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk

Cycling

Cycling England

www.cyclingengland.co.uk

Cycling Scotland

Phone: 0141 229 5350

www.cyclingscotland.org

Sustrans

Phone: 0845 113 00 65

www.sustrans.org.uk

Swimming

British Swimming

Phone: 0871 200 0928

www.britishswimming.org

Go to 'Go Swim' link on this website.

Scottish Swimming

Phone: 01786 466520

www.scottishswimming.com

Swim Wales (Nofio Cymru)

Phone: 01792 513636

www.welshasa.co.uk

Other activities

BTCV Green Gym

Phone: 01302 388 883

www.btcv.org/greengym

For information on outdoor conservation activities.

Physical activity for older people

Age Concern and Help the Aged (Age UK from Spring 2010)

Phone: 020 7278 1114 or

020 8765 7200

www.ageconcern.org.uk

www.helptheaged.org.uk

Help the Aged has produced a book on exercise (Strength and balance exercises for healthy ageing), and two exercise DVDs/videos (Step to the Future and Be Strong, Be Steady), for people aged over 65. To order them, call Help the Aged on 0800 169 1609.

To find facilities near where you live

Active Places

www.activeplaces.com
A Sport England website.

Sports Council for Wales (Cyngor Chwaraeon Cymru)

Phone: 0845 045 0904
www.sports-council-wales.org.uk
Go to 'in your area'

Sport Northern Ireland

Phone: 028 90 381222
www.activeplacesni.net

DirectGov

www.direct.gov.uk
To find a sports club near where you live, look up your local authority website and search for 'sports clubs'.

For a list of national governing bodies of sport and sport clubs

Sport England

www.sportengland.org

Sport Scotland

www.sportscotland.org.uk

Sports Council for Wales

www.sports-council-wales.org.uk

Sport Northern Ireland

www.sportni.net

For people with mobility problems or a disability

British Wheelchair Sports

Phone: 01296 395 995
www.wheelpower.org.uk

Disability Sport England

Phone: 0161 953 2499
www.disabilitysport.org.uk

Disability Sport Wales (Sports Council for Wales)

Phone: 0845 846 0021
www.disabilitysportwales.org

Extend

Phone: 01582 832760
www.extend.org.uk
For local exercise classes for those aged over 60 and for less able people of all ages.

Inclusive Fitness Initiative

Phone: 0114 2572060
www.inclusivefitness.org
For details of centres, with special equipment and specially trained staff, offering fitness programmes for disabled and less mobile people.

Thrive

Phone: 0118 988 5688
www.thrive.org.uk
A charity which helps people with disabilities to take part in, benefit from and enjoy gardening.

How the British Heart Foundation can help you

We are the nation's heart charity, dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change, and providing vital information.

You might find some of the following resources helpful:

Booklets

Our heart health catalogue

For you, for family and friends, for health professionals

Put your heart into walking

It's easy, it's free, it's great for your heart

Get active, stay active

Enjoy being active and keep your heart healthy
(Aimed at people under 50)

Physical activity and your heart

For people who have a heart condition or are at risk of developing heart disease

Take control of your weight

Safe ways to lose weight for heart health

Eating well

Keeping food fun and good for your heart

Cut down on salt

It's easy to do and good for your heart

Stop smoking

How to quit for a healthy heart

Coping with stress

How to manage stress and help your heart

DVD

Risking it

This DVD follows five ordinary people, all of whom have one or more risk factors for coronary heart disease. They have decided to start taking responsibility for their health and take positive action.

For information on other BHF booklets and DVDs ask for a copy of *Our heart health catalogue*.

How to order our resources

To order any of our booklets or DVDs:

- call the BHF Orderline on **0870 600 6566**
- email **orderline@bhf.org.uk**
- visit **bhf.org.uk/publications**

You can also download many of our publications from our website.

Our booklets are free of charge, but we would welcome a donation so we can continue our vital work. (Turn the page to see how you can make a donation.)

Heart Matters

Heart Matters is our **free**, personalised service to help you live with a healthy heart. Join Heart Matters today to access benefits including *heart matters* magazine, a HelpLine and an online members' area with recipes, articles and lifestyle tools. Register online at **bhf.org.uk/heartmatters** or call **0300 330 3300** (a local rate number).



We need your help... to continue our life-saving work

As a charity we rely on the generosity of people like you to fund our vital work. Thousands of people with heart disease turn to us for help every year and even more will need us in the future. **We want to be there for them.**

Please donate today and together we can beat heart disease for good.

If you would like to make a donation:

- please call our donation hotline on **0300 330 3322**
- contact us through our website at **bhf.org.uk/donate**
- or fill in the form on the next page and post it to us at the address on the back cover.

Other ways you can help

There are many other ways you can play a crucial role in our efforts to beat heart disease:

- Become a volunteer and help run our shops, events or services for local communities. To find out more, call **0845 130 8663** or visit **bhf.org.uk/volunteer**
- Have fun on a sponsored run, bike ride or walk. For more on this, call **0844 477 1181** or visit **bhf.org.uk/events**
- Join our *Heartstart* initiative and learn to save lives with the skills of emergency life support. Over 2.3 million people already have. For more information contact **heartstart@bhf.org.uk**
- Donate goods to your local BHF shop. To find out where your nearest BHF shop is, call **0844 412 5000**.
- Give in celebration by offering your party guests the chance to donate to us instead of buying gifts, for example for your wedding anniversary or birthday. Visit **bhf.org.uk/celebrate** for more information.

Thank you.





Your support will help us prevent early deaths

Here is my gift to help more people recover from

heart problems £10 £15 £20 Other £

Please make your cheque / postal order/ CAF voucher payable to the British Heart Foundation.

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other) First name Surname

Address

Postcode

Email

We would like to keep in touch with you, to let you know your support has made a difference.

By supplying your email address you agree that the BHF may use this to contact you about our work.

OR please debit the above sum from my:

AMEX CAF Card MasterCard Visa / Delta Maestro

Card number (Maestro only)

Valid from / Expiry date / Issue no

(Maestro only)

Signature Date / /

Please tick here if you do not wish the British Heart Foundation to contact you. (MP0059)

From time to time we allow other similar organisations to write to our supporters.
If you do not wish to be contacted by them, please tick here. (MP0060)

The British Heart Foundation is the nation's heart charity, registered in England and Wales (225971) and in Scotland (SC039426).

giftaid it

Make your gift worth almost a third more – at no extra cost to you!

Are you a UK taxpayer?

If you are a UK taxpayer please **tick the first box** so we can claim back up to **28p** for every **£1** you give **at no extra cost to you.**

GA1 **Yes**, I am a UK taxpayer and would like the BHF to reclaim the tax on any of the donations I have made in the last six years and any future donations I may make.*

Date

GA2 **No**, I am not a UK taxpayer.

* To qualify for Gift Aid, you must pay an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the BHF will reclaim on your donations in the appropriate tax year. Your donation must be of your own money and cannot be a collection.

Please send this form to:

British Heart Foundation

Greater London House
180 Hampstead Road
London NW1 7AW

Thank you.



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Have your say

We would welcome your comments to help us produce the best information for you. Why not let us know what you think? Contact us through our website at **bhf.org.uk/contact**. Or, write to us at the address on the back cover.

Kids and Schools

Do you want the kids in your family to be more active and eat healthier?

Help them make some changes now by encouraging them to visit the following websites:

cbhf.net

a website for 7-11 year olds

yheart.net and **yoobot.co.uk**

websites for 12-19 year olds

Do any of the teenagers in your family have a heart condition?

Visit **yheart.net/meet**

You can also order resources from our Kids' and schools' catalogue: visit **bhf.org.uk/publications**, call **0870 600 6566**, or email **orderline@bhf.org.uk**



HEART HELPLINE

For information and support on anything heart-related



0300 330 3311

local rate number



bhf.org.uk

Phone lines open 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday



British Heart Foundation

Greater London House
180 Hampstead Road
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Website: bhf.org.uk

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