

This week we will look at:

Be Active

Each week we will look at one of the 'Five ways to wellbeing':

- Connect
- Be Active
- Try Something New
- Give
- Take Notice

Having a good balance in these five areas of your life has been proven to increase people's health and happiness.

Being physically active is not only great for your physical health and fitness, but evidence also shows that it can also improve your mental wellbeing.

It can help you feel good both on the inside and out. It does this by causing chemical changes in your brain, which can help to positively change your mood and can help with:

- Raising your self-esteem
- Setting goals or challenges and achieving them
- Reducing anxiety and stress

Being physically active might be something new for you, or you may already do exercise/sports, but the current situation is restricting what you are able to do and how you would normally do this. Find something that you enjoy doing or want to do. It is okay if you do not know what this is yet, now is a good time to experiment and find out...



Learn a new way of being active

Ever wanted to learn a new skill/exercise/activity, but never had the opportunity? Having a bit of extra time at the moment, could be the perfect occasion to learn the basics and practice. Try and choose something you enjoy, and that fits into your daily life. This might be perfecting that signature dance move, your martial arts routine or seeing how many kick-ups you can do.

Try searching 'learn how to...' on YouTube!

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Get creative with your activities

Getting active does not have to be long or intense. You could mix things up by taking part in fun challenges individually, in a group, or even online. More and more different exercise/relaxation/fitness classes are being streamed or broadcast over live video chat services online, which you can pick and choose to take part in.

Here is a link to some videos of workouts you can do in the comfort of your home:

<https://bit.ly/3blZnUQ>

Getting active at home

We know that staying active can be good for your mental health, but if you are unable to leave the house for any reason, staying active can feel like a challenge.

Suggested activity: Here is a link to a ten minute cardio workout you can do at home, which includes star jumps, squats and burpees:

<https://bit.ly/2wc1xxc>

Or you can learn how to juggle:

<https://bit.ly/2R4XWrX>

The outdoors

If things are becoming too much being stuck indoors or you need a change of scenery, then being active outdoors can be a good way to break up the day and let off some steam.

Getting fresh air is really important, staying indoors all the time is not good for your mental health. This could be walking to the local shop or around the block, or spending some time in your garden or yard if you have one, which also gives you time to reflect on things.

Suggested mindful activity: Go for a walk in your local area, without taking any distractions (e.g. phone/music). Try to notice what is around you. Count in your head how many:

- moving objects you can see
- sounds or noises you can hear
- things you can smell in the air



Take it slow

Try not to do too much, too quickly. Build up gradually, whether this is walking, running, cycling or lifting weights. Remember, we cannot become a marathon runner or professional weightlifter in a week. Doing too much exercise at one time can overwork our body and could result in injury, which no one wants to happen. Allow your body to have a rest.

It is important to make sure that you stretch before and after doing any physical exercise. **Here is a link for some recommended stretching exercises that you can do:**

<https://bit.ly/39BsOqk>





Make a plan

Having a plan of what exercise and when you intend to do this can be very helpful, something to work towards and become part of your routine, adding structure to your day.

Give it a go... write down, either on a piece of paper or on your phone, a rough plan of the days, time, duration and activity you aim to do over the next week, and try to stick to it.

Getting active with others:

You do not have to go it alone. Going for a walk, run or cycle with a member of your household could be helpful. You can be there to motivate each other and this can also be a good time to talk and connect.

Music

Whether you have on your headphones out in public or through your speakers at home, music can be a great way of helping to become motivated, focused and get in the right mind-set when exercising. This could be fast paced pumping music for when going on a run or relaxing music whilst doing yoga, pick the style of music to fit what workout you will be doing and set the pace.

Suggested activity: Create a playlist of ten tracks that you think will help you with your chosen activity, and next time you are being active, press “play” and see if this helps.



Have a look at these links for more information:

5 steps to mental wellbeing from the NHS
<https://bit.ly/2wMPois>

5 Ways to Wellbeing from Mindkit
<https://bit.ly/2xw9j5g>

How to stay active at home from Mind
<https://bit.ly/2X2bPLe>

Getting active at home and outdoors from Mind
<https://bit.ly/2xLjza4>

