



## Mental Health: The Impact of Physical Activity

Taking part in regular physical activity provides a range of benefits to your physical and mental health and can also give you the opportunity to spend time with friends. It is well known that regular exercise can help combat depression and anxiety and help to reduce stress.

*You*  
**MATTER**



## The Influence of Physical Activity on Mental Wellbeing

Engaging in physical activity releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good, boosting your self-esteem and helping you concentrate as well as sleeping and feeling better. Being physically active doesn't have to mean taking out an expensive gym membership, running marathons or even engaging in the 'traditional' sports. Finding an activity you can enjoy can give you a goal to aim for and a real sense of purpose and achievement. It offers a break from daily life and is a great way to meet people and gain confidence.

**GET**  
*excited*  
**ABOUT**  
**GETTING**  
**HEALTHY**

Engaging in physical activity can also have the following benefits:

- Less tension, stress and mental fatigue
- A natural energy boost
- A sense of achievement
- More focus and motivation
- Feeling less angry or frustrated
- A healthy appetite
- Having fun

**Get moving!** 

Young People aged 11-18 years should be aiming for at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity a day across the week. Moderate intensity activities will raise your heart rate, make you breathe faster and feel considerably warmer.

It is important to highlight that any activity is better than none, whether that is getting out on a short walk, cycling to school or playing a team sport; engaging in any physical activity is positive. If you are starting out on a journey to engage in more physical activity, making a start is the first step, but there are some useful tips to ensure you are exercising in a healthy way:



- Start gently, especially if you have not done exercise before or for a long time. If you have worries over your physical health, check with your GP.
- Don't overdo it, too much exercise or exercising too intensely will make you feel worse. Even top athletes have to make sure they don't overstrain themselves.

## Activity Finder

[www.activecumbria.org/behealthy/beactive/physical-activity-search/](http://www.activecumbria.org/behealthy/beactive/physical-activity-search/)

Find an activity near you on our Activity Finder to get involved!



- Do not ignore pain and seek medical advice if you are concerned.
- Make sure you are eating a healthy diet and are getting enough to eat and drink if you are exercising a lot.
- Avoid exercising too late in the day because it can make it hard to switch off and go to sleep.
- Finally, enjoy it. If you find it's making you anxious or unhappy, then speak to someone.



IT'S OK  
not to be  
OKAY

Better Health  
Let's do this

## Mind

However you're feeling at the moment, there are lots of things you can do to look after your mental health and wellbeing. MIND have put together these tips and guides to support young people aged 11-18 years.

Mind



## Better Health

Every Mind Matters will get you started with a free NHS-approved Mind Plan, available on the website. By answering five quick questions you'll get a personalised action plan with practical tips to help you deal with stress and anxiety, boost your mood, sleep better and feel more in control.

Better Health



## Useful Tips

- Avoid being inactive for long periods of time.
- If you are watching TV or playing video games, break it up with physical activity.
- Instead of taking the bus or driving places, try an alternative method; walking, riding a bike or scooting instead. Alternatively, if you are getting a lift somewhere, can you be dropped off slightly further away, so you have to walk part of the way.



## Year 7

New to secondary school, joining sports teams can be a great way to meet new people, socialise and form new physical activity habits.



## Year 10

Physical activity and exercise can help improve alertness and concentration which can be extremely beneficial when revising for exams. Break it up into small chunks and get out for a walk in between.



## Year 12

As your routine and responsibilities begin to change, ensure that you prioritise exercise and physical activity, make time for you.

ME TIME



## Interactive Physical Activity Opportunities

### Street Tag

Street Tag is a free mobile app that turns the world around you into a virtual playground. Points are gained by actively travelling to and from places, in addition to scanning virtual tags that have been scattered throughout the community. Tags can be found on the route to school, in local parks, at local events and more or less anywhere and everywhere making it really easy to join in the fun! Encourage your School to sign-up on our website.



Active Cumbria  
Street Tag



Street Tag



**BETTER**  
the feel good place

Better at Home



Better at Home

Online exercises for all ages and abilities.



The Body  
Coach TV



The Body Coach TV

Home workouts to get you stronger, healthier and happier.





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*Be part of it!*

**[www.activecumbria.org](http://www.activecumbria.org)**

We would like to thank **Every Life Matters** for their assistance in producing this booklet. You can find additional advice and support for looking after your wellbeing and mental health in the Every Life Matters booklet – a guide to looking after yourself and others.

**Every  
life  
matters** ●●●

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