

# Build Activity Into Your Everyday Life

## Dementia

Did you know that staying physically active and mentally engaged appears to reduce the risk of dementia? In addition, research has shown that staying physically active can decrease your risk of Alzheimer's Disease. So what are the good things that can come from being more physically active?

### Exercise can:

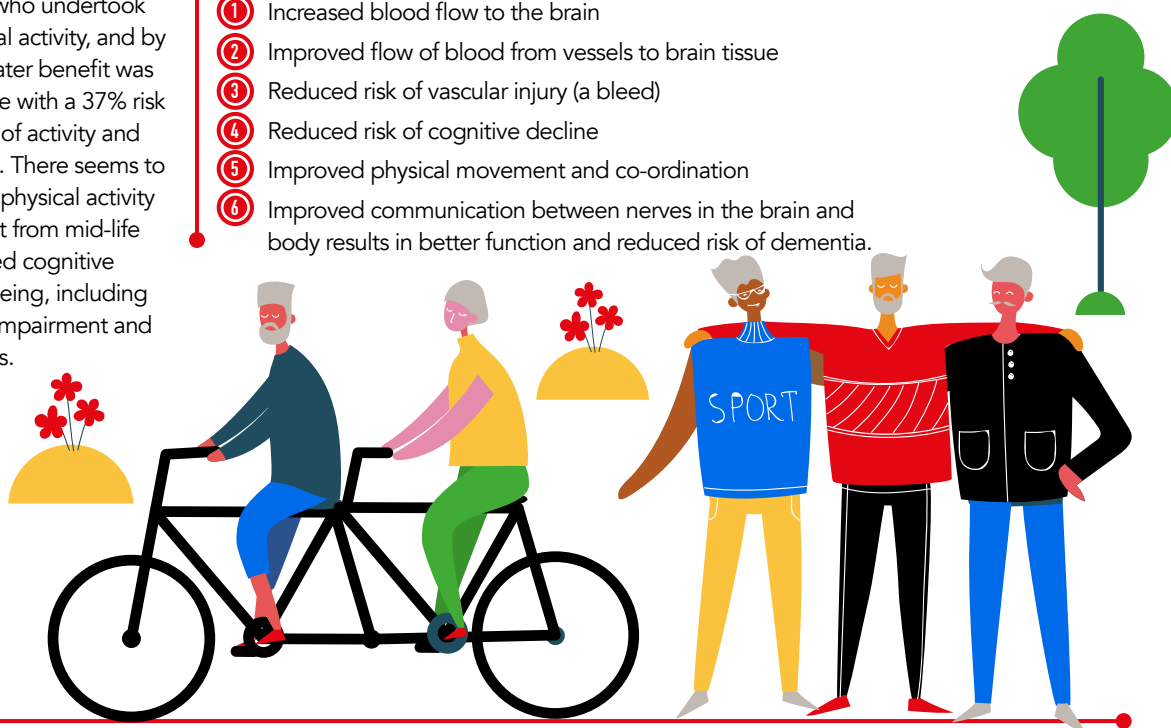
- ① **Promote brain health** and reduce the risk of dementia and other cognitive diseases
- ② **Prevent frailty, falls and improve mobility**, helping you maintain your independence
- ③ **Reduce stress and anxiety** and improve your mood, improve socialisation, reduce loneliness and depression, and improve your general wellbeing.

The protective effect of physical activity against all-cause dementia has been shown to reduce dementia incidence by as much as 21% in those who undertook moderate levels of physical activity, and by 24% with high levels. Greater benefit was seen in Alzheimer's disease with a 37% risk reduction with high levels of activity and 29% with moderate levels. There seems to be a protective benefit of physical activity where regular involvement from mid-life is associated with improved cognitive outcomes and positive ageing, including the absence of cognitive impairment and mental health impairments.

### Essentially, what is good for the heart is good for the brain – studies have shown that the same sort of exercise that benefits cardiovascular function also reduces the risk of dementia, with:

- ① Increased blood flow to the brain
- ② Improved flow of blood from vessels to brain tissue
- ③ Reduced risk of vascular injury (a bleed)
- ④ Reduced risk of cognitive decline
- ⑤ Improved physical movement and co-ordination
- ⑥ Improved communication between nerves in the brain and body results in better function and reduced risk of dementia.

You may have some specific concerns about starting to do more physical activity some of which we have addressed in the table below.



Concern	Advice
I am worried about exercising in public or with strangers, it may increase my anxiety and agitation	<b>All of these concerns are real and appreciated.</b> Physical activity must be fun and enjoyable for you to continue doing it long-term and therefore reap the health rewards. It also needs to be safe and add value to your day, not make it any more stressful.
I am worried that encouraging physical activity may increase the risk of wandering or getting lost	<b>You may need to try different activities or classes until you find something you enjoy.</b>
I don't have the right facilities or support	<b>Groups are a wonderful way of socialising</b> , engage verbally with others, use recall and memory and have mental stimulation at the same time as exercising. And a group is also a safe place where people can guide you. There are many organisations and charities that have group classes, enquire through your physical therapist or doctor.
I am worried about doing something wrong	<b>If you plan to exercise outdoors</b> ensure you have a friend or family accompany you – it's more fun than doing it alone and safer as you won't fear 'wandering' or getting disoriented.
I am unsteady on my feet and fear falling?	<b>Physical activity will strengthen your muscles and stabilise your joints offer better support.</b> More activity also improves the communication, by your nerves, between your brain, legs and feet which results in better balance and co-ordination reducing your risk of falls. Start exercising with someone or in a group where there is a safe supervised environment to prevent falls.

# Making everyday life more active

Apart from formal exercise or group activities, you can build activity into your everyday life. Small changes will ultimately make big differences to your quality of life.

Ideas for making everyday life more active include:

- Swimming or aqua
- Playing with grandchildren
- Singing
- Walking club
- Exercise class
- Pilates, yoga, Thai Chi



- Home-based exercises
- Stand during advert break
- Walking
- Singing
- Gardening
- Housework
- Walking the dog

- Take active breaks
- Walking meetings
- Stand when on the telephone
- Stand at your desk
- Take stairs instead of lift

- Cycling
- Walk
- Park further away in the car park
- On public transport get off a stop earlier and walk



## The Last Word

A good idea before starting an activity is to sit down with your therapist or even a family member or friend and write down what it is you want to achieve. Set goals, easy achievable ones initially. These will help build self-esteem and confidence. Then you can start looking from short-term easier goals (which may be as simple as walking 10 minutes every day, or achieving a walk around the block 3 times a week) to middle- and long-term ones, extending over the coming months and year.

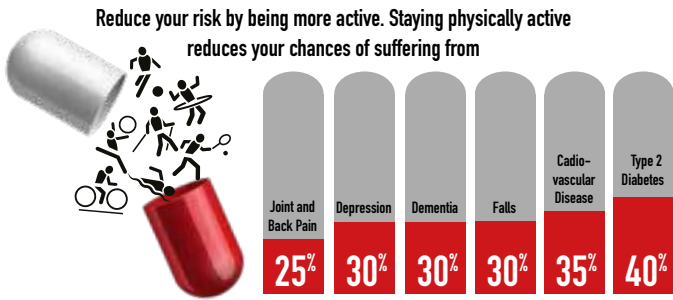
'Action planning' is the next step. Write down what you are going to do each day or as a weekly plan. Keeping these plans, together with a daily diary, will help you stay motivated and see the improvements over time. You can use self-monitoring devices like pedometers, wrist-worn accelerometers or smartphones to keep track of your daily step count. There are also many activity apps that can be downloaded to mobile phones to help you monitor your activity levels, motivate

you or provide you with daily exercise routines. Get help and advice from your physical therapist about what would best suit you and your condition.

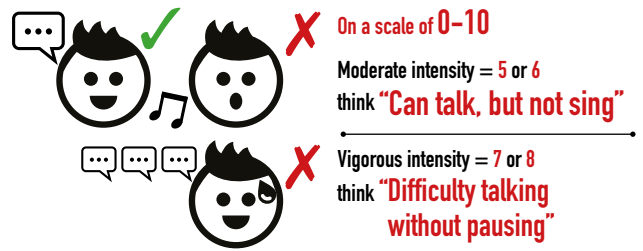
Make sure you have support – be it family and friends or a physical therapist, support group or exercise programme. The right support will be invaluable in keeping you motivated and encouraged, particularly on those bad days, and make you accountable for changing your life!

# Gold Standard Exercise Recommendations for Health

## If Exercise Was A Pill



## What is Moderate Intensity Versus Vigorous Intensity Activity?

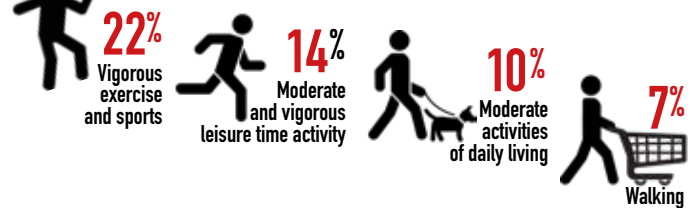


## What Activity Should I Be Doing If I'm Between the Ages of 5-17?

- 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity – every day
- > 60 minutes daily will give even better health benefits
- Most of the daily physical activity should be aerobic
- But should incorporate vigorous – intensity activities that strengthen muscle and bone, at least 3 times per week



## How Activity Intensity Reduces Your Risk of Dying



Reference: Domains of physical activity and all-cause mortality: systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis of cohort studies. <http://bit.ly/2S7BXOW>

## What Activity Should I Be Doing If I'm Between 18-64?

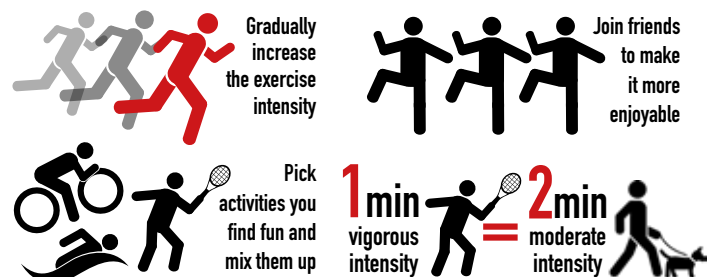
- 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity each week, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity
- Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes
- 300 minutes of moderate-intensity or 150 of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity brings even greater health benefits
- Muscle-strengthening activities should be done involving major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week.



## First Steps to Being More Active



**TIP** If you are starting out try breaking your daily goal into shorter bouts of 10 minutes at a time



## What Activity Should I Be Doing If I'm Over 65 Years of Age?

- 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity each week, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity
- Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes
- 300 minutes of moderate-intensity or 150 of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity brings even greater health benefits
- Activities that enhance balance and prevent falls on 3 or more days per week
- Muscle-strengthening activities should be done involving major muscle groups, on 2 or more days a week
- The goal is to be as physically active as your abilities and conditions allow.



Reference: Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health, World Health Organisation 2018