The Little Book of Fitness

A guide to fitting fitness into your daily life

Yakult
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Please note:
Start new exercise regimes with care, build up to full workouts gradually and stop if you feel pain or experience difficulty with any particular movements. Always follow the instructions for the programme you are undertaking. You should consult a doctor, other health care professional or a qualified fitness instructor before starting any fitness regime, particularly if you are elderly, pregnant, have medical problems or have been used to a sedentary lifestyle.
OK, we’re not saying this little book is going to completely revolutionise your life – but everyone’s got to start somewhere, right?

And that’s exactly what we hope this book might help you to do: kick-start a new, healthier lifestyle – whether that begins by taking up a new activity from scratch, or falling back in love with a long-forgotten sport or pastime.

We know it can be challenging to factor in exercise and sporting activities – it can be tough to find the time (let alone the money), and all too often it’s one of the aspects of our lives that simply slips by the wayside.

But being fit is wonderful. Not just because it makes you look great – but you feel great too. You’ll have more energy, more confidence – and probably, if you take up a social sport, more friends!

The key is simple: Find something you love doing...and keep doing it! But finding the right thing is not always as easy as it sounds – that’s why this little book incorporates a wide and varied range of sporting activities – if you try one and find it isn’t quite your cup of tea, just move on to another. With sports for every age, ability and budget, and tips from some of the country’s top sporting organisations and experts, you’re bound to find something that’s just right in the end.

And when you do, don’t forget to tell us your story! Email us at info@yakult.co.uk (heading your email ‘Little Book of Fitness’) to share your experience and photos. So, what are you waiting for? Turn the page and take that first step on your own personal track to a fitter lifestyle!

We would like to thank all the experts and organisations that have helped to put this book together.
So you’ve decided to give it a go and take that first step to a fitter lifestyle (well done you!)…but how much exercise should you be aiming for?

**Government Physical Activity Guidelines**

For a simple, reliable guide, take a look at the current government guidelines. Published by the UK Chief Medical Officers, these encourage physical activity for everyone and describe in clear terms the recommended minimum levels of activity for each age group – from the Under–5s, right up to the Over–65s.

The full guidelines can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) (‘Publications’ section). The basic adult recommendations are summarised below:

**Adults 19 – 64 years**

1. Aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more – one way to approach this is to do 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week.

2. Alternatively, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or combinations of moderate and vigorous intensity activity.

3. Undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.

4. Minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

**Adults 65+ years**

1. Older adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits, including maintenance of good physical and cognitive function. Some physical activity is better than none, and more physical activity provides greater health benefits.

2. Aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more – one way to approach this is to do 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week.

3. For those who are already regularly active at moderate intensity, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity.

4. Undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.

5. Anyone at risk of falls should incorporate physical activity to improve balance and coordination on at least two days a week.

6. Minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

This publication is not necessarily approved or endorsed by the Department of Health or any government authority.
We all know that, when it comes to a new project, the initial process of ‘getting started’ can be the hardest bit – so why not make it easier for yourself and break it down into simple steps?

Ask yourself what you want to do, when you could fit it in to your schedule – and how you plan to measure your success.

Obviously, these variables will change depending on your personal circumstances and preferences – but here are some basic pointers to get you started:

**What are you going to do?**

This is entirely up to you! We have included a wide range of suggestions in this book, from simple, inexpensive activities such as walking and gardening, to sports involving a little more time, money and commitment. Take a look and see which activity (or combination of activities) best appeals to you.

**When are you going to fit it in?**

This is a problem that many of us face. With busy modern lifestyles, fitting in exercise and regular activity can be a challenge. But you may have more time than you realise. Could you get out of bed 20 minutes earlier and go for a brisk walk? Could you fit in 20 minutes of yoga when you get in from work? Or, in place of a social event, could you factor in some exercise – perhaps instead of watching the football on a Sunday, get some friends together for a five–a–side match in the park? Or instead of a Saturday afternoon coffee and film with the girls, go for a swim or a walk in the park? Take a look at page 8 for some easy ‘fitness for free’ ideas to get you started!

**How are you going to measure your success?**

Start by using our simple ‘Goal Planner’ on page 42. You can of course create your own personalised version of this, with specific targets and measures of success – but this template should provide a good starting point. Your goals don’t have to be overly ambitious, but it can be very motivating to have specific targets to work towards – and trust us, it will be very satisfying to look at your chart six months on and see how far you have progressed!
Wendy is the Lead Nutritionist for the Great Britain Rowing Team, Lead Performance Nutritionist (South) for the English Institute of Sport, Consultant Sports Nutritionist for Middlesex County Cricket Club and has done some consultancy work for The London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in the run up to London 2012. She combines this with her role as a job share (two days per week) Nutrition & Dietetic Service Manager in the NHS.

Wendy has also worked with the British Olympic Association, British Gymnastics, the England Football Squad and English National Ballet School, as well as with many other athletes in a variety of sports.

In the New Year 2010 Honours list, Wendy was awarded an OBE for services to sport and to nutrition.

We asked Wendy to share her expertise on what (and how) to eat in order to support a healthy exercise regimen:

Do you have any tips on how to get started?
Finding something you enjoy is key, otherwise you won’t carry on with it. For me music inspires me to work hard during exercise but everyone is different. To get started it could be a walk each evening after dinner, taking up a new sport, trying a Zumba class, cycling to work, trying aqua aerobics – the possibilities are endless.

Any advice on how to get motivated when you don’t feel like it?
For me I know that even if I don’t feel like exercising, as soon as I start I will be fine and will feel great afterwards. Exercising with friends also helps as you can motivate each other. I have made many fantastic friends through teaching my exercise classes. If all else fails put on some music, dance around the living room and before you know it you will be going out for a run!
What are the most important things to remember in terms of nutrition when exercising?

Balance:
This sounds obvious but the first thing to get right is the overall balance of the diet. There must be sufficient carbohydrate, protein, and essential fats vitamins and minerals in the diet to enable quality training to take place. All food groups should be included and the importance of simple strategies like eating a wide variety of brightly coloured fruit and vegetables every day to provide essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants should not be overlooked.

Fuelling:
Another key thing is to think about correct fuelling before exercise. It’s important to have eaten some carbohydrate rich foods (cereal, bread, pasta, rice, potato etc.) a few hours before exercise especially if it’s going to be a fairly high intensity cardio–based session otherwise there will be nothing in the tank. Include carbohydrate foods that release energy more slowly (low glycaemic index) such as multigrain bread, muesli, porridge, sweet potato and pasta.

Hydration:
Hydration is also important as it affects exercise capacity, perception of effort and mental functioning. Starting exercise already well hydrated is important and checking for pale coloured urine can be used as a crude indicator of an adequate hydration state. Taking fluids on board if exercising for more than 30 minutes is important. Water will often suffice for short periods of exercise but during longer periods a sports drink containing carbohydrate can have performance benefits.

Recovery nutrition:
This is really most relevant for athletes training for periods of an hour or more several times per day. For them, consuming carbohydrate in combination with some protein either in the form of a drink or snack as soon as possible after the session makes a big difference to how they feel and perform in the next session. It also positively enhances the physiological adaptation that takes place following exercise. The target amounts post–training are in the region of 1 – 1.2g carbohydrate per kg and 0.3g protein/kg body weight but this will vary according to the type of session completed.
What about timings - are there specific things you should eat before, during and after exercising?

Before exercise:
Before exercise, eat a meal or snack containing some carbohydrate as this is the most important source of energy for the body during intense physical activity. Carbohydrate is stored as glycogen in the muscles and liver but these stores are quite small and need topping up on a regular basis. As well as providing energy for the muscles, carbohydrate also provides energy for the brain and central nervous system and a lack of carbohydrate in the diet may cause tiredness and a lack of coordination and concentration during exercise. Carbohydrate can be found in a variety of different foods and rich sources include breakfast cereals, bread, pasta, potatoes, rice etc. Other foods such as beans (haricot, kidney etc.), peas and lentils, fresh and dried fruit and milk and yoghurt also provide carbohydrate.

It is best to allow approximately 2 – 3 hours after eating a meal and 30 – 60 minutes for a snack before exercising to prevent indigestion.

Example meals include:
✓ Pasta dish with tomato based sauce
✓ Boiled rice or noodles with low fat sauce
✓ Cereal and milk/yoghurt
✓ Toast/muffins/crumpets with honey, jam or marmalade
✓ Sandwiches with salad and lean meat, chicken or fish
✓ Jacket potato with low fat topping

Examples of snacks that could be eaten 30 - 60 minutes before exercise:
✓ Bananas
✓ Cereal bars
✓ Rice cakes
✓ Fruit loaf/malt loaf
✓ Fruit smoothie/yoghurt

During exercise:
For most people there is generally no need to eat solid food during exercise, but it is important to take fluids on board to replace sweat losses.

This of course is different for high level endurance athletes. For example, those performing long training rides of several hours on a bike may eat solid foods to provide carbohydrate energy as well as drinking fluids.
After exercise:

For those exercising more than once per day (less than eight hours between sessions), it is important to replenish carbohydrate stores quickly and to provide protein for muscle repair as well as a good mix of vitamins and minerals to support immune function.

However most people will only complete one exercise session per day or less and so this is unnecessary. However, whenever the next meal is after the exercise session it should contain good quality protein, complex carbohydrate and a mixture of vegetables.

**Example meals include:**

- Grilled tuna, trout or salmon steak with salad/vegetables and sweet potato
- Grilled lean steak with jacket potato and salad
- Lentil and bean curry with basmati rice and vegetables
- Stir fry prawns with noodles and vegetables
- Chicken with couscous and salad
- Wholegrain bread or bagel with egg or hummus and salad

Does the type of activity you are doing affect what you should eat?

The type of activity does affect nutritional requirements particularly in regard to the amount of carbohydrate and protein required. Those focusing on building their endurance fitness by doing large volumes of cycling, running, swimming etc. will need a greater intake of carbohydrate than those participating in more short sharp bursts of activity or weight training. Those wanting to build more muscle, strength and power will need to look particularly at the timing of their protein and carbohydrate intake around training sessions. Taking on board some protein after a weight training session helps to maximize muscle development. Around 20g protein is sufficient for most people and in combination with some carbohydrate the overall effect will be to enhance protein production, restore glycogen stores and may reduce muscle soreness. Milk and milkshakes are convenient options, containing 20g good quality protein per pint.

What about drinking? What and how much should you be drinking before / during / after exercise?

It is important to be well hydrated before exercising. Recommendations on the amount of fluid to consume prior to exercise, include drinking 5 – 7ml per kg of body weight steadily throughout the four hours before exercise and then, if the urine is still dark, a further 3 – 5ml per kg should be consumed during the two hours before exercise.

It is recommended fluids be taken on board for any exercise lasting over 30 minutes. For most people taking part in recreational activity, water is sufficient. Those people participating in more intense exercise for longer periods of time, i.e. 1 – 2 hours or more, may benefit from a sports drink, which will provide some carbohydrate energy and help replace electrolyte losses. There is some evidence that even during shorter periods of exercise (30 – 75min), mouth rinsing with a carbohydrate solution can improve performance through a mechanism via the central nervous system.

After exercise the fluid required to replace losses should ideally be consumed within two hours to ensure that optimal hydration is achieved as soon as possible if there is a further exercise session planned that day. 1 kg weight loss equates roughly to 1 litre fluid loss. For every kg of weight lost, 1.25 – 1.5 litres of fluid is needed to replace it due to the continuing loss of sweat after exercise finishes and the urine losses that persist even in the dehydrated state. If large amounts of sweat have been lost, a fluid containing electrolytes would be useful to replace losses.

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1 American College of Sports Medicine
Fitness for Free

Getting fit doesn’t mean you have to spend a fortune on gym equipment or gym memberships; with a bit of initiative and good planning, you can shift the pounds from your waistline – without spending the ones in your wallet!

How?

Walking:
One of the easiest ways to incorporate more activity into your day. Try to fit walking into your daily routine. If you work in an office, try simply getting off your chair and going to talk to a colleague in person rather than phoning or emailing. Walk up the stairs instead of opting for the lift, and go for a walk at lunchtime – this can help sharpen you up mentally too! Invest in a pedometer, and work towards 10,000 steps each day. [See page 18 for more top tips on walking.]

Jogging:
A great way to increase the intensity of your daily activity. You can jog on the spot whilst watching the TV or listening to a few of your favourite songs, even for ten minutes. If the weather is nice, why not take a jog around the park, the block, or to your local news agent for your newspaper? As your fitness improves you can increase the time you jog for and the distance that you cover. And if you need a bit of extra motivation, why not sign up for charity walks or runs – you can do it in a group; it will be fun and for a good cause!

Cycling:
If you own a bike, why not plan bike rides on the weekend? You can discover beautiful parks and scenery en–route, whist keeping fit at the same time. Have you considered cycling all or at least part of the way to work? It'll also save you money on petrol or public transport costs. [See pages 21 – 23 for more information on cycling.]

Outdoor Park Gyms:
These are free and fun facilities accessible by the public. They offer a variety of activities: cross training; running; cycling, and even light resistance training. You can search for an outdoor gym near you.

Did you know?
Walking 10,000 steps a day can burn up to 300 calories (based on a body weight of 60kg)

Source NHS

Websites

More information on walking: www.walk4life.info
Find outdoor gyms near you: www.tgogc.com
Fitness at Home

A home workout is free and perfect if you’d rather stay indoors, if you’re short on time or if the weather’s putting you off. You can use familiar objects around the house, such as the stairs, chairs, food cans and water bottles to exercise with.

How?

• Dancing – it’s an aerobic activity that improves your balance and your co-ordination. It’s suitable for people of all ages, shapes and sizes. It is a really fun way of burning energy – it can be in a class with friends, in front of the TV or dancing to the radio. All you need is a good tune! [See pages 27 – 30 for more information on dancing.]

• Cleaning your house is a great opportunity to sneak in some exercise: vacuuming more briskly, scrubbing the bathtub faster and using plenty of elbow grease when cleaning the windows or mopping the floor; it means you’ll work up a sweat and is a great way to get some moderate exercise into your day.

• While watching TV, maximise your time by ironing, dusting or cleaning. It sounds simple, but it keeps you moving! If you have a hula hoop why not use it whilst watching the TV?

• And when watching TV, get up and move about during the commercial breaks. Tidy up, bring in the laundry, empty the dishwasher, or dry the dishes and put them away.

• Clean the car by hand rather than taking it to the car wash.

• Put on a fitness DVD, or if you have a video games console at home, use it for an exercise session (such as yoga, Pilates, dancing or aerobics) – just plug in and work out!

• For a free, easy, ‘at–home’ workout, see the BMF exercises on the next page.

Top Tip!

If you have a smartphone, free apps such as ‘Endomondo’ are a great way to track your training and record your times. You can track walks, jogs and cycles – and even share routes and compare performances.

Apps are generally very simple to use, and can be a great motivating tool to keep your training progressing.

Did you know?

Mopping the floor for 30 minutes can burn around 112 calories!3

3 www.fitnessmagazine.com
Gut Workout

For a free, easy workout in the comfort of your own home, complete all these exercises or build up slowly by focusing on one at a time.

**Plank position**

01. Get on the floor with your knees bent and your forearms touching the floor, shoulder-width apart.

02. Push up so you’re balancing on your toes with your feet together and make sure that there is a straight line for your heels to your head and your head is down. Hold this position for 30 – 60 seconds and repeat three times.

**One leg stand and reach**

01. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Lift one leg backward and put your weight on your front leg.

02. Bend down and touch your foot that you’re standing on with the opposite hand.

03. Stand back up repeat on the other leg. Three sets of 10 repetitions on each leg.

**All fours opposite arm and leg raise**

01. Position yourself on all fours with your hands directly underneath your shoulders.

02. Raise one arm in front of you into a Superman pose whilst raising and straightening the opposite leg. Return to the all fours position and repeat on the other arm and leg. Repeat the position 20 times on each side and repeat three times.

03. For a harder version of this move, push up onto your toes instead of your knees.
If you wish to try these exercises with a group of like-minded people, then you can join one of the many British Military Fitness classes that take place across the country in over 120 venues. Visit www.britishmilitaryfitness.com to sign up for your first FREE class.
Yoga

The origins of the philosophy and practice of yoga go back 5000 years to India and are linked to meditative practices of religions such as Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. In the UK today, yoga is viewed primarily as a form of exercise and relaxation, which usually involves performing a number of postures, breathing exercises and relaxation techniques.

Why?

Yoga makes you feel really good! Whether you do it in your lunch break, after work, on a Saturday morning or on a week-long retreat in Thailand, you’ll probably find it difficult to say that yoga didn’t make you feel that little bit better about yourself – and probably the world in general!

You don’t necessarily have to pursue the spiritual or religious path of yoga, nor do you need to spend time trying to find union with the divine consciousness to take part. Yoga is open to everyone.

The postures used in yoga are suitable for all levels of ability and can be tailored to beginners and those with a limited range of movement. Being flexible is certainly not a requirement for starting yoga and you won’t be asked to perform a headstand on arrival at your first class, but it’s more than likely that once you start, your flexibility and strength will improve – so why not give it a go? And who knows – soon you might discover that a headstand really is the most comfortable position in which to settle down in front of your favourite soap!

To get started

Find a local yoga class in your area and speak to the teacher about which session is most suitable for you. There are a number of different styles and forms of yoga. In the UK the most frequently taught form is Hatha Yoga that combines postures, breathing and meditation but within Hatha there can be a huge range in style and intensity of the classes – some will be low-impact and some will be very demanding indeed.

When?

Yoga classes go on throughout the year and most are on a ‘drop-in’ basis, so you can turn up to the class as it suits you and pay for only the classes that you attend (booking may be necessary at busier classes). However, some yoga classes will be run in courses over a certain number of weeks on specific dates, usually consisting of one session per week. To participate in these courses will require a booking and payment before the term starts.
Equipment
Wear clothes that are comfortable such as a t-shirt and shorts or leggings that do not restrict your movement when stretching. It is recommended that you do yoga in bare feet. Classes will usually provide mats and blocks, however you may decide to buy your own yoga mat which will cost anything from £15 upwards.

Cost
Classes usually last an hour to an hour and a half, and range in price from being completely free at some community facilities to £10 or more per session. There are usually savings to be made if you buy a block of ten or so classes at a time.

My five top tips for practicing yoga

1 Food
Try not to eat or drink anything for at least two hours before practicing as you will be more comfortable moving and twisting your body on an empty stomach. If you are hungry eat something light such as a banana or fruit bar and drink a little lukewarm water.

2 Clothing
Wear something comfortable. You will be most comfortable in something that enables you to move freely. Ladies, this also includes comfy underwear such as soft supportive bras instead of under-wired ones which can be uncomfortable in certain positions.

3 Ego
Yoga is not a competitive sport but sometimes we feel like we have to keep up with others in the class. Try not to get caught up in this string of thought, and rest when you need to rest. With continued practice your stamina, strength and flexibility will improve. You will feel less likely to continue if you come out of the class feeling completely shattered. After a few classes you will begin to feel energised, uplifted and revitalised.

4 Breath
During your practice, keep an eye on how you are breathing. If your breath becomes forced or you feel over-exerted focus on long, deep, even breaths. This will ensure your muscles get enough oxygen helping to avoid fatigue, as well as keeping your cardiovascular system healthy.

5 Injuries
Lastly, if you have any previous or existing injuries or ailments, or think you may be pregnant inform your teacher who will be able to advise you on any modifications that you will need during the class.

For information on classes, treatments and training, please see www.yoganesh.co.uk

by Rita Chohan of acclaimed London studio Yoganesh
What and when was your first experience of yoga?
I started yoga in the late 60s, quite by accident. A friend asked me to go with her to an evening class. I did not even know what yoga was then!

Did you immediately take to it and if so, what was it that attracted you to continue practising?
Yes. I was hooked after the very first class. I had practised ballet until my late teens and I immediately felt the similarities, in particular the precise attention to posture and alignment, and the feeling of well being after the class. To begin with it was the physical movement I enjoyed. Later as I began to realise yoga is one of the oldest systems of personal development in the world, I became interested in how yoga can be used to balance the body, mind and spirit.

What made you decide to teach yoga?
As my interest in yoga grew, I wanted to learn more and more about the subject: both the physical and philosophical aspects. So I joined a teacher training course as a way to further my knowledge and understanding, and have never looked back.

Do you think yoga has changed your life? If so, how/why?
I am often asked this question, and it is difficult to say as I have practised now for more than 40 years and changes take place gradually. It has certainly allowed me a career doing something I really enjoy and, despite being in my late 60s, I still feel strong both physically and mentally. I do not know how I would have felt if I had not practised so regularly, but I suspect I wouldn’t still be doing the splits!

What are the benefits of practising yoga?
The benefits are numerous. A regular yoga practice will use a wide range of postures and breathing techniques to take the body through its full range of movement and this will help improve your posture, release stiff areas and strengthen weak ones. Equally importantly, it will reduce stress levels and help relaxation. Yoga postures are also concerned with the physiological body and the vital organs. They strengthen and revitalise organs such as the liver, spleen, intestines, lungs and kidneys.

What advice would you give to beginners or people thinking of trying yoga?
Don’t just think about it! Find a class, with a qualified teacher, and give it a try. Words cannot convey the benefits you will feel from doing yoga – it simply has to be experienced.
Gardening

Why?
What is there not to like about gardening? Fresh air, getting back to nature, creating something beautiful, growing something useful, an uplifting sense of achievement, just knowing that you have grown something that is fresher, tastier and better for the environment than the supermarket down the road – and that all this cost you barely a thing.

Equipment
Perhaps the most essential pieces of equipment for any gardener are a spade, fork and a hand trowel...and of course a watering can or hosepipe to keep everything well watered. If you have a lawn it is advisable to get hold of a lawn mower so that the grass does not block out the view of the lovely flower beds or vegetable plots you’ve planted.

To get started
If you have a garden, then you may already know that some of the simplest tasks will get your heart pumping that little bit faster. Mowing the lawn, trimming the hedges, raking up the leaves, turning over the soil with a fork or a good bit of weeding are all good ways to get moving, expend a bit of energy and make your garden look fit for a visit from royalty!

If you don’t have a garden, try planting pots and tubs outside or ask your local council about available allotments in your area.

There are also a number of community initiatives where you can volunteer to improve your local environment with like minded people. BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) is the largest organisation in the UK providing thousands of volunteering opportunities. BTCV has developed a scheme called The Green Gym® which aims to help improve strength, stamina and skills through practical projects whilst improving the local environment.

Go to www.btcv.org.uk to find opportunities in your area.
For a quick start buy a packet of seeds and read the instructions on the back! It’s that simple to grow something successfully. If you want to find out more there is a wealth of advice, tips and practical videos on almost everything to do with gardening on the Royal Horticultural Society website (www.rhs.org.uk) and the BBC gardening website (www.bbc.co.uk/gardening).

The beauty of gardening is that it is for every budget – you can spend as little or as much as you like on your garden, over a short or a long period of time. Seeds, bulbs and young plants from garden centres, local markets, supermarkets or by mail-order can be quite cheap – and green-fingered friends and neighbours will often be willing to provide seeds or cuttings from their garden, which will cost you nothing. Look at gardens around you or ask at the garden centre for advice on which plants will do well in your garden year after year and how and when to collect the seeds and cuttings from your favourites. You can even save money by growing your own food and flowers for the house.

If you’re thinking about an allotment, the cost of plots can vary around the country. The average cost of a plot is between £20 – £40 per year but this can be more in some areas – and waiting lists can be long!

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**BTCV Green Gym® facts**

From research with Oxford Brookes University, commissioned by BTCV.

- 100% of participants interviewed during the current National Evaluation agree that taking part in the Green Gym® has benefited their mental health, boosting self-esteem and confidence through learning new skills and completing new tasks.
- Taking part in the Green Gym® improves muscle strength, which is particularly important for older people, helping to maintain independence in later life.
- Almost a third more calories can be burnt in an hour of some Green Gym® activities than in doing a step aerobics class.
What are the benefits for you?
No matter what mood I am in I know I will always feel better and more relaxed once I’m doing something in the garden with my wind-up radio next to me.

I get a huge sense of achievement and pride when I am in the garden, especially when someone comes round and comments on it. Just looking at the beauty of a garden is enjoyable – even if it’s the muddy vegetable patch, I think it is beautiful.

Eating anything from the garden gives me a definite positive feeling – whether it is fruits and vegetables or the jams and chutneys I’ve made.

Tell us about volunteering in the kitchen garden at Tatton Park?
Well I just love it. It’s a big area so there is so much growing there, much more than I can get in my garden. The produce is sold in the on-site shop so we spend time picking fruit and vegetables and weeding (which I enjoy). It’s also very sociable; we talk to the visitors who are looking around the garden and other staff too. I also learn a lot by being there; from the experience of other volunteers and the professional gardeners that we work alongside.

Tell us about your recent working holiday with the National Trust?
It was really fun and I would highly recommend it – I chose to go to Northern Ireland to an estate called Castle Ward which is by Strangford Lough in County Down. There were 11 people in the group, none of whom I had met. There was such a good time and just laughed all through the holiday.

We were clearing brambles and ivy and some young trees around a small lake to improve the view and we’d work alongside the wardens on some days doing various other jobs.

It cost £100 for the week and it was well worth it; we were in a beautiful conservation area, meeting new and interesting people and having a very good time.

What would you recommend for a new gardener to try first?
I think I would start by sorting out the soil by adding lots of compost – so actually the first thing to do would be to start a compost heap if you have space. But really just have a go at anything, maybe things that grow quickly like radish and lettuce or a tomato bush so you get a really quick reward from your efforts.

Or buy something permanent like a blossoming fruit tree and for very little effort you will get a beautiful tree year after year which will blossom for part of the year and produce fruit for others. Herbs are often very easy to grow and perennial; they smell wonderful and you can use them when you cook.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/workingholidays
Walking is an easy way to improve both physical and mental health – and it’s great for making new friends and exploring new places!

**How?**

Whether you live in the town or the country, walking can be an enjoyable and beneficial pastime at any level – short or long, fast or more leisurely. The Ramblers Association has a walking plan to help get you started – and you can also download their free maps – visit [www.getwalking.org](http://www.getwalking.org)

**Motivation**

- Remember in the UK, it’s never the wrong weather – it’s the wrong clothes. Walking is wonderful in the wet and the cold, just be sure you are prepared.
- Combine it with other things to make you want to get out there:
  - Socialising – with your own friends or join the local ramblers’ society. Incorporate a stop off at a local pub or café for a healthy snack;
  - Map reading – plot your own route using trails and tracks;
  - Photography – capture hoar frost on leaves, bluebell woods, sunrise and sunset – take your camera and let nature be your inspiration;
  - Set goals – start with a short walk and gradually increase the mileage. You could end up devoting a weekend or holiday to a long distance walk – and some people even raise money for charity this way.
We spoke to Caroline Wheeler, 43, about her love of walking.

When did you start walking?
36 – but I wish I’d started earlier now that I know what I was missing!

Why did you start walking?
I had put on quite a bit of weight. My mum had bought some walking boots that were too small for her, so she gave them to me, adding not-so-tactfully that it might help me lose a few pounds.

What are the benefits for you?
It really helps keep my weight down and it’s fun and sociable at the same time so it isn’t a chore and a slog like going to the gym is, plus there are so many new places to discover, with amazing scenery you’d never see from a car. Being in the fresh air and green spaces clears my head, lifts my mood and is really inspiring.

What are the benefits of walking in a group?
It’s a great way to make new friends – most people go along on their own at first. It’s safer than walking on your own, and you can just ‘follow the leader’, so you can enjoy yourself and take in the scenery without worrying about getting lost.

Or how about?
Does ‘just walking’ sound a little too basic for you? Perhaps you live in a town or city and can’t think of any scenic walks? No problem – try community orienteering!

The aim is, with the benefit of a map and compass, to navigate the best route between a set of points. And you can run, walk or jog the course and progress at your own pace.

Visit the British Orienteering website (www.britishorienteering.org.uk/page/newcomers_guide) to find out if there is a local Community Orienteering Club Night near you!

Websites
The Ramblers: www.ramblers.org.uk
Long distance walking: www.ldwa.org.uk
Walking for Health: www.whi.org.uk
Football

Football is played by over 250 million players in over 200 countries, making it the world’s most popular sport. Football is suitable for all ages and genders: whether you want to play in the park, in your back garden, with a group, a few others or even on your own, it can be done – all you need is a ball! It is a great way to socialise and to fit some physical activity into your day.

How?

• After a Sunday roast, why not take a stroll in the local park with the family – both young and old! – and have a kick around with a ball? If you have a dog, take it along with you so it can have a run around too.

• Set up a 5-a-side football team at work or with friends and have a weekly match after work. It will keep you active and may encourage team bonding.

• Ask to join in a game – the idea of walking up to a group of strangers playing football and asking if you can join in may be daunting but once you get over the nerves, it is an excellent way to get fit and to make friends. More often than not, you’ll be welcomed and it will open up the possibility of playing a regular game.

• You can play or practice ball skills alone too – challenge yourself or each other by seeing how many kick ups you can do, or run the ball from one side of your arm to the other – or just practice penalty shootouts!

• Why not become a coach or referee (good ones run miles!); a weekly routine will increase your level of physical activity and it’s a great way to meet new people too!

Motivation

Create a league table between 5-a-side teams at work or with friends and agree that whichever team is on top of the league after a set amount of matches (or months) will be treated to a round of drinks!

Websites

More information on football: www.thefa.com/findaclub

Find your local park: local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRRedirect/index.jsp?LGSL=461&LGIL=8

Did you know?

• Football was first played in China, dating back to 476 BC. It was known as ‘cuju’, where it involved kicking a leather ball through a hole in a piece of cloth.¹

• You can lose between 250 – 955 calories by playing 30 minutes of football, depending on your weight.²

¹ Ref: uktv.co.uk, 2012  ² Ref: www.fitnessforweightloss.com
A Guide to Cycling by Caz Nicklin, Cycling Columnist for The Sunday Times and founder of Cyclechic.co.uk

Most of us learn to ride a bike as a child but find our hectic schedules as adults prevent us from cycling regularly. So how can you start cycling and stay cycling as part of a healthier lifestyle?

Buying a bike

The first step is to get yourself a bike that is comfortable and that you enjoy riding. It’s a great idea to test–ride a few different models rather than just going on the way they look; all good bike shops will accommodate this. Car boot sales or internet auction sites can be a good way to get a second hand bargain but make sure you do your research before you buy. Or alternatively, look into bike hire – this can be relatively inexpensive (from around £7 per day), and is a good alternative if you don’t have storage space for your own bike.

What else do I need?

There’s no need to cover yourself head to toe with Lycra. You can cycle in everyday clothes as long as you have ease of movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessories you will need:</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Lights</td>
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<td>✓ Lock</td>
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<td>✓ Pump and puncture repair kit</td>
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<tr>
<th>Additional accessories that will be helpful:</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Panniers/baskets</td>
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<td>✓ Waterproof/reflective wear</td>
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Getting started

If it’s been several years since you last rode a bike don’t be alarmed if you feel nervous about getting back in the saddle. Start with short familiar trips on quiet roads to ease yourself back in.

• Take your bike to the park and practice stopping, starting, looking behind and indicating without the pressure of traffic.

• Plan your route. You will feel far more confident on your bike if you know where you are going. Take a look at Transport for London’s Cycle Journey Planner cyclejourneyplanner.tfl.gov.uk (for journeys in and around London) or Google Maps before you set off.

• Get some training. More adults than ever before are undertaking cycle training and certain councils in the UK heavily subsidise the cost. Whether you’re starting from scratch or just need to brush up on your road safety, it can prove invaluable. For more information, visit www.cycletraining.co.uk

When?

• Cycle to work: This is a great way to incorporate cycling into your regular routine. Perhaps start by cycling in once or twice a week, or cycle to the nearest station if the journey is too long.

• Cycle to the shops: Equip your bicycle with good panniers and a basket and your grocery shop can be much easier and more cost-effective by bike. Cycling home with a wicker basket full of fresh bread and fruit and veg is far more glamorous than struggling with carrier bags on the bus.

• Cycle social: Cycling has a strong community and can be a good way to meet people. You could sign up for large group rides such as Skyride www.goskyride.com Or join a local club for either recreational rides or rides with more of a sport focus. Take a look at British Cycling’s club finder www.britishcycling.org.uk/clubfinder

• Cycle the school run: Whether your children are old enough to ride their own bikes or you have them on a child seat on yours, doing the school run by bike is a great way to start the day and beats sitting in a long queue of cars at the school gates.

Top tips for cycling

1. Pace yourself. Don’t feel you have to race along with the Lycra clan. Cycling at a leisurely pace will ensure you can cover longer distances without getting tired or hot and sweaty.

2. Be aware that drivers will give you the same amount of space you give yourself so if you give yourself a metre from the curb they will be inclined to give you the same.

3. If you are cycling to work, there is no need for an entire change of clothes when you get to the office. Try cycling in a loose fitting top – and simply take a smarter top or shirt with you for a quick change to freshen you up.
When did you start cycling?
I started ‘grown–up’ cycling about five months ago.

Why did you start cycling?
I’d started walking to work occasionally and noticed the number of bikes whizzing past me. I began thinking about how it would be quicker so I could ultimately afford more time in bed. I also calculated cycling instead of getting the bus would save me £20 a week.

What have been/are the difficulties?
No difficulties really. It’s like any new thing, you feel a little silly at first due to your relative inexperience but you soon adjust. If anything there was a little ache in the legs and the derriere at first but that soon passed.

What are the benefits for you?
Exercise that doesn’t really feel like exercise as you’re achieving and seeing things, a lovely sense of pollution offset, the joy of realising you have some balance even in your 30s and a true sense of how close things are and how quickly you can get to them.

Why?

• **Saves you money**: The beauty of cycling is that once you’ve purchased your bike, it’s absolutely free. You don’t need to cycle every day for it to make a difference. Cycle just once a week and you will save on petrol or train fares.

• **Keeps you trim**: Cycling regularly is a great way to burn the calories, so you can have that piece of cake with your coffee knowing full well you will burn it off when you’re back on your bike.

• **Reduces your carbon footprint**: We all talk about being environmentally conscious, but how often do we act on it? Take action by replacing one car journey a week with a cycle ride.

• **Makes you feel happy**: Many people say cycling gives them a sense of wellbeing. The combination of the endorphins released from exercising, the fresh air and sheer fun of riding a bike really can make you feel like you’re on cloud nine.
A Guide to Keeping Fit by John Williams, Expertise Coach for David Lloyd Leisure

Keeping fit is a goal many would like to achieve, but what does ‘keeping fit’ actually mean? It’s actually a very general term that can be interpreted as many things.

For example

• Being injury free;
• Having good flexibility;
• Having an abundance of vitality/energy;
• Having good levels of endurance, strength, power and cardiovascular fitness;
• Having an aesthetically pleasing physique with weight and body fat levels in desirable ranges.

Prior to embarking on a fitness regime, it is a good idea to clarify what fitness actually means to you and what you would like to achieve. If you have many goals, consider the order of priority – what is most important? Clarifying what you would like to achieve allows you to select the best methods of exercise to achieve your objectives; essentially, clarity enables a focused approach, which really improves results. If you are unsure of what you would like to achieve and/or the best methods to use, a discussion with a fitness professional will undoubtedly provide some answers.

So, assuming you have some clear goals on keeping fit, here are some key principles:

Frequency

To keep fit, exercise/activity should be undertaken frequently. As a rule of thumb, three to four workouts per week would be a good goal to aim for and will significantly improve fitness levels.

Enjoyment

To support frequency of exercise, it is highly recommended that you make exercise an enjoyable event. If you haven’t worked out for a while, it would be a good idea to have a chat with a fitness professional who could help you consider these questions:

• Would you like to work out alone or as part of a group?
• Do you like exercising to music?
• What type of activities do you enjoy?
• Are you open to trying some new exercise methods in an attempt to find something you enjoy?

Health and fitness clubs such as David Lloyd Leisure offer a wide range of exercise options, from group exercise classes to swimming to one-to-one or small group personal training – so there is no doubt you will be able to create a really enjoyable exercise routine that will encourage you to visit the gym.

There are basically two main types of exercise in terms of intensity levels:

1. Those that challenge and stress our bodies, encouraging it to adapt
2. Those that relax our bodies, facilitating recovery and energy accumulation

The intensity required to challenge and stress our bodies is obviously highly specific. This is where fitness professionals and exercise classes become highly valuable; they can provide exercise options that are perfectly suited to the intensity YOU require. This renders redundant one of the worst excuses not to exercise – ‘I’m not fit enough to go to the gym!’ A few examples of exercise classes and workouts that will challenge you and can be adapted to suit individual needs are Body Pump™, Body Combat™, indoor cycling, ViPR™ (‘Vitality, performance and reconditioning’) TRX™ (suspension training), cardiovascular workouts and swimming, to name just a few.

Exercise sessions that can facilitate recovery and energy accumulation tend to be much lighter in nature. These are very important, too, especially if you are low on energy – perhaps due to the stresses of everyday life or from harder workouts undertaken earlier in the week; it’s not all about pushing yourself to the limit!

Some examples of good recovery workouts, many of which promote breathing and flexibility, are Body Balance™, Pilates, yoga and swimming or, though strictly not a workout, perhaps a massage either by a therapist or using a foam roller or Power Plate™.
**Duration**

A lot of people think that to get fit you need to work out for hours on end; this is simply not the case. Little and often is a great way to keep fit. Sessions that are 30 to 45 minutes long are ideal, and three to four exercise sessions of this duration are much more effective than, say, two big workouts of 90 minutes.

**Type of workout**

There are many ways to exercise. Years ago, gym options were limited in the main to traditional weight lifting and aerobics classes that originated during the Jane Fonda era. These options still exist today in various formats and are still enjoyed by many. However, the offering has progressed and there is far more variety; this is fantastic news if you get bored easily and like to change it up a bit. Here are three workout types that can be performed in the gym:

1. **Traditional exercise** – resistance and cardio performed in traditional ways
2. **Progressive exercise** – modern exercises that promote function for everyday tasks
3. **Hybrid workouts** – workouts that blend traditional exercises and modern functional exercises

**Summary**

When aiming to keep fit, firstly decide what it means to you. Secondly, plan in your diary how you can commit to three or four exercise sessions per week – typically, for most, 30 to 45 minute sessions are ideal. If you think you will struggle with staying committed, perhaps find yourself a ‘workout’ buddy, pre-book your classes or undertake a course of personal training to kick off a regime that will become habit forming. Thirdly, select exercise sessions that are enjoyable and if enjoyable is a stretch, go for more tolerable! If you want to review available options, book a session with a fitness professional – you will come away with plenty of exciting options. Good luck!

**Websites**

For more information, see [www.davidlloyd.co.uk](http://www.davidlloyd.co.uk)
Dance is suitable for all age groups, from young to old. It can be as active (street dance/salsa) or as calm and relaxed (ballroom/ballet) as you choose. Dancing offers many health and wellbeing benefits, such as increasing flexibility, strength and endurance as well as helping to improve overall sense of wellbeing. And because it is a very social activity, you’re bound to make new friends too!

Dancing is a very diverse activity, with many different forms – too many to list here. Three of the most popular in the UK are dance fitness classes, ballet and ballroom dancing.

Dance fitness classes

These are taking the country by storm, with the latest craze being Zumba. This combines Latin rhythms and aerobic movements, giving a great cardiovascular workout whilst also toning a wide range of muscles.

Where?

Zumba classes are widely available within the UK and cater for a range of ages and abilities. Check for a class at your local church hall, leisure centre or gym. There are even specialised classes for your children to stay fit and have fun. To find out about a local Zumba class visit www.zumba.com/en-US/parties/search or www.thezumbagirls.co.uk

How?

Classes tend to cost between £5 – £10. You must wear suitable shoes (i.e. trainers) and suitable loose clothing to enable you to move. The only other things you will require are a bottle of water, and maybe a towel.
Adult ballet lessons

Ballet is excellent for posture and toning. It can also be relaxing as you can let yourself go with the flow of the music, helping mind, body and spirit. Ballet classes do not have to be just ‘bar and centre’ exercises as is so often the perception. More and more contemporary and artistic forms of ballet are developing – so why not embrace your inner creativity, whilst burning off those calories!

Where?

Most classes tend to be in the evening and are held in local community centres or gyms. There are also online ballet classes which are the first of their kind – simply log into a Skype account and follow the lesson live.

How?

Many ballet teachers across the country will hold an adult ballet lesson as part of their school. Lessons range from beginners’ classes, to those aimed at adults who went to ballet as a child and would like to take it up again.

Cost

Classes tend to range from £5 – £10.

Did you know?

Dancing can burn as many calories as walking, swimming or riding a bicycle. During half an hour of sustained dancing you can burn between 200 and 400 calories.\(^6\)

Just think, dancing on a night out could be beneficial!

For more information, see www.learntodance.com

\(^6\) Source:www.learntodance.com
How did you first become interested in dancing and in particular ballet?
I was introduced to dance by my very supportive parents. I am one of five children who are very close in age and my parents encouraged us all with many activities during our childhood. My mother is a former dance teacher trainer at a vocational sports college so naturally has a passion for dance and introduced all five of her children to dance classes. Bearing in mind that we were four boys and one girl growing up in the North of England I guess we were quite a presence within our local dance school.

How easy is it to get started; what are the most important things you would need to buy?
It is very easy to get started as there are many dance centres and schools nationwide, both local and vocational. All you would need to buy from the outset is a pair shoes appropriate to the dance style in question and sports/dance clothing which is comfortable for movement.

Do you have any advice you would give someone who has never been to a ballet class and is just starting out?
My advice to someone just starting out with ballet classes would be to try and find a teacher who is very positive and encouraging and not be put off by the French terminology used in ballet. Like with any activity it takes a little time to learn the basics but very quickly the fundamentals will become second nature.

What is your most significant memory from when you started to dance?
I attended a Summer School at the Vaganova School in St. Petersburg followed directly by a second Summer School in London. Four weeks of dancing/training for eight hours a day convinced me that I might be able to go the distance as a professional dancer.

Would you say there is an age limit to taking up ballet recreationally?
Absolutely no age limit to get involved. I teach an early morning beginners’ ballet class at the Royal Opera House for “In–House” employees from any department. 80% had never tried ballet before. I’ve also taught dance workshops for families, in which ages range from 1 – 80 years! Dance is for everyone.

What would you say the main benefits of ballet would be, for someone just doing it as a keep fit exercise?
Dance is fantastic for aerobic fitness, balance, flexibility and general well being. It encourages good posture and gives you confidence in your physical capabilities.

Yakult is proud to support The Royal Ballet, and will be supplying dancers (based at the Royal Opera House) with Yakult throughout 2012.
Ballroom dancing is good exercise for all age groups; you can carry on dancing no matter how old you are. You can learn a new skill while mixing socially and making new friends, and it gives you a great sense of wellbeing and achievement.

Where?

To find a dance school close to you, take a look in your local papers, or on the internet – or ask friends and neighbours for any recommendations they may have. Most dance schools have new beginner classes, starting on several different dates throughout the year.

How?

In terms of what to wear for ballroom dancing, you do not usually need any special clothes. Shoes should be comfortable and not slip on your feet. Ideally if you decide to continue, proper dance shoes would be preferable – but give it a go first and see whether it is for you!

You do not need a partner, so just go along and join in. You can dance socially or challenge yourself by taking medals or entering competitions. Many schools or halls hold afternoon tea dances, which are often free to attend. Or if you enjoy dancing in a big group, why not give line dancing a go!

CASE STUDIES

“I may be in my 80s but I’m determined to stay young and fit - line dancing helps me do this. It’s fun, friendly and really good exercise”

Olive, 86 (pictured with her great-granddaughter Maddie)

“Since taking up Ballroom & Latin dancing I have lost weight, feel fitter and have made lots of new friends.”

Hazel (right), 64
Hockey is one of the great team games played in the UK, for all the family. The game developed as a way to keep cricketers entertained during the off-season and was played on grass – usually the outfield of the cricket pitch. Today, hockey is mostly played on artificial turf pitches, which make for faster and more accurate ball control and in many ways, a much easier game to play.

Hockey really is for everyone – it is almost unique in that there are equal numbers of women as men playing the sport in the UK, all greatly ranging in ability and age. Many clubs will have junior teams as well as a number of men’s, women’s and mixed teams of various levels. You can even volunteer as an umpire, which is a great way to keep fit in a sociable, fun environment.

To get started

Simply get in contact with your local hockey club and turn up to practice! Most clubs are more than happy to accept new players. Take a look at the ‘club-finding’ section of the relevant site:

England: www.englandhockey.co.uk
Scotland: www.scottish-hockey.org.uk
Wales: www.hockeywales.org.uk
Ireland: www.hockey.ie

Equipment

You can probably borrow most of the equipment from friends, family or members of the club for a few weeks whilst you decide whether hockey is the activity for you. However, eventually the three essential pieces of kit you will need are a hockey stick, shin pads and a mouth guard. A new hockey stick can cost as little as £20 – 30 (though a top of the range stick can be £200 – £400 or more!) Shin pads and mouth guards usually range in price from £5 – £30.

If you decide you want to take up hockey on a long-term basis, hockey shoes and a hockey glove for the left hand are probably worthwhile investments. Shoes made for artificial turf pitches will have more grip than normal trainers and cost from £25 upwards and a hockey glove will cost from £5.

Team kit is often provided by the club, except for the socks. And don’t forget that there will usually be someone in the club wanting to pass on some second-hand equipment.
**Cost**

The first few times you go along to practice will more than likely be free. After this, the cost to play for a season can vary greatly between clubs (approximately £150 – £300 per season); this is primarily used to cover the cost of hiring/maintaining the pitch and facilities, insurance and to pay coaches and umpires if necessary. Most clubs will have concession rates for students, juniors and job–seekers.

**When?**

The hockey season runs from September to April with most league games played on Saturdays and a mid–week evening practice at nearly all clubs. During the summer there are many social leagues and weekend tournaments to fill the time.

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**Interview:**

Yakult is proud to supply the England and GB Hockey Teams.

In an exclusive interview, we asked Anne Panter (GB women’s team) and Richard Alexander (GB men’s team) to outline the main benefits to be gained from taking up hockey.

“Exercise and friendship. Hockey’s a really popular sport - you meet some great people and you get fit doing it. Ultimately, you’ll be healthier and have a lot of fun at the same time.”

Anne Panter

“The social environment is great. You meet some great people who become some of your best friends through hockey.”

Richard Alexander

To read the full interview please visit the Yakult website and download Issue 29 of Yakult Digest (available from June 2012).

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**Did you know?**

- Hockey players are estimated to expend 630 – 840 kcal per game\(^7\)
- International male hockey players may expend 1240 kcal per game\(^8\)

\(^8\) J Sports Med Phys Fitness 1994 Sep;34(3):235 – 41
An introduction to tennis from Graham Hayden, coach at the Parklangley Club

There are few social sports more addictive and rewarding than tennis. Whilst once a somewhat elitist sport due to the lack of readily available court space, tennis is now enjoying a boom time with many local clubs eager to attract new members to enjoy not only the sport but to engage in the social dimension. Indeed many clubs will now offer some free introductory lessons to encourage you to see whether the game could suit your needs.

Equipment

It is very easy to get started as the modern equipment available now is of high quality and easy to find at sports shops or online. A modern quality racket could cost no more than £50 although, like golf clubs, you can pay a lot more for high performance equipment. The important aspect is to find a racket that feels right in your hand and many shops will let you borrow and try out a racket before you make your decision.

It is essential to invest in suitable footwear, which will enable you to move comfortably round the court. Many players would consider tennis shoes to be more important than their racket. Again, sports shops will have a selection of brands and styles to suit your needs.

Where?

At the social level, tennis clubs usually have sessions that encourage beginners to meet up, play games and find their level of play, which can be enhanced by taking some group or individual lessons with a qualified coach who will be able to advise individuals as to how to get the maximum enjoyment from the sport. Every club will have a competitive element that will enable you to take part in club matches or inter club championships but this is by no means compulsory and many players just enjoy playing social tennis.

So how do you go about finding the ideal club for you? You probably know most of your local ones but just visit www.lta.org.uk and there will be an easy to follow guide for you to compare. If you join a club that is affiliated to the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) then you will automatically be enrolled as a British tennis member, which will give you lots of additional benefits.
Why?

Whilst tennis will help you maintain a healthy lifestyle, one of the major benefits of the game is that it is not too demanding on dynamic movement. Unlike squash or bowling in cricket, the strain on individual joints is not as high and many players find the tennis movements to be less demanding than a higher impact sport – and of course knees and arms can be protected against possible injuries by the wearing of suitable supports.

The real beauty of tennis is that it can be played and enjoyed at any level. And can you imagine a more delightful way of spending a warm summer’s day with your friends than hitting a tennis ball over the net for an ‘Andy Murray’ like winner?!

Yakult is proud to supply the Parklangley Club and to support the Mini Tennis Series for 2012.

CASE STUDY

“I love running and hitting the ball and the games we play.”

Ryan Kelly aged 4 is a member of the Parklangley Club and has weekly coaching.

For more information on the club, please visit www.theparklangleyclub.co.uk
Swimming

Each week, 3 million people swim in the UK; it is one of the few sports that can be undertaken by anyone, regardless of height, weight and build, size, gender or age – so why not take the plunge and join them?!

Why?

Swimming provides a workout for your entire body; not only is it a cardiovascular workout but it improves strength, flexibility and balance.

Most of the time you are in the pool you are working; just getting into the water burns calories as the body has to work harder to stay warm. Once you get going, the temperature of the water cools you, so you never feel over-heated or sweaty.

Any swimming that makes you breathe more heavily counts as ‘moderate’ activity; length swimming in particular forces you to breathe in a deep and rhythmic way, which gives your lungs a huge boost.

The amount of resistance from the water can range from 4 to 44 times that of air. To improve muscle strength and endurance, create different resistances by yourself, with floats, woggles or aqua dumbbells. This is like exercising with weights or machines on land, but safer.

Due to the buoyancy of the water 90% of your body’s weight is supported, which is 90% less stress on your joints than most other forms of exercise. Also, the hydrostatic pressure of the water creates a massaging effect, which helps soothe and comfort joints, muscles and internal organs.

This hydrostatic pressure also reduces the demand on the heart by up to 17bpm or 13% than that of someone exercising on land. This allows you to work longer and use more fat as a fuel source.

And as with many sports, swimming provides an opportunity for social interaction.

Did you know?

- 30 minutes of swimming is equal to 45 minutes’ activity on land⁹.
- 30 minutes of steady paced lane swimming burns over 240 calories – almost 500 in an hour¹⁰.

⁹ www.swimming.org
¹⁰ www.bigsplash.co.uk
Overcoming obstacles

But even now you have read the benefits and may be feeling that swimming is of interest to you, it’s likely that you might be thinking of one of these common obstacles to actually getting in the pool:

• “I can’t hide in a large T–shirt and jogging bottoms in the pool!” – Another benefit of swimming: confidence. Don’t let this concern keep you away from the pool; the benefits definitely outweigh any initial embarrassment (really though it is not as bad as you imagine).

• “I don’t want to catch a chill!” – Dry yourself properly and wrap up warm before leaving. If you don’t want to get your hair wet you can invest in a swimming hat, and most swimming pools have hairdryers that you can use for a small fee or even take your own.

• “I hate it when there are no lanes and people are swimming in all directions” – Check the timetable for your local pool, very often there are sessions for lane swimming; this doesn’t mean you have to be an athlete to go to these sessions, it just means the swimming itself is more organised. Public swim sessions are great for the whole family; sometimes the pool may add floats and equipment for children.

Top tips for swimming

1 Keep feet off the floor – when coming to the shallow end try to avoid putting feet on the floor and instead just hold the wall and push off.

2 If you struggle with front crawl breathing it is worth investing in goggles as the ability to see in the water can be a huge help.

3 Breast stroke – think “pull (arms), breathe, kick (legs), glide (arms & legs)”.

4 Back stroke – Keep ears in the water, tummy at the top of the water, knees just below the water and toes pointed, making only a small splash.

5 Front crawl – When your face is in the water be sure to breathe out little bubbles instead of holding your breath; this will help to control breathing. Also, keep one ear and one eye in the water as you turn your head to breathe.

6 And don’t forget – compared to most land–based activities, post–exercise appetite levels for swimming can be sky high. This is due to differences in blood flow to the digestive system; during swimming this is elevated and increases hunger pains. Most swimming pools have vending machines – but to improve long–term fitness and save money, take your own healthy snacks: fruit, sandwiches, milkshakes, etc.
How?

• With most pools open to the public from 7am – 10pm you should be able to find a time that is convenient for you.
• It’s never too late to learn: most pools offer adult classes for beginners to those wanting a refresher course in a friendly and supportive environment.
• If you would prefer not to go it alone then many pools offer sessions of coached lane swimming. Ability can vary from those needing advice on stroke technique who can only manage a few lengths or widths, to those who are looking at participating in competitions.
• There are Aquacise/exercise in water classes, which provide an alternative way to work all the muscles in the body and increase fitness.

Motivation

• Take a friend or a family member along and make swimming a social occasion.
• Swimming in an indoor pool means that there is never the wrong weather to exercise.
• Swimming is relatively inexpensive; you just need a swimming costume/trunks and the entrance fee in to a pool, which for an adult is generally around £3 – £5 per session.
• Set goals:
  • Start with a couple of widths or lengths and then build it up, doing an extra length each time.
  • If you are limited in terms of time then use that time to swim as many lengths as you can, again each time trying to beat what you achieved previously.
  • You may end up joining in with a swimathon to raise money for charity or entering a competition.
• Swimming can be the first step to other activities and clubs such as surfing, scuba diving, sailing, water skiing and anything else that involves water.

Websites

To find your nearest pool: www.bigsplash.co.uk
Rowing is a fantastic sport for improving health and fitness. Although rowing is a low impact sport it actually uses more muscles than any other sport. Whether you want to become part of a team or go it alone most people will find some part of rowing that appeals to them – whether that be on land or water.

**How?**

Many clubs run ‘learn-to-row’ courses that you can join, which will give you a head start if you want to become part of a team. This is also a great way to meet new people as you will all be in the same ‘boat’!

Whilst you might automatically assume that rowing is an outdoor activity and mainly for the summer months, indoor rowing is currently on the rise. Although rowing machines are part of the rowing community’s training regime, indoor rowing has also become a sport in its own right with competitions taking place more frequently across the country. British Rowing has developed RowActiv, an iPhone App with helpful tips for training and technique – see www.rowactiv.com

Rowing machines can be found in most local gyms and in all rowing clubs. Explore Rowing, launched by British Rowing in May 2010, has been very successful in helping people of all ages, abilities and aspirations to try rowing. With wider boats and accredited ‘learn-to-row’ courses you will find yourself out on the water in no time. To find out more, visit www.britishrowing.org/taking-part

**Where?**

There are over 550 rowing clubs affiliated to British Rowing; to find out your nearest club visit www.britishrowing.org/clubs
In an exclusive interview, we asked Helen Glover and Heather Stanning, the GB women’s pair and two time silver medallists (World Championships, 2010 and 2011) what they feel makes a great rower.

“A great rower, like any great achiever, is someone who is willing to go that extra mile to make themselves the best they can be; having mental strength as well as the obvious physical attributes will aid in this.”

Helen Glover

“Mental toughness, competitiveness, fitness, strength, tactical awareness and desire to be the best.”

Heather Stanning

To read the full interview please visit the Yakult website and download Issue 28 of Yakult Digest.
What do you want to take up again?

Remember way back, when exercise wasn’t ‘exercise’ but just having fun, and a skipping rope or hula hoop could keep us entertained for hours on end? Well nothing has to change; it should still be all about fun!

Think back to what it was that made you happy or think about a sport or activity you would like to get involved in. Remember all the ‘playground’ style games that were so much fun: rounders; skipping; hide and seek; ‘You’re it’; Frisbee; swingball; limbo; hop scotch; ‘cops and robbers’ – or that old classic, kiss chase!

So next time you find yourself in a group in an open space why not play chase or mark out hop scotch with chalk on a pavement!

Or why not reacquaint yourself with these sports that you may have played at school and simply lost touch with as an adult:

What do you want to take up again?

40 Little Book of Fitness
Netball

If memories of the pleated skirt and pivoting around on one foot bring back fond memories then why not seek out a local netball team? Netball is for everyone, of all ages, shapes and levels – and is played by many men as well as women!

It has never been easier to join a team, whether you are an experienced player looking for a professional team or a complete netball novice – log on to www.englandnetball.co.uk for more information.

Cricket

If a bat and a ball is more your thing, then why not try out cricket? The season runs from April to September, with indoor cricket over the winter. Cricket is a very sociable sport and you will be sure to have lots of fun!

Visit www.ecb.co.uk to find out more.

Rugby

If you find yourself engrossed in any of the rugby tournaments on the TV be it league, union or touch then why not get involved?!

There are many ways to be part of a rugby team, as a player, a referee or a coach.

Whatever your level or ability rugby provides varying degrees of competition and you will find it both enjoyable and rewarding. So don’t delay, take a look at the websites below and find out which game suits you best:

www.therfl.co.uk
www.rfu.com/TakingPart
www.englandtouch.org.uk/wp/index.php

Or if you love the sport but don’t fancy playing, why not umpire or referee? There is a lot of opportunity out there and there is always something for everybody. Good luck!
Goals

As with everything, how you measure your success is entirely up to you. You may not wish to track this in any kind of formal way; you may like to simply find an activity that you like and keep doing it!

But setting goals is a great way to keep motivated. And sometimes looking to where you want to go can seem a long way off, so looking back to where you have come from can be much more motivating.

Photographs of landmark steps or sites during your fitness journey can help reinforce the reasons why you exercise. These can be the places you have exercised, changes in your lifestyle, enjoyable moments experienced as a result of exercising, and even the changes in your appearance.

And if you wish to keep a record of your progress and see what is working for you (and what may not be), then you can use a chart such as the one suggested to the right.

Obviously you can make this as simple or as complicated as you like; you can be specific about the exact results of your target activities (eg: ‘walked 1.2 miles’) or can just state whether or not you achieved target with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

If you wish to see at a glance how you are progressing through the various activities, you can colour code your chart (eg, we have suggested green for achieving target; orange for ‘almost’ achieving and red for not yet achieving) – but it is best to just use this as a template and find what works for you!
# The Little Book of Fitness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>ACTIVITY 1: Target</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>ACTIVITY 2: Target</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>ACTIVITY 3: Target</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Success measure</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st June (daily example)</td>
<td>Walk one mile</td>
<td></td>
<td>Walked 1 mile</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 minutes of yoga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 June (weekly example)</td>
<td>Walk three miles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Walked 2 miles</td>
<td></td>
<td>60 minutes of yoga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 June (weekly example)</td>
<td>Walk three miles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Walked 2 miles</td>
<td></td>
<td>60 minutes of yoga</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example**

- **1st June (daily example)**
  - ACTIVITY 1: Target - Walk one mile
  - ACTIVITY 2: Target - 15 minutes of yoga
  - ACTIVITY 3: Target - Find tennis club
  - Achievements: Not yet mastered new yoga move!

- **2 June (weekly example)**
  - ACTIVITY 1: Target - Walk three miles
  - ACTIVITY 2: Target - 60 minutes of yoga
  - ACTIVITY 3: Target - Find tennis club
  - Achievements: Found!

- **7 June (weekly example)**
  - ACTIVITY 1: Target - Walk three miles
  - ACTIVITY 2: Target - 60 minutes of yoga
  - ACTIVITY 3: Target - Find tennis club
  - Achievements: Mastered new yoga move!

**Notes:**
- Lost 2lb this week
- Worked late Monday so missed evening walk
Yakult is proud to supply The Royal Ballet, and will be supplying dancers (based at the Royal Opera House) with Yakult throughout 2012.

Yakult is proud to supply the England and GB Hockey Teams.

Yakult is an Official Partner of FINA, the Fédération Internationale de Natation: The world governing body for the five Aquatic Disciplines of Swimming, Diving, Water Polo, Synchronised Swimming and Open Water Swimming.

“Yakult is proud to be supplying the GB Rowing Team with Yakult throughout 2012.

“A great rower, like any great achiever, is someone who is willing to go that extra mile to make themselves the best they can be...”

Helen Glover

“The social environment is great. You meet some great people who become some of your best friends...”

Richard Alexander

Yakult is proud to supply the Parklangley Club and to support the Mini Tennis Series for 2012.
The Little Book of Fitness is packed with a wide range of fitness activities - from competitive sports such as tennis, hockey and football, to lifestyle activities such as gardening, walking and yoga.

Dive in now and discover:

• Expert hints and tips from some of the nation’s leading sports organisations
• Advice on nutrition and exercise from Wendy Martinson, OBE
• A comprehensive ‘at home’ workout from British Military Fitness
• Exclusive interviews with the GB Rowing Team, The Royal Ballet and the GB Hockey Team
• Your own personal fitness planner...

...and so much more! With sporting suggestions for every age, ability and budget, there really is something for everyone.