

WELLBEING

Physical wellbeing—mental health benefits



Studies have shown that there is a 20% - 30% lower risk of depression and dementia for adults participating in daily physical activity.

We are all aware of the benefits from taking part in physical activity and eating well - your risk of heart disease reduces, your joints improve, and your overall health develops as a result.

However, have you ever considered the positive effects that physical activity can bring to your mental health and wellbeing?

How can physical activity improve mental health?

Many studies have highlighted the link between a healthy body and a healthy mind. Here, we have listed several mental health benefits from engaging in regular physical activity:

Improve your mood - Studies have shown that regular physical activity can give your mood a boost. Experts say that low-intensity aerobic exercise – for 30–35 minutes, 3–5 days a week, for 10–12 weeks – is the best exercise to boost positive moods.

Managing stress & anxiety - Being active allows you to keep your mind focused on a task separate to your stressors. Exercise also releases cortisol - the hormone that allows our bodies to

manage stressful emotions.

Self-esteem - Being more active and achieving your goals can boost your confidence and make you feel better about yourself.

Build relationships - Taking part in group or team activities can help you meet new people with similar interests and build new relationships with like-minded individuals.

Physical activity top tips

To stay healthy, adults should try to be active every day and aim to achieve at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week or 10000 steps per day (use a pedometer to track your progress) through a variety of activities. Here are a few top tips on how to incorporate physical activity in your day-to-day life:

Set yourself a daily target - Make yourself accountable by telling your friends, family and colleagues about your wellbeing goals. Whether it's reaching a steps goal, achieving an hour of walking or eating a designated number of calories, ensure that you track your progress.

Healthy commute - Incorporate some physical activity into your daily commute. If you take public transport, get off a stop earlier and walk the remainder. Why not swap your car for your bicycle? It's good for your health and the environment!

Join a gym/class - Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual workout classes have become readily accessible via personal devices. Encourage your friends to take part to bring a social

element to the experience.

At home - Some people find it more comfortable, convenient and safe to incorporate physical activity into their lifestyle while being at home. Activities include; working in the garden, mowing the grass, raking leaves, picking up rubbish.

At work - There are plenty of ways to achieve to your daily physical wellbeing goals while at work. For example, go for a walk on your lunch break, take the stairs instead of the lift to your floor or stand up every time you answer a phone call.

In the midst of the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's common for us to neglect our physical wellbeing to accommodate other areas of our lives e.g. work, family, caring responsibilities.

As mentioned in this guidance, there are plenty of ways of incorporating more physical activity into our daily routine and as a result, your mental health will benefit too.

It's important to know that if you need to access our services to discuss any concerns you may have, our [confidential helpline](#) is available 24/7, 365.

Alternatively, you can visit our portal and smartphone app to view advice articles, webinars and 4-week programmes all aimed at improving your physical and mental wellbeing:

www.healthassuredeap.com

TOPICAL

World Photography Day

19th August 2020



World Photography Day - the annual global celebration of the "art, craft, science, and history of photography", will be held on Wednesday 19th August 2020.

Founded in 2009 by Australian photographer Korsche Ara, the day aims to encourage us all to indulge in our creative tendencies and explore our photography skills.

Mental health benefits of photography

Did you know that there are multiple mental health benefits in pursuing creative activities such as photography? Here, we have listed a few reasons why photography could be your new favourite pastime...

Focus - Experts say that the average person has about 60,000 thoughts in a day. Taking part in a creative activity such as photography can help focus the mind and help you take stock of your mental landscape.

Happiness - By succeeding at a creative task, such as capturing a beautiful photo, your brain is flooded with the feel-good chemical dopamine, which in turn reduces anxiety, boosts your mood, and even slows your heart rate.

Reduce stress - Studies have found that

taking part in creative hobbies can help prevent depression, lower stress levels and process traumatic experiences.

Mindfulness - Photography is a form of mindfulness and allows you to be present in the moment and take notice of your feelings.

Confidence - Photography allows you to share your individuality and take pride in the results of your creativity, thus boosting your confidence, self-esteem and mental resilience.

How do I get involved?

Whether you consider yourself a professional or an amateur with a camera, there are plenty of ways to get involved with World Photography Day 2020.

Get snapping - Pick up a camera - you can use your smartphone if you don't have one - and spend some time capturing images. You don't need to go on an outdoor excursion taking photos of picturesque scenery (although you can if you want to). Instead, take photos of items, people or locations from your daily life that are meaningful to you - try to show your personality through the lens.

Struggling for inspiration Think about your interests e.g. wildlife, nature, film, architecture, people watching, engineering, your home, food etc.

Learn - Research the history of

photography and its importance in preserving history. Look up your favourite images and discover the stories behind them - you may be surprised at what you learn!

Share your photos - Want to share your images? Submit your photography to the official World Photography Day website [here](#). You can also share your images via social media using the hashtag #WorldPhotographyDay.

Finding the right balance of work, family and personal time can be a difficult task. During our hectic lives, it can be easy to forget about self-care, often putting the wellbeing of others above our own.

World Photography Day is an opportunity for you to discover a new pastime for you to enjoy and reap the mental health benefits from. Whether your subject is a landscape or lamppost, the mental health benefits of a creative hobby such as photography are boundless.

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LEGAL

Financial support for single parents



Single parenting is becoming more common and in today's climate can place substantial financial pressures on the family unit.

Many are unaware of the financial benefits that may be available and there may be a misconception that benefits are only available for the unemployed.

England and Wales

Parents in England and Wales are entitled to claim Child Benefit, a monthly payment to support with the costs of children, if 'responsible for the child' and if the child is less than 16 years old, or 16- 20 years and still in education/training. Only one parent can receive the payment, with the current 2020/21 tax year payment amount at £21.05 per week for the first child and £13.95 a week for any children after that.

If you are a single parent and have the main day to day care of a child, regular child maintenance payments should be paid by the other separated parent. This is financial support that helps towards a child's everyday living costs such as food, clothing and other essentials.

Additionally, there are various welfare benefits that may be available to single parents. This will be determined by your income, whether you have claimed benefits before and any benefits you are

currently in receipt of. [Click here](#) to view the benefits/financial support that may be available to single parents.

The current benefits system is evolving and working out exactly what you are entitled to can be complex. The quickest and simplest way to work out what you are entitled is to input accurate information regarding your circumstances into a benefits calculator tool. There are various free, online tools which will outline what you are entitled to and how to claim. For further information about these benefits and to access a benefits calculator contact the Health Assured helpline. There are also great resources available online from organisation such as:

Turn2us - is a national charity that provides specialist benefits advice and guidance, supporting those in financial hardship to gain access to welfare benefits and charitable grants.

Gingerbread - is a national charity that supports single parent families, providing advice and practical support. Gingerbread provide various information on benefits, tax credits and Universal Credit, including a benefits calculator to work out what you may be entitled to.

Scotland

The One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS) service provides free telephone advice for single parents to address financial struggles and childcare services. Their Advice Guide tells you

more about the changes to benefits in Scotland and how single parents may claim them. You can also contact their free helpline to access confidential information on benefit/tax credit entitlement.

Northern Ireland

Parenting NI is a charitable support helpline providing advice and guidance for lone parents specifically located in Northern Ireland. They can be located through their [website](#) or their free helpline.

Furthermore, visit [NI Direct](#) for more information about benefits you may be able to apply for.

Ireland

The One-Parent Family payment is a means tested payment specifically available for lone parents without the financial support of a partner. More information can be found on the Citizens Information [website](#), including eligibility criteria, or via their helpline.

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