

Warm up and cool down

Walk or jog at an easy pace for five to seven minutes until you feel warm all over.

Loosen up the joints and muscles by doing the following stretches:

- Hold each stretch for 10 seconds.
- Repeat each stretch two to three times.
- Breathe normally and slowly.

Shoulder roll

Lift your shoulders up. Circle them forwards and down. Now circle them up, back and down.



Stretch the back of your leg

Put one leg in front of the other. Bend the back leg and ease back onto it as if you were about to sit on a chair. Keep your back straight. Feel the stretch along the back of the straight leg. Repeat on the other side.



Stretch the front of your thigh

Use a chair or the wall for balance. Stand on one foot with your knee slightly bent and hold the other foot as shown. Ease your foot upwards until you can feel a slight stretch on the front of your thigh. Change legs and repeat.



Stretch your calf

Stand with one leg in front of you and bend the knee. Lean forward keeping your back leg and your back straight. Repeat with the other leg forward.



Stretch your whole body

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Raise your arms over your head. Slowly begin to stretch upwards.



Activity check

- 1 Are you physically active in the home (for example gardening, vacuuming or cleaning windows or floors)?

never	
some days	
every day	

- 2 Are you physically active at work?

not active (sitting and driving)	
light activity (some walking)	
heavy manual labour	

- 3 Do you do any physical leisure activities (for example, walking, cycling or dancing)?

never	
some	
most days	

- 4 When you exercise, do you do so:

lightly	
moderately	
or vigorously ?	

- 5 How would you describe your weight?

more than two stone overweight	
about two stone overweight	
fine, maybe a little overweight	

- 6 Would you describe yourself as fit for your life?

very unfit	
quite fit	
very fit	

Mostly green - Well done. Keep up the level of physical activity in your daily routine.

Mostly blue - Try to include more activity in your weekly schedule and aim to include at least three sessions of 30 minutes continuous aerobic activity

Mostly orange - You need to be more active. Start gradually and work towards building up to about 30 minutes of any activity most days of the week.

Guidelines for being active

- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes, five days of the week. Activity can be spread over 2-3 shorter sessions.
- Choose an activity that you enjoy and makes you feel good.
- Take part in moderate intensity aerobic activities that get the whole body moving for a period of time, for example: walking, swimming, dancing and jogging.
- If doing more vigorous activity warm-up at the beginning and cool-down at the end.
- Set yourself a goal which is achievable, for example, a walk during lunch time three times a week.
- Wear loose clothing and supportive shoes with adequate cushioning in the soles for walking or jogging.
- Drink water before, during and after your physical activity, to prevent dehydration.
- Listen to your body - stop your activity if you feel unwell, have pain or feel dizzy.
- Consult your doctor before starting to be more active, if you are unsure or have a health problem

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Be Active
For A Happy Heart

30 minutes physical activity, most days,
is good for your heart!

Information Leaflet

Regular physical activity can make you feel and look good. It can give you many benefits for your overall health. More importantly regular physical activity reduces your risk of heart attack and stroke, as well as many other diseases.

Over 20% of coronary heart disease and 10% of stroke is due to physical inactivity.

All it takes is 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week...

Adults, up to age 65, need to accumulate moderate intensity aerobic activity for a minimum of 30 minutes on five days a week.

Accumulated...

... means you can build up to thirty minutes of activity over two to three shorter sessions or do it all in one single session. Either way you still get the same health benefits.

If you are breaking up your 30 minutes of activity over the day, any one session needs to be for 10 minutes or longer to get health benefits, e.g.:

- ♥ 2 x 15 minutes - 15 minutes gardening and 15 minutes walking
- ♥ 3 x 10 minutes - 10 minutes walking to or from work, 10 minutes dancing around the kitchen or 10 minutes hoovering.

Moderate Intensity...

... means you will feel some effort, your heart rate and breathing will increase and you will feel warmer all over, just like you do after a brisk walk.

Aerobic Activity...

...means you are continuously moving over a period of time. Activities such as walking, cycling, dancing, jogging are all excellent aerobic activities as well as some household tasks such as hoovering, cleaning windows, washing the car and gardening.

What type of activity is best?

Any type of regular physical activity is good for you. For overall good health, include the following three types of activity.

- ♥ **Aerobic Activity** is an activity that uses your heart, lungs and large muscles over a period of time. Walking, cycling, tennis, digging the garden are all aerobic activities. Aim to do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity most days of the week.

Aerobic activity is the best form of activity to keep your heart healthy.

- ♥ **Strengthening Activities** will keep your bones and muscles strong and will help you maintain good posture. Brisk walking, climbing the stairs, hoovering and weight training are all strengthening activities and should form part of your activity at least twice a week.

- ♥ **Stretching Activities** will keep you flexible, relax your muscles and prevent you from becoming stiff. During the day take time to stretch if you are standing or sitting for long periods. If you are doing more vigorous activity, a warm-up and cool-down should be included in your activity.

First get active

You don't have to be sporty, join a gym or spend lots of money to be active. Try and be more active at home and at work each day. You will be surprised how a brisk walk to the shops and some gardening can add up to 30 minutes of activity in your day. Replace your minutes of sitting with minutes of activity - take the stairs instead of the lift, get up and move about during TV ad breaks.

Be Active @ home

- ♥ Give the car a rest. **Walk** or **cycle** to the shops, bank or restaurant or church.
- ♥ **Walk** the dog or take the family for a walk.
- ♥ Tackle housework - **sweep**, **scrub** and **hoover**.
- ♥ In the garden - **rake** leaves, **pull** weeds and **mow** the lawn.
- ♥ **Play** active games with your children, for example hide and seek, follow the leader and ball games.
- ♥ Do some **stretching** during the TV breaks.
- ♥ **Avoid sitting** for long periods.

When doing gardening or housework, take good care of your back and avoid overusing any one muscle group. Change from one activity to another every 15 to 20 minutes.

Be Active @ work

- ♥ **Cycle** or **walk** at least some of the way to work.
- ♥ **Walk** during your lunch break.
- ♥ **Stretch** at the desk.
- ♥ **Move** about during the day.
- ♥ **Climb** the stairs instead of taking the lift.
- ♥ **Walk** to talk instead of emailing or phoning.
- ♥ **Walk** to the furthest bathroom from your desk.
- ♥ Be mindful of **correct posture** and avoid rounding your shoulders at the desk.
- ♥ Meet a friend for a **walk** instead of a coffee.

Be Active @ leisure

- ♥ Get active with a friend.
- ♥ Start a new hobby that involves being active.
- ♥ Check out sports clubs and exercise classes.
- ♥ Look out for your local Slí na Sláinte walking routes.
- ♥ Try and include some vigorous intensity activities once or twice a week.

Now get fitter.

Now that you are including regular physical activity in your weekly schedule, you may wish to get fitter.

To gain even more health benefits and get fitter follow the F.I.T.T. formula.

Frequency – You are now active most days of the week. To get fit, include at least three sessions of continuous activity for 20 minutes three times a week.

Intensity – Increase your pace to a vigorous intensity, which will cause your pulse and breathing to increase much more than that of a moderate intensity. Jogging, cycling uphill and swimming continuous laps are all vigorous intensity activities.

You do not have to be active so much that you start to feel dizzy or faint, or that you are in pain. This could be a danger to your health.

You can meet the minimum goal of being active for health with vigorous intensity activity for 20 minutes three times a week or combine it with moderate intensity activity, e.g. vigorous activity, such as jogging, for 20 minutes two days a week and moderate activity, such as brisk walking, for two days a week.

Time – Gradually extend the length of your continuous activity from 20 to 40 minutes.

Type – Any activity is good for you. For best results include aerobic as well as stretching and strengthening activities.

If you need to lose weight or want to maintain weight loss, aim to be active for at least 60 minutes each day.