

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Useful organisations

- Check The Map - find all learning disability services  
[www.checkthemap.org](http://www.checkthemap.org)
- English Sports Association for People with Learning Disability  
[www.esapld.co.uk/links.html](http://www.esapld.co.uk/links.html)
- Manchester Learning Disability Partnership (find Fighting Fit)  
[www.mldp.org.uk](http://www.mldp.org.uk)
- MENCAP - the UK's leading charity for people with learning disabilities. Helpline 0808 808 1111 or  
[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)
- National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (US) [www.ncpad.org](http://www.ncpad.org)
- Special Olympics GB  
[www.specialolympicsgb.org](http://www.specialolympicsgb.org)
- London Sports Forum for Disabled

People. Telephone 020 7354 8666  
[www.londonsportsforum.org.uk](http://www.londonsportsforum.org.uk)

- Wheels for All (cycling)  
[www.cycling.org.uk](http://www.cycling.org.uk)

### Other resources

- 'A practical guide to...' Resource on a variety of topics for those wanting to promote health to people with learning disabilities  
[www.hpsearch.co.uk/manchester/](http://www.hpsearch.co.uk/manchester/)
- Exercise and nutrition health education curriculum for adults with developmental disabilities -  
[www.uic.edu/orgs/rrtcamr/hpcurriculum.htm](http://www.uic.edu/orgs/rrtcamr/hpcurriculum.htm)
- In-house training seminars contact Michael Craven by email on  
[ioseminars@fsmail.net](mailto:ioseminars@fsmail.net)

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### WHO IS SPORTEX/HEALTHEX?

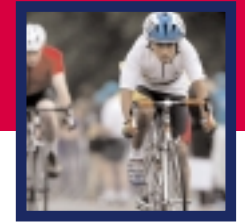
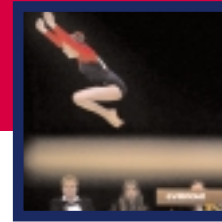
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## EXERCISE FOR PEOPLE WITH

# LEARNING DISABILITIES



### ■ EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR YOU

Exercise can play a very important role in helping you stay healthy. Research has shown that if you have a learning disability, you are five times less likely to exercise than people without these disabilities. So it is very important for you to build some activity into your life.

### ■ NOT DOING EXERCISE IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH

Not doing physical activity can lead to weight gains and higher risks of suffering from heart disease, and/or medical conditions like diabetes.

### ■ YOU CAN DO IT!

But there is lots of good evidence that even if you do have a learning disability, you can maintain a

healthy weight and increase your fitness, strength and physical function through physical activity. Just one look at the fantastic achievements at events like the Special Olympics, also proves that you can be just as successful in sport as people without a learning disability.

### ■ IT'S FUN AND GOOD FOR EVERYONE

The great thing is that exercise is good for everyone so wherever you live, it would be good for you to get those around you to go out for a walk together. This might include your family, your friends or any carers. That way you can all help motivate each other. Exercise will also help you increase your level of fitness so you can do more with less effort.

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# Be active - be safe - have fun!

# EXERCISE FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

## WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

- It can help you lose weight particularly if you combine this with eating healthy food
- It helps build muscle which means you burn more calories even when you're not exercising.
- It helps protect you against other conditions which cause ill health like diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and some cancers.
- Did you know that several short bouts of exercise (eg. 3x10 minutes) is as useful as 30 continuous minutes?
- Physical activity, along with a healthy diet, helps reduce stress and improves your overall feeling of well-being and quality of life, as well as helps you to sleep better.

## STAYING SAFE

Stop exercising if you get any of the following problems and tell your carer who should get medical advice from your GP or by contacting NHS Direct on 0845 4647:

- Discomfort in your chest or upper body
- Uncomfortable or severe breathlessness brought on by physical activity during your activity
- Dizziness or nausea on exertion
- Fainting during or just after exercise
- Palpitations (a very fast or irregular physical activity heart beat) during activity.

## WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITY IS BEST?

While stamina-based activity is particularly important, you also need to include some strength and flexibility-based activity to get the best health gains.

**Stamina-type activities:** Walking, swimming, cycling, dancing, tennis, and playing sport

**Strength-type activities:** Walking uphill, carrying shopping, climbing stairs, gardening (digging or mowing) and housework

**Flexibility-type activities:** Dancing, yoga, Pilates, T'ai Chi and gardening

### Tips on increasing your activity level

- Walking is an ideal activity as it's free and easy to do anywhere. Perhaps take a dog for a walk or go with some friends to make it more interesting. You could also use a pedometer to count your steps (see back page).
- Look for opportunities to be active during your whole day. For example park at the far end of the car park, or walk one stop further to catch the bus, and take 10 minutes out of your lunch break to go for a walk.
- Try using the stairs instead of the escalator. If you do use the escalator, start by walking part of the way and gradually progress to walking up the whole way.
- Choose activities that you enjoy doing. Involve your friends and family to make your activities fun, sociable and enjoyable.

## HOW MUCH AND HOW OFTEN?

**Frequency** Your main aim is to build up to 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on 5 or more days of the week. If this seems too much to start with, try starting with 3 x 10 minute walks spread throughout the day and work towards 2 x 15 minute walks and then 30 continuous minutes. One goal is to try and increase your activity by 2 minutes each day.

**Intensity** Moderate intensity means breathing harder and getting warmer than normal. It does not need to be hard. You should be able to talk and be active at the same time.

**Advice** Whatever your chosen activity, it should be performed at a gentle intensity which gradually increases for the first 10 minutes and then reaches a level you can maintain for your chosen period of time. This gets the blood flowing to your muscles and allows your heart rate to increase gradually. When you are nearing the end of your activity you should also slowly decrease the level of activity over 5-10 minutes to allow your heart rate to slow down gradually.

**Remember** Set yourself realistic goals and don't worry if you miss one day. Just make sure that the next day you pick up where you left off.