

# The POWER of Self Care

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

**P**  
Personal Wellbeing

**O**  
Out & about & Exercise

**W**  
Weight Awareness

**E**  
Eating & Diet

**R**  
Risks & Prevention

## Personal Wellbeing



## Mental health and wellbeing

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

- Take small steps. Pick one or two things that feel achievable at first.
- Give yourself time to figure out what works for you going at your own pace.
- Only try what feels comfortable.

See: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

## Sleep

Good sleep is vital to personal and mental wellbeing. Help by establishing a routine at night, avoid using screens, try to wind down, make your sleep environment comfortable. See <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

## Spirituality

Spirituality is a feeling of connection with something greater than ourselves and search for meaning in life. Explore the positives of your belief on your mental wellbeing: <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/treatments-and-wellbeing/spirituality-and-mental-health>

## Managing illness

Know how to look after yourself and loved ones during periods of illness. The Self Care Forum's fact sheets tells you how to do this and when to seek help for a range of common illnesses. <https://www.selfcareforum.org/fact-sheets/>

## 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

#### Starting out - Exercise

You don't have to be an olympic athlete to be fit- Start with 10 minutes of brisk walking twice a day and you are nearly there! The NHS Active 10 App can help



#### Starting out- Counting steps

To count your daily steps, use the free 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

**75**  
minutes  
vigorous intensity  
a week

If you can't sing or talk, it's vigorous

Run

Sport

Stairs



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

**Build strength**  
on at least **2** days a week  
to keep muscles, bones & joints strong

Gym

Yoga

Carry Heavy Shopping

**Minimise sedentary time**  
Break up periods of inactivity

Less:

More:

# Weight Awareness

## Get to know your Body Mass Index (BMI)

BMI	Weight Status	Advice
<b>Below 18.5</b>	<b>Underweight</b>	Speak to your GP
<b>18.5 to 24.9</b>	<b>Healthiest weight</b>	Try and keep it there
<b>25 to 29.9</b>	<b>Overweight</b>	Try to get to a healthier weight
<b>Above 30</b>	<b>Obese</b>	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, you can reduce your risk of developing serious diseases such as cancer and heart disease just by losing weight.

- BMI takes into account your weight and height
- Be aware of your BMI, but don't judge yourself or let others judge you
- This information is for you to use to achieve the healthiest weight you feel you can
- Start with something achievable. Even a 5% weight loss can have significant benefits
- Go to the NHS website for a free BMI calculator and fill in your height and weight

## 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

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



# 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.

From: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/>

- 1** Base meals on 1/3 starchy carbohydrates e.g. potatoes, bread, rice, pasta - wholegrain if possible
- 2** At least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every 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** If having foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar eat in small amounts and less frequently
- 8** Maximum recommended daily calories:  
Females: 2,000, Males: 2,500



# Risks and Prevention

## Help your heart and your health

### • Start exercising

This reduces the risks of: Diabetes, heart disease, falls, depression, joint and back pain, many cancers

### • At the same time become Weight Aware

Increasing weight above a BMI of 25 increases your risks of: Heart disease, Stroke, diabetes, many cancers, including breast cancer, bowel cancer and oesophageal (gullet) cancer

### • Stop smoking (there is no safe level)

### • Watch your alcohol intake

Men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis

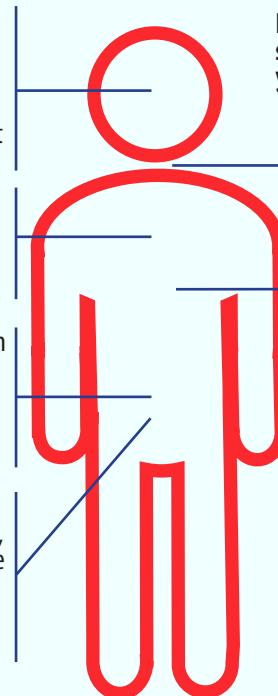
### • Check your Blood Pressure - Know your numbers!

The BHF says: "Unless your doctor says otherwise, blood pressure should be below 140/90". <https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/medical/high-blood-pressure-latest-news>

### • Ask for your NHS health check if you are aged 40 to 75

## Watch for these symptoms of possible cancer

- 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, including nipple or skin changes
- Change in bowel habits such as constipation, looser poo or pooing more often
- Blood in your poo
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding including after sex, between periods or after the menopause
- Blood in your pee
- Problems peeing



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

- Difficulty swallowing
- Persistent heartburn or indigestion

- Appetite loss
- Persistent bloating

### General symptoms

- Heavy night sweats
- Appetite loss
- Fatigue
- unexplained weight loss
- unexplained pain or ache
- unusual lump or swelling anywhere in your body
- new moles or changes to a mole
- sores that won't heal

Based on: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cancer-symptoms>

These websites have specific localised advice:

**Scotland** <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>

**Northern Ireland** <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>

**Wales** <https://www.wales.nhs.uk/>

## What I'd like to do and by when

Take small steps. Pick one or two things that feel achievable, before moving on to other new things.

Fact Sheet No 20 The POWER of Self Care

Produced by and © The Self Care Forum [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org) Contact: [selfcare@selfcareforum.org](mailto:selfcare@selfcareforum.org)

In addition to highlighted information, includes text from the NHS, PHE and CRUK



**Self Care Forum**  
Helping people take care of themselves