Before you start

Physical activity is good for your health. However, it can pose a small risk of injury or illness. To lower this risk, speak to your healthcare professional. They will advise you on what kind of exercise is safe for you.

Overcoming common barriers to physical activity

"I'm too tired and have no energy."

- **Start slowly and increase gradually.**
- **Over time, you will find your energy levels improve.**

"I don't have the time."

- **A little bit is better than none.**
- **Try being active at lunchtime, or while watching TV – it all adds up.**

"I don't like being out in bad weather."

- **Find indoor activities that you like.**
- **Get suitable rain gear.**
- **Walk around a shopping centre.**

Keeping it going

It can be difficult to stay motivated, so here are a few tips for when you need some extra motivation.

- **Get active with a friend for both company and motivation.**
- **Develop support networks by, for example, joining a walking group.**
- **Set realistic goals and reward yourself when you reach them.**
- **Keep a record of your progress.**

Use technology to help you keep track of your progress. For example, use a pedometer to count your steps.

Helpful Links

If you want to get more active but are not sure how, use the following links to get helpful information. Also, ask your healthcare professional for advice.

www.getirelandactive.ie
www.healthyireland.ie
www.mentalhealthireland.ie
www.getirelandwalking.ie
www.sportireland.ie
www.parkrun.ie

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Mental Health Services

HSE, St Lomans Hospital
Palmerstown, Dublin 20
D20 HK69

Email: mentalhealth@hse.ie

....

Let's Get
Active!

...to improve health & wellbeing

HSE Mental Health Services

hi Healthy Ireland

Healthy Eating Active Living Programme

Why is physical activity important?

Being active is very important for both your mental and physical health. It is worth the effort to make it a part of your everyday life.

Physical activity has many benefits for your mental health. It can:

- **Improve your mood and help you sleep.**
- **Reduce your stress and anxiety.**
- **Enhance your self-esteem and sense of well-being.**

Also, regular exercise will improve your physical health. It can help you to:

- **Maintain a healthy weight.**
- **Improve your immune system.**
- **Reduce your likelihood of developing heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes.**

How much physical activity?

- **Ideally, you should aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days a week.**
- **To start, try and aim for 10-minute bouts. Start off small and build up from there.**

"

When myself and my girlfriend go for a walk in the forest we always feel much better after, we sleep better, we're less anxious, our mental health is better. We find walking great.''

Neil, Service User, Galway

Sit less, move more

If you spend too much time being physically inactive – such as just sitting around or lying down for long periods – this is likely to lead to negative changes in your mental and physical health.

Even doing a little bit of physical activity can have important health benefits. You'll be surprised how much better you'll feel if you sit less and move more.

SIT LESS

MOVE MORE
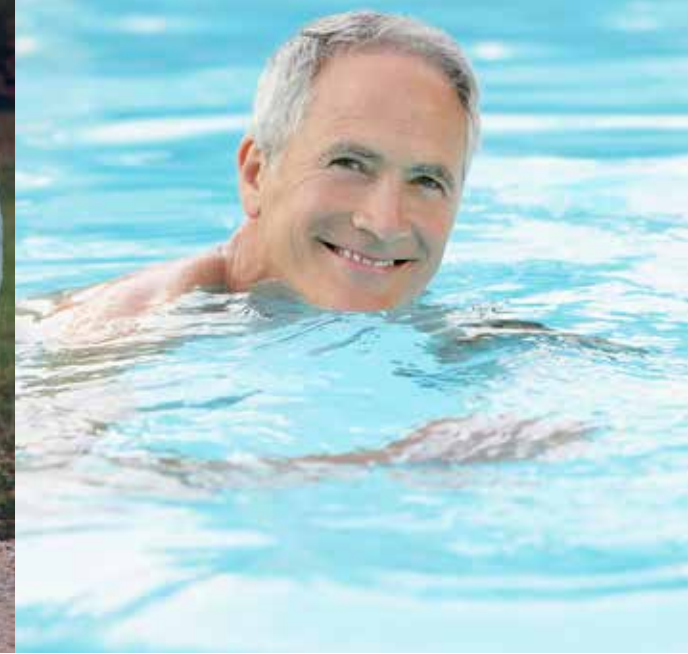
Which physical activity is best for me?

If you choose an activity that you like, you are more likely to keep it up! Think about what you would like to gain from being more active. Do you want to:

- **Meet new people and make friends?**
- **Learn a new skill?**
- **Manage your weight?**
- **Improve your physical fitness?**
- **Get active on your own or with friends?**
- **Be active indoors or outdoors?**