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MOVE FOR MENTAL HEALTH



Get moving for
Mental Health Awareness Week
Boost your mental health and support Shout

13 - 19 May 2024



Welcome from Harry Kane



Welcome to Move for Mental Health. Physical exercise is vital for our physical health, but it also has a positive impact on our wellbeing. Let's get moving to improve our mental health this May, all while supporting Shout's [JustGiving](#) campaign.

Personally, I find that moving each day helps with my mental health. You don't have to be an elite athlete to move - choose to move in whatever way makes you feel good, whether it's walking, dancing, running, playing sports or something more extreme!

I'm challenging you to find a type of exercise that you enjoy and make a commitment to yourself to stick with it from 13 - 19 May. You could decide to do 20 press-ups or skip 50 times every day, to do a daily workout, or to walk or run 20 miles over the week.

Whatever you decide to do, set yourself a target that feels achievable but that will stretch you out of your comfort zone.

This pack gives you ideas and inspiration from lots of different people for exercise you could choose. There is information about the benefits of movement for good mental health and tips and suggestions for you.

Good luck, I'll be cheering you on!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harry Kane'.

Harry Kane



[Click here](#) to tell us how you'll be getting involved.

Benefits of physical exercise for mental health

Mental wellbeing

Exercise encourages the release of **endorphins**, our brain's **feel good hormones**. These boost mood and reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress.



Brain health

It **reduces your risk** of cognitive decline including dementia and Alzheimer's disease by stimulating the growth of new brain cells and improving memory and problem-solving skills.



Sleep

Exercise **reduces muscle tension** and tightness associated with stress and anxiety. Combined with enhanced mood, this helps us to sleep better.



Concentration

Movement boosts **dopamine** levels, helping improve concentration, attention and motivation. It can also be a **distraction** from negative thoughts and feelings.



Self-esteem

Feeling stronger, fitter and better about yourself can foster **confidence, self-worth** and help to give you a sense of **purpose**.



Connectivity

It can reduce feelings of loneliness by helping you feel **connected to others and places**. Team activities offer the opportunity for mutual support and to form new friendships.



Need some ideas to get you started? We asked Shout supporters from different walks of life for their favourite ways to move for mental health.

Ideas and inspiration

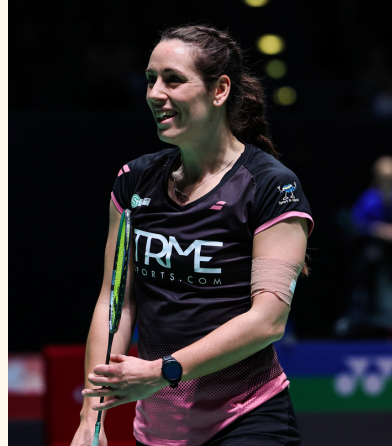
*“I first started to **walk** during Covid-19 lockdown. It’s a chance to let go and appreciate the world outside. It’s a breath of fresh air for my mental health”*

Clare, Shout Volunteer



*“As an athlete, mental health is so important for me to be able to compete at the highest level and to enjoy my sport. Exercising, even when I don’t feel like it, gets me out of my head. Anything that gets your body moving, whether it’s **walking in nature** or going to a **sports club**, helps keep those negative thoughts at bay.”*

Chloe Birch, Badminton England player



*“For us at Run with Purpose, **running** allows us to create safe spaces and talk about what’s really going on. Sometimes 5k. Sometimes a little longer. We have a laugh. We get a little healthier. We drop our guards, and we help each other. Every step brings us closer. Every mile makes us stronger.”*

Joel, Run With Purpose



How much physical exercise do I need?

The [NHS](#) recommends that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity such as brisk walking, cycling or gardening, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity such as running, aerobics or football, per week. That's 15 - 30 minutes five days a week.

For children and young people aged 5 to 18, the recommendation is an average of 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity activity a day across the week.

It is important that you use these recommendations as a guide only. If you have any health concerns, please seek advice from a GP or healthcare professional.

Remember: Physical exercise is just one aspect of keeping ourselves mentally healthy. We may, at times, require the support of a friend, family member or professional; a counsellor or GP.

You can always reach out to Shout for confidential and anonymous support. Our trained volunteers listen 24/7 with empathy and compassion, ready to support texters to think about their next steps.



More ideas and inspiration

*“**Running** helps me feel strong and in control. I’ve never felt worse after running - only better!”*

Mollie Pearce, model, advocate for those with limb difference and The Traitors finalist

*“I used to play **rugby** which I loved. I’m only up for watching it these days, but I love **cycling, walking** and I’ve recently got into **using weights** at the gym. I’m always happiest when I’m physically active.*

Organised sport or going to a gym can be off-putting, but even a walk in the park or jogging up the stairs can help us keep physically and mentally fit. Springtime is the perfect time to start getting active.”

Matt Tebbutt, chef and television presenter

*“I enjoy all kinds of sports with my best friend, from **badminton** to **swimming**. Sometimes you don’t even realise it’s exercise when you’re having fun! It can be hard to get up and do things when our mental health isn’t great but you will feel proud and better once you have.*

I did my first ever 5k last November for Shout (I’d never run before so it was a big challenge). I felt like giving up halfway but kept going. I felt so happy and proud once I completed it, I’m doing it again this November!”

Beth, Shout fundraiser



Movement doesn't just mean running

*"I really enjoy **gardening** and **being outdoors**. It's a great way to stay physically and mentally fit and helps me immensely with low moods.*

Now is a great time to engage with nature because everything is bursting with life. A simple way to get started is to go for a walk in any green space near you. It can boost your mood and best of all - it's free."

Hamzah-Adam Desai, RHS award-winning garden designer

*"**Getting out** with my camera is one of my safe spaces and when I'm behind the camera the world is quiet and nothing can bother me. Moving for your mental health doesn't have to mean going for a run or a walk, it can be anything you want it to be: **go out and take pictures, draw, visit an outdoor cafe and have a cuppa**. Just remember you're not alone, and Shout will always be there for you."*

Robyn, Photographer and Shout Volunteer

*"Using **stretchy bands** is really good for my mental health. You can do a full body workout with them which really helps my mind. I'd really recommend it - it's easy, cheap and it's your mobile gym."*

Will Young, Shout patron, musician and actor



Tips for starting exercise



If you are a beginner, returning to exercise after a period of inactivity or juggling a busy life, incorporating exercise into your schedule can be daunting.

Here are a few tips that can help you get started, stay motivated and build up your stamina.

Build up slowly: Don't be tempted to do too much too quickly and risk an injury.

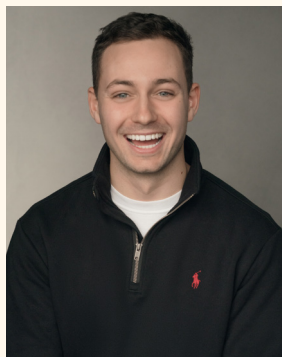
Incorporate activity into daily life: Walk or cycle instead of driving and take the stairs rather than the lift. Using a smart device or pedometer could motivate you to increase your daily steps. Household chores count as exercise!



Choose an appropriate time of day: If you are on medication that makes you tired in the mornings, exercise later in the day. If you find it hard to fall asleep after physical activity, exercise earlier on.

Pick exercise you enjoy: It will help with motivation. If an activity makes you feel happy, comfortable and good about yourself you're more likely to stick to it and enjoy the benefits.

Don't pile pressure on: It's okay to take a break if you find that you can't be as physically active as you might like to be, especially if you are struggling with emotions or you feel unwell. Other self-care activities such as breathing exercises and practising mindfulness are beneficial too.



“Whether it’s running, cycling, rowing, rock climbing or just a short walk every day, getting out and moving is one of the best ways to improve your mental health. Challenge yourself to prioritise your mind by taking part in Move for Mental Health, you’ll build a healthy habit all while supporting the life-saving work of an incredible charity.”

**Ben West, Shout Volunteer
and Mental Health Campaigner**

Some final words of encouragement

*“It’s important you **invest that time in yourself** - you can’t pour from an empty cup. It’s always easy to prioritise other things, but I never regret exercising, whether running or going to a class.”*

Sam, General Manager, Selfridges Birmingham (Shout funder)

*“I would say to anyone starting a sport to keep at it. **Big goals are easier in smaller steps**, so set small goals along the way. Last year I was training to cycle to Scotland for Shout. I now swim a few mornings a week before school.*

When I am more active I feel a sense of self achievement, which makes me happier for the rest of the day.”

Leo, Shout fundraiser

*“Aiming to complete a certain **number of steps a day** is a good way to get moving. **Set yourself a challenge.** In 2023, I took on a ‘Virtual Kilimanjaro’ challenge to demonstrate the uphill struggle that people struggling with their mental health face on a daily basis.*

Running is my time, it helps me process things and makes me stronger and better able to support family and friends. It’s not always easy to kick myself out of the door, but it is always worth it when I do.”

Peter, Shout Volunteer and fundraiser



My commitment

Challenge yourself to move every day in Mental Health Awareness Week, boosting your mood and supporting our life-saving service.

[Click here](#) to let us know how you'll be getting involved. We'll ask:

For your name and email address: so we can stay in touch and send you your Move for Mental Health participation certificate at the end of the challenge.

How you're planning to get involved: so we can see and celebrate all the ways people challenged themselves to move for mental health throughout the week.

If you'll be fundraising for Shout: so we can support you and send you our digital fundraising pack and a free Shout t-shirt once you start fundraising, while stocks last.



Raising vital funds for Shout

By taking on a movement challenge this Mental Health Awareness Week, you'll be helping to raise vital funds for Shout.

Join Shout's [Move for Mental Health campaign](#) on JustGiving and help us hit our **£15,000** target!

Mollie Pearce images: Nancy Collins, photographer. Illustrations throughout: lemono, S-S-S, zuperia and elenabs.

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