Easy Read

Let's Get Active

A guide to physical activity and sport for people with a learning disability

In this guide there will be information about:

What is physical activity and sport?

Why is being active important?

Ideas of what activities and sports you can try.

Other ways of taking part in physical activity and sport.

Useful contacts.

Reason for this guide

This guide will give information on:

- The benefits of being active.
- Where you can go if you want to take part in physical activity and sport.

Who is the guide for?

- People with a learning disability.

- Families, friends and carers of someone with a learning disability.

- Support workers. Paid staff who support people with a learning disability at home and to go out in the community.

What is physical activity and sport?

Physical activity means taking part in exercise to keep healthy, for example, walking, cycling and yoga. Sport is a type of physical activity, there are usually rules to follow and it can be competitive. Examples of sports are football, tennis and boccia.

Why is being active important?

Physical activity and sport is good for your health and fitness.

It is good for you because:

- It raises your heart rate, makes you healthier and feel happier.

- It can help you lose weight. It lowers the chance of you getting health problems like diabetes and heart disease. Being active helps you to live longer.

- It can improve your confidence and help you make new friends.

- You can learn new skills.

- It can help you improve your sleep.

Physical activity and sport is for everyone and anyone can take part.

Taking part in physical activity and sport does not mean you have to compete against other people. You can do activities and sport for fun at your local sports club or **community centre**.

A **community centre** is a place where people get together and take part in activities.

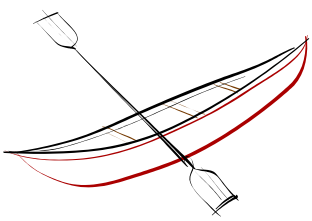
You should make sure you speak to your doctor before starting any exercise so they can give you some advice. You can also speak to your doctor if you are worried about your health.

I do not know what activity to do

If you do not know what activity or sport you want to do, you could think about what you would most like to get out of doing the activity:

- Do you want to meet new people? If you do then you can try a team sport. For example football, basketball or netball.

- Would you prefer to exercise on your own? If you do you can try an activity or sport you can do by yourself. For example walking, running or swimming.



- Do you want to try something you have never done before? If you do you could think about what type of activities you might enjoy and give them a try. For example rowing or golf.

You can try out lots of different activities and sport. When you find the activities you enjoy the most, keep doing those ones.

Physical activities and sports you could try:

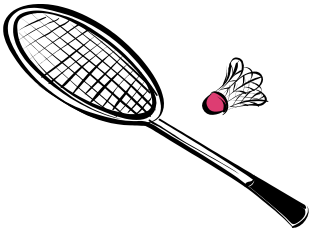
Walking - It is very easy to fit walking into your everyday life. You could walk instead of driving, getting the bus or a taxi.

Running – You can run on your own or with family and friends. There might be a local running group you could join. All you need is a pair of trainers.

Cycling – You can cycle for fun or as a way of getting somewhere instead of getting the bus or driving. If you do not have a bicycle you could find a local cycling session or bike hire near you.

Football – You can play with friends and family in your local park. There might be a local football club you could join.

Swimming – You can swim in your local public swimming pool. You can do it for fun or you can have lessons to help you get better. There might be a local swimming club you could join.



Badminton – Lots of leisure centres allow you to hire a badminton court. There might be a local badminton club you could join.

Exercise in the gym – There are lots of activities you can do in the gym. You could try an exercise class or use the equipment. For example the weights or the rowing machine.

There are lots of other activities and sports you can try. Look on the internet for more ideas and use the ‘Useful Contacts’ page at the end of this guide to find activities in your area.

Top tips to get involved in physical activity and sport:

Take part with a friend, family member or carer.

Visit the place a few days before the session so you know what it looks like and how to get there.

Try activities that do not cost much money. For example walking, running, cycling or football.

Do not worry about what other people think – as long as you enjoy yourself that is all that matters.

If you are not sure if an activity is right for you then you can speak to the session leader first.

Try and plan to have a regular time that you go every week. This will create a routine and keep you active.

Next time you visit your doctor you can ask them for advice on sport and physical activity and talk through your options. Some doctors offer an **exercise referral scheme**.

An **exercise referral scheme** is when a doctor or medical expert helps someone exercise safely to improve their health.

Other ways of getting involved in sport

You can get in involved in sport without actually taking part.

You could watch sport on television or you could get tickets to watch your favourite team play, for example football.

You could volunteer at a sports club or event.

Useful contacts

Below is a list of organisations you can contact to find out about physical activity and sport in your area.

Mencap – some local Mencap groups will organise sport and physical activity sessions or they may know of activities in your local area.
www.mencap.org.uk/local-groups
0808 808 1111 or **helpline@mencap.org.uk**

Special Olympics GB – there are lots of Special Olympics GB clubs that have a range of sports for people with a learning disability.
www.specialolympicsgb.org.uk/find-a-club
0207 247 8891

Active Partnerships – work with local partners to increase the opportunities for people to be physically active. You can contact your Active Partnership to find out about activities and volunteering where you live.
www.activepartnerships.org/active-partnerships
info@ActivePartnerships.org

Local Authority – you can contact the Leisure or Public Health teams in your local authority to see what activities they offer.

Leisure centres and swimming pools – you can contact your local leisure centre or swimming pool to find out what activities are available and how you can take part.

National Governing Bodies (NGB's) – want to increase participation in one sport. If you know what sport you want to do you can speak to the NGB of that sport.
www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/national-governing-bodies

Activity Alliance – want to make active lives possible for disabled people.
www.activityalliance.org.uk
01509 227 750

Parasport – you can search for disability sport and physical activity in your local area.
www.parasport.org.uk

Get Inspired – you can get activity ideas, find online workouts and search for activities.
www.bbc.co.uk/getinspired

Volunteering – you can get involved in physical activity and sport by helping at events and sessions near where you live.
www.beinspireduk.org/volunteer or **doit.life/join-in**

mencap SPORT

Mencap registered charity number 222377 (England and Wales); SC041079 (Scotland) 2020.162