

## **Activity is Good for You!**

'Exercise' – the word strikes fear into some of us – we think of Lycra, ultra marathons, iron men and women, cyclists whizzing past, and the sports achievements on TV. It's so easy to be daunted and to think that exercise is too challenging – and therefore for other people!

Activity is what our bodies are designed for – bodies are designed to move, designed to be outdoors, and designed to be active (some of the time!). Over the last 70 years there have been so many extra labour saving devices in the home and elsewhere - which reduces regular body activity

Lockdown and restriction has been so difficult for so many – daily activities constrained, working from home, 'cooped up', home schooling and other changes to our lives. For many, working from home means

- No commuting (walk, bike, car or bus)
- No clear separation between home time and work time

So what simple steps (!) can we take to get the health benefits of activity into our lives?

First, all activity that moves muscles is good for us, however much or little. It helps produce endorphins, (happy chemicals in the blood stream), and clears thinking.

Just ten repetitions of standing up and sitting down, running on the spot, or star jumps clears the mind

We could 'walk to work' - to get separation between work and home time, and also move our muscles. Ten minutes 'commute' gives us several hundred steps outside the house, in fresh air, and invigorates us ready for the day – and helps clear the mind at the end of the day – maybe even a quick stroll at lunchtime too! And if you have stairs, you can use them several times a day – muscles work harder when climbing against gravity than walking along the flat.

At a vaccination centre the other day, one staff member, the 'runner' - showing people to the waiting room after the vaccine – managed ten thousand steps (which put me to shame, sitting in a room drawing up and giving vaccines)

And as lockdown eases, we all need to get fit again for our own bodies' sakes – especially if we are restarting work which requires manual fitness – otherwise we risk straining little used muscles. So do think about how to regain fitness – time in nature is good in so many ways