

# MINDFUL MOMENTS

## JULY: EXERCISE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

### Introduction

Physical activity doesn't always mean exercise like hitting the gym or playing sports, it can be any form of movement including dancing, gardening and stretching. Lots of people find that when they're more physically active it helps to manage and improve symptoms of mental health problems. This could be due to the release of our 'happy hormones' endorphins and serotonin.



### How can I help myself?

The government guidelines suggest an adult should be doing 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week. Getting more physical activity and moving more is easier when you find an activity you enjoy, and it fits in with your daily life. At home, if you spend lots of time sitting down, try to get up and move around a bit every hour. There are lots of free exercise or stretching videos on the NHS website or YouTube which you could try.

Active household chores like hoovering, tidying or DIY also count! If you're at work all day try to keep moving – get out for a lunchtime walk, go to the toilet on a different floor of your building or plug in your headphones and walk around while you take a phone call. By adding little things into your day to day routine, like carrying in your shopping bags one at a time or doing some gentle stretching while you're watching TV can help boost your activity.

### How can it impact me and my work?

Research suggests that physical activity can improve mental health, helping you to sleep better, feel happier and reduce feelings of stress, depression, and anxiety. Meaning you should be able to focus on your work better. It can also help you to connect with people. Why not grab a colleague for a lunchtime stroll today, set yourself a physical activity challenge with a friend or find out if there are any team sport clubs in your local area?

### Support available

**NHS Live Well** – [www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well):

Resources and including tips on being more active, exercise programmes, activity ideas. Includes information on finding classes and group exercises.

**Parkrun** – [www.parkrun.org.uk](http://www.parkrun.org.uk): Organises free, weekly, 5km timed runs across the UK, which are open to everyone.

**Activity Alliance** –

[www.activityalliance.org.uk](http://www.activityalliance.org.uk): Supports disabled people to become more active. Provides information about how to start and where to find inclusive programmes.

### Tips to move more:

**Find new opportunities to get outside and moving** – could you take the stairs or park in the furthest space in the carpark?

**Keep trying new activities until you find something you like** – find something that you enjoy, we are all different.

**Do active household chores** – think heavy hoovering or gardening.

**Get the family involved** – get to the park and play frisbee, tag or a game of catch.

**Volunteer outdoors** – Why not join a beach clean or a conservation project to get out and about?

**Find your local leisure centre** – these might have new exercise classes and sports facilities that you can try.

**Do an online activity programme** – there are many online free exercise regimes you can try at home. Why not try a yoga stretch or a cardio workout.