

AMIAN HEALTH & WELLBEING

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- **SWIMMING FOR FITNESS**
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Swimming for Fitness

Have fun and stay motivated!

Swimming is a great form of all-round exercise. It's ideal if you want to be more active and stay healthy, whatever your age or ability. Regular swimming can reduce the risk of chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke. It can also boost your mood and keep your weight under control.

Swimming is a lifelong skill that could save a life. If you can't swim, it's never too late to learn. Most pools cater for a variety of tastes and abilities, such as women-only classes, parent and toddler groups, and lessons for different age groups. So here are some tips to make swimming fun for beginners of all ages and encourage them to stick with it...

Before you start

For most people, swimming is a safe and effective form of exercise. If you're worried about an existing health condition, see your GP before you start swimming.

Don't worry if you're afraid of the water or panic when you think about the deep end. Beginners' lessons focus on building confidence in the water. A swimming costume is all you need. Make sure your swimwear is comfortable and fits properly. Wearing a pair of goggles is a good idea to avoid the stinging sensation caused by chlorine in the water and to see where you're going under water.

Starting out

The best place to get started is at your local pool. Most pools offer adult-only beginners' lessons, which focus on building water confidence and improving your stroke. If you're unsure about starting lessons, ask if you can watch a class or two to get a better idea if it's for you, or ask to speak with one of the teachers.

A 30-minute session of moderate to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity at the pool on one or more days a week will count towards your recommended weekly activity. But any improvement on what you currently do is good. Even small changes can make a big difference to your health and make you feel great.

Staying motivated

Make it a habit - Try to set aside time every week to go to the pool, before or after work or on weekends. Write it in a diary so it becomes a permanent fixture in your weekly schedule. Consider getting an annual swim pass to save money and encourage you to go more often.

- **Take the kids** - Swimming is a great way for families to get moving and have fun together.
- **Swim with a friend** - It really helps to go swimming regularly with someone of about the same ability as you. You'll encourage each other when you're not so keen to go to the pool.
- **Mix it up** - The swimming pool makes a great playground and gym, even for non-swimmers, with activities such as aqua fit. However, learning to swim will introduce you to a whole new world of water-based activities.

- **Join a club** - If you enjoy swimming and want to get more involved, consider joining a club. Clubs are a great way to make new friends, improve your swimming and motivate you to exercise regularly.



Stand up, Sit less, Move more!

Tips for getting more active

Modern daily life means most of us get to the end of our day and realise we've been sitting down for most of it. People are less active nowadays, partly because technology has made our lives easier. We drive cars or take public transport - even for short journeys. Machines wash our clothes. We entertain ourselves in front of a TV, iPad or computer screen. Fewer people are doing manual work, and most of us have jobs that involve little physical effort. Work, house chores, shopping and other necessary activities are far less demanding than for previous generations. We move around less and

burn off less energy than people used to. Research suggests that many adults spend more than 7 hours a day sitting down, at work, on transport or in their leisure time.

A silent killer

Inactivity is described by the Department of Health as a “silent killer”. Evidence is emerging that sedentary behaviour, such as sitting or lying down for long periods, is bad for your health as it increases your risk of many chronic diseases, like heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, as well as weight gain and obesity.

The solution

Not only should you try to raise your activity levels, but you should also reduce the amount of time you spend sitting down. Crucially, you can hit your weekly activity target but still be at risk of ill health if you spend the rest of the time sitting or lying down.

So, start by reducing the amount of time you spend sitting down - get up, stretch your legs and do more steps each day.

Guidelines for adults

To stay healthy, adults aged 19-64 should try to be active daily and should do:

- at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity such as cycling or fast walking every week, and
- strength exercises on two or more days a week that work all the major muscles (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms).

Build activity into your life

There are many ways you can build physical activity into your life. It's easier than you think, especially if you make activity part of your daily routine. Here are some ideas if most of your day is spent at work:

- Cycle or walk part - if not all - of your journey to work.
- Get off a bus or tube stop before your destination.
- If you need to drive, try to park further away from your office and walk the rest of the way.
- Discuss project ideas with a colleague while taking a walk.
- Stand while talking on the telephone.
- Walk over to someone's desk at work rather than calling them on the phone or sending an email.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift, or get out of the lift a few floors early and use the stairs.
- Walk up escalators or travellators rather than standing still.
- Go for a walk during your lunch break – use a pedometer to keep track of how many steps you take.
- Try to find different walks, and alternate between them during the week. Gradually build up to walking 10,000 steps a day.
- Exercise before or after work, or during your lunch break. Your office may have a gym, or you may have access to a nearby swimming pool or squash courts.



Stay Healthy on Holiday!

Tips for you to follow...

Holidays have a tendency to throw healthy eating and exercise habits off track, but there are steps you can take to try and minimise the harm while you're away.

Take a look at these tips to help you...

1. Think about all your hard work to lose weight leading up to your holiday and promise yourself that you won't undo it in the space of two weeks or so. Don't go on a crash diet the week before your holiday to make room for weight gain while you're away. You'll only gain it back twice as quickly.

2. Balance high and low calorie meals throughout the day. If you have a high calorie breakfast, make sure you cut back at lunch or dinner.

3. Take healthy foods and snacks with you if you'll be travelling for long periods of time or through mealtimes. That way you won't be tempted by high fat snacks or meals at the airport or in road-side cafes.

4. Choose carefully when ordering meals at the restaurant. Avoid any fried or fatty foods and try not to eat a starter AND dessert. Plan ahead and order one or the other.

5. Take fresh fruit with you to the beach as a snack. The only snacks available are often ice creams or crisps. If you leave it to chance, you might find yourself filling up on fatty treats mid-afternoon.

6. Use your holiday as an opportunity for extra exercise. Take an hour or two to walk on the beach - walking in soft sand can be a great work-out! Or get involved in some water sports like water skiing, wind sailing, canoeing etc.

7. What you drink is just as important as what you eat when it comes to watching your weight on holidays. Water is the best option for staying well hydrated during the day, and stick to diet drinks if you want to have a soft drink. (A can of fizzy drink will add around 130 needless calories to your daily intake!). It's also a good idea to limit your alcohol intake by alternating between water and your drink of choice throughout the evening.

Remember, a holiday won't ruin a healthy lifestyle if you give some thought to the foods you choose BEFORE eating them and make an effort to get active every day.

When the holiday is over, you can face the scales knowing you haven't done too much damage and get back on track, refreshed and ready to start again.

Bon Voyage!



Try Yoga at your Desk to Relieve Stress

Give these easy exercises a go!

Stretch breaks are especially important if you sit at a desk in front of a computer for long hours. Sitting at a desk for hours on end places unnecessary strain on your spine, chest and hips - which can result in neck, shoulder and low back pain, as well as repetitive stress injuries. But just taking a few minutes to do stretches can keep you alert, increase productivity, and most importantly, release stress and make you feel better. Try to set aside a few minutes each day to take some deep breaths, clear your mind, and stretch with these yoga poses.

1. Neck rolls

Close your eyes. Let your chin drop down to your chest. Begin to circle your neck slowly, taking the right ear to the right shoulder, the head back, and then the left ear to the left shoulder. Try to keep the shoulders relaxed and don't hurry through any areas of tightness that you come across. Take 3-5 rolls and then switch directions and take another 3-5 rolls.

2. Cat-cow stretch

Bring both feet flat on the floor and your hands onto your knees. Take a deep breath in and arch your back and look up towards the ceiling. Breathe out and round the spine, letting your head drop forward. Repeat for 3-5 breaths.

3. Seated spinal twist

Turn so you are sitting sideways in your chair. Bring both feet flat on the floor, knees bent. Inhale and lengthen your spine towards the ceiling. Breathe out and twist towards the back of the chair, holding the chair with both hands. Hold for a few breaths, moving deeper into the twist with every exhalation. Turn the chair the other way and repeat on the other side.

4. Standing wrist stretch

Stand up. Turn your hands so that the insides of your wrists face your computer and your fingers face the edge of the desk. Lean away from your desk with your arms straight while flattening your palms as much as possible. Stop if you feel pain.

5. Finger stretches

Extend the arms to the sides or overhead and draw 5 to 10 circles inward and outward through the wrists. Next, quickly spread the fingers and close the fists, repeating this 5 to 10 times to shake off any excess tension.

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If you have any further questions or wish to book an appointment, please do not hesitate to contact **AMIAN:**

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