

Benefits of being physically active

Keeping physically active is key to leading an independent life. It doesn't mean you have to go to the gym three times a week; it means being more active in your day-to-day life, every day. Doing a little bit of activity regularly can make a real difference to your health.

Why should I be more active?

Research suggests that amongst the over 50s, only 17% of women and 25% of men are sufficiently active to benefit their health. Regular physical activity, together with a [healthy diet](#), can provide you with a number of health benefits.

It's a good idea for older adults to do two types of physical activity each week: aerobic (such as cycling and walking) and strength exercises that work all the major muscles.

You should also try to break up long periods of sitting with light activity, as research has suggested that remaining seated for too long is bad for your health, regardless of how much exercise you do.

If you have had a [fall or are unsteady on your feet](#) due to weak legs, poor balance or a medical condition, you should do exercises to improve balance and co-ordination such as [yoga](#), [tai chi](#) or [dancing](#).

Being active will help you to:

- Ensure that your heart and lungs stay in their best condition
- Reduce and control your blood pressure
- Be relaxed, sleep better and cope with feelings of stress
- Increase your energy levels
- Strengthen your bones and muscles
- Reduce the risk of cancer
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Improve your flexibility, balance and co-ordination
- Improve your posture
- Increase your ability to remain independent in later life
- Delay the signs of ageing
- Get out and meet people
- Have fun

If you haven't been very active for a while, it is best to check with your GP or practice nurse before becoming more active, particularly if you have any problems with your blood pressure or

have a medical condition such as diabetes, heart disease or breathing problems.

How can I be more active?

It's a good idea to start exercising gently and then to build up what you are doing. Your body will then get used to being more active, and you are far less likely to strain your muscles.

Always warm up thoroughly by gradually easing your body into activity for the first few minutes. If you experience pain or discomfort, you must stop straightaway.

See our section on [Fitness](#) for ideas on how to get more active.

[Ways to Wellness](#) service helps people in the West of Newcastle to manage their long-term health conditions, through activities such as:

- Getting involved in local groups and activities
- Accessing specialist services and support
- Healthy eating and getting more active
- Getting support around benefits and welfare rights

[Wayout in Gateshead \(WinG\)](#) is an outdoor education activity charity that offers outdoor activities to a range of client groups from the Tyne and Wear area.

[The Comfrey Project](#) works with refugees and asylum seekers on allotment sites across Newcastle and Gateshead with the aim of improving their conditions of life and general wellbeing.

Other useful information

- [Age UK Gateshead](#) offer the ActivAge activities in Newcastle.
- [Healthworks](#) offer a range of fitness classes, gym facilities and healthy living advice and support.
- [Active Newcastle](#)
- [Healthy Living](#) – guide from Age UK

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Useful Organisations

Healthworks

Email: enquiries@hwn.org.uk

Website: <https://www.healthworksnewcastle.org.uk>

Telephone: 0191 272 4244

Address: West End Health Resource Centre, NE4 8BE

Active Newcastle

Email: info@activenewcastle.co.uk

Website: www.activenewcastle.co.uk

Telephone: 0191 278 3129

Address: Leisure Services, NE6 2SZ

NHS

Website: www.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0191 278 3129

SwimNE

Email: hello@swimne.co.uk

Website: www.swimne.co.uk

Telephone: 0191 281 7678

The Comfrey Project

Email: info@thecomfreyproject.org.uk

Website: www.thecomfreyproject.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 447 7801

Address: Windmill Hills Centre, NE8 1QB

Ways to Wellness

Email: info@waystowellness.org.uk

Website: <http://waystowellness.org.uk>

Telephone: 0191 208 6555

Address: 2nd Floor, Biomedical Research Centre,, NE4 5PL

Wayout in Gateshead (WinG)

Email: nickcoates.wing@gmail.com

Website: www.wing.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 267 1579

Address: c/o Newburn Activity Centre, NE15 8ND

Age UK Gateshead in Newcastle

Email: advice@ageukgateshead.org.uk

Website: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/gateshead/>

Telephone: 0191 477 3559

Address: 341-343 High Street , NE8 1EQ

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