



SPRING INTO LIFE

Fight the ageing process, and feel good too, with regular exercise

Exercise is good for you in every way - mind, body and spirit. As well as benefiting joints and muscles, exercise releases endorphins, helping us feel peaceful and happy. It is the most efficient way of burning calories and helping you lose weight, and it can lower the risk of high blood pressure and contracting some diseases such as type 2 diabetes.

Exercise can also help you age well. For instance, studies have found that weight-bearing exercise, like jumping, running or brisk walking, can help keep bones strong, and assist in the prevention of osteoporosis. By promoting balance, strength and flexibility in your spine, the risk of getting problems with your back now and in the future can be substantially reduced.

What should I do?

If you do not currently exercise regularly, check with your chiropractor, GP or other healthcare practitioner, before starting an exercise regime. This will enable you to identify any mechanical problems, get them dealt with and make sure that your chosen exercises are appropriate for your specific needs.

Take advice but this doesn't necessarily mean hiring a personal trainer: Your chiropractor can help you to devise a set of exercises that will address your personal needs specifically. Or there is Straighten Up UK, a simple, three-minute

posture care programme designed to help you feel and look your best. The programme is divided into three quick sessions: warm up, posture care and core balance. You can find it online or ask your chiropractor for details.

There are many simple things you can add into your normal routine that can contribute to your daily exercise: use the stairs instead of a lift or escalator in shops and offices; if you get a bus to work, get off a few stops earlier and walk the remaining journey; if a planned journey would take you less than 10 minutes to walk, then leave the car at home.

Exercise needn't be dull either. Do something you will enjoy like walking, cycling, swimming or dancing, or play a team game. Or perhaps join a fun class like salsa or belly dancing and go with a friend – it's much more fun with two. Try to exercise outdoors at least half the time. Vitamin D is vital for your heart, and for healthy bones, and is conveniently provided by the sun.

OK, I want to exercise. But how can I motivate myself?

You will know what motivates you but sometimes there is something out there that you may not have thought of. Consider the following ideas and build up a combination of factors that you can use to motivate yourself.

For many people the easiest way to get motivated is through competition.

This doesn't have to involve a league

table or a national competition, simply find a partner or join a training group. If you prefer to exercise alone, keeping track of personal bests, a log of how many lengths you swam, how long you exercised for or how far you walked (a pedometer is a great help) is a good way to challenge yourself. Match those numbers – or beat them – the next time you go out.

Notice the 'feel better' effect of exercise. Take pictures - before and after photos can be a great encouragement. Why not look into the future? Seeing yourself in a few month's time looking healthy, hearing people comment on the 'new you', will help you feel now how it will feel then.

Knowing what you are working towards can be a rehearsal and helps you turn a goal into a reality. Set a realistic, achievable target such as walk three times a week, double the number of lengths you swim in one session at the pool or beat my personal best and make sure that you give yourself a reward when you reach your target.

What if I do?

Imagine the differences regular exercise will make to your life. What will you see? How will the world look different? What will you hear people saying? How will you feel about yourself, knowing that you have taken the decision, motivated yourself and done something positive?

How about getting started right now?