

# Being more active and NAFLD - Getting started

BRITISH  
LIVER  
TRUST

Being more physically active helps reduce liver fat and improve your NAFLD. The more physically active you are, the better. But don't let that put you off if just getting started feels like a struggle. **Remember that any activity is better than none.**

Find things you enjoy doing and that suit your level of fitness and any symptoms you have, like fatigue. You don't have to join a gym or run a marathon - you can be active by walking and when sitting down. Speak to your doctor to get suggestions or for a referral to local services like walking groups and free classes.

A burst of activity doesn't just help your physical health. It brightens your mood and helps your mental health too. Mix and match these ideas to get started, or add some of your own.

Do some **seated arm raises**. Sit up straight with your arms by your sides. Raise your arms out to the side, palms facing forwards, as high as feels comfortable. Then bring them back down. Repeat 5 times.

Team up with a friend and **try out a class** - online or in person.

Go for a **walk around the block**. Take the time to notice anything new or things that make you smile.

Put on your favourite tunes and have a **kitchen disco**. Legwarmers optional!

Join in **outdoor play** with your kids, grandkids or pets.

**Walk or cycle part of a journey**. Go to a bus or train stop that's a bit further away. Or get off a stop early and walk.

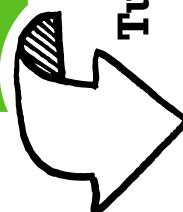
Take a movement break when the TV ads come on. **Walk to another room and back**. Or do some seated stretches.

Relax and shake off the day with **10 minutes of yoga or pilates** when you get home. [The NHS has free online videos](#) to guide you.

Jog for 10 minutes, or as long as you can. If you aren't sure how far you can go, **try jogging on the spot**.

Try **seated hip marches**. Sit up straight without leaning back and hold on to the sides of the chair. Lift your left leg up then slowly put it back down. Now do your right. Repeat 5 times on each side.

**For seated exercises use a strong stable chair that does not have wheels.**



## How much physical activity should I aim to do?

The NHS recommends doing 2 different types of activity - moderate aerobic activity ('cardio') and strengthening exercises. Both of these can help with NAFLD.

Aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week. That's the same as doing 30 minutes on 5 days of the week. You can break it up however you like - just 10 minutes at a time counts. You should feel a bit out of breath and warmer.

Do strengthening exercises that work all your major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms) on at least 2 days a week.

If you can't do the recommended amount at the moment, don't worry. **Make a start by doing what you can.** As your body gets used to being more active, build up your activity levels by pushing yourself a bit harder or keeping going for longer. Tracking how much you do can help you see your progress and stay motivated.

### Moderate aerobic activities or 'cardio' include:

- brisk walking
- dancing
- hiking
- riding a bike
- pushing a lawn mower

### Vigorous aerobic activities include:

- swimming
- running
- aerobics classes
- team sports such as football

1 minute of vigorous activity counts as 2 mins of the 150 min weekly goal.

### Strengthening exercises include:

- yoga, pilates or tai chi
- exercises with weights or a resistance band
- exercises like push-ups or squats
- heavy gardening such as digging

“It can be hard to get more active, especially if you're not feeling well. So be proud of yourself for trying. Simple seated exercises or walking a short distance are a good start.”

*Dr Kate Hallsworth, Senior Research Physiotherapist, Newcastle University*

### Where to get help with getting active

- Ask your doctor if they can refer you to a physical activity specialist or to a local group like a walking club
- Visit [howfittoday.nhs](https://www.nhs.uk/howfittoday) for activities and exercises for all levels, including beginners
- If you want to build up to running, follow the [NHS couch to 5k](https://www.nhs.uk/couch-to-5k) programme
- Talk to your family and friends, they can encourage you and you might find a buddy to get more active with
- Help yourself by thinking about when and where you could fit a bit of activity in and planning how you'll do it.

To read or download our other information on NAFLD, scan the code with your phone or visit [www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/naflD](https://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/naflD)

