

Get active for your mental health

Top tips from SAMH

Being active isn't just good for our physical health; it's also proven to have a positive effect on our mental health and wellbeing.

Regular exercise doesn't have to be very strenuous or sporty to be effective. And by discovering the physical activity you enjoy one that suits you, you're more likely to stick with it.

There are lots of things you can do to get active:

- Spend time outdoors, whether it's hiking, gardening, or simply taking a stroll in nature. Exposure to natural settings has been linked to improved mood and reduced stress levels.
- Practice mindful walking by paying attention to each step and your surroundings. This can be a meditative activity that combines physical movement with mindfulness.





- Try the NHS Couch to 5K programme – it's great if your new to running, or want to get back to it after a break.
- If you would prefer to run with others, check out joscotland's group finder for your nearest jogging group.
- Jumping jacks, squats and lunges can all be done quickly. Movement relaxes the muscles, uses up adrenaline, and can be effective in helping to combat depression.
- Swap a daily car or bus journey for a walk instead.



- Stretch. Stress can make us tense. When we stretch, our muscles relax, blood flow increases, and endorphins are released.
- Find an exercise buddy – being active together is much more fun, and encourages you to keep it up.
- Join a fitness class. Whether it's aerobics, spinning, or a high-intensity interval training (HIIT) class, group classes can provide motivation and a sense of community.

- Simple changes like taking the stairs instead of the lift could have a positive impact on your mood.
- Try incorporating yoga and meditation into your routine. These practices focus on the mind-body connection, promoting relaxation, stress reduction, and improved mental clarity.
- Set yourself small weekly goals to increase how active you are.