

How to..

Look after your  
mental wellbeing  
using exercise..

Whittaker Lane  
Medical Centre

**Did you know that being physically active not only helps keep your heart healthy and strengthens your muscles, but is really important in helping improve your mental health and wellbeing?**

## What is physical activity?

Being physically active means moving our bodies more, and spending less time being sat down. This does not mean that you have to be sprinting, there are lots of different activities you can get involved in, which are suitable for all ages and levels!

It is recommended that adults should do 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week. Moderate activities include walking, hiking, riding a bike, while vigorous activities can be running, skipping and swimming. Anything that increases your heart rate, makes you breathe faster and feel warmer will count towards your activity!

Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/> for more information!

## How can physical activity help my mental health?

Many studies have shown the benefits that physical activity can have on people's mental health. It can help with:

- **better sleep** - by making you feel more tired at the end of the day
- **happier moods and better self-esteem** - exercise releases feel-good hormones which improve your mood and give you more energy
- **managing stress, anxiety or intrusive and racing thoughts** - being active releases cortisol which helps us manage stress. It also gives our brain something to focus on
- **reducing the risk of depression and dementia** - studies have shown that doing regular exercise can minimise the chance of a depressive episode by 20-30%!
- **connecting with people** - doing group activities can help you meet new people

We understand that it can be difficult to find motivation to exercise when you're feeling low, always take it at your own pace and don't feel pressured!

## What activities are available for me locally?

- **Heaton Park** - why not take a stroll around Heaton Park and see what it has to offer?
- **Group activities** - Bury Council are offering a wide range of group activities daily for all ages and levels that you can participate in to improve your wellbeing! To find an activity suitable for you, check out their wellbeing timetable on <https://www.bury.gov.uk/wellbeing>
- **Visit your local leisure centre** - find an activity you enjoy such as swimming, badminton and table tennis at your local leisure centre
- **Social Prescribing Service** - you can self-refer yourself for the VCFA Beacon services which help patients get support with their wellbeing by connecting you to 500 organisations in Bury, offering a volunteering service which gets you involved in community activities, make friends and learn new skills. For more information, please visit <https://www.buryvcfa.org.uk/health-social-care/>



If you're struggling with your mental health, please reach out to your GP, or visit the Mind website <https://www.mind.org.uk/> a mental health charity which can provide you with the support you may need. Do not be afraid to speak up, talking through your problems can help and we are here for you!