

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). These messages will be circulated to stakeholders for use at their discretion and can be adapted appropriately to fit the relevant context. Public Health Scotland (PHS), in collaboration with stakeholders including Scottish Government Active Scotland Division, SportsScotland, Paths for All and the University of Edinburgh Physical Activity for Health Research Centre have facilitated the development of these key physical activity related public health messages for the general population. The key messages focus on encouraging and enabling people to be active at home and or when physical 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 physical distancing and non-essential travel guidance. National and local 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. The NHS Inform website is the obvious home for such information and the key messages below have been used to develop a COVID 19: Physical activity page within the COVID 19 section on the NHS inform website. A link to this page can be found here:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/healthy-living/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-activity>

2. Target audience

a. Those at risk of inactivity due to COVID-19 stay at home and physical 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 physical 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: COVID 19: Physical Activity information https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/healthy-living/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-activity Scottish Government, Physical Activity COVID-19 infographic https://www.nhsinform.scot/media/3065/coronavirus-physicalactivity-infographics-27032020.zip
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 physical distancing guidance and try to build into your commute.	Paths for all: Keeping Active at Home https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/keeping-active-at-home Scottish Disability Sport: Give it a Go https://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com/giveita-go/
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: https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/ Actify, Exercise at Home: https://www.actify.org.uk/result/exerciseathome

General population	Get your daily dose of physical activity, fresh air and vitamin D.	Everyone is encouraged to be more active either at home or outdoors. Walking, jogging or cycling are a great way to be more active and to get to some fresh air and sunlight to boost your vitamin D levels.	NHS Inform: COVID 19: Physical Activity information https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/healthy-living/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-activity
General Population	Stay active, stay safe.	<p>As lock down restrictions ease, you can now meet with 4 other households outdoors with no more than 15 people once a day and enjoy non-contact outdoor activities in your local area.</p> <p>So long as you follow hygiene and physical distancing measures you can now participate in activities such as; golf, hiking, canoeing, outdoor swimming or tennis.</p> <p>You can now travel more than 5 miles away from your home, unless restrictions apply to your local area. Visit Gov.Scot for more details.</p> <p>If you go somewhere and find it crowded, change your plans and go somewhere less busy.</p>	<p>Scottish Government: Route map for moving out of lockdown: https://www.gov.scot/news/route-map-for-moving-out-of-lockdown/</p> <p>Walking during periods of physical distancing: https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/walking-during-periods-of-social-distancing</p> <p>Sportscotland – Health and wellbeing: https://sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/covid-19-health-and-wellbeing/</p> <p>Scottish Disability Sport: Give it a Go https://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com/giveita-go/</p>

Key workers travelling to work outside the home	Work out, when working out. 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: https://www.travelinescotland.com/lts/#/travellinfo
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: https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lots-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/advice-and-tips-for-homeworkers
Adults/ Older adults and those working from home.	Sit less, move more.	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.	Keeping active at home: https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lots-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/keeping-active-at-home Seated strength and flexibility exercises for adults with mobility issues: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/ Five-week strength and flex programme: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flex-exercise-plan/ Actify, Exercise at Home: https://www.actify.org.uk/result/exerciseathome Scottish Disability Sport: Give it a Go

			https://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com/giveita-go/
Over 70s and those with underlying health conditions.	Move more, feel the difference.	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.	Link to Up and About booklet and NHS Inform Strength and Balance Exercises .
People who are shielding	Stay active, stay safe when outdoors	<p>People shielding can now meet with two other household outdoors, in a group up to 8 people once a day and are encouraged to go outside to be active as much as you like, as long as you stay 2 metres away from other people and follow hygiene rules.</p> <p>You can go outdoors for a walk, jog, cycle or wheel or to take part in non-contact activities such as; golf, bowls, tennis and outdoor swimming.</p> <p>Where possible, do not share equipment (i.e racket and ball) with others, use your own and ensure to clean after use.</p> <p>Try to choose times and places that will be less busy and make sure to follow hygiene guidance, such as; washing your hands as soon as you return home.</p>	<p>Scottish Government: Route map for moving out of lockdown: https://www.gov.scot/news/route-map-for-moving-out-of-lockdown/</p> <p>Walking during periods of physical distancing: https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/walking-during-periods-of-social-distancing</p> <p>Sportscotland – Health and wellbeing: https://sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/covid-19-health-and-wellbeing/</p> <p>Actify, Exercise at Home: https://www.actify.org.uk/result/exerciseathome</p> <p>Scottish Disability Sport: Give it a Go https://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com/giveita-go/</p>

<p>People who are shielding and/or inactive</p>	<p>Getting back outdoors safely</p>	<p>It may have been sometime since you were active outdoors, so start slowly, don't go too far from home and gradually build up how far or fast you go day by day.</p> <p>If you have been unable to be active at home, and feel more unsteady on your feet than you use to, try doing some strengthen and balance exercise to build up your muscle strength, before going outdoors.</p> <p>Being active is important for you physical and mental health, so if you don't feel confident enough to go outdoors yet, try doing something active at home such as housework, an online fitness class, gardening or dancing to music of your choice.</p>	<p>Keeping active at home: https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/lets-walk/tips-and-stories/tip-and-story/keeping-active-at-home</p> <p>Seated strength and flexibility exercises for adults with mobility issues: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/</p> <p>Five-week strength and flex programme: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-and-flex-exercise-plan/</p> <p>Link to Up and About booklet and NHS Inform Strength and Balance Exercises.</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. This could be through active play, taking part in a virtual workout, dancing or going on a walk, jog, wheel or cycle as a family.</p> <p>Children and young people under 18 who are not shielding can take part in organised outdoor contact sports, play and activities arranged by clubs, schools and leisure providers.</p> <p>Children, young people and families can also take part in non-contact sports such as tennis,</p>	<p>Parent Club, keeping active during coronavirus: https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/keeping-active-during-coronavirus-outbreak</p> <p>Change4Life indoor games for children – https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/indoor-activities</p> <p>Change4Life accessible activities for children: https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/accessible-activities</p>

		<p>badminton or golf organised by individuals or facilities</p> <p>Being active whether through sport, play or activities are all great ways to improve mood, reduce boredom, stimulate learning and help with parent/guardian and child bonding.</p>	<p>Play@Home books for 0-5 year-olds offer simple activities that can be done at home: http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/23142-Play@homeLeaflet_ForWeb.pdf</p> <p>Actify, Exercise at Home: https://www.actify.org.uk/result/exerciseathome</p> <p>Scottish Disability Sport: Give it a Go https://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com/giveitagogo/</p>
--	--	---	--

Diet, Physical Activity and Healthy Weight Team, Public Health Scotland, June 2020.