

# Strengthen your immunity

## Staying active during the COVID-19 pandemic

There is evidence that lockdown has resulted in people sitting more and moving less. If these activity levels continue to be low, then our bodies' ability to fight off infections may be weakened.

This leaflet provides practical suggestions to increase your physical activity levels and therefore help strengthen your immune system

### Regular physical activity can improve immunity\*

#### by increasing:

- your body's ability to produce antibodies
- the detection of cancerous cells
- wound-healing and blocks the entry of bacteria and viruses into the body

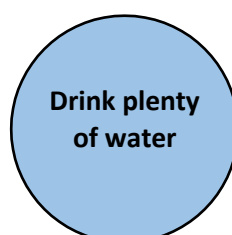
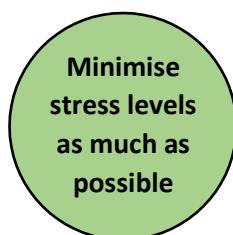


#### by reducing:

- the risk of developing long-term health conditions
- the risk of infection
- the frequency of infections
- the severity of infections

### Stay active and keep COVID-19 at bay

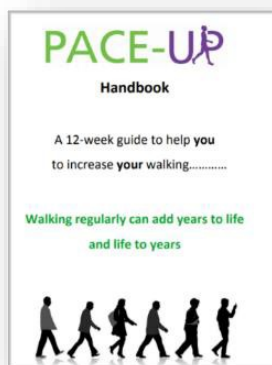
<b>Make exercise a habit</b>	Spend less time sitting and try to do about 150 minutes of moderate activity every week (20-30 minutes every day). Taking regular, shorter bursts of activity each day could also benefit your immune system.
<b>If you are vulnerable</b> (self-isolating or at a higher risk)	Build up home-based activities that you can achieve. Try some strength and balance activities such as controlled sitting-to-standing movements or heel-and-toe raises.
<b>Avoid exposure to the virus</b>	Adhere to government guidance on physical distancing and personal hygiene.
<b>Prioritise your health, not your performance</b>	When restrictions ease, be careful not to exercise too much, too hard or without proper recovery. Keep in mind these five lifestyle choices that <b>you</b> can control:



## Some ideas to stay active and to spend less time sitting

The COVID-19 pandemic with lockdown has made it difficult for many of us to be physically active. Here are some ideas for you to stay active:

Aerobic activities		Good for your heart and lungs and help your immune system
Indoor activities	Climbing stairs Dancing to music Exercise videos Active housework, such as vacuuming	
Outdoor activities	Walking Cycling Skiing Snowshoeing Shovelling Snow Gardening	
Strength and balance activities		Good for your muscles and bones
Indoors	Online strength videos Online Pilates, yoga and Tai Chi exercises Using weights and resistance bands Gym classes (if gyms are open)	
Outdoors	Carrying shopping bags DIY Park workouts	



## Help is at hand

Try to make walking a habit. A good starting point is the **PACE-UP** walking programme with its free walking handbook, diary and planner to encourage you to get moving more.

<http://www.paceup.sgul.ac.uk/materials>

And if motivation is sometimes difficult for you, try using a simple pedometer or an activity-tracker app on your phone.

Do you want to know more about how physical activity can improve your general health and help your immune system?

Do you have a particular medical condition that's preventing you from being active, such as recent surgery or asthma?

Here's a useful website that will answer questions like these:

<http://www.benefitfromactivity.org.uk/>

\* Wadley A, Physical Activity, Exercise and Immune Function, RCGP Factsheet

