

In this month's newsletter:

Mental Health
Awareness

National Walking
Month

3 ways to boost your mental fitness

Most of us are aware that maintaining physical fitness helps your body to function, but did you know that the key to achieving and sustaining positive mental health and brain function is through mental fitness?

The term mental fitness is used to describe having a well-maintained state of mental wellbeing. Just as physical fitness can prevent you developing conditions such as diabetes and heart disease as you get older, mental fitness can keep your mind sharper for longer. Taking time to think about things that are outside of your daily worries, can also help to build self-confidence and lessen the effects of depression.

There are many different ways you can boost your mental fitness, but here are 3 of the easiest things you can do to kick off your mental fitness journey:

- 1 Play games such as sudoku, crossword puzzles, and board games. Games like these are an excellent way to strengthen and build brain muscle as they keep your mind active and sharp.
- 2 Focus on one task at a time. Many of us multitask in the aim of getting more things done at once, but working on one task at a time will not only improve your concentration but will also allow you to have a much more productive day.
- 3 Practice positive affirmations – by talking to yourself in a positive way your neural pathways will strengthen and boost your self-confidence, satisfaction, and wellbeing. Why not try writing down a list of your good qualities and setting achievable goals for things you want to improve on?

As you can see there are many types of exercises that will help to boost your mental fitness, and the best thing is they don't require an expensive gym membership! All you need to do is set a few minutes out of your day to take a mental fitness break.



WALK



THIS MAY

[LIVINGSTREETS.ORG.UK/NWM](https://livingstreets.org.uk/nwm)

How to easily sneak extra steps into your day

In the UK, May is [National Walking month](#). Going on a walk is one of the easiest ways that you can boost your activity levels and become healthier overall. Getting those steps in will lower your blood pressure, strengthen your bones, reduce your risk of developing a number of chronic illnesses, and improve your mood, amongst many more physical and mental health benefits.

To be considered active, it is recommended that non-disabled adults should take between **7,500 and 10,000 steps a day**, numbers which can seem quite overwhelming to a lot of us, especially when commuting to work on foot or taking a walk on your lunch break is not always possible.

You don't need to take hours out of your day to meet those step goals though, **there are plenty of small changes you can make to your day that will allow you to sneak extra steps in:**

Take the stairs over the elevator every time

It may be quicker to hop in the elevator but you're missing out on the simplest way to squeeze those steps in!



Park far away

Whether you're pulling up into your work car park or doing your weekly shop, parking as far away from entrances as possible will really help to get you closer to your daily step goal.



Walk in place while you wait

Stop sitting down and waiting for things to happen, whether you're waiting for a friend to meet you or the oven to preheat, pacing can help to both pass the time and boost that step count.



Use public transport

Trains and buses aren't as convenient as cars, but when trying to sneak those steps in this is a good thing! The walk to your local bus stop is usually longer than the walk to your car, so this is a really easy way to increase the amount of walking you do on a daily basis.



These **small changes** will have a **big impact** on your overall physical and mental health and wellbeing. Try them out and watch your daily step count go up.

You can also find more information on the benefits of walking, more tips to help you move more, and helpful apps such as [Active 10](#) on the [NHS website](#).

Finally, it's important to remember to be kind to yourself and set yourself realistic goals, especially if you're just at the start of your fitness journey.

