

Moving More and Sitting Less

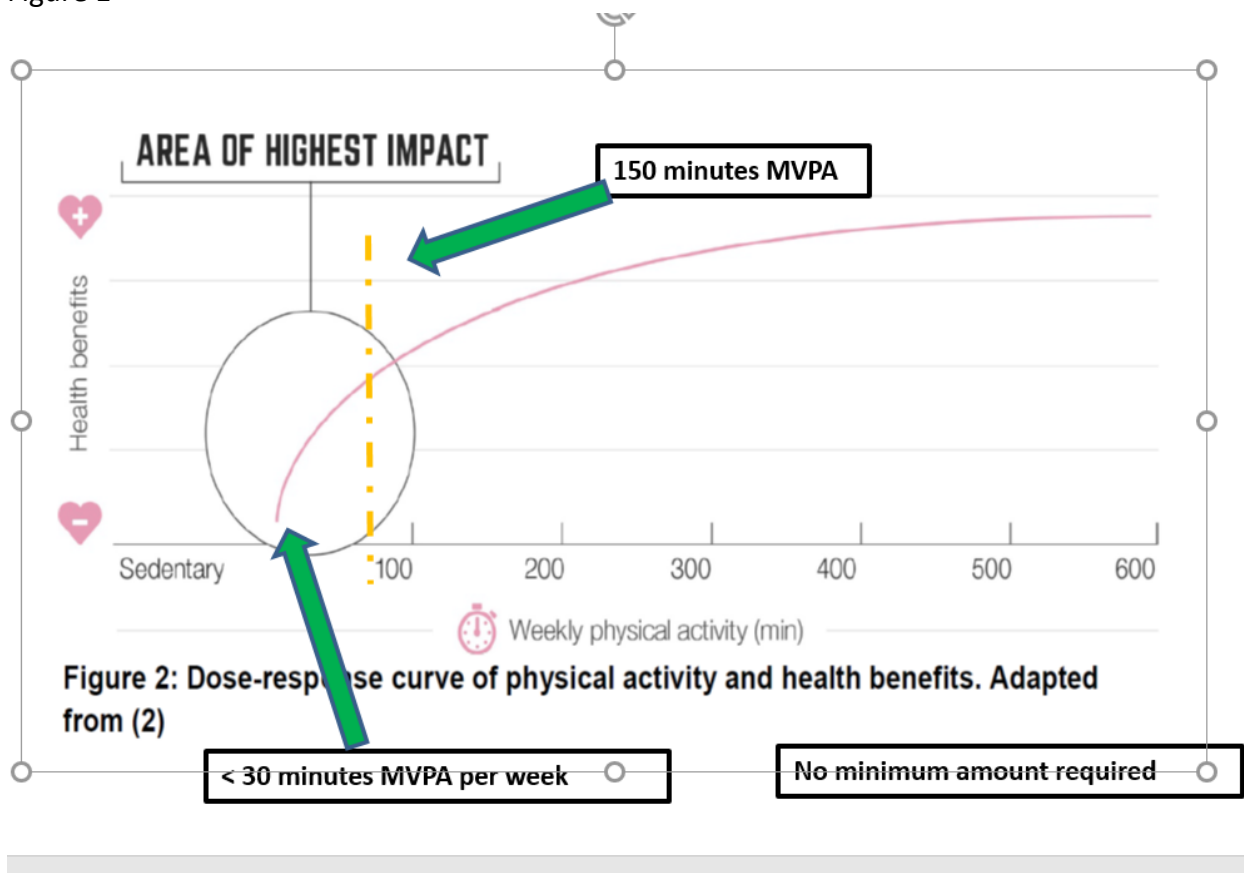
I think most of us have heard the message that to stay healthy we need to move more and sit less. This message is reinforced in the most recent [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) recommendations](#).

Professor Suzanne McDonough and Dr Aoife Stephenson from the [RCSI School of Physiotherapy](#), share some of their own findings and useful tips from their collaborators about how you can best enact this important health advice. Check out their research twitter page to stay up to date with their programme of work <https://twitter.com/MAINTAINprog>.

My activity levels have actually got lower since lock down

Many of us have lost our routine of travelling to and from work giving us fewer opportunities to be active. So some of us may need to start a new routine until we all get back into the office. Remember, the biggest benefit to your health is going from no or very little activity to some activity! (See Figure 1). It can be helpful to measure what you are currently doing (see below a useful App you can download onto your phone, or use your Fitbit or other wearable device). If your activity levels are very low, try setting yourself a goal of walking or doing some other activity for 5 minutes as briskly as you can each day. If you are finding it hard to get going, you could organise to go for a walk with a friend or organise a walking meeting to get away from the computer, or sign up for an activity via the RCSI Sports and Social club, gym etc. (in line with public health guidelines).

Figure 1



I'm in pain or I have arthritis- what can I do?

Research by Professor Suzanne McDonough has shown that people with painful conditions such as low back pain, osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia, can safely increase their walking gradually in order to meet the physical activity guidelines <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25529265/> and that walking can help to reduce pain levels and improve your day to day function, over time. In one of Suzanne's most recent clinical trials, walking seems to work better in people with greater levels of pain and disability due to their back pain

https://repository.rcsi.com/articles/journal_contribution/A_randomized_controlled_trial_investigating_effects_of_an_individualized_pedometer_driven_walking_program_on_chronic_low_back_pain/14455833 or

<https://bmcmusculoskeletdisord.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12891-021-04060-8>

Sitting less

If your activity levels are low and you would like to become more active- maybe you might find it easier to reduce your sitting time first. Or are you quite active but know you are spending too long sitting at your computer each day? There is increasing evidence that, sitting down too much

can be a risk to your health. Sitting for long periods is thought to slow the metabolism, which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar, blood pressure and break down body fat. Unfortunately, there is currently not enough evidence to set a time limit on how much time people should sit each day.

However, there is emerging evidence that for inactive older adults, replacing sitting with light-intensity activity e.g. light gardening, is likely to produce some health benefits. Specifically, for people who perform no or little activity, replacing sitting with some light activities reduces the risk of death, heart disease and, and type 2 diabetes.

What can I do to reduce the time I spend sitting during the workday?

As many of us are now working from home, there are some simple things we can do to reduce the amount of sitting we are doing.

Some tips include:

- If you don't have a sit stand work desk at home, place your laptop on a box or similar and try alternating between working standing and sitting throughout the day
- Stand or walk around while on the phone
- Get Up for Lunch and Coffee Breaks and try include a walk
- Use a smaller cup. You'll need to get up and go for a refill more often with a smaller water bottle or coffee cup

Research from Dr Stephenson and Prof Mc Donough suggest that using technology can help us reduce our sitting time <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-017-0561-4>.

Using technology you can try the following tips:

- Set a reminder for a scheduled movement break and get up every 30 minutes- 1 hour to break your sitting time
- Use the inactivity feature on your fitness tracker to notify you when you have been inactive/sitting for a prolonged period

Is intensity of physical activity important?

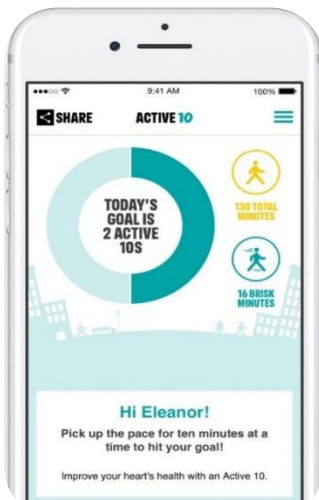
That depends, if you have been doing very little then starting to move, even just 5 minutes of walking per day, or starting to break up your sitting will benefit your health.

The physical activity guidelines recommend moving at a moderate intensity, and this seems to be particularly important for your heart health. Moving at a moderate intensity will make you feel warm, increase your heart rate, make you breathe a little harder but you can still hold a conversation. Brisk walking is considered to be at a moderate intensity and typically brisk

walking is a pace between 100 to 130 steps per minute (so if you can walk 1000 to 1300 steps in 10 minutes you are likely to walking briskly-approx. 3 mph or 5 km/hour). Walking briskly compared to slow walking appears to protect the heart and reduces the risk of other causes of death. If you want to read more about walking pace and health benefits, see <https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/52/12/761>

What can I try to help me to walk briskly?

Try using the Active 10 app <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active10/home> (free to download), this app counts all your steps, and also those at moderate intensity (steps where you are walking at a pace of around 100-120 steps/min) and displays these back to you, rewards you when you meet a step goal challenge and will send you health messages on the benefit of walking occasionally.



ACTIVE 10 BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY **ONE YOU**

EXERCISE ... MADE EASY

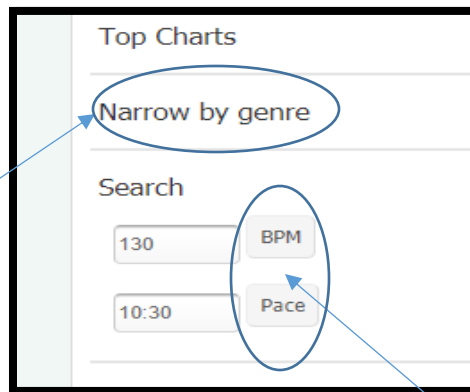
Did you know that walking briskly for just 10 continuous minutes counts as exercise?
It's easier than you think to fit into your day with the Active 10 walking tracker app!

- > **10 BRISK MINUTES**
- > **GET STARTED WITH THE APP**
- > **WALK YOUR WAY TO HEALTH**
- > **CHAT WITH OTHER WALKERS**
- > **WATCH THE ADVERT**
- > **OUR PARTNERS**

Music for walking at moderate intensity

If you like to listen to music while you walk, you could listen to music that will help you to walk at a brisk pace.

Another link is <https://walk.jog.fm/popular-workout-songs>. This site also has a downloadable app that allows you to search for and download complete playlists based on BPM and search by genre to find the music you like.



You can click this segment of the website to selected your preferred genre of music

You can enter the pace or the BPM here to find a song to match

Moderate intensity will vary between people depending on your age and fitness, so you may need to try a couple of songs to get the right speed for you. Try walking to the beat of these songs below. If, by walking to the beat of the song you feel warm, increases your heart rate, makes you breathe a little harder but you can still hold a conversation, you are likely to be walking at a good pace for you. If the song is too slow, or too fast try another with a slower or faster beat, until you find your rhythm.

- Abba, Take a Chance On Me 107 Beats Per Minute (BPM)
- Survivor, Eye of the Tiger 109 BPM
- Mark Ronson, Uptown Funk (feat. Bruno Mars) 115 BPM
- Dua Lipa, New Rules 116 BPM
- Bon Jovi, It's my Life 120 BPM
- Lizzo, Juice 120 BPM
- The Black Eyed Peas, Boom Boom Pow 130BPM

Interesting podcast on walking

If you would like to hear more about the power of walking, this podcast is worth a listen.

Just One Thing - with Michael Mosley <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000v3fz>

He speaks to Marie Murphy, Professor of Exercise and Health at Ulster University (an RCSI collaborator), who talks about how walking more briskly could cut your risk of heart disease by 20-50%.