



Physical Activity for
BETTER HEALTH

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BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR AGE, CAN HELP YOU LIVE A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE. CYCLING TO WORK, WALKING TO THE SHOPS, PLAYING WITH YOUR CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN, OR TAKING PART IN ORGANISED SPORTS CAN ALL ADD UP TO LIVING A MORE ACTIVE LIFE.

THERE ARE MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR BEING ACTIVE ON-ISLAND, AND WE HOPE YOU ARE ABLE TO USE THESE RESOURCES TO MAKE SOME SMALL LIFESTYLE CHANGES. IF YOU ARE NOT SURE HOW MUCH ACTIVITY YOU SHOULD BE GETTING TO KEEP HEALTHY AND ACTIVE, READ ON.



Physical Activity

The guidelines in this leaflet can help you and your family decide what levels of physical activity you should be aiming for on a weekly basis to keep healthy. Visit ourisland.im for up to date listings of what is available on the Island near you.

Individual physical and mental capabilities should be considered when interpreting the guidelines for all age groups and abilities. If in doubt, consult your GP before increasing your levels of physical activity.

BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular exercise has positive effects on many aspects of health and well-being.

Not only can it help maintain and improve general fitness levels, it can also prevent ill-health. It also helps to tackle health problems, such as:

- Overweight and obesity
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol levels
- Heart disease and angina
- Type 2 diabetes
- Joint and bone problems.

It is recognised that physical inactivity is one of a range of risk factors involved with the conditions above.

Activity can reduce the risk of developing some cancers, stroke, heart disease and osteoporosis.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

Physical Activity can:

- Provide relief from symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Enhance and protect brain function
- Improve self-confidence
- Increase social interaction
- Improve independence and mobility in later life.



WHAT IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY?

If you are an adult with a disability, regular physical activity can provide you with important health benefits, such as a stronger heart, lungs and muscles, improved mental health, and a better ability to do everyday tasks. It's best to talk with your healthcare provider before you begin a physical activity routine. Try to get advice from a professional with experience in physical activity and disability. They can tell you more about the amounts and types of physical activity that are appropriate for you and your abilities.

SETTING REALISTIC AND ACHIEVABLE GOALS

Making any lifestyle change can be challenging. Having a goal in mind gives you something to work towards, keeps you motivated, helps you to stay on track and provides a measure of how well you are doing.

When setting your goals, be realistic - think about what is achievable for you and work out the best ways to achieve your goals.

For example, your end goal may be to swim 50 lengths of the pool, run 10 miles or be able to participate in a fun/charity walking event by the end of the year. You are more likely to achieve your end goal if you break it down into small achievable mini-goals. Make the goals specific - for example, include daily activities that will lead to you achieving your end goal. You need to know your starting point and pick an activity that is comfortable and realistic for you and slowly build at a pace that is right for you. The more mini-goals you achieve, the more motivated you will become to achieve your end goal. There are times when your training schedule could be interrupted - for example, going on holiday, family issues or an illness. Don't be too hard on yourself - adjust the timing of your end goal and look at changing your mini-goals to help keep you on track until such time when you are ready to go back to your original programme.

Remember - if you haven't exercised for a long time or you suffer from a chronic medical condition, please see your GP before you take up any new exercise programme.



Physical Activity Guidelines

UNDER 5'S WHO ARE **NOT YET WALKING**

1. Physical activity should be encouraged from birth, particularly through floor-based play and water-based activities in safe environments.
2. All under 5's should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (being restrained or sitting) for extended periods (except time spent sleeping).

Encouraging active behaviour is also important for health and development and may include:

- Reducing time spent in infant carriers or seats
- Reducing time spent in walking aids or baby bouncers (these limit free movement)
- Reducing time spent in front of TV or other screens.

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THAT MEET THE GUIDELINES

For infants who are not yet walking, physical activity refers to movement of any intensity and may include:

- 'Tummy time' – this includes any time spent on the stomach including rolling and playing on the floor
- Reaching for and grasping objects, pulling, pushing and playing with other people
- 'Parent and baby' swim sessions.

Floor-based and water-based play encourage infants to use their muscles and develop motor skills. They also provide valuable opportunities to build social and emotional bonds.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MOVEMENT?

- Develops motor skills
- Improves cognitive development
- Contributes to a healthy weight
- Enhances bone and muscular development
- Supports learning of social skills.



UNDER 5'S WHO ARE ABLE TO WALK

1. Children of pre-school age who are capable of walking unaided should be physically active daily for at least 180 minutes (3 hours), spread throughout the day.
2. All under 5's should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (being restrained or sitting) for extended periods (except time spent sleeping).
 - Walking/skipping to shops, a friend's home, a park, or to and from a school.

Encouraging active behaviour may include:

- Reducing time spent watching TV, using the computer or playing video games
- Reducing time spent in a pushchair or car seat – this can also help to break up long periods of sedentary behaviour.

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THAT MEET THE GUIDELINES

Physical activity is likely to occur mainly through unstructured active play but may also include more structured activities.

Activities can be of any intensity (light or more energetic) and may include:

- Activities which involve movements of all the major muscle groups
- Energetic play; for example - using a climbing-frame or riding a bike
- More energetic bouts of activity; for example - running and chasing games

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING ACTIVE FOR AT LEAST 180 MINUTES EACH DAY?

- Improves cardiovascular health
- Contributes to a healthy weight
- Improves muscle and bone health
- Supports learning of social skills
- Develops movement and co-ordination.



Physical Activity Guidelines

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (5–18 YEARS)

1. All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.
2. Vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week.
3. All children and young people should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THAT MEET THE GUIDELINES

Moderate intensity physical activities will cause children to get warmer, breathe harder and their hearts to beat faster, but they should still be able to carry on a conversation. Examples include:

- Bike riding
- Playground activities.

Vigorous intensity physical activities will cause children to get warmer, breathe much harder and their hearts to beat rapidly, making it more difficult to carry on a conversation. Examples include:

- Fast running
- Sports such as swimming or football.

Physical activities that strengthen muscle and bone involve using body weight or working against a resistance. Examples include:

- Swinging on playground equipment
- Hopping and skipping
- Sports such as gymnastics or tennis.



Encouraging active behaviour may include:

- Reducing time spent watching TV, using the computer or playing video games
- Breaking up sedentary time, such as swapping a long bus or car journey for walking part of the way.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING ACTIVE FOR AT LEAST 60 MINUTES EACH DAY?

- Improves cardiovascular health
- Maintains a healthy weight
- Improves bone health
- Improves self-confidence
- Develops new social skills.



Physical Activity Guidelines

ADULTS (19–64 YEARS)

1. Adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more – one way to approach this is to do 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week.
2. Alternatively, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week, or combinations of moderate and vigorous intensity activity.
3. Adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.
4. All adults should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THAT MEET THE GUIDELINES

Moderate intensity physical activities will cause adults to get warmer, breathe harder and their hearts to beat faster, but they should still be able to carry on a conversation.

Examples include:

- Brisk walking
- Cycling.

Vigorous intensity physical activities will cause adults to get warmer, breathe much harder and their hearts to beat rapidly, making it more difficult to carry on a conversation.

Examples include:

- Running
- Sports such as tennis or football.



Physical activities that strengthen muscles involve using body weight or working against a resistance. These should involve using all the major muscle groups.

Examples include:

- Exercising with weights
- Carrying or moving heavy loads such as groceries.

Encouraging active behaviour may include:

- Reducing time spent watching TV, using the computer or playing video games
- Taking regular breaks at work
- Breaking up sedentary time, such as swapping a long bus or car journey for walking part of the way.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

- Reduces risk of a range of diseases; for example - coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes
- Helps maintain a healthy weight
- Helps maintain ability to perform everyday tasks with ease
- Improves self-esteem
- Reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety.



Physical Activity Guidelines

OLDER ADULTS (65+ YEARS)

- 1.** Older adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits, including maintenance of good physical and cognitive function. Some physical activity is better than none, and more physical activity provides greater health benefits.
- 2.** Older adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more – one way to approach this is to do 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week.
- 3.** For those who are already regularly active at moderate intensity, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity.
- 4.** Older adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.
- 5.** Older adults at risk of falls should incorporate physical activity to improve balance and co-ordination on at least two days a week.
- 6.** All older adults should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.



EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THAT MEET THE GUIDELINES

Moderate intensity physical activities will cause older adults to get warmer and breathe harder and their hearts to beat faster, but they should still be able to carry on a conversation.

Examples include:

- Brisk walking
- Ballroom dancing.

Vigorous intensity physical activities will cause older adults to get warmer and breathe much harder and their hearts to beat rapidly, making it more difficult to carry on a conversation.

Examples include:

- Climbing stairs
- Running.

Physical activities that strengthen muscles involve using body weight or working against a resistance. These should involve using all the major muscle groups.

Examples include:

- Carrying or moving heavy loads such as groceries
- Activities that involve stepping and jumping such as dancing
- Chair based exercises.

Activities to improve balance and co-ordination may include:

- Tai chi
- Yoga.

Encouraging active behaviour may include:

- Reducing time spent watching TV
- Taking regular walk breaks around the garden or street
- Breaking up sedentary time, such as swapping a long bus or car journey for walking part of the way.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

- Helps maintain cognitive function
- Reduces cardiovascular risk
- Helps maintain ability to carry out daily living activities
- Improves mood and can improve self-esteem
- Reduces the risk of falls.



Physical Activity Guidelines

PREGNANCY

- 1.** Throughout a normal pregnancy you should aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week. These should be in bouts of ten minutes or more if possible.
- 2.** If you are not already active, and were not active before pregnancy, start gradually. If you were already active before pregnancy, then keep going. Listen to your body and adapt as your pregnancy progresses.
- 3.** If you can, include muscle strengthening exercises two times a week.
- 4.** Talk to your health visitor, midwife, practice nurse or GP if you are unsure about being active during pregnancy.

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THAT MEET THE GUIDELINES

- Walking
- Swimming
- Pre-natal yoga
- Aqua-natal swimming sessions
- Low impact aerobics/dancing

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO AVOID

- Any contact sports (don't bump the bump)
- Activities lying on your back after the 1st trimester
- Any sports/activities with risk of falls (i.e. horse riding/skiing)
- Vigorous activity – especially if you are new to exercise
- Heavy weight training
- Scuba diving/sky diving



BENEFITS OF BEING ACTIVE WHILE PREGNANT

- Helps to control weight gain
- Improves sleep
- Improves mood
- Helps to prevent diabetes of pregnancy
- Helps reduce high blood pressure problems
- Improves fitness

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AFTER GIVING BIRTH

When you're a new mum, being active may seem like the last thing you need. However, regular activity may help you to relax, keep fit, feel more energetic, recover after childbirth and prevent or relieve postnatal depression.

It's usually a good idea to wait until after your six-week postnatal check before you start any high-impact exercise, such as aerobics or running. This is especially important if you had a caesarean, as your recovery time will be longer. If you had a straightforward birth, you can start gentle exercise as soon as you feel up to it. This could include walking, gentle stretches and pelvic floor exercises.

Talk to your midwife, health visitor or GP and they will advise you on what would be best for you, taking into account your previous activity levels and your birthing experience.





**The information in this document can be provided
in large print or on audio tape on request.**



**Isle of Man
Government**

Keillyn Eilan Vannin

**Public Health • Cronk Coar • Noble's Hospital
Strang • Douglas • Isle of Man • IM4 4RJ**

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