

## COVID-19: Physical Activity Key Messages

### 1. Introduction

It is recognised that there is an immediate need to provide credible, up to date information and advice around physical activity to support the Scottish public during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). Public Health Scotland (PHS), in collaboration with stakeholders including Scottish Government Active Scotland Division, Sportscotland, Paths for All and the University of Edinburgh Physical Activity for Health Research Centre have facilitated the development of a set of key physical activity related public health messages for the general population. These messages will focus on encouraging and enabling people to be active at home and or when social distancing outside (subject to Scottish Government Guidance).

#### a. The current landscape

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions there is a significant increase in the risk of harm to physical and mental health from increased sedentary behaviour, increased physical inactivity, limited access to outdoors and potential increase in food /alcohol consumption and malnutrition.

Internationally the World Health Organisation have published guidance on how to '[Stay physically active during self-quarantine](#)'. Nationally and locally partners and services are adapting to the situation, with an increased emphasis on physical activities that can be done in the home, garden or within close proximity of home, adhering to social distancing and non-essential travel guidance. Nationally and locally partners are looking for a single point of truth, to which professionals or the public can go to find up to date information on physical activity and COVID-19. NHS Inform website is the obvious home for such information. In addition to this a set of core physical activity COVID-19 messages are also required.

### 2. Target audience

- a. Those at risk of inactivity due to COVID-19 stay at home and social distancing restrictions:
  - Over 70s self-isolating at home.
  - Those at high risk from COVID-19 due to underlying health conditions self-isolating at home.
  - Adults working from home (desk based occupations).
  - Children and parents at home with dual responsibility for childcare, education and in many instances work.
  - Those accessing one session of daily exercise outside the home.
- b. Professionals – providing signposting from [NHS Inform](#) – [Public Health Scotland](#) website – to [Health Protection Scotland](#) website, where other planning COVID19 guidance is held.

### 3. Communication Channels

- a. Local services/community connections, particularly for those digitally excluded. A briefing via the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) will be drafted and a toolkit will be shared with the Local Government Communicators' Group.
- b. Existing communications and networking channels utilised by PHS and partners.
  - PHS and Partner Communications Teams
  - Professional and voluntary networks with PHS and Partners currently work
- c. NHS Inform and Ready Scotland - Similar to the [mental wellbeing pages](#) developed on NHS Inform, similar content could be developed to inform people on how to stay physically active during COVID-19. A link to this content could then be shared with partners and also added to the [Ready Scotland coronavirus](#) webpages.
- d. Cross organisational and internal communications from Public Health Scotland. Briefings for colleagues will encourage them to share information with their own networks, where relevant and internal communications via the intranet and staff bulletins will ensure that colleagues are informed and can sign post others.
- e. Engagement and dissemination via COVID-19 Red Cross volunteers.

### 4. Measurement and evaluation

To demonstrate impact and reach of the proposed communications, PHS and partners will be asked to record and collate analytics through the following channels:

- Social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook)
- Web page analytics of content highlighted via these communications
- Email enquiries related to communications on healthy eating and COVID-19.

### 5. Key messages

#### a. Cross cutting themes:

- Benefits of staying physically active during COVID-19
- How to stay active when self-isolating
- How to stay active while staying at home
- How to stay active while social distancing outdoors

**b. Core messages and associated signposting**

Target Audience	Short message	Descriptive message	Signposting resources:
General population	Be active, feel the difference.	Being active can help to enhance your mood, wellbeing and energy levels by helping to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Now more than ever, it's important to move more.	NHS Inform: Benefits of Physical Activity <a href="https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/keeping-active/health-benefits">https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/keeping-active/health-benefits</a>  Scottish Government, Physical Activity COVID-19 infographic <a href="https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/3065/coronavirus-physicalactivity-infographics-27032020.zip">https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/3065/coronavirus-physicalactivity-infographics-27032020.zip</a>
General population	Something is better than nothing.	Any amount of physical activity, however small, is good for you. Continuing to enjoy short, local walks, jogs or cycles is a great way to clear your head and stay active. Remember to observe social distancing guidance and stay local (or try to build into your daily commute).	Stay In Workout <a href="https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout">https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout</a>
General population	Stay active at home.	Stay active at home, by walking up and down stairs, dancing, gardening or taking part in a virtual fitness class. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do something that you enjoy and keep moving.	Home-based strength and cardio workouts for adults: <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/">https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/</a>

General population	Get your daily dose of physical activity, fresh air and vitamin D.	Everyone is encouraged to exercise once a day outside. Walking, jogging or cycling are a great way to not only exercise but get to some fresh air and sunlight to boost your vitamin D levels.	NHS Inform - Keeping Active: <a href="https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/keeping-active">https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/keeping-active</a>
Those able to leave the house to exercise.	Stay active, stay safe.	Make the most of your daily opportunity to be active outside. Maintain social distancing, stay local, avoid non-essential travel and walk, jog or cycle from your door step.	Walking during periods of social distancing: <a href="https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/walking-during-periods-of-social-distancing">https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/walking-during-periods-of-social-distancing</a>  Get Active Outdoors: <a href="https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout#get_active_outdoors">https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout#get_active_outdoors</a>
Key workers travelling to work outside the home	Work out, when working out.  Active travel; walk and cycle if you can.	As key worker travelling to work, try and incorporate some walking or cycling as part of your journey.	Journey planner: <a href="https://www.travelinescotland.com/lts/#/travellnfo">https://www.travelinescotland.com/lts/#/travellnfo</a>
Those working from home	Sit less, move more.	Be active throughout the day, breaking up the amount of time you spend sitting by standing and walking around every 30 minutes, or whenever you're on the phone.	Advice and tips for home workers: <a href="https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/advice-and-tips-for-homeworkers">https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/advice-and-tips-for-homeworkers</a>

<p>Adults/ Older adults and those working from home.</p>	<p>Sit less, move more.</p>	<p>Break up the amount of time you spend sitting every 30 minutes by standing or walking whenever you're on the phone, dancing around your home like no one's watching, performing domestic chores, gardening or doing a few strength and balance exercises throughout the day.</p>	<p>Keeping active at home: <a href="https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/keeping-active-at-home">https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/keeping-active-at-home</a></p> <p>Seated strength and flexibility exercises for adults with mobility issues: <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/</a></p> <p>Five-week strength and flex programme: <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flex-exercise-plan/">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flex-exercise-plan/</a></p> <p>Get Active at Home: <a href="https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout#get_active_at_home">https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout#get_active_at_home</a></p>
<p>Over 70s and those with underlying health conditions.</p>	<p>Move more, feel the difference.</p>	<p>There's a risk of becoming less active as we spend more time at home. It's important for your mental and physical health that you stay active. By building or maintaining your strength and balance you'll find it easier to do daily tasks and move around. Here are some easy exercises that you can do in your home.</p>	<p>Link to <a href="#">Up and About</a> booklet and <a href="#">NHS Inform Strength and Balance Exercises</a>.</p>

<p>Parents and children</p>	<p>Stay active, stay safe at home or outside.</p>	<p>For parents and children, however young or old, it's important to stay active for your wellbeing.</p>	<p>Parent Club, keeping active during coronavirus:  <a href="https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/keeping-active-during-coronavirus-outbreak">https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/keeping-active-during-coronavirus-outbreak</a>            Change4Life indoor games for children –  <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/indoor-activities">https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/indoor-activities</a>             Change4Life accessible activities for children -  <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/accessible-activities">https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/accessible-activities</a></p>
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**Diet, Physical Activity and Healthy Weight Team, Public Health Scotland, April 2020.**