

Looking after your fitness as an adult

First of all, I would like to talk about being fit and then next time I'll talk about being healthy. Being fit means that you have plenty of energy to do the things that you want to do. It involves you thinking about your muscles and joints, and what you eat...and then doing something about it! Exercise is a wonderful thing to do. It makes you feel better in yourself, even when you have blue days and it makes you strong.

How much exercise should you do? Scientists have shown that we should all spend half an hour per day devoted to exercising. This could mean walking with or without the dog, running, swimming, aerobics, dancing, riding a bike, boxing or lifting weights or all of the above. If you cannot walk very well, you could do swimming or use some hand weights. I would recommend that if you have not done much exercise before that you start by doing exercises for five minutes per day. Over a month or two you could build up to half an hour. Why not keep a calendar like one below on the fridge to keep a record of how well you are going? You could tick each day that you achieved your goal. Fitting exercise in takes some planning, especially with work and other activities, so you have to think about booking in a special time of day to do it when making up your plan.

What should you look out for when exercising? It is normal to get a bit puffed out and sore in the muscles when you start. But if you have a heart condition or you get dizzy, you should not exert yourself too much and you could talk to your doctor or me if you want some advice on this. If you have dicky knee joint that keeps popping out, then we need to work on a special plan for you too, but exercise can help this too. In the summer it is important to avoid exercising in the middle of the day - I prefer the early morning, and you should wear sunscreen and a hat if it is outdoors. Don't forget to drink water after doing your exercises.

Exercising is good for your bones, joints, blood pressure and cholesterol, moods, heart, prevents falls, helps your balance and strength, and also helps to reduce weight. It helps you wind down after a busy day or prepare for a big day ahead. All these things need to be looked at especially as we get older.

Here is a sample plan of getting started with your exercise to make you fit. Make up your plan and also circle in whether or not you are going to do your exercises in the morning (m) or the afternoon (a):

Date started:

Week 1	Mon 5 mins	Tues 5 mins	Wed 5 mins	Thurs 5 mins	Fri 5 mins	Sat 5 mins	Sun 5 mins
Week 2	8 mins am/pm	8 mins am/pm	8 mins am/pm	8 mins am/pm	8 mins am/pm	8 mins am/pm	Rest Day
Week 3	12 mins am/pm	12 mins am/pm	12 mins am/pm	12 mins am/pm	12 mins am/pm	12 mins am/pm	12 mins am/pm
Week 4	17 mins am/pm	17 mins am/pm	17 mins am/pm	17 mins am/pm	17 mins am/pm	17 mins am/pm	Rest Day
Week 5	20 mins am/pm	20 mins am/pm	20 mins am/pm	20 mins am/pm	20 mins am/pm	20 mins am/pm	Rest Day
Week 6	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	Rest Day
Week 7	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	Rest Day
Week 8	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	Rest Day
Week 9	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	25 mins am/pm	Rest Day
Week 10	30 mins am/pm	30 mins am/pm	30 mins am/pm	30 mins am/pm	30 mins am/pm	30 mins am/pm	Rest Day

Continue at this pace; sometimes do 30 minutes on Sunday too.

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The SHAID clinic for adults with Down syndrome is held at the Mater Hospital on the second Thursday of each month.

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