

The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise

MIND SPACE

young people's
health matters **MAYO**

Free and confidential support service
for young people aged 15 – 25 years old.



MINDSPACE

How we support young people:

- Offer advice & support.
- Listen without making judgements.
- Help with decision making skills.
- Support (anxiety, stress, mood).
- Supported access to other services.

What we offer someone who supports a young person:

- Advice & guidance on how to support or refer the young person.
- Information & signposting.



Who are Mindspace Mayo?

Brief Summary

Mindspace Mayo is a free and confidential support service for young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Mindspace's aim is to support young people aged 15-25 who are going through a difficult time to ensure they get the support they need.

Our centre in the Market Square, Castlebar provides a welcoming space for young people to call in, get information or have a chat one-to-one with a support worker.

If a young person wants support, our staff are there to listen, without making judgements, and to provide supportive guidance.

Mindspace also has two outreach locations in Erris and Ballina. The aim of the outreach programme is to provide essential support for young people in their own locality, in a setting that feels safe and comfortable for the young person.

Getting support can help you to keep on track at school, study or work, and in your personal and family relationships. The sooner you get help the sooner things can begin to improve for you.

We also provide information and advice to anyone who is worried about a friend or young person in their life.



Why should we exercise?

Keeping active helps protect both your physical and mental health. Regular exercise will help you sleep, relax and feel better. Exercise helps reduce stress and boosts your energy levels. Not only does exercise help your physical health, it can influence your mental health too. It releases chemicals in your brain that have a positive effect on your mood and your body.

Regular physical activity is the key to getting healthy and staying healthy yet studies show that few Irish people take part in regular physical activity.

How do I start?

It can be very difficult starting a new activity for the first time or after a long break. It can take patience and perseverance, and you should take it at a nice gentle pace especially at the beginning. Make sure you have had enough rest, you are hydrated and feeling well.

When you're first starting exercise, pace yourself and start slow! A gentle pace will get your body used to exercising. Setting small goals can help in the beginning- make sure they are realistic and achievable, but also enjoyable!

Light jogging or brisk walking is a good place to start. It can be a bit scary starting a new activity or exercise, and it is ok to feel a bit nervous. Some common barriers that people often find are cost, injury or illness, lack of energy, fear of failure, or even the weather.

There are things you can do to get past these issues.



If cost of a gym membership is an issue, try free activities such as walking or running. There are plenty of helpful exercise instruction videos on the internet that you could try also. You can get good quality videos on everything you could need from yoga to running to swimming technique. Taking it easy at the beginning will protect against injury and exercising with a friend can also help to reduce anxiety about starting.

Fitting exercise into your day can be another struggle. It can help if you figure out what time of the day works best for you. Are you a morning, afternoon or evening person? Some people prefer to get their exercise over and done with first thing in the morning or getting it done on their lunch break. Do whatever works for you so it feels less like a chore. You are more likely to stick with the new activity if it fits into your day.

What are the benefits?

Regular physical activity has a positive impact on physical and mental health.

It reduces your risk of chronic diseases, such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, cancer, osteoporosis and depression.

For older people regular physical activity reduces the risk of falls.

Physical activity and exercise can really enhance our wellbeing. A short, brisk walk can increase mental alertness, energy and mood. Engaging in regular physical activity can increase self-confidence and self-esteem and can reduce stress and anxiety.

Physical activity has been shown to have a positive impact on our mood and can reduce levels of anxiety in people.



How much exercise do I need?

The HSE National Guidelines on Physical Activity for Ireland states that all children and young people should be active, at a moderate to vigorous level, for at least 60 minutes every day.

For adults, they recommend at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week).

These are some examples of moderate to vigorous activity for children:

Hiking, skateboarding, rollerblading | Bicycle riding | Brisk walking
PE class | Housework and garden work, such as sweeping or pushing a lawn mower | Games of catch and throw, frisbee and rounders | Martial arts, such as karate | Running | Sports such as gaelic football, hurling, soccer, rugby, basketball, swimming, tennis | Active games involving running and chasing
Boxing | Vigorous dancing | Rope climbing | Climbing walls |
| Games such as hopscotch Hopping, skipping, jumping, Jumping rope
| Sports such as gymnastics |



How much exercise do I need?

These are some examples
of the moderate/ vigorous activities for adults:

- | Brisk walking - a mile in 15 – 20 minutes | Digging in the garden |
- | Medium paced swimming | Water aerobics |
- | Cycling slower than 10 miles per hour | Tennis (doubles)|
- | Ballroom dancing | General gardening |
- | Jogging or running a mile in 10 minutes or faster |
- | Active sports such as football or soccer, squash, aerobics |
- | Circuit training | Fast cycling (10 miles per hour or faster)
or brisk rowing | Swimming lengths | Tennis (singles)|
- | Dancing such as quick step, hip hop, street, salsa, Irish dancing |
- | Hill-walking with a backpack |



Healthy Eating

Healthy eating habits go hand in hand with a healthy lifestyle. A healthy body and mind, balanced diet and regular exercise are all part of ensuring a happy and healthy lifestyle. Healthy eating really comes down to eating a variety of foods in the right amounts to make sure you get all the energy and nutrition you need.

It's important to eat sensibly, finding a balance, and eat as much unprocessed, natural foods as possible with plenty of fruit and vegetables.

Try to eat energy providing carbohydrate foods, for example: bread, cereal, potatoes, rice and pasta. Choose wholemeal options whenever possible. It is recommended that we eat six servings/portions from this food group daily.

Cut down on fat, and junk food. It is healthy to have a small amount of healthy fat in our diet but we don't need to be gobbling chips and greasy fries all day.

Cut down on sugary drinks and snacks. For example, instead of eating a bar of chocolate, have a square, or a glass of coke instead of a bottle of coke.

If possible don't use salt. Choose from the huge variety of herbs and spices to brighten up your meals, for example chilli, garlic, pepper and mixed herbs.

We all need at least eight glasses of water or fluids every day. This can be water or other drinks like juices, herbal teas and so on. Choose pure unsweetened fruit juice instead of sugary cordials or minerals and watch out for coffee and tea with lots of added sugar. Sugary drinks rot your teeth as well as upping your daily calorie intake.



Healthy Eating

If you are very active, you'll need to drink even more than eight glasses during the day. Carry a bottle of water with you so that you can keep sipping all day.

If you are a vegetarian or a vegan, it is still possible to have a nutrient-rich, balanced and healthy diet. Paying attention to what you're eating and what vitamins and nutrients you're getting from each meal will help you to stay healthy and have more energy. Make sure to include some protein with each meal to stay healthy. Try to keep your alcohol intake low, drinking more than the recommended amount of alcohol can be harmful to your heart. Alcohol is also high in calories, so it can lead to weight gain.

Eating a healthy diet doesn't have to be overly complicated. While some specific foods or nutrients have been shown to have a beneficial effect on mood, it's your overall dietary pattern that is most important. The cornerstone of a healthy diet pattern should be to replace processed food with real food whenever possible. Eating food that is as close as possible to the way nature made it can make a huge difference to the way you think, look, and feel.



Exercise & Sleep

Sleep is vital to our health and wellbeing. It helps restore energy, keep memory functioning properly, and helps to heal our bodies. When sleep is disrupted or deprived, we don't feel as alert. We are easily agitated and all of our actions seem slow. Stress and anxiety caused by work, family, and daily life commonly lead to sleeping problems. Hectic work schedules, school and personal lives leave little time to unwind and relax.

Exercise and physical activity can have a big impact on your sleep. As little as 10 minutes of aerobic exercise, such as walking or cycling, can dramatically improve the quality of your sleep, especially when done on a regular basis. What's more, people who are more active may reduce their risk for developing troublesome sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea and restless leg syndrome. Physical activity improves sleep quality and increases sleep duration. Exercise may also assist sleep in other ways, because it reduces stress and tires you out.



Gentle, low-key exercises may be particularly good to try before bed, because they help you let go of all the stress that you likely accumulated throughout the day and they allow you to stretch and relax your muscles to relieve tension. When both your body and your mind are calm, it's easier to drift off into slumber.

**Try yoga or Pilates at bedtime
for a restful night's sleep.**

Key Messages

Remember the benefits of physical activity!

Regular physical activity will improve your health and well-being as well as reduce the risk of developing chronic illness.

The health benefits of physical activity increase as your level of activity increases.

Some physical activity is better than none.
The more you do, the more benefits you gain.

Be active for reasons that are important to you and choose an activity you enjoy.

Start slowly and set goals to increase your chance of success.

Keep an activity diary, or use a pedometer and aim to increase the number of steps you take each day!

Good luck!

BOOST YOUR MOOD WITH HEALTHY FOOD

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is proven to have a positive impact on how you feel.



Little things
can make a big
difference.



yourmentalhealth.ie
#littlethings



If you're going through a tough time ...

Mindspace can help.

There is no issue too small to see us about. Mindspace can help if you:

- Are feeling down, stressed or can't stop worrying.
- Don't feel like yourself anymore.
- Can't deal with school/college/work or are finding it difficult to concentrate.
- Are feeling sick or worried about your health.
- Have questions about, or want to cut down on alcohol or other drug use.
- Want to talk about sexuality, gender identity or relationships.
- Are having difficulties with your family or friends.
- Have sexual health issues.
- Are being bullied, hurt or harassed.
- Are worried about work or study or if you're having money trouble.
- Need someone to talk to.



Getting support can help you to keep on track at school, study or work, and in your personal and family relationships.

The sooner you get help the sooner things can begin to improve for you.

MindSpace Mayo is NOT a 24 hour emergency or crisis intervention service.

Our phone, text and email services are NOT checked outside of office hours.

If you need help outside of office hours please see below a list of support services:

24 hour services

Phone

Emergency Services..... 999 or 112

Samaritans.....116 123

Listening service for people who are lonely, despairing and suicidal.

Childline..... 1800 666 666

A confidential phone line for children and young people.

Pieta House..... 1800 247 247

Suicide prevention Helpline, for anyone in a suicidal crisis or who has been bereaved by suicide.

THE MORE YOU MOVE THE BETTER YOUR MOOD

Getting regular exercise is proven to have
a positive impact on how you feel.



Little things can make a big difference

yourmentalhealth.ie
#littletthings

 facebook.com/mayomindspace

 twitter.com/mindspacemayo

 [@mindspacemayo](https://www.instagram.com/mindspacemayo)

MINDSPACE MAYO

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