

LET'S GET ACTIVE AND STAY ACTIVE

Research has shown that regular exercise decreases the risk of developing many chronic diseases. These include:

- ❑ Coronary artery disease
- ❑ High blood pressure
- ❑ Obesity
- ❑ Type 2 diabetes mellitus
- ❑ Some cancers, especially colon cancer
- ❑ Osteoporosis.

According to the US Surgeon General's report, significant health benefits are obtained by 20 minutes of moderate exercise at least every day. People who maintain a regular regime of exercise with longer duration with higher intensity are likely to receive the greater benefits.

'Getting fit', 'losing weight' and many other health changes are most prominent when New Years Resolutions are made. Blending exercise into a person's everyday lifestyle produces positive physiological (increase in energy levels) and psychological (increase in confidence) changes. However, out of the many who make these resolutions, very few are able to maintain their promise.

Top Tips to get active

Set goals –Research has shown that goal setting is a very effective motivational tool.

- ❑ Form smaller goals in order to progressively reach the final goal.
- ❑ Make sure your goals follow the S.M.A.R.T. principle. **S**pecific to you; **M**easurable; **A**chievable; **R**ealistic, **T**imed (i.e. you have a date in mind when you wish to achieve each goal by).
- ❑ Stated Positively - According to those who practice Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) the goals which are positively stated are more likely to be achieved compared to those stated

in the negative (for example, saying 'I want to be faster' rather than 'I don't want to be slow').

- ❑ Spend time with a fitness professional who is able to develop the most effective activity routine that will not only be enjoyable to you but also suit your daily routine and reach your goal.

Choose activities you enjoy - Those taking part in something they do not enjoy become lost, un-focused and end up dropping out.

Running and going to gym are the obvious ways to become more active. However, other ideas may include circuit style classes and other group exercise programmes as they provide an enjoyable and motivating environment to exercise in. Because of their nature these classes are suitable to most people's goals as they develop many aspects of fitness including strength and cardiovascular performance.

Every little helps - Staying active away from sports also goes a long way to improving health and fitness. So if there are time constraints to take part in a class, go to the gym or run try other ways which can work with your exercise routine.

- ❑ Do 5 minutes of exercise 3x per day morning, lunch and evening. Try doing: Dips, Squats, lunges, press-ups, and crunches.
- ❑ Take a walk in the park at lunch time
- ❑ Get off the tube, bus or train a stop earlier
- ❑ Make use of the stairs where possible

Always try something once – It is inevitable that some forms of exercise may not be suitable. Remember there are many ways to be more active.

Tips to stay active

- ❑ **Eliminate 'all or nothing' thinking** – try and remember that there will be times when you fall behind in your activity plan. Put it down to a blip and pick up from where you left off.
- ❑ **Continually review and reset goals** – Re-think goals when blips occur.

- **Identify high risk situations** - Before you start your 'new regime' develop coping strategies to deal with situations that will prevent you carry out exercise. For example, if you have not exercised for a week try and do something for the next three days.
- **Two's company** – Exercising with a friend eliminates the boredom factor, and helps maintain motivation.
- **Fitness is a journey and not a destination** – Being active should ALWAYS be a part of someone's life