

What to consider when starting to exercise.

Regular exercise is hugely beneficial to your health, and can help prevent the risk of major illnesses. However, if you're starting from scratch there are some things you should consider to ensure you're exercising safely.



Starting to exercise.

Exercise is hugely important to your health and wellbeing.

It can reduce your risk of major illnesses like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers.

It can also boost your self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing your risk of stress, depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

But, going from couch potato to intensive bootcamp can be counterproductive at best, and at worse a risk to your health.

Read our five things to consider when starting exercise:

1. Do NOT exercise if you:

- Have an unstable medical condition - you should get your doctor's OK first.
- Have an injury/illness that affects your ability to exercise - listen to your body and your doctor.
- Have cardiac, pulmonary, or metabolic disease - seek your doctor's advice.

2. Start slowly and in moderation

- Build up your exercise level slowly. This will ensure your body gets used to the extra strain and you're less likely to feel overwhelmed and give up.
- Walking is a good place to start. Simply walk a little further than you normally do and progress to walking further and faster as the weeks and months pass.

3. Listen to your body

- You should always be able to catch your breath and speak comfortably while exercising, and although you should feel some discomfort, you should never feel pain.
- Rest adequately in-between sessions.

4. Learn from a professional

- It's always useful to learn from someone who is a specialist. They can teach you which exercises to do, the correct technique and how intensely to do them.

5. Have an exercise plan

- An exercise plan will help break down what you want to achieve into a manageable program you will actually stick to.
- Adults should aim to be active daily to promote good health. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate intensity activity, in bouts of 10-minutes or more – one way to do this is to do 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week.
- Moderate intensity physical activities will cause you to get warmer and breathe harder and your heart will beat faster, but you should still be able to carry on a conversation. Examples include brisk walking and cycling.
- Alternatively, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity exercise spread across the week, or combinations of moderate and vigorous intensity activity. Vigorous intensity exercises include running, swimming and sports.



Exercise has tremendous health benefits, but you should take care when starting from scratch.