

# Employee Well-being Healthy Lifestyles/Healthy Living



There is a lot of uncertainty around the COVID-19 outbreak, especially as things are changing and developing at a fast pace.

Understandably, this causes a lot of worry and anxiety and whether we are going into work, working from home, working whilst looking after children/parents etc., it is important to look after our well-being including both physical and mental well-being.

It is normal to feel worried, stressed and anxious in these times, but giving focus to our well-being can keep us healthy and better equipped to cope and deal with the situation.

A healthy lifestyle can have many benefits in terms of your physical and mental well-being and in this module, we will look at the benefits of physical activity and a healthy balanced diet as well as examining ways of maintain a healthy weight

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# Overview

## The 5 ways to Well-being



Five simple things you can do as part of your daily life

### Get active



A look at exercise for health, the benefits of keeping active and how exercise can be slotted into a busy schedule.

### Eat Well



The food groups that make up a balanced diet, tips for eating well and the health benefits of good diet.

### Sleep well



8 tips for a better night's sleep

## Weight Management



Looks at weight issues in modern society, identifying what a health weight is and how to maintain it.

## Resources



In this section we have provided sources of further information

# The 5 ways to Well-being

Simple and proven actions that can be introduced to help find balance, build resilience and boost mental health and well-being.



## Connect



There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by other people is a fundamental human need and one most that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting well-being and for acting as a bugger against mental ill health for people of all ages.

- Talk to someone instead of sending an email
- Skype/FaceTime an elderly relative instead of calling by phone
- Ask how someone's week was and really listen when they tell you
- Put **5 minutes** aside to find out how someone really is

## Be Active



Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being.

But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good – slower paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefits of encouraging social interactions as well as providing some level of exercise

- Go for a walk, run or cycle
- Complete a Joe Wicks PE session
- Play a game in the garden with your family
- Do some 'easy exercise' like stretching or try yoga
- Walk or dance in the garden

## Take Notice



Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly, enhances your well-being and saving 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations.

- Get a plant for your bedroom
- Have a 'clear the clutter' day
- Take notice of how your family or friends are feeling or acting
- Visit a new place on your daily walk
- Be aware of the world around you and how you are feeling

## Keep Learning



Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression.

The practice of setting goals which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of well-being.

- Read the news or a book
- Set up a book club
- Do a crossword or Sudoku
- Research something you've always wondered about
- Learn a new word
- Learn a new language or to play an instrument
- Learn to cook a new meal

## Give



**Your time,  
your words,  
your presence**

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of well-being research.

Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely rate themselves as happy.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in well-being.

- Do something nice for a friend or family member
- Thank someone
- Smile more
- Volunteer your time e.g. write a thank you letter to our Key Workers
- Plan to join a new club or community group

You can also watch [‘The 5 ways to Well-being’](#) video which is available on YouTube



# Get active

## Benefits of exercise

Regular activity provides a range of physical and mental benefits. Exercise is by far the single best thing you can do to improve all aspects of your health.

The benefits of regular exercise include:



- Reduced knee arthritis and disability
- Reduced progression towards dementia and Alzheimer's
- Reduced type diabetes
- Reduced risk of fractures
- Delaying natural decline in muscle mass and bone density in over 50s
- Reduced anxiety
- Relieve depression by 30%
- Reduced risk of coronary heart disease
- Reduced risk of cancer

Exercise is encouraged for people of all ages, helping them to live happier healthier lives.

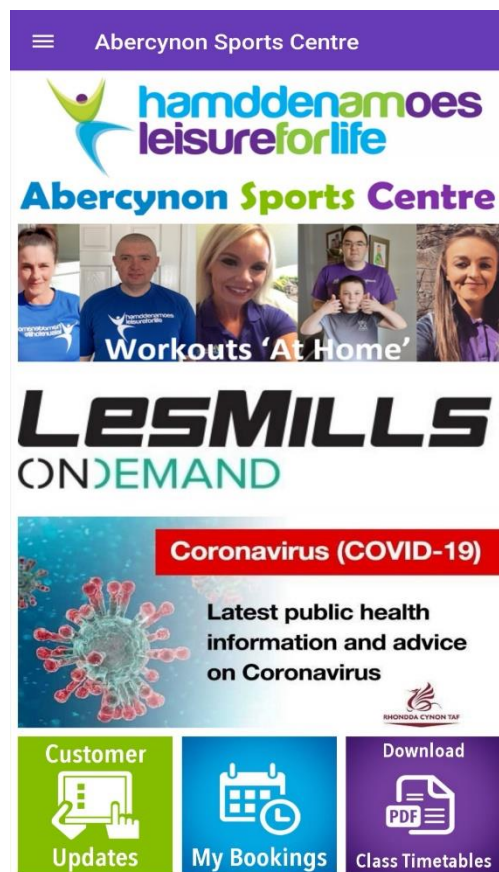
## What exercise should I do?

That is the one question that is always, asked, but the honest answer is **anything** you enjoy and that gets your heart and breathing rate up!

The really important things is that you enjoy what you do so it becomes a habit. Humans are simple human beings and if we don't like something, we avoid it, same goes for exercise!

Some people prefer groups like yoga or Pilates, whilst others prefer being alone with their thoughts on a walk or listening to music or an audiobook. The exercise you choose is a personal choice, but find something you enjoy and will want to stick to.

During the COVID-19 outbreaks, there are also government restrictions on what you can do in terms of physical activity and social distancing and we recommend that you stay up to date with these.



The screenshot shows the Abercynon Sports Centre website. At the top, there is a purple navigation bar with the text 'Abercynon Sports Centre'. Below this is the logo for 'hamddenamoes leisureforlife' and 'Abercynon Sports Centre'. A banner features a group of people with the text 'Workouts 'At Home''. Below the banner is the 'LES MILLS ONDEMAND' logo. A red banner highlights 'Coronavirus (COVID-19)' with the text 'Latest public health information and advice on Coronavirus' and the Abercynon Sports Centre logo. At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'Customer Updates' (green), 'My Bookings' (blue), and 'Download Class Timetables' (purple).



There are lots of online physical activities and apps out there including the Council's own **Leisure for Life** which is free to download for [Apple](#) and [Android](#). The app has some great examples of home workouts that you can do.

**Remember – all exercise needs to be safe so that we don't place extra strain on our healthcare system during these challenging times.**

## How much exercise do I need?

Staying active is important in maintaining and developing good health and wellbeing, but do you know how much exercise you need to stay healthy?

It is recommended that adults aim for 2.5 hours of moderate activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more. Another way to achieve this is to aim for 30 minutes of exercise 5 times a week. The same applies to people over 65 but if there are health or mobility problems you should consult your GP.

Children under the age of 5 who can walk unaided should be physically active for at least 3 hours during the day.

Children over the age of 5 should aim for 1 hour of physical activity every day.



Only 40% of men and 28% of women in the UK meet the recommended guidelines for physical activity.



Physical inactivity is one of the leading causes of death in developed countries.



Increasing levels of physical activity will help to reduce the risk of over 20 diseases and conditions including cancer and diabetes.



Only 1 in 8 children get the right amount of exercise with 1 in 5 saying it was a chore and only for those who were overweight.

At the moment you may find you have more motivation and time on your hands to be physically active which is a great thing! It is important that you do this sensibly and think about how much you are doing and the way you do it as doing too much too soon could lead to problems.

Think about your usual levels of activity and use this as your starting point. Small increases week by week is key. Push yourself, but don't wipe yourself out.

You'll be amazed at your body's ability to adapt. Listen to it, it will tell you when it's had enough!

## Intensity of exercise

As the intensity increases, heart rate, respiratory and energy consumption also increase further.

We see a huge difference when people go from doing nothing to doing something.



# Health benefits

Regular physical activity can help prevent and reduce the risk of a range of health conditions.

## Cardiovascular disease (CVD)



- In the UK 36 of people die from CVD – the main causes being coronary heart disease (CHD) and stroke
- CVD is estimated to cost the UK economy just under £26 billion a year and CHD just over £6,9 billion per year
- Over 40,000 people in the UK die every year from stroke and 90,000 from coronary heart disease, exercise can reduce your chance of both

## Diabetes

- Almost **3 million** people in the UK have type 2 diabetes, but just a small amount of regular activity can help to prevent it.
- Physically active people have a **33-50%** lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared to those who are inactive.



## Cancer



- Your chance of developing certain cancers is reduced if you keep active.
- Physical activity is associated with a reduced risk of breast cancer in women after the menopause. Women with higher levels of physical activity have about 30% lower risk of breast cancer than those who are not active.
- Inactive people have a 3.6% higher risk of colon cancer.

## Stroke

- Research shows that those who are physically active have a lower risk of stroke compared to those who are inactive.
- It is estimated that 26% of all deaths from stroke in Scotland are due to lack of physical activity.



## High blood pressure



- The higher your blood pressure the greater your risk of developing narrowed arteries which can lead to heart problems and strokes.
- Regular physical activity can help prevent high blood pressure and reduce it in those with hypertension.

## Mental health

- You will feel happier and have a better sense of well-being if you are physically active.
- A survey carried out by MIND found that 83% of people with a mental health illness looked to physical activity to help lift their mood.
- It is known that exercise helps release endorphins, the feel good chemical in the body



## Musculoskeletal health



- Exercise can increase bone mineral density in adolescents, maintain it in young adults and slow its decline in old age.
- Physical activity can help prevent osteoporosis and osteoarthritis, especially in young women.

## Finding the right exercise

Many of us don't exercise as we don't have the time, the money or are just afraid of setting foot in a gym. There are many ways that we can keep active, many of which don't cost a penny and with the current situation most classes are available on-line (see section 'What exercise should I do' above), or check out the **Leisure for Life** app.

## Walking



Walking is the simplest and cheapest form of exercise and something that we can all fit into our existing routines.

Normal walking (between 2mph and 4mph) can burn between **150 to 300 calories** per hour – that's the equivalent of a fast food chain cheeseburger.

## Running/jogging



Running can be a very effective form of exercise as it costs nothing and can be done anywhere. Why not join a running club or sign up to run a marathon for charity as an incentive?

Running at a gentle pace for an hour at 5mph can burn anywhere between **450 and 600 calories** per hour. Running more briskly at 8mph could burn up to 800 – that's the same as a standard takeaway portion of fish and chips.

## Cycling



Many of the short trips that we normally make by car can easily be done by bicycle and, as well as keeping healthy, you will also be doing your bit for the environment.

1 hour of cycling will burn between **280 and 400 calories** depending on the conditions – that's the equivalent of just over half a 12 inch pizza. Moderate effort mountain biking can burn **500 to 600 calories** per hour.

## Dance



Dancing is an aerobic activity that helps improve the condition of the heart and lungs. Dancing is suitable for people of all ages, shapes and sizes.

There are a weald of dance classes, including salsa, ballroom, Zumba and jive to suit everyone's music tastes. There plenty of computer games, apps, YouTube videos and live streaming classes, together with the Leisure for Life workouts at home.

An hour of moderately paced ballroom dancing can burn up to **400 calories** – that's equivalent of a takeaway Chicken Chow Mein.



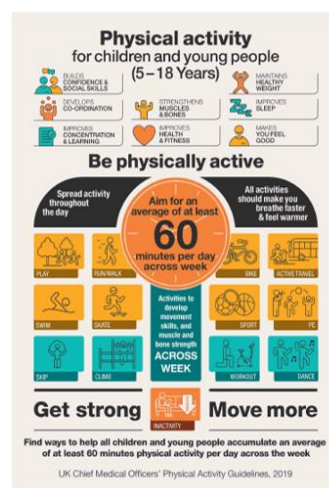
# Setting goals

Setting small goals is a useful way to kick start your physical activity journey. Set yourself some small targets that are realistic. **It is important that you have some success!**

These targets will be personal to you, but the overall aim should be to slowly increase your levels of activity, from there the sky is your limit. How fit you want to be depends entirely on what you want to achieve!

Spreading your activity across the day or week can help you make your goals achievable.

Extended periods of staying still should be broken up by light physical activity such as desk based exercises if working from home. Visit our **Remote Learning/Agile Working** section – ‘*The benefits of taking micro breaks*’ and ‘*Working from Home - easy exercise*’ guides

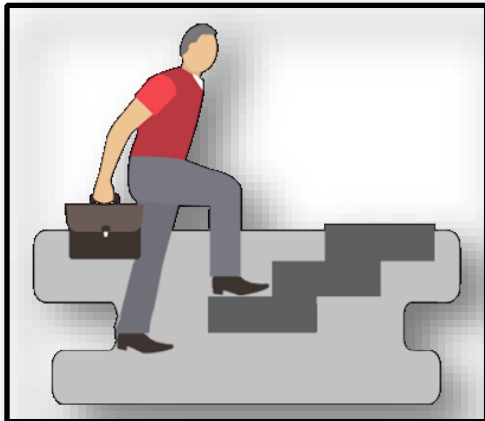


See our **Get Active Guide** in the **Additional Resources** section together with **Physical Activity** guides as recommended by the Chief Medical Officer, Wales

# Fitting it in

Whilst we are limited on what we can do under COVID-19 lockdown we can still include some physical and mental wellbeing activities as part of our daily structure. We only need to fit in a minimum of 30 minutes a day and this can be broken into blocks of time if that helps. We may need to become creative in how we do things i.e. use tinned food as weights, climb the stairs or go for a walk or cycle as part of our daily exercise- don't forget stay close to home.

## Clive



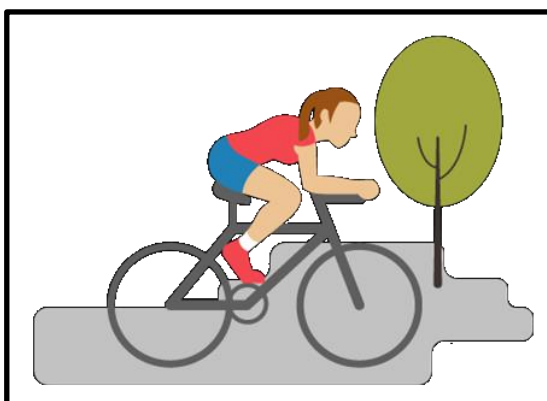
Clive is 28 and works a busy full-time job, so struggles to fit exercise into his routine. He relies on public transport to get to and from work and has started to get off the bus a few stops early which gives him a 10 minute walk each way. Clive has also started taking the stairs in work rather than the lift and as he works on the third floor, it gives him quite a work out

## Mary

Mary is 35 and is a mother of 3 children, who also works part-time. Mary normally takes the car to do the school run in the morning and it's quicker, but has started to get the children up that bit earlier and they all do the 10 minute walk to school together. That activity, coupled with some vigorous vacuuming at home, means that she is hitting her recommended target of 30 minutes of physical activity per day.



## Laura



Laura is 23 and works two jobs, one during the day and one at night time. As she doesn't have much spare time the chances of joining the gym are very slim. Rather than just sitting in the staff canteen at lunchtime, Laura has started going for a brisk 15 minute walk. She has also started to cycle to and from work, which is saving her money and means that she is now exceeding her target of 30 minutes physical activity each day.

There are many ways you can incorporate exercise into your routine, whatever your circumstances – visit the NHS's [Get Active Your Way](#) website.

## What can go wrong?

All exercise comes with some low risk, however, the benefits of being physically active are far greater.

- You are more likely to be successful if you work to your own levels of fitness and build up slowly. Starting easy and building up over time as the body adjusts, is the safest way to travel along the road of physical activity
- If you are new to exercise or are increasing how much activity you do, it is not unusual to have muscle soreness for 2-3 days after exercising. Don't worry though, this is normal. The other good news; this lessens as your body gets used to exercise



- You will feel like quitting at some point we guarantee it. The road to health isn't a straight path and you will have to travel over a lot of hills and dips to get there. There will also be times where the wheels will fall off completely. The important part is to expect it, recognise it and motivate yourself to get back behind the wheel

People with underlying health problems can also benefit from physical activity. You will hopefully know if it is safe for you to exercise. If you are unsure or have concerns about being more physically active, seek help from a health care professional before you start.

# Eat well

## What is a balanced diet?

A balanced diet requires us not to ban any foods but to eat the correct foods in the correct quantities. The Food Standards Agency has created the Eatwell Guide to help you get the balance right, see the **Additional Resources** under the **Eat Well** section



## Step-by-step guide to nutrition

### Fruit and vegetables

Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day, both frozen and fresh are great!



- Frozen can often be much better value for money
- Don't panic if you can't access everything you want. It is the reality of the situation right now

### Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins

Eat more beans and pulses and 2 portions of sustainably sourced fish per week (one of which is oily). Eat less red and processed meat.

People who eat more protein tend to maintain bone mass better as they age and have a much lower risk of osteoporosis and fractures.



If that isn't enough, protein helps you to maintain muscle mass, and promotes muscle growth which can improve your muscle tone.

Your aim – 0.8g – 1.8g of protein per kg of body weight is recommended

See the **Additional Resources** section for great protein ideas!

## Vitamin D – you may need it!

Vitamin D is produced by your body when it has spent time in the sunlight and is known to:



- Improve muscular control in the elderly
- Reduce the risk of colorectal cancer
- Protect from the development of multiple sclerosis
- Improve mood and reduce risk of seasonal disorders where there is less sunlight

**How do we get it?** - just 30 minutes per day in the sun will give you what you need, if the garden or going out is not an option you can use Vitamin D supplements

## Make your meals mindful

- Eat away from your desk
- Working from home? Clear a space, close your laptop and eat somewhere different
- Turn off the news
- Take your time
- Cook something different
- Eat to your hunger



You're like to have more time now working from home, not less. Don't work through your lunch.

If you are home-schooling, think about teaching your children about mindful meals and cooking together.



## Minimise trips to the supermarket during the pandemic and eat healthy



**Plan ahead**- visualise break, lunch and dinner for at least 5 days. What will you serve? What do you need? Consider the foods your family likes, your food preparation methods, interests and skills together with the time and energy you will have for preparing meals.

**Make a shopping list** – and use it! You'll be less likely to forget items or buy impulse items.

**Find yourself snacking?** - that's fine! Make sure you have 'healthy' snacks readily available. Controlling your environment is key.

## Be kind

Be kind to yourself if you over eat because of stress or anxiety.

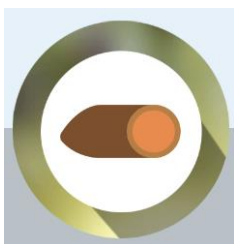
These unprecedented times, feeling more anxious or stressed are completely normal. You are forgiven if every now and then you resort to 'junk food' for comfort.

*Be kind*

## Health benefits of eating well

As well as the obvious benefits of eating well, having a healthy balanced diet can do wonders for your health. Certain foods are particularly beneficial for your health and wellbeing and can be easily incorporated into your diet.

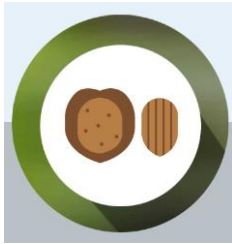
## Sweet potatoes



The deep orange colour of this vegetable means they are full of the antioxidant 'beta carotene', which may help slow the ageing process. They are also fat free and very low in calories with half a sweet potato containing only **81 calories**.



## Almonds



This nut is packed full of nutrients and contains more calcium than any other. They contain mono-saturated fat which can help lower blood cholesterol.

## Broccoli



Broccoli can help prevent heart disease, diabetes and some cancers and is an excellent source of both vitamin C and A.

## Salmon



This fish contains Omega 3 fatty acids which help prevent heart attacks, lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of stroke.

## Brown rice



Brown rice is an excellent source of fibre, which can maintain healthy bowels. A study published in the British Medical Journal found that for every 10g increase in daily fibre intake there was a 10% drop in the risk of bowel cancer. Other excellent forms of fibre are porridge and certain cereals and breads.

## Spinach



Spinach is high in both Vitamin C and A. It helps to boost the immune system and keeps skin and hair healthy as well as helping to prevent some age related vision diseases.

## Blueberries



Blueberries are loaded with nutrients that can help prevent chronic diseases and help improve short term memory and healthy ageing.

## Apples



This fruit is a good source of pectin which helps lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels.

# Tips for eating well

There are various ways that you can eat well. Below are some more hints and tips for a healthier lifestyle. The ones in the second column are from the NHS Change4Life website

<b>Hints and tips for a healthier lifestyle</b>	
<b>Base your meals on starchy foods</b>	<b>Love our labels</b>
One third of your plate should, where possible, consist of starchy foods as these foods make you feel fuller for longer. Some people believe them to be fatty but they actually contain less than half the calories or fat.	Food labels can seem a bit boring, but they are the best way of checking what you're eating as they can tell you what's hidden inside the food. Once you know how to use them, you'll soon be able to make healthier choices when you're shopping.
<b>Eat lots of fruit and vegetables</b>	<b>Be calorie smart</b>
It is recommended that you eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day. To get the most benefit from your five portions, eat a wide variety of fruit and vegetables	Counting calories doesn't have to mean you're on a diet! They are a really handy way of helping you choose balance meals each day and not eating more than your body needs.
<b>Eat more fish</b>	<b>Share packaged foods</b>
Fish is a great source of protein and it is recommended that you should aim to eat 2 portions per week, including one portion of oily fish.	Many foods and drinks are packaged for two adults sharing, so if you're eating by yourself avoid temptation and save some for later. Don't give a whole one to a child – let them share a bag of crisps or save some.
<b>Cut down on saturated fat and sugar</b>	<b>Eat a little slower</b>
There are 2 types of fat – saturated and unsaturated. Too much saturated fat can increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood and increase your risk of heart disease. Saturated fats are found in hard cheese, cakes, sausages and cream. Unsaturated fats are found in vegetable oil, oily fish and avocados.	It takes time for our brains to register we're full, so try to eat more slowly. If you're eating with friends or family try pacing yourself to the slowest eater.

## Hints and tips for a healthier lifestyle

Too much sugar in our diet can lead to weight gain. If a food product has more than 15g of sugar per 100g then it is classed as high.

### Eat less salt

Just because you don't physically add salt to your food doesn't mean you aren't consuming it through other foods. If a food product has more than 1.5g of salt per 100g then it is classed as high. Adults should not consume more than 6g of salt per day. Remember to read the labels on food products to identify hidden salts!

### Focus on your food

Eating distractedly, such as in front of the TV means we eat more without noticing or even enjoying it. Swap the TV for the table.

### Don't get thirsty

We should try to drink 1.2 litres of fluid every day to stop us getting dehydrated. This includes tea, coffee, milk and fruit juice but where possible we should try to consume water. The most important thing to remember is that by the time a person feels thirsty they are most likely dehydrated so remember to drink plenty of fluids regularly throughout the day.

### Aim to feel satisfied, not stuffed

Try eating just one plate of food and don't go back for seconds.

### Don't skip breakfast

Many people skip breakfast in an attempt to lose weight, but research has shown that eating breakfast can actually help control our weight.

### Pack it in

Plan ahead and try to take a packed lunch to work or when you are out and about. It can work out cheaper.

# Healthy food swap

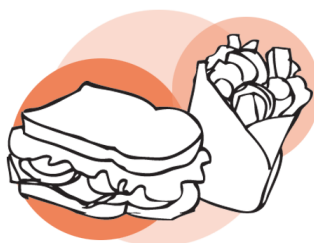
If you are still unsure about how to make the first move to improve your diet why not introduce some of these food swaps gradually?

## Breakfast



- Swap full fat milk for semi skimmed or the skimmed variety
- Switch sugar coated cereals for wholegrain varieties
- Top your cereal with some dried or fresh fruit, replacing the need for sugar

## Lunch



- Swap white bread for the wholegrain variety
- Avoid sandwiches with mayonnaise and opt for salad fillings instead

## Dinner



- Swap creamy sauces for tomato based ones
- Choose leaner cuts of meat and cut off any visible fat
- Try to grill where possible and ditch the frying pan
- Eat plenty of vegetables with your meal

## Drinks



Try to drink water where possible and avoid sugary drinks and cordials

See the Additional Resources section to view some NHS guidance on eating a balanced diet

# Sleep well

Creating the right routine and environment for a good night's sleep

When we think about a healthy lifestyle, two pillars of health that most often come to mind are diet and exercise, for good reasons, but there is a third pillar that isn't often talked about ... sleep!

Sleep is the time your body and mind recovers and long term lack of sleep has been linked to many health complaints.

Getting enough good quality sleep is important for your physical health and it can also help you perform better mentally and physically and it can certainly make you a lot happier!

## So what can we do?

### Light

Blue light – which is produced by the sun also by your TV, computers and smartphones disrupts your production of melatonin.

Melatonin is a hormone that helps you sleep. During night-time (dark conditions) melatonin production increases and it gets released into your brain which is what gives your body the sleep signal. On the flip side, during hours of daylight, the production of melatonin reduces, helping you to stay awake.



This is what we don't want at night!

Some apps gradually reduce blue light on your phone. Fortunately, more and more devices come with such a programme preinstalled (e.g. Night Shift on iPhones).

Finally, know that even when you're in the land of nod, light can still impair the quality of your sleep.

To help you sleep, think about:

- Steering clear of bright and blue lights in the 2 hours before bedtime
- Using blue-light blocking programmes that reduce the blue light from electronic screens
- Making your bedroom dark or consider using a sleep mask



## Noise



Noise can drastically reduce the quality of your sleep. If you can't make your bedroom silent, think about wearing earplugs (unless you need to hear somebody calling). Some people appreciate white noise or soothing music, especially when it masks more irritating sounds such as traffic noise, but keep the volume low.

## Heat

Elevated core body temperature can make it more difficult for you to fall and stay asleep. If your bedroom is too warm – it could be part of the problem.

On the flip side, reductions in core body temperature have been linked to people taking less time to fall asleep. A slightly colder room may help you to fall asleep faster and enter the deeper stages of sleep sooner.

Even if high temperatures don't prevent you from falling asleep, you should still try to sleep in a cool room as heat may still impair sleep quality.



## Alcohol

Alcohol is a depressant of your nervous system; in other orders, alcohol can help you unwind and you may think it helps you sleep better. The research, however, shows the opposite.



Yes, at first, alcohol can help you fall asleep, but this effect fades after a few days if you keep drinking close to bedtime. Right from the start, it will negatively impact the quality of your sleep so you may fall fast asleep, but you won't wake up feeling refreshed.

**Don't use alcohol as a sleep aid** – it may help you relax, but also negatively affect your sleep. For most people, it will be beneficial to avoid drinking alcohol after dinner.

## Caffeine

Caffeine is usually safe and certainly has benefits, but it also has some downsides.

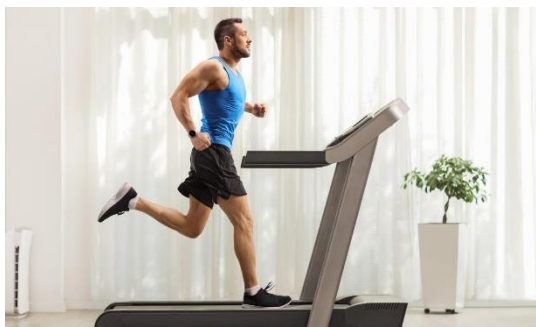
Caffeine can promote sleepiness when activated and can increase alertness. Caffeine can increase dopamine (happy hormones) levels, with stimulating and mood enhancing effects.

As they no longer feel stimulated coffee 'veterans' often feel caffeine won't affect their sleep. Indeed, many people can fall asleep with caffeine coursing through their veins. As they slumber, caffeine makes them more alert and their sleep shallower.



Caffeine should be avoided within the **6 hours** before bedtime. Even if it doesn't prevent you from falling asleep, caffeine can still impair the quality of your sleep.

## Exercise



This statement is backed by most studies, although, the exact mechanisms are not yet clear, physical activity during the day seems to improve sleep quality especially in times of stress. Many types of exercise from meditative movement such as yoga and tai-chi to something more intensive such as aerobic exercise or resistance training have the potential to improve sleep quality as well as your mood and overall health.

Exercise close to bedtime? Everyone is different, if it works exercising at that time for you, great! If though you discover that exercising too close to bedtime disrupts your sleep, trying finding another workout window.

## Sleep routine

Going to bed at around the same time every night can help you sleep faster and better. A bedtime routine can prime your body for sleep; your routine should be more soothing .e.g. meditating or relaxing instead of playing a computer game.



## Magnesium



Lack of magnesium can impair sleep. Multiple types of magnesium supplements exist, but there are plenty of magnesium rich goods in all kinds of diets. These should be your first option. If your body has enough magnesium already, magnesium supplements won't benefit your sleep.

Examples of magnesium rich foods:

- green leafy vegetables
- legumes
- nuts
- seeds
- wholegrains
- some breakfast cereals
- fortified foods

These **8** tips are not the be all and end all for sleep. There may be other underlying sleep areas for you to look at – such as your mental or emotional state.

However, these are quick wins that are fairly easy to put in place and may just help you feel a bit better rested.

See the **Additional Resources** under the **Sleep Well** section

## Weight Management

- More than 30,000 people die prematurely every year due to obesity
- 68% of men and 58% of women in the UK are overweight or obese
- Obesity can shorten life expectancy by up to 9 years
- 28% of children aged between 2 and 15 are overweight or obese

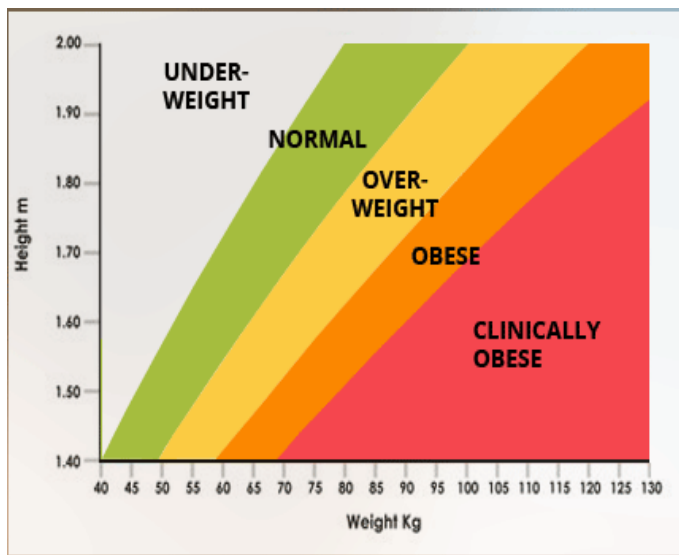
As well as affecting your quality of life and general wellbeing, being obese is linked to a range of conditions, including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and some cancers.

If you are worried about your weight, don't despair; by becoming more active and eating a healthier diet you can be on your way to losing weight and improving health and wellbeing.

# What is an ideal weight?

A number of factors determine our weight, which is why it is virtually impossible to set an ideal weight that we should all aspire to. There are, however, a number of ways that you can work out your healthy weight range.

## Body Mass Index (BMI)



This is a way of determining if your weight is appropriate for your height. The calculation is your weight (in kilograms) divided by your height (in metres) squared.

BMI can be divided into several categories but the general rule is the higher the figure, then the higher the risk of a range of medical problems.

A drawback of BMI is that it does not take into account an individual's body fat content.

## Body fat



We have all heard the term 'pinch more than an inch'. It refers to measuring the amount of body fat and is usually done with a pair of skinfold callipers.

You can also measure the amount of fat on your body using special scales called body fat analysers which pass a small, safe electrical signal through your body.

Body fat is only one aspect of health.

## Waist circumference

WAIST MEASUREMENT FOR	AT INCREASED RISK	AT HIGH RISK
<b>WOMEN</b>	80 CM (32 INCHES)	88 CM (35 INCHES)
<b>MEN</b>	95 CM (37 INCHES)	102 CM (40 INCHES)
<b>ASIAN MEN</b>	90 CM (36 INCHES)	

One of the easiest ways to find out if your weight falls into the healthy category is to take the tape test.

Storing fat around your middle increases your risk of developing heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure.

The most effective place to measure is around belly button height, halfway between the bottom of your ribs and the top of your hips.

You should check your findings against the table above. **NB:** Men from Asian groups may be at a higher risk at a lower waist measurement.

## How can I manage my weight?

The most important thing to remember is that slow, sustained weight loss is the best option, rather than using a faddy diet that promises quick results.

A lifestyle change is often required to manage your weight, which involves healthy eating and the introduction of physical activity.

Whether you need to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight there are some simple steps that can help you.

- **Watch your calories**

An average man needs around 2,500 calories a day to maintain his weight, for a woman that figure is 2,000 a day. If you consider that there are over 1,800 calories in a standard takeaway 12 inch pizza, you can see how your calorie intake could spiral out of control.

Don't forget that alcohol also contains calories, in fact a bottle of wine contains almost 600 calories.

It takes, 3,500 excess calories go gain just 1lb in weight so extreme weight gain is not something that happens overnight.



- **Portion control**

Portion sizes have increase over the years with readily available ‘supersize’ options.

Try to use the ‘Eatwell Plate’ as a guide to portioning your food groups for a healthy balanced meal and try to use the tips below:

- Measure pasta and rice before you cook it to avoid the ‘if I have cooked it I may as well eat it’ trap
- Fill your plate up with fruit and vegetables
- Use a smaller plate to make your portion sizes appear bigger

- **Why do I eat?**

Try to keep a food diary to monitor where and why you eat. This can help you identify eating habits and problem areas.

You can access a printable diary from the Additional Resources section on the course page, and there are loads of free apps available too.

- **Keep active**

Those who lead a physically active life are less likely to gain weight than those who spend their day sitting.

Follow some of the tips we have given in the **Get active** section and introduce at least 30 minutes of physical activity into your daily routine.

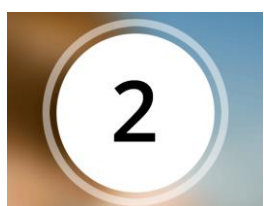
## Myths around weight management

There are many myths out there surrounding the subject of weight management and how to lose weight.



### Cut the carbs out of your diet to lose weight

Your body needs carbohydrates for energy and it is never wise to remove any good food group from your diet. This food group makes us feel fuller for longer and removing it will only make us crave it



### Eating after 8pm makes you fat

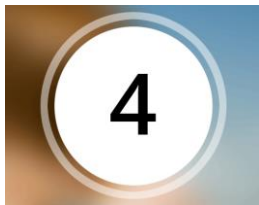
Your metabolism can't tell the time. The amount of calories you consume is more important than the time eat them.





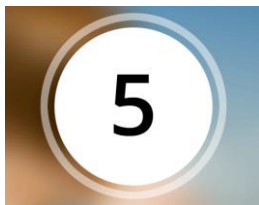
### Certain foods like grapefruit, celery or cabbage soup can help me burn fat

No food can burn fat and while these foods will provide you with certain minerals and nutrients, they will only help you lose weight as part of a healthy balance diet.



### I shouldn't snack between meals

You can still snack and lose weight. The most important thing to remember when trying to lose weight is that you need to consume fewer calories than you use. Try incorporating healthy snacks into your diet in place of those that are high in sugar and fat.



### Skipping meals is a good way to lose weight

Missing out on meals or starving yourself is never a good idea. Crash diets are hard to maintain and generally don't work. Your body will only become low on energy causing you to crave foods which are high in fat and sugar.

## Dos and don'ts of weight management

There are many myths surrounding weight loss but do you know which ones fall into the 'Do' and 'Don't' categories

To lose weight, plan every meal – Do  Don't

Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables with every meal – Do  Don't

Skip breakfast – Do  Don't

If you eat lunch you should skip dinner – Do  Don't

Eat regularly and have snacks where you need them – Do  Don't

I need to exercise to lose weight – Do  Don't

I should cut out carbohydrates from my diet as they are too fattening – Do  Don't

**Answers revealed at the end of the module.**

# Resources

## Further information

If you would like some further information about getting fit or are concerned about your weight, we've gathered together a number of online resources that can aid you in your efforts.

These can be found in the **Additional Resources** sections on the **Employee Well-being** course page

## Answers to Dos and Don'ts of weight management

There are many myths surrounding weight loss but do you know which ones fall into the 'Do' and 'Don't' categories

To lose weight, plan every meal – **Do**  **Don't**

Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables with every meal – **Do**  **Don't**

Skip breakfast – **Do**  **Don't**

If you eat lunch you should skip dinner – **Do**  **Don't**

Eat regularly and have snacks where you need them – **Do**  **Don't**

I need to exercise to lose weight **Do**  **Don't**

I should cut out carbohydrates from my diet as they are too fattening – **Do**  **Don't**

The main rules to remember are never skip a meal and try not to cut out any of the main food groups out of your diet.

You should always try to introduce some form of physical activity into your routine to maintain a healthy weight.