



# Physical activity and your mental health

Information about how physical activity can help your mental health, and tips for choosing an activity that works for you, and how to overcome anything that might stop you from becoming more active.

If you require this information in Word document format for compatibility with screen readers, please email: [publications@mind.org.uk](mailto:publications@mind.org.uk)

## Contents

What is physical activity? .....	2
What type of activity might work for me? .....	3
How can I start getting active? .....	6
How much activity should I do?.....	9
What should I consider before I start getting active? .....	10
What if getting active doesn't work for me?.....	13
Useful contacts .....	14

## What is physical activity?

Being physically active means sitting down less and moving our bodies more. Many people find that physical activity helps them maintain positive mental health, either on its own, or in combination with other treatments.

This doesn't have to mean running marathons or training every day at the gym. There are lots of different things you can do to be a bit more active. For ideas, see our information on [choosing an activity](#). We also have some tips to help you [get started](#), and information about [how much activity is healthy](#).

However, it can be difficult to be physically active, especially if you are [feeling unwell](#). We have information which you may find helpful if:

- you have particular physical or mental health considerations that you need to think about [before you start getting active](#)
- you feel like, right now, [physical activity isn't working for you](#).

## How can physical activity help my mental health?

There are many studies which have shown that doing physical activity can improve mental health. For example, it can help with:

- **better [sleep](#)** – by making you feel more tired at the end of the day
- **happier moods** – physical activity releases feel-good hormones that make you feel better in yourself and give you more energy
- **managing [stress](#), [anxiety](#) or intrusive and racing thoughts** – doing something physical releases cortisol which helps us manage stress. Being physically active also gives your brain something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times.

*"I've always found that exercise is the one thing that gets me well again, with depression, it's invaluable. It makes me feel great, just healthy and active. I don't feel as tired or lethargic when I exercise and it makes me happy and content in myself."*

- **better [self-esteem](#)** – being more active can make you feel better about yourself as you improve and meet your goals
- **reducing the risk of [depression](#)** – studies have shown that doing regular physical activity can reduce the likelihood of experiencing a period of depression
- **connecting with people** – doing group or team activities can help you meet new and like-minded people, and make new friends.

But physical activity isn't always helpful for everyone's mental health. You may find that it is helpful at some times and not others, or just that [it doesn't work for you](#). For some people, physical activity can start to have a negative impact on their mental health, for example, if you have an eating problem or tend to [overtrain](#).

*"Exercise ... can seem like [an] impossible challenge when you're having a tough time."*

## What if I'm feeling unwell?

When you're feeling unwell, it can be really hard to get started and it can be frustrating when people tell you about the benefits of being more active.

If you're in a really bad place, don't be too hard on yourself if you can't exercise. It can be easy to start feeling guilty or beat yourself up about not exercising, and this can start to contribute to feeling unwell.

You may need to focus on other things for a while, and build some physical activity into your routine once you're feeling a bit better. It's important to find a balance, and figure out what works best for you.

## What type of activity might work for me?

Being physically active tends to be easier if you choose an activity that you enjoy, and that fits into your daily life. If you force yourself to do something you don't enjoy, you're much less likely to keep it going and experience benefits to your mental health.

There are lots of different things you can try – not everybody will enjoy or feel comfortable doing all of these activities, so you may need to try a few before you find something you like. You may also find that different things work for you at different times, depending on how you're feeling.

If you think you might find it hard to get going with any of these things, we have [information which may help you get started](#).

## Activities at home

- **Try to sit less** – if you spend lots of time sitting down, try to get up and move around a bit every hour. If you're worried you might forget, you could set an alarm to remind yourself.
- **Chair-based exercises** – if you have mobility problems, a physical condition, or find it difficult spending time out of a chair, [the NHS website has activity routines you can try while sitting down](#).
- **Play an active computer game** – there are a few different gaming consoles you could try which involve actively moving your body while playing computer games.
- **Do exercises or stretches at home** – the [NHS website has lots of different routines](#), or you could try an exercise CD or DVD.
- **Do an online activity programme** – there are lots of free, online exercise regimes designed for you to try at home, including everything from chair-based exercises to yoga and cardio workouts.
- **Do active household chores**, like hoovering, tidying or DIY.

- **Include more activity in your day-to-day routine** – run up the stairs instead of walking, carry your bags of shopping in one at a time or do some gentle stretching while you're watching TV.
- **Dance** – put on some music while you're cooking and dance around your kitchen, or have a mini dance party with your friends or family.

*"It calms my mind, it stops me ruminating, it actively lifts my mood and it makes me feel a lot more positive about life."*

## Activities out and about

- **Walk a bit more** – to work, to the shops, or to the end of the road and back.
- **Play a game in the park** – for example, frisbee, tag or a game of catch.
- **Try a new sport, or join a team, group or exercise class** – the [Be Inspired](#) website has lots of information about what different sports and activities are like, and how to get involved.
- **Volunteer outdoors** – [The Conservation Volunteers](#) and [The Wildlife Trusts](#) run outdoor volunteering projects around the UK.
- **Find your local leisure centre** – leisure centres have a range of sports facilities, such as badminton and squash courts, and run exercise classes and groups, such as Zumba and aerobics. They often feel more inclusive than private gyms, and many have discount schemes and childcare facilities. Check your [local council website](#) to find your nearest centre.
- **Try a dance class** – from Zumba to swing, ballroom or dancercise, the [NHS website has a directory of classes in your local area](#).
- **Walking or running groups** – [Walking for Health](#), [Let's Walk Cymru](#), [Ramblers](#) and [Run Together](#) all organise free, inclusive local groups with trained volunteers.

*"I'm not the sporty type, but I love walking. It really lifts my mood."*

- **Outdoors gyms** – some local parks have free outdoors gym equipment you can use. You can try your local council website to find the location of any outdoor gyms near you.
- **Cycling** – whether riding to the shops or to work, or going on long bike rides at the weekend, the [Sustrans](#) website has lots of ideas for routes and information about safe cycling to get you started.
- **Adventure gaming apps** – some gaming apps are a great opportunity to explore outside.
- A mindful sport, such as [yoga](#), [pilates](#), [tai chi](#) or [Nordic walking](#) – the NHS website has information about what these involve and how to find classes.
- **Gardening or seated gardening** – the [Carry on Gardening](#) website has information about gardening for emotional wellbeing and with particular disabilities. If you don't

have a garden at home, the [Social Farms & Gardens](#) website has details of community garden and farms around the UK.

- **Be active in nature** – our information on [nature and mental health](#) has lots of ideas for getting active outdoors.
- **Swimming** – [swimming.org](#) has a search tool to find your local pool, information about adult swim classes and water-based sports such as aqua aerobics, aqua Zumba, water polo and synchronised swimming, as well as pool exercises you can do on your own.

*“Swimming has helped me. The pool is one of my safe places now and I go twice a week. It means that I’m tired at the end of the day so I can sleep much better, and I feel happier about my body.”*

## Motivation and extra support

- **Music** – putting music or a podcast on your headphones can help distract, entertain or motivate you while you exercise.
- **Apps and programmes**, such as the NHS's [Strength and Flex](#) and [Couch to 5K](#), give you step-by-step programmes to follow, include information about how to exercise safely and help keep you motivated.
- **Enjoy alone time** – being active alone can provide a good way to reflect on how you're feeling or practise being mindful.
- **Online communities** – you could check in with other people who are also trying to get more active on an online community, such as Mind's community [Elefriends](#). This can help you stay motivated and connect with others in a similar situation.
- **Ask for recommendations** – some activities are more inclusive than others. Try asking your GP, friends or an online community like Elefriends for recommendations and tips.
- **Raise money for charity** – many charities, including [Mind](#), support people who want to do an active challenge, like an organised run or bike ride, and use it as a chance to raise funds and support the charity's work.
- If you **identify as female**, check out the [This Girl Can](#) website for lots of ideas, from trying a new sport to being more active as part of your day-to-day life.
- **Exercise with other people** – many people find that joining a group or getting active with someone they know – like a friend, family member, colleague or support worker – can be motivating and make a new activity more enjoyable.

*“The thought of going to a gym on my own terrified me but I started going to various exercise classes with a friend. The difference it made to my mental health was incredible.”*

## Disability, mental health and inclusive activities

- **Disability sports** – the [NHS](#) and [Disability Sports Wales](#) websites list local organisations that offer disability sports in your area, whatever your disability or level of fitness.
- **Walking sports** – many sports are available in a walking version, such as walking football, walking hockey or walking basketball.
- **Inclusive gyms** – the [Activity Alliance](#) has information about inclusive gyms and leisure centres, which offer welcoming and accessible environments for people with disabilities. This includes a search tool to help you find an accredited inclusive gym in your area.
- **Try an NHS routine** – the [NHS website has tips and routines for people with disabilities](#) who want to get more active, as well as [fitness guides for wheelchair users](#).
- **Specific activities for people with a mental health problem** – some local Minds offer physical activity sessions through Mind's [Get Set to Go programme](#).
- **Ask for a referral to a physical activity scheme** – if you have a mental health problem, your GP may be able to refer you to a physical activity programme.

## How can I start getting active?

It can be difficult to start being more active, particularly if you're not feeling well or you feel like there are things getting in the way.

These are some tips to help you get started.

### How to get started

- **Start off slowly.** It may take a while to build up your fitness. Doing too much at first will make you feel tired and may put you off.
- **Plan a realistic and achievable routine.** Try to find ways to be active that fit into your day-to-day life around your commitments, or build activity into your daily life. Trying to move a bit more every day can really help.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Sometimes you can't be as active as you would like, and your energy levels will vary on different days. It's fine to slow down or take a break.
- **Try to identify your triggers and work around them.** For example, if you find leaving the house difficult or don't like to exercise in front of other people, you could try doing some exercise at home.
- **Keep trying.** It may take a while to find an activity you like. As well as trying different activities, you may find that you prefer a particular class, instructor or group.

*“Although I love many aspects of running, it also brings out my capacity for guilt and self-criticism. There can be quite a lot of “no excuses” and “man up” type messages in the running world and I really struggle to keep these in perspective at times.”*

- **Work with your highs and lows.** If you take medication that leaves you feeling exhausted in the mornings, let yourself rest and build in some exercise later on. If you find that exercising in the evenings affects your sleep, try doing some activity earlier in the day. You may also have periods of time when you're unable to exercise because of your mental health – that's OK. Let yourself have a break if you need it, and start again once you're feeling better.
- **Have some alternatives.** If you can't be as active as you would like, it's a good idea to have alternative options that will help lift your mood. See our [information on self-care](#) for ideas.
- **Try not to compare yourself to other people.** Set your own goals based on your own abilities and what you would like to achieve. Try to pay attention to how you are feeling and the progress you are making rather than other people.

## Get Set To Go

[Mind's Get Set To Go programme](#) has lots of helpful information if you want to get more active but you're finding it difficult. For example, if you:

- feel like you aren't a sporty type
- don't feel very confident doing exercise, or comfortable with your body
- feel low in energy
- don't have much money to spend on exercise.

There are also [personal stories from people who have found ways to be more active and help improve their mental health](#).

*"I have done some fantastic activities [with Get Set to Go], had loads of fun and sampled sports that I've never had the chance to try before."*

## Free and low-cost activities

- **Find activities you can do for free.** The [NHS website has lots of ideas for getting active without spending any money](#).
- **Look for local schemes and discounts.** Some councils offer cheaper leisure centre memberships for people who want to be physically active, especially if you have a health problem or are inactive, so it's worth checking your council's website. Many private gyms also offer free trials or discounts.
- Many **local Minds** also run physical activity sessions at minimal cost – you can [contact your local Mind](#) and ask what they offer.

*"Parkrun has given me the confidence to really believe in myself and keep my depression at bay."*

## If you need a confidence boost

- **Look for groups of like-minded people.** Some leisure centres and sports clubs provide sessions aimed at people with mental health problems. This can be a great way of boosting your confidence levels.
- **Go with someone else.** Some clubs will allow you to attend with someone you know, such as a friend, family member, colleague or support worker, for the first few sessions while you get used to the new surroundings.
- **Consider doing an activity on your own.** There's lots of options if you prefer not to be active with other people. Walking, running or cycling are great physical activity - they can help you clear your head and can be built into your daily routine.

*"When I'm feeling low, I crank up the music and hit the streets; it stops me heading to a really dark place."*

## If you feel conscious about your body

- **Remember that you're not alone.** Most people have worries about their bodies, and other people may well be feeling self-conscious too.
- **Find an inclusive class.** There are lots of classes where you will find people of all shapes and sizes. For example, you may be able to find a friendly Zumba class in your community centre or local walking group.
- **You could look for women- or men-only sessions.** Many leisure centres and swimming pools run women- or men-only sessions, which may provide an environment in which you feel more comfortable being active.

*"In my aqua classes there are people of all shapes and sizes – and honestly no one cares."*

## If you're struggling with your mental health

- Look for **activities specifically aimed at people with mental health problems.** Some sports and leisure providers have sessions for people with mental health problems. Your local Mind may also provides access to different types of physical activity – you can [contact your local Mind](#) and ask what they can offer.

### Exercise on prescription

If you have a diagnosis of mild to moderate depression, or if you are physically unwell, your GP may be able to refer you to a physical activity programme to help improve your mental and physical health – this is also called **exercise on prescription**.

In this type of programme, sessions usually last from 45 minutes to 1 hour, and take place at least three times a week over a 10–14 week period. The sessions often take place at a local leisure centre. If you think this might work for you, talk to your GP.



[Read Laura's blog](#) about why, at times, she's found running and training for races difficult mentally.

Want to add your story? [Find out more about blogging for us.](#)

## How much activity should I do?

There are lots of benefits to being more active, and any amount of physical activity can help. You don't have to begin a vigorous training plan to start feeling better.

How much activity you decide to do is personal to you. This will depend on your current level of activity and fitness, and what you can fit in with your day-to-day life.

There may also be things that affect how much activity is safe for you to do, such as medication you might be taking, an eating problem, anxiety, OCD, or a physical health condition. See our information on [what to do before you start exercising](#) if you think these things may affect you.

What's important is that you work out what feels realistic for you at the moment. This may change from time to time, depending on how you are feeling, and what you are able to do.

## NHS guidelines

The [NHS website has information about how much exercise a person is recommended to do each week](#), and how intense (moderate or vigorous) this activity would ideally be. The NHS's information includes examples of activities which count as moderate or vigorous exercise.

However, it's important to remember that this is just a guide based on the average person, and it's OK if you don't feel like you can achieve this right now. The important thing is to start to try to increase your activity levels, and to find something that works for you.

## Overtraining

Doing too much physical activity can be as unhealthy as doing too little. This is called overtraining or overexercise.

Overtraining can have a negative impact on both your mental and physical health. For example, it can:

- cause **injury and long-term physical damage** to tendons, ligaments, bones, cartilage and joints.
- destroy **muscle mass**.
- become **life-threatening** - if your body isn't getting enough nutrition, it is forced to break down muscle for energy.

- have a negative impact on **your relationships, mood and ability to function** in other areas of your life.

## How can I spot if I'm overtraining?

It can be really hard to spot that you are starting to overtrain. Some signs that you may be overtraining include:

- **Never having a day off** – including training when injured or unwell.
- Physical activity has started to affect your **relationships, work, hobbies or other responsibilities**.
- You feel **anxious or irritable** if you miss a session.
- You constantly feel you have to **push yourself** to go further, faster or heavier.
- You **no longer enjoy it** but feel it's something you have to do.

## How can I stop myself from overtraining?

If you feel like you are overtraining, it can help to:

- **Re-focus** - re-assess why you wanted to be active in the first place and what you enjoy about it.
- **Try a new activity or mix up your routine**.
- **Try a less competitive sport or atmosphere** – like tai chi, yoga or pilates, or a different class or instructor.
- **Limit your exercise time** to a healthy schedule - for example, sessions of 30 minutes, 5 times a week.
- **Listen to your body** - have some time off if you need it, or if you're in pain or unwell.
- **Take a break** - you may need to stop exercising for a while to focus on other things.
- **Seek help** - you may need to get support if you feel like overtraining is starting to have a negative impact on your mental or physical health - for example, by [visiting your GP](#).

## What should I consider before I start getting active?

If you have a mental health problem, or if you're physically unwell, there may be certain things that might affect the type and amount of activity you can do. It's important to think about these before you start getting active, to make sure what you're doing is safe.

### Medication

Some [medication](#) can cause side effects that affect the type and amount of physical activity that is safe for you to do. Always check with your GP before you start a new routine, or if you change your medication or dose.

For example:

- Some [antidepressants](#) can cause dizziness, high or low blood pressure, or affect your heart rate.
- [Antipsychotics](#) can cause muscle spasms, disturbed heart rhythm and palpitations, drowsiness, blurred vision or dizziness.
- [Beta-blockers](#) slow your heart rate and lower your blood pressure, so your heart will work harder when exercising. You may need to adjust how you exercise to avoid becoming exhausted by this.
- If you take [lithium](#), you should check with a GP before doing any physical activity. This is because losing fluid from your body during exercise (for example, by sweating) can sometimes increase the concentration of lithium in your blood to a harmful level.
- [Tranquillisers](#), for example [benzodiazepines](#) like Diazepam, can slow your reaction times, or cause drowsiness, dizziness or unsteadiness.

## Anxiety or panic attacks

If you experience [anxiety or panic attacks](#), you might find that some of the physical sensations you get while exercising, such as raised heart rate, feeling shaky or dizzy, breathlessness or feeling hot, can feel similar to a panic attack. This can then cause you to feel anxious, and may cause a panic attack.

If you experience this:

- **Start off slowly.** This may help you spot the difference between the effects of physical activity and a panic attack.
- **Do a gentler activity.** An activity that focuses on strength and stretching, such as yoga or tai chi, may work better for you than one that requires more intense exercise.
- **Take deep, slow breaths.** This may help stop you hyperventilating. Focus on breathing out.
- **Avoid triggering situations.** For example, if you want to avoid crowds or travelling, you could go jogging or walking in a local park, or try exercising at home.

## Eating problems

Many people with [eating problems](#) have a complex relationship with exercise, and [overtraining](#) can become an unhealthy part of your condition. However, physical activity can still be a positive part of your recovery – you may just need to be more careful about the type and amount of activity you do.

If you have, or are recovering from, an eating problem, it is a good idea to talk this through with your GP before you start an activity.

[Read Angela's blog about taking on a difficult trek to Iceland while living with an eating problem, depression and anxiety, and how the challenge helped her mental health.](#)

## Compulsive or addictive feelings

Some people experience compulsive or addictive feelings about physical activity (sometimes called an exercise addiction), which can lead to harmful [overtraining](#). These feelings can be a form, or a symptom, of [obsessive-compulsive disorder \(OCD\)](#), or part of an [eating problem](#).

If you tend to experience compulsive or addictive feelings about exercise, or start to experience them once you start doing more physical activity, it is a good idea to talk to your GP about how to manage this or think about [seeking help](#).

## Physical health conditions

For many people with a physical health condition, doing an appropriate amount of physical activity can be an important part of managing your condition and avoiding future health problems. However, depending on your condition, you may need to be more careful about the type and amount of activity you do, to make sure what you are doing is safe and won't have a negative impact on your health.

You should be particularly careful if you have:

- high blood pressure
- chest pains
- a heart condition
- diabetes
- are pregnant or have recently given birth
- an injury.

Always check with your GP about what is safe for you before you start any physical activity.

### Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaires

Some sports clubs, gyms and leisure centres may ask you to complete a short health questionnaire before letting you use the facilities and equipment (often referred to as a PAR-Q, or physical activity readiness questionnaire). These questionnaires focus mainly on making sure you are physically healthy enough to use the facilities and activities that the club, gym or centre offers, so you shouldn't be asked to disclose any mental health problems as part of the questionnaire.

But if you are concerned that a mental health problem may affect your ability to do any activities, you can still mention this on the questionnaire. You could also ask to discuss this with somebody who works at the club, gym or centre, if you think that will put you at ease about starting an activity.

Depending on your answers, you may be asked to have a check-up with your GP before participating in any activities. This may seem overcautious, but it's really important to make sure if it's safe for you to do more physical activity, and if so, what type and amount of activity is appropriate for you.

## What if getting active doesn't work for me?

While many people find physical activity helpful, not everyone does. You may find that there are times when it is helpful, and times when it isn't.

For example:

- **You may not always be able to exercise** – if you are unwell, you may need to focus on looking after your mental health in other ways.
- **It may not help** – there may be days, weeks or months when physical activity doesn't make you feel better, and you may need other types of support.
- **For some people, exercise can make mental health worse** – it can trigger [anxiety](#), be part of a mental health problem like [obsessive-compulsive disorder \(OCD\)](#) or an [eating problem](#), or you may start to [overtrain](#).
- **You may be taking medication or have a physical health condition** that means you can't exercise or need to take particular care when doing any physical activity, either for a while or longer term.

If you find that physical activity isn't working for you right now, there are a few things you can do:

- **Try changing your routine, or doing a different type of activity.** Different things work for different people at different times – [there are lots of activities you can try](#).
- **Do what you can when you can.** It's completely normal to have days when you wake up excited about going for a run, and other days when walking upstairs feels like a challenge. It's OK to adapt your physical activity to how you're feeling.
- **Be gentle with yourself.** If you don't manage to do what you were planning, that's OK. Have a break, and try again when you're feeling better.
- **Try out some [other ways of caring for yourself](#),** like relaxation, mindfulness and getting into nature.

- If you're struggling to manage your mental health on your own, [seek help](#). You might want to talk to your GP about possible treatments, such as [medication](#) or a [talking therapy](#).
- If you're finding that exercise is having a negative impact on your mental health, **you may need to take a longer-term break** until you're feeling better.

If you've tried being physically active and it hasn't helped, **it's important not to blame yourself**. Looking after your mental health can be really difficult, especially when you're not feeling well. It can take time, but many people find that when they have the right combination of treatments, self-care and support, it is possible to feel better.

## Useful contacts

### Mind's services

- **Helplines** – all our helplines provide information and support by phone and email. Our Blue Light Infoline is just for emergency service staff, volunteers and their families.
  - Mind's Infoline – 0300 123 3393, [info@mind](mailto:info@mind)
  - Mind's Legal Line – 0300 466 6463, [legal@mind](mailto:legal@mind)
  - Blue Light Infoline – 0300 303 5999, [bluelightinfo@mind](mailto:bluelightinfo@mind)
- **Local Minds** – there are over 140 local Minds across England and Wales which provide services such as [talking treatments](#), [peer support](#), and [advocacy](#). [Find your local Mind here](#), and contact them directly to see how they can help.
- **Elefriends** is a supportive online community for anyone experiencing a mental health problem. See our [Elefriends page](#) for details.

## Who else could help?

### Active Partnerships

[activepartnerships.org](http://activepartnerships.org)

A network of 43 local organisations across England that support sport and physical activity opportunities for participants, coaches and volunteers. Has a search tool to find your nearest partnership, with opportunities to be active in your local area.

### Activity Alliance

[activityalliance.org.uk](http://activityalliance.org.uk)

Supports disabled people to become more active. Provides information about how to start, where to find inclusive programmes and gyms, and personal stories about getting more active with a disability.

### Be Inspired

[beinspireduk.org/play](https://beinspireduk.org/play)

Guides on how to get started with a range of different sports, including how to find a local organisation and clubs, as well as ideas for exercising on a budget, and with a disability.

## Carry on Gardening

[carryongardening.org.uk](https://carryongardening.org.uk)

Practical tips for gardening for emotional wellbeing, especially for anybody with a disability.

## Disability Sports Wales

[disabilitysportwales.com](https://disabilitysportwales.com)

Provides a search function to help you find organisations and classes in Wales offering inclusive activities for people with disabilities, including behavioural and learning difficulties.

## Get Set to Go

[getsetto.go.mind.org.uk](https://getsetto.go.mind.org.uk)

Mind offers physical activity programmes for people with mental health problems through local Minds and online.

## Let's Walk Cymru

[letswalkcymru.org.uk](https://letswalkcymru.org.uk)

Organises groups walks and provides walking information for Wales.

## NHS Live Well

[nhs.uk/live-well](https://nhs.uk/live-well)

Offers resources on physical activity, including tips on being more active, exercise programmes and the Couch to 5K app, and activity ideas if you have a physical disability or if you're on a budget. Includes information on finding classes for walking, cycling, dance, yoga, pilates and Tai Chi.

## parkrun

[parkrun.org.uk](https://parkrun.org.uk)

Organises free, weekly, 5km timed runs across the UK, which are open to everyone.

## Ramblers

[ramblers.org.uk](https://ramblers.org.uk)

Organises group walks in cities and the countryside, and has information about walks and getting started.

## Run Together

[runtogether.co.uk/groups](https://runtogether.co.uk/groups)

A directory of running groups across the UK. Supports mental health via a network of Mental Health Champions and #runandtalk events.

## Social Farms & Gardens

[farmgarden.org.uk](https://farmgarden.org.uk)

Has a directory of community farms and gardens around the UK.

## Sustrans

[sustrans.org.uk](https://sustrans.org.uk)

Provides information about taking up cycling, including information about cycle safety, and ideas and maps for local rides.

## Swimming.org

[swimming.org](https://swimming.org)

Has a search tool to find your local swimming pool, information about adult swim classes and water-based sports, as well as pool exercises you can do on your own.

## The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)

[tcv.org.uk/greengum](https://tcv.org.uk/greengum)

Runs free outdoor sessions working on conservation projects around the UK.

## The National Trust

[nationaltrust.org.uk](https://nationaltrust.org.uk)

Outdoor spaces around the UK.

## The Wildlife Trusts

[wildlifetrusts.org/closer-to-nature/volunteer](https://wildlifetrusts.org/closer-to-nature/volunteer)

Runs outdoors volunteering opportunities around the UK.

## The Woodland Trust

[woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods](https://woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods)

Has information about woodland walks and activities around the UK.

## This Girl Can



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[thisgirlcan.co.uk/activities](https://thisgirlcan.co.uk/activities)

Ideas to help anyone who identifies as female become more active, providing information about a wide range of sports and other activities, including ways to add more activity in your day-to-day life.

## Walking for Health

[walkingforhealth.org.uk](https://walkingforhealth.org.uk)

Supports a network of walking groups across England.

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References are available on request.