The POWER of Self-Care

SELF-CARE FORUM FACT SHEET No. 20

You've got the POWER to take control of your life

P	O	W	E	R
Personal Wellbeing	Out & about & Exercise	Weight Awareness	Eating & Diet	Risks & Prevention

Personal Wellbeing



Mental health and wellbeing

The 5 ways to personal wellbeing will help improve your mental health.

- Start with one or two things you know you can manage.
- Take small steps.Take time to find out works for you.
- Go at your own pace. Only try what you are happy with.

For more info see - 5 steps to mental wellbeing and Boosting your Mood.

Sleep

Good sleep is vital to personal and mental wellbeing. It helps to have a routine at night. Avoid using computer and phone screens, try to wind down, make your sleep area comfortable. More on the Mind website here.

Spirituality

Spirituality is a feeling of connecting with something greater than ourselves or a search for meaning in life. Explore the positives of your own beliefs on your mental wellbeing here.

Managing illness

Know how to look after yourself and loved ones during periods of illness. The Self-Care Forum's fact sheets can help.

Out and about and Exercise

EXERCISE - some is good, more is better

Exercise improves sleep, helps maintain a healthy weight, reduces the risk of many diseases, helps manage stress and improves your quality of life

Where to start

You don't have to be an Olympic athlete to be fit-
Start with 10 minutes of brisk walking twice a day and build up gradually.
The free NHS Active 10 App can help

Counting steps

To count your daily steps, use the free smartphone apps: Google Health on Android phones and Apple Health on iPhones - or use a cheap pedometer

- Check your daily step count on a quiet day - it may be between 2500 to 4000 steps already
- Start by aiming for a couple of thousand steps a day extra– 10 minutes brisk walking twice a day will give you this
- Then try to achieve 7500 steps a day

AIM FOR:

150 minutes moderate intensity a week
If you can talk but can't sing, it's moderate
Swim · Brisk walk · Cycle

OR

75 minutes vigorous intensity a week
If you can't sing or talk, it's vigorous
Run · Sport · Stairs

Active 10

AND

Build strength on at least **2** days a week to keep muscles, bones & joints strong
Gym · Carrying Heavy Shopping · Yoga

Reduce inactive time
Break up periods of inactivity
Less: More:

Couch to 5K

Why not try the free **NHS Couch to 5K App?**
It takes 9 weeks.
No previous running experience is necessary.

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Self-Care Forum
Helping people take care of themselves

Weight Awareness

Get to know your Body Mass Index (BMI)

BMI		
Below 18.5	Underweight	Speak to your GP
18.5 to 24.9	Healthiest weight	Try and keep it there
25 to 29.9	Overweight	Try to get to a healthier weight
Above 30	Obese	See your GP for help with weight loss

BMI ranges are slightly different for people from S. Asian, Chinese, African-Caribbean and Black African backgrounds. The NHS BMI calculator takes these issues into account.

Being underweight or overweight can affect your health. If your BMI is 25 or over, losing weight can lessen your risk of serious diseases such as cancer or heart disease. If your BMI is under 35 you can use the waist to height ratio calculator to find out if you have too much fat around your tummy.

- BMI takes into account your weight and height
- Be aware of your BMI, but don't judge yourself or let others judge you
- Use this information in your own away to reach the healthiest weight you feel you can.
- Start with something doable. Even a 5% weight loss can have many benefits
- Go to the NHS website for a free BMI calculator and fill in your height and weight

The NHS 12 Week Weight Loss Plan is a great place to start. It's available as an app or pdf.

The NHS Weight Loss Plan

Will help you to:

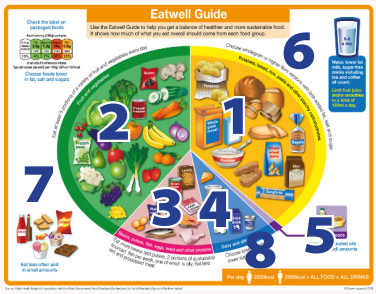
- Set weight loss goals
- use the BMI calculator to customise your plan
- plan your meals
- make healthier food choices
- get more active and burn more calories
- record your activity and progress



Eating and Diet

Use the NHS Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

1. Base meals on 1/3 starchy carbohydrates e.g. potatoes, bread, rice, pasta- wholegrain is best
2. At least 5 portions of fruit + vegetables each day
3. Eat some protein - beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat including 2 portions of fish, one oily, every week
4. Dairy or alternatives (such as soy drinks); choose lower fat and lower sugar options
5. Unsaturated oils and spreads - small amounts
6. Drink 6-8 glasses of fluid a day
7. Foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar - eat in smaller amounts and less often
8. Daily calories: Keep to fewer than: 2,000 for females, 2,500 for Males



Risks and Prevention

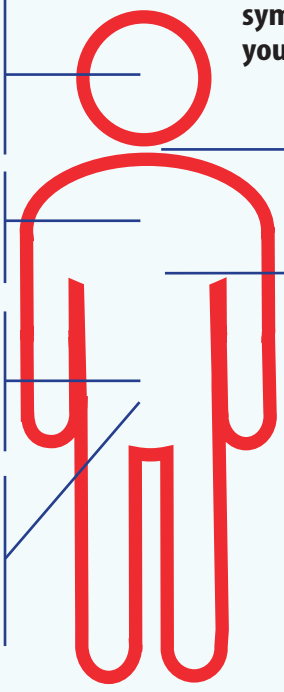
Help your heart and your health

- **Start exercising**
  This lessens the risks of: diabetes, heart disease, falls, depression, joint and back pain and many cancers
- **At the same time become Weight Aware**
  A weight that gives you a BMI of 25 or over increases your risks of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and many cancers, such as breast, bowel and oesophageal (gullet) cancer
- **Stop smoking (there is no safe level)**
- **Be careful how much alcohol you drink**
  Men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis
- **Check your Blood Pressure - Know your numbers!**
  If your blood pressure is over 135/85" when you measure it at home call NHS111 or your surgery. For more info check the NHS website - Check your blood pressure reading.
- **Ask for an NHS health check if you are 40 to 75 yrs**

Watch for these symptoms of possible cancer

If you have any of these symptoms, call 111 or see your GP

- Croaky voice, hoarseness or cough for more than 3 weeks
- Coughing up blood
- Mouth or tongue ulcers that last longer than 3 weeks
- Unusual changes to the size, shape or feel of breasts, and nipple or skin changes
- Breathlessness
- Change in bowel habits such as constipation, looser poo or pooing more often
- Blood in your poo
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding such as after sex, between periods or after the menopause
- Blood in your pee
- Problems peeing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Persistent heartburn or indigestion
- Appetite loss
- Persistent bloating or tummy pain



General symptoms

- Heavy night sweats or fever
- Appetite loss
- More tired than usual
- unexplained weight loss
- unexplained pain or ache
- unusual lump or swelling anywhere in your body
- new moles or changes to a mole
- skin or nail changers or sores that won't heal
- unexplained bleeding or bruising

Based on Cancer Research UK's Signs and symptoms of cancer

More information.

NHS Scotland | NHS Northern Ireland
NHS England | NHS Wales

Take small steps, pick one or two things that feel achievable before moving on to the next.

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