

# Physical Activity



The Flora Project



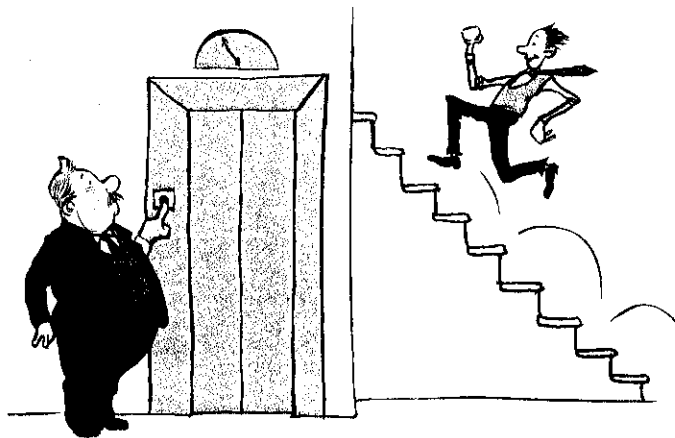
## How can I get fit?

The golden rules of activity are to start gently, to build up gradually, and do it regularly. To be effective we should be physically active for 30 minutes on at least 5 days every week. Don't worry this does not need to be an exercise class or a 30 minute run (although these are fine if you're already fit and active). Simple activity such as a brisk walk, washing the car by hand, cycling to the shops, gardening or vigorous housework all count towards this active goal.

If you have not been active for some time you may not be able to manage 30 minutes of continuous activity at first. Break it down into shorter blocks eg 15 minutes and try to do this twice each day. After a week or so start to increase the time you spend at the activity until you can carry on for at least 30 minutes. Starting to do something is far better than doing nothing.

## But I don't have time to be active

It's a common complaint in our busy lives, but it's surprising how easy it is to fit activity in if you really want to. You are most likely to fit activity in regularly if it becomes part of your daily regime just like cleaning your teeth. Why not get off the bus or train a few stops early and walk the rest and use the stairs instead of the lift. Make the time to be active and you will soon find yourself with a new found energy which will enable you to achieve things more quickly and efficiently - in effect making more time for yourself.



## Fit for what?

People talk about "being fit"... but for what? You don't have to be an athlete to be fit. Your fitness level should be in tune with your lifestyle. You should have plenty of energy to climb stairs or take a brisk walk, as well as performing other day to day activities without becoming tired or gasping for breath.



Being fit not only makes you look and feel better, it has many pay-offs for your health. It strengthens your heart and bones and improves your circulation. It can also help lower your blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels, control your weight and reduce your stress levels, all of which reduce your risk of suffering from serious illnesses such as heart disease.

## Fitness is...

Finishing the day... as fresh as you started it.

Feeling full of beans... not down in the dumps.

Keeping up with the kids... and giving them the occasional surprise.

Trotting up stairs... and still having enough breath to talk.

The passport to ripe old age... with the vitality to enjoy it.

**FITNESS IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HEALTH.**

**FITNESS SHOULD BE FUN!**

Activities you may not have considered like golf, dancing, sailing, windsurfing, tennis, pony trekking, canoeing, bowls and archery are available all over the country.

Your local leisure centre or school can give you more details about any new activity you would like to get involved with. Or, if these sound too exotic, perhaps you should think about activities like walking, swimming or cycling in a new light.

There's something for all the family, whatever age or stage of fitness.



# Be Pro-active

## Become more active



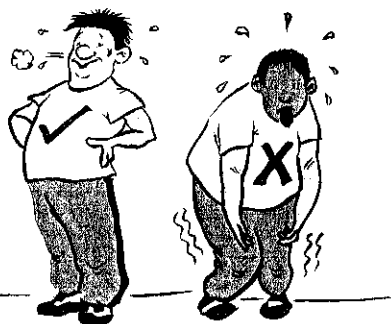
Remember that lack of physical activity is one of several risk factors for heart disease - there are five others to bear in mind.

Collect all 6 leaflets in this series: **Smoking, Blood Pressure, Weight, Eating to Manage Your Cholesterol, Physical Activity and Stress and Relaxation.**

### Tips about activity and ways to be more active

1. Remember to include some activity into your daily routine. Get off the bus a few stops early and walk the rest. Use the stairs instead of the lift and for short trips leave the car in the garage and enjoy the stroll.
2. Remember to start slowly and build gradually.
3. Exercise until pleasantly tired, but don't push to exhaustion. The right level will leave you breathless but not speechless.
4. 'Wind down' your activity session, don't stop suddenly following vigorous exercise. Slow the pace of your activity to a comfortable level for a few minutes at the end of your session.
5. Leave at least an hour after heavy meals before starting exercise.
6. Don't ignore pain - it's your body saying "stop!"
7. Easy, rhythmic movements are best - cycling, swimming and walking are the best all round forms of exercise.

BUT: You can start exercising at any time of life; however, if you've not taken any exercise for some time, are over 40, have recently been ill or have any joint problems, check with your family doctor before doing anything too strenuous.



### Planning for Change

Whilst reading this leaflet you may have found things which you feel you could change - why not record them here. Remember that it is easier to make one small change at a time than trying several big changes all at once. Make your changes simple and achievable.

I Will...

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

### For more information...

...Speak to your family doctor or practice nurse

Or contact any of the organisations below:

**British Heart Foundation**, 14 Fitzhardinge Street, London W1H 4DH

**Health Education Authority**, Trevelyan House, 30 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3HW

**ASH - Action on Smoking and Health**, 16 Fitzhardinge Street, London W1H 9PL

**QUIT - The National Society for Non-Smokers**, Victory House, 170 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 0HA

**Sports Council**, 16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0QP

**Your Local Leisure Centre**



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