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# Exercise for Health

Exercise opportunities on Wirral

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[wuth.nhs.uk](http://wuth.nhs.uk)



## 5. Sources of information

Other useful organisations	
Osteoporosis Society www.nos.org.uk	01761 471771
Parkinson's Disease Society www.parkinsons.org.uk	0808 800 0303

**Feeling anxious or low in mood.**

**Access talking therapies or other support in Wirral.  
Get help by visiting our website and complete the  
online referral:**

### **Talking Therapies Wirral**

**0151 649 1859**

Unit 24-28, Woodside Business Park,  
Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41 1EL

**<https://www.everyturn.org/talking-therapies/locations/wirral/>**

## 1. Exercise for Health

One of the fundamental objectives of promoting healthy living is to enable people to 'live well' and 'age successfully'. Just a small increase in the level of activity or exercise that you do can have far reaching health related benefits and improve your quality of life.

As you grow older, it is especially important to keep and maintain your health by exercising on a regular basis. Exercise should be fun and can also be an opportunity to socialise and meet new friends. So take the plunge, start a new activity or join an exercise class and see how much better you feel!

The benefits of regular exercise can include an improvement in the following: -

- General health
- Level of fitness
- Joints and muscles
- Bone health
- Balance & co-ordination
- Pain
- Mobility
- Flexibility
- Morale & self esteem
- Mental health

It is important to check with your General Practitioner (GP) first, before embarking on any exercise programme, especially if you do not normally exercise on a regular basis.

**Footwear:** It is important to wear good fitting shoes with cushioned soles when you are exercising.

## 2. Regular Exercise

**Fitness:** If you maintain your health by regular exercise you will find that it becomes easier to do your everyday activities. To improve your general health levels you need to take part in different types of moderate exercise for about 30 minutes, 5 times per week. You don't have to do this all at once, for example it could be split into three x 10 minute activities. Types of moderate exercise include brisk walking, dancing and gardening.

**Strengthening:** By improving the strength of your muscles you will help to protect your joints and bones, and it will become easier to do your daily activities. It will also help your balance and lower your risk of falling. Walking up and down stairs or practising sitting to standing can be good ways to improve your lower limb strength.

**Balance and co-ordination:** Maintaining or improving your balance and co-ordination can help to lower your risk of falling. Appropriate exercises may include Tai Chi, line dancing and regular walking.

**Flexibility:** Improving flexibility, especially in your trunk, can improve your posture and also reduce the risk of falling. Suitable exercises may include Yoga or Tai Chi.

**Bone Health:** If you do an exercise that is weight bearing, for If you do an exercise that is weight bearing, for example standing or taking steps, you will also be helping to maintain the health of your bones. Appropriate exercise for bone health may include low impact aerobics, line dancing, brisk walking and skipping. If you have severe osteoporosis, or have had one or more fractures, it may be best to take expert advice about which exercises are most appropriate.

## Yoga

Various options available locally

The British Wheel of Yoga [www.bwy.org.uk](http://www.bwy.org.uk)  
[www.yogaforbacks.co.uk](http://www.yogaforbacks.co.uk) to find local class

## Pilates

[www.bodycontrolpilates.com](http://www.bodycontrolpilates.com)

Search 'pilates classes wirral' for more options

## Private Fitness Clubs

Some offer concessions if you are over the age of 55, or have certain medical conditions.

## AGE UK Wirral Services

Offer activities including walking groups, dancing, singing, yoga, chair based exercises. These services for people aged 55 and over.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wirral>

General enquiries: 0151 482 3456

**Remember: You do need to check times and telephone numbers as these may change.**

**There are many other facilities and events. These may be listed in local libraries or newspapers.**

## NHS fitness videos:-

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) (and search fitness studio)  
various short classes available

## 4. Exercise Opportunities

### Wirral Borough Council

Invigor 8 Leisure Centres and Facilities. They offer a wide range of suitable activities including cycling, outdoor gyms in parks.

Contact them to see what is available.

Tel: 0151 606 2000

[www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)

### Change 4 Life in Wirral

[www.nhs.uk/change4life/](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/)

### Cycling

To find local routes, a group or a buddy.

<https://letsride.co.uk>

### Walking for Health

Walking for Health offers free short walks in your area every week, with varying times and difficulty

[www.walkingforhealth.org.uk](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk)

### Park Run

[www.parkrun.org.uk/birkenhead](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/birkenhead)

### Tai Chi

Various options on the Wirral including sessions in some of Wirral Borough Council Leisure Centres

## 3. Exercise in the Community

There is no guarantee that the examples of activities and classes listed in the following charts are appropriate or safe for you as an individual. If you are unsure that an organised class or activity is at the right level for you, ring first and discuss your needs, or arrange to go for your first visit and watch only.

**If you are fairly active, or have only minor balance problems,** you may wish to attend activities in leisure centres, private clubs and societies or other agencies.

Class or activity	Benefit
• Low impact Aerobics	Good for general fitness, balance and bone health
• Tai Chi	Good for flexibility and balance, can help to reduce falls
• Line dancing	Good for general fitness and balance.
• Stretching or flexibility class	Good for flexibility and posture. With osteoporosis, stretch <b>gently</b> - do not bounce.
• Yoga	Good for flexibility, posture and relaxation
• Aqua-aerobics	Good for general fitness. People with osteoporosis can jump and safely hop, when supported in water.

<b>Class or activity</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
• Over 55's classes	Usually tailored to the exercise needs of over 55's.
• Strength training	Good for muscle strengthening and osteoporosis.
• Relaxation	Can help to reduce stress levels and pain.
• Early Pilates	Good to improve strength in back and stomach muscles. You must be able to get up safely and easily off the floor. Suitable for the more active person.
• Walking clubs	Check first about the difficulty and length of walks offered.
• Tea dances or other dancing	Good for general fitness, balance and bone health.

<b>Other activities</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
• Walking	Walking is good exercise for all abilities. Try to include a regular walk in your routine.
• Swimming	Good for general fitness but will not improve bone health.
• Cycling	Good for general fitness but will not improve bone health.
• Climbing stairs	Good for strengthening lower limbs.

**If you are less active, or have more severe balance problems** you can still improve your levels of activity. Gradually increase how far and how often you walk. Age Concern runs a number of appropriate classes including a 'safe exercise class'. You could ask your GP to refer you to a physiotherapist for assessment and advice.

<b>Class or activity</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
• Chair based exercises	Keep fit for people with more severe balance problems
• Safe exercise class	Keep fit for people with more severe balance problems