

Physical activity at home

Guidance for people with dementia and those who support them



Over the coming weeks and months we are all being asked to change the way we live our lives so that those who are at most risk of coronavirus are kept as safe as possible. For people with dementia and their families and carers this period of change will be unsettling. Not being able to go about your daily routine or undertake the activities you normally do, could be quite stressful.

In collaboration with allied health professionals, we are preparing a range of information to help you through this time and this guide is one example. If you need more information please call our 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline on 0808 808 3000 and we will do our very best to help you.

Regular physical activity is very important for staying healthy. It has many physical and mental health benefits including reducing feelings of stress and anxiety, which many of us will be feeling at the moment. Physical activity includes all forms of activity where you move your body. It includes exercise or sport such as cycling or running, but it also includes things like, dance, gardening and even housework. Whatever your starting point, doing a bit more activity will help combat social isolation and anxiety.



Helpful tips for physical activity around the home:



Break up sitting time

Stand (if you are able) at least every hour. You can set reminders, (using your mobile phone or another device such as an Amazon Alexa) or get up when the adverts come on the TV. You could keep a notepad next to you and record when you have done this.



Household chores

Household chores and everyday activities can help keep you physically active. Walk to get water or a hot drink regularly, throw some clothes in the washing machine, do the dishes, dust, vacuum, feed the birds or tidy – these can all be a good source of physical activity.



Dance

Dance to your favourite music and even incorporate this into daily living tasks. Try doing a dance while walking into the dining room or the toilet or even dance with your arms and feet while still seated.



Move more

Move more by combining every other time you stand up with walking laps around your house or marching on the spot. If you have more than one toilet in your house, you could use the one furthest from where you are sitting. If you have stairs, you could include them in your lap of the house.



Play

Play active games with your family or pets. For example throwing/catching balls/balloons or target games e.g throwing balls or beanbags into a basket.



Use technology

Things like mobile apps can be very useful to give examples of exercises you can do and track your activity levels. You and your friends & family can encourage each other to be more active via telephone, text or social media.

Getting Started

- Choose activities you enjoy – try to make them fun
- Set some goals about when and how much you are going to do
- Set a schedule in your daily routine
- Track your activity through diaries or phone apps or buddy up remotely with a friend.

Key Messages

- Taking part in any amount of physical activity will provide some essential benefits to both physical and mental health
- Everyone should limit and break up the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting or lying)
- Physical activity can be built up gradually
- Physical activity should provide a sense of enjoyment and purpose.

It's normal to feel some shortness of breath during physical activity. This shouldn't last a long time. If you experience dizziness, chest pain, shortness of breath or muscle pain that does not go away, please seek medical assistance. The NHS is still there for you during this time. If it's not urgent, speak to your GP or you can call NHS24 on 111. Call 999 if it's an emergency.

Helpful links

An interactive website with a new theme of resources each week:

www.connectingpeopleconnectingsupport.online

Get Up and Go. A guide to staying steady:

www.csp.org.uk/system/files/get_up_and_go_0.pdf

Dementia Friendly Exercises:

www.alzscot.org/living-with-dementia/health-and-social-care-professionals/allied-health-professionals

