

This month is 'Active April' and we will be thinking about how being active supports our overall wellbeing. It is widely considered a "natural mood booster" because it triggers chemical changes in the brain that directly impact how you feel.

Here are 10 ways being active supports your wellbeing and mental health:

- **Boosts mood through "feel-good" hormones:** Physical activity causes the brain to release chemicals like **endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine**, which naturally improve your mood and create feelings of happiness.
- **Reduces stress and anxiety:** Exercise lowers levels of the body's stress hormones, such as **adrenaline and cortisol**. It also helps make the "fight or flight" response less reactive over time.
- **Improves self-esteem and confidence:** Meeting small goals or mastering a new physical skill can give you a sense of achievement and improve your self-worth.
- **Enhances sleep quality:** Regular activity helps regulate your sleep-wake cycle, making it easier to fall asleep and improving the quality of restorative sleep.
- **Sharpens memory and focus:** Physical movement increases blood flow to the brain, which can improve concentration, attention, and memory.
- **Provides a healthy distraction:** Focusing on movement allows your mind to take a break from constant worrying or negative thinking patterns.
- **Fosters social connection:** Joining a team, a local walking club, or a group fitness class provides opportunities to meet new people and reduces feelings of loneliness.

- **Builds emotional resilience:** Mastering physical challenges can help you develop coping strategies that translate to other life stressors.
- **Reduces symptoms of depression:** For mild to moderate depression, regular exercise can be as effective as some traditional treatments by promoting neural growth and reducing inflammation in the brain.
- **Connects you with nature:** Exercising outdoors (sometimes called a "**green gym**") has been shown to have a greater positive effect on wellbeing than indoor activity alone.

Low-impact activities at home are a great way to move your body without putting stress on your joints. These exercises can be done in small spaces and often require no equipment.

Simple Low-Impact Activities

- **Marching on the spot:** A classic way to get the blood flowing. You can add shoulder rolls or arm swings to increase the movement.
- **Seated or standing side taps:** Tap your toes to the side while raising your arms to shoulder height to engage your upper body.
- **Chair-based exercises:** Use a solid chair for seated leg extensions, chair squats, or even [chair-based yoga](#) to improve flexibility and strength safely.

- **Wall push-ups:** A gentler version of a standard push-up that builds upper body strength using a wall for support.
- **Glute bridges:** Lie on your back with knees bent and lift your hips toward the ceiling. This is an effective way to strengthen your core and lower body without jumping.
- **Stretching and mobility:** Simple movements like ankle rolls, spinal rotations, and side body stretches can release tension and improve your range of motion.
- **"Kitchen Discos":** Put on your favourite music and dance around your living room or kitchen. It's a fun, low-pressure way to boost your mood and heart rate.

Here is a 5-Minute "Feel-Good" Flow for you to try at home:

Perform each move for about **45 seconds**, taking **15 seconds** to transition to the next.

- **Gentle March & Shoulder Rolls:** March on the spot at a comfortable pace. Every few steps, roll your shoulders backward in a big circle to open up your chest and release tension from sitting.
- **Wall Push-Ups:** Stand arm-length away from a wall. Place your hands flat against it at shoulder height. Slowly lean in and push back out. This strengthens your arms and chest without the strain of a floor push-up.
- **Seated or Standing Side Taps:** While standing (or sitting on the edge of a sturdy chair), tap one foot out to the side, then the other. To boost the benefit, reach your arms out to the sides like you're making a "T" shape as you tap.
- **Chair Squats (or "Sit-to-Stands"):** Stand in front of a sturdy chair. Slowly lower your hips until they just touch the seat, then stand back up. Use the armrests for support if you need to. This is the best move for building leg strength!

- **Sky Reaches & Side Stretches:** Stand tall and reach both arms toward the ceiling as if you are trying to touch the sky. Then, gently lean to the left, back to the centre, and then to the right. Breathe deeply as you stretch.

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Below are some suggested Upbeat Songs to support movement:

These tracks are known for their "feel-good" energy and steady rhythms:

- **"Walking on Sunshine" by Katrina & The Waves:** A classic mood booster with a high-energy tempo.
- **"Can't Stop the Feeling!" by Justin Timberlake:** A bright, pop track perfect for a morning "warm-up" vibe.
- **"Happy" by Pharrell Williams:** Focuses on choosing positivity and has a tempo that is easy to step along to.
- **"Levitating" by Dua Lipa:** Features a disco-inspired beat that makes you want to move without being too intense.
- **"Uptown Funk" by Mark Ronson ft. Bruno Mars:** Great for keeping a steady rhythm during moves like side taps or marching.

Active April 2026

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		1 Commit to being more active this month, starting today	2 Spend as much time as possible outdoors today	3 Listen to your body and be grateful for what it can do	4 Eat healthy and natural food today and drink lots of water	5 Turn a regular activity into a playful game today
6 Do a body-scan meditation and really notice how your body feels	7 Get natural light early in the day. Dim the lights in the evening	8 Give your body a boost by laughing or making someone laugh	9 Turn your housework or chores into a fun form of exercise	10 Have a day with less screen time and more movement	11 Set yourself an exercise goal or sign up to an activity challenge	12 Move as much as possible, even if you're stuck inside
13 Make sleep a priority and go to bed in good time	14 Relax your body & mind with yoga, tai chi or meditation	15 Get active by singing today (even if you think you can't sing!)	16 Go exploring around your local area and notice new things	17 Be active outside. Plant some seeds and encourage growth	18 Try out a new exercise, activity or dance class	19 Spend less time sitting today. Get up and move more often
20 Focus on 'eating a rainbow' of multi-coloured vegetables today	21 Regularly pause to stretch and breathe during the day	22 Enjoy moving to your favourite music. Really go for it	23 Go out and do an errand for a loved one or neighbour	24 Get active in nature. Feed the birds or go wildlife-spotting	25 Have a 'no screens' night and take time to recharge yourself	26 Take an extra break in your day and walk outside for 15 minutes
 27 Find a fun exercise to do while waiting for the kettle to boil	28 Meet a friend outside for a walk and a chat	29 Become an activist for a cause you really believe in	30 Make time to run, swim, dance, cycle or stretch today			

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together