



# How sport and physical activity can be used to benefit people's mental health

Hayley Jarvis, Head of Physical Activity

**We are Mind.  
We're here to fight for  
mental health.**

**For support. For respect.  
For you.**



# Mind's physical activity work

## Programmes & partnerships

- Get Set to Go
- Sector Support
- On Your Side - EFL
- Heads Up
- ASICS 'Get Active'
- Mental Health Champions



## Influencing policy & practice

- Mental Health Charter for Sport & Recreation
- Mental Health in Elite Sport
- Duty of Care in Sport Review
- Mental Health and Elite Sport Action Plan
- NICE Guidelines for depression and anxiety
- Moving Medicine



# Mental health facts

**1 in 4 adults**  
have a mental health  
problem

**1 in 6 children &  
young people**  
have a mental health  
problem

**Half** of all mental health problems  
have been established by the **age of 14**,  
rising to **75% by the age of 24**

**Approximately only 1 in 8**  
adults with a mental health problem are currently  
getting any kind of treatment



# Relationship between physical activity and mental health



# How moving supports our mental health



**Reduces stress**



**Improves mood**

**Lifts  
self-esteem**



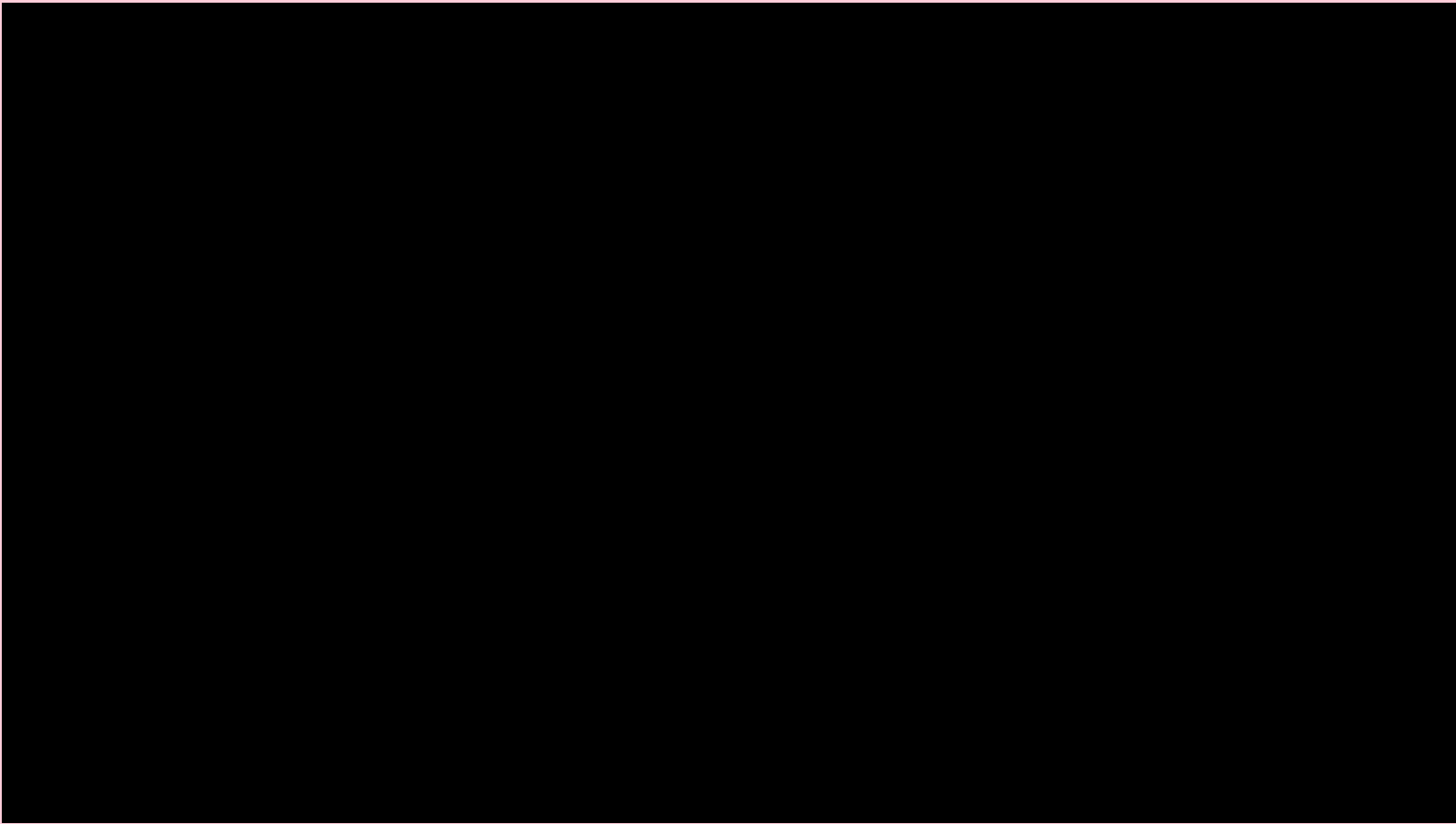
**Improves sleep**



**Lowers risk  
of depression**

**50%** of adults and **57%** young people coped by exercising during the pandemic.

Mind (2021)  
Coronavirus: the  
consequences for  
mental health



[https://youtu.be/rwUH4aF\\_rUM](https://youtu.be/rwUH4aF_rUM)

# Miracle cure?

“If any single drug had the same range of health benefits as physical activity, it would be sold as a miracle cure!”

Take it for 30 minutes on 5 days a week, or start taking it for 10 minutes a day and then take more.



**Over  
a third**

of people (38%) say they take part in physical activity, sport or exercise as a way to manage difficult feelings or emotions.



**1 in 6**

people (18%) take part in physical activity, sport or exercise when they are unwell or injured.



Around  
**2 in 5**

people (39%) say they feel guilty when they miss a session of physical activity, sport or exercise.



# It's complicated



- Risk of over-exercising
- Exercise addiction
- Form of self-harm
- Link to eating problems
- Medication side effects and/or panic attacks

# Healthy relationship with physical activity

- Resources for the public and for sport/physical activity professionals
- Peer support via Mind's [Side by Side community](#)
- Tips including:
  - **Focus on fun and social aspects**
  - **Educate on importance of rest/active rest and a varied routine**
  - **Explore how to fuel and hydrate for physical activity**
  - **Keeping a diary focussing on how being active makes you feel**

Further resources and tools available [here](#)

Contact us today - the following resources cover elements of what physical activity can become actually. We will be happy to help you explore your options and we can provide more advice if you feel any of the content is helpful. We encourage you to reach out to Mind's helpline on 0300 123 3393 or Facebook on 191 523 for immediate support if you need it or see something that looks like it.



**mind**

## Signs a relationship with physical activity is becoming unhealthy

We know physical activity can be an amazing way to support our mental health and help us feel good. But it isn't helpful for everyone all the time, and can lead to problems for some of us.

It's important to recognise that sometimes our relationship with being physically active can become unhealthy, and to help people manage this and get the support they need to develop and maintain a healthy relationship.

### What are the signs?

**Signs can include:**

- changes to personal appearance or how often they exercise
- feeling guilty or anxious when they aren't doing enough exercise
- exercising in secret
- regular injuries (which can be a sign of over-exercising)
- making excuses to be active
- appearing constantly tired and exhausted
- exercising even when unwell or injured
- exercising instead of connecting with others
- feeling physical activity is the most important thing in their life
- exercising even when they need to stop.

**Spotting the signs of over-exercising can be difficult, especially when you are already very active. While athletes are also at risk of over-exercising for over-exercising, if they are training without enough time to rest and recover between training sessions.**

### What do I do next?

**You can make a real difference. By starting conversations with people about the problem, or letting them know where to get help, you can support them towards developing a healthy relationship with exercise.**

It may feel difficult, but making it someone else's job can be an important first step. Remember it's not your responsibility to fix the problem. Talking to what they say and being there when you need/understand them can be really helpful.

Introduce the benefits of rest. Talk about how it can help physical and mental health. Show them alternative activities like meditation and yoga can be a healthy part of their routine.

Identify a person's motivation for doing exercise and how it's making them feel. Physical activity is personal - we all have different preferences, tolerances and fitness levels. Some of us feel short sessions will be best, others enjoy being active for longer. These may differ at different times.

Organising can help too. You can support people by passing on the details of the organisations and resources below.

**Helplines:**

- **Support people to their local Mind or mental health organisation**
- **Request an anonymous helpline**

Call helplines on **191 523**  
Call Mind's helpline on **0300 123 3393**  
Text Mind to **8220**

**Resources:**

**Guides:** For information on the relationship between physical activity and mental health. This includes guidance on developing a healthy relationship with physical activity, signs, symptoms and approaching to support.

**More information on getting help for a mental health problem.**  
More information on [physical activity and mental health.](#)



**Supporting  
people with mental  
health problems to be  
active**

# Loughborough University evaluation of Get Set to Go



**Get Set to Go Programme  
Evaluation Summary**

2014 to 2017



### The Get Set to Go programme

**2015** Get Set to Go launched in 2015 to help people with mental health problems get active

Designed by people with mental health problems. Get Set to Go was delivered in three ways...

- Online peer support through our Externets website
- Local Mini: Local delivery of physical activity sessions through our local Mini network
- Communications and media campaigns

8,219 people accessed support to help them get active through our Externets website

83,282 people engaged with specially developed information on the benefits of getting active

3,585 people with mental health problems get active in a supportive setting

Over 1000 people contributed to the Get Set to Go research making this the largest ever study of its kind

78% of participants rated the programme as very good or excellent after 6 months

Peer support: People using their own experiences to help each other was a key element of Get Set to Go - it helped people feel like they had more support available

Our findings showed that people who were regularly physically active also experienced better wellbeing

After taking part in Get Set to Go, participants exercised on average an extra 1.3 days each week

Make it easier for people with mental health problems to get active - follow our recommendations at [mind.org.uk/GST/Results](http://mind.org.uk/GST/Results)

Click the  
screenshots  
to access the  
evaluation

# Key active 'ingredients'

- Lived experience of mental health and peer support is key
- Help people to overcome barriers, especially at the start
- Same place, same time, same coach
- Include family and friends
- Focus on autonomous motivation
- Provide volunteer training and support
- Send personalised messages
- Promote walking as an achievable activity
- Develop links between the mental health and sport sectors
- Sport sector should develop their mental health knowledge



# CARE

## Coaching and customer skills

C



Be welcoming



Talk about mental health



Offer alternatives



Get feedback

## Awareness

a



Ask people how they are feeling



Pay attention



Use your observation and listening skills



Ask how they would like to be supported

## Respect

r



Avoid intrusive questions



Treat everyone fairly



Make yourself available to listen



Treat information in confidence

## Empathy

e



Learn from reliable sources



Listen and seek understanding



Don't feel pressured to find answers



See the individual, not their diagnosis



# Inspiring others to adopt a peer support model



**RUN TALK RUN**



HM Prison &  
Probation Service



# We Are Undefeatable

- Encourages people with long-term health conditions who can, to move in their own way.
- Shares stories, resources and tools to get started.



Time to lift! While seated,  
lift up one leg at a time.



or start with your hands in front of  
your shoulders and push up  
above your head.

Pull no punches!  
While seated or standing.



reach your arms out  
to hit an imaginary punching bag!

Get going with some half jacks.  
Step to the side and lift one arm on  
your left side, then your right.



If you're seated, you can do  
overhead claps instead!

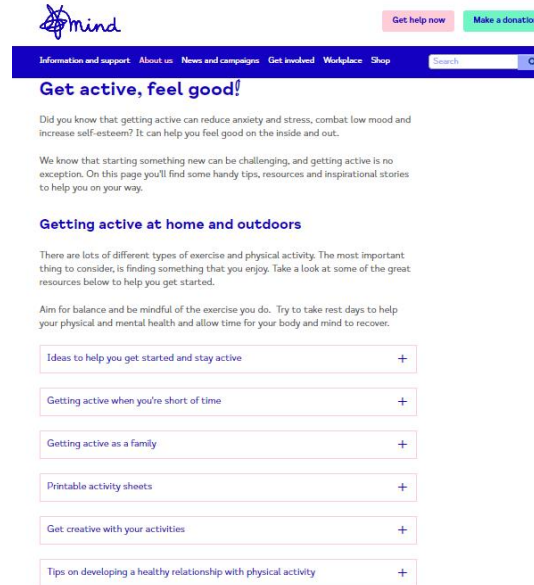
[weareundefeatable.co.uk](https://weareundefeatable.co.uk)





# Get active resources

- [mind.org.uk/getactive](https://mind.org.uk/getactive)
- Get Set to Go plan and wellbeing kitbag
- Online peer support through [Side by Side](#) search tagged conversations physical activity, sport, exercise problems



The screenshot shows the 'mind' logo at the top left, with navigation links for 'Information and support', 'About us', 'News and campaigns', 'Get involved', 'Workplace', and 'Shop'. There are buttons for 'Get help now' and 'Make a donation'. A search bar is visible on the right. The main heading is 'Get active, feel good!'. Below it, there is introductory text about the benefits of physical activity and a section titled 'Getting active at home and outdoors' with a list of resources:

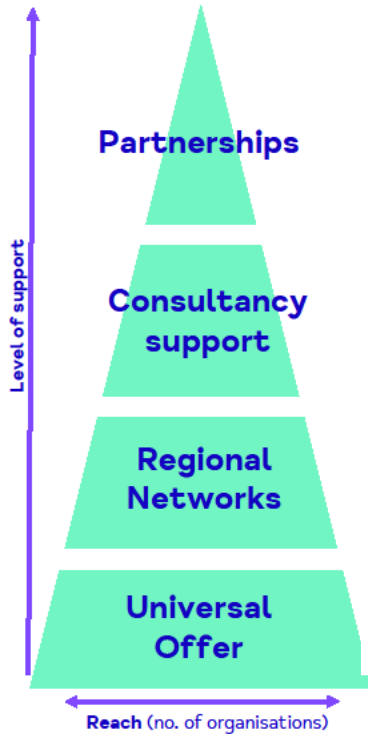
- Ideas to help you get started and stay active +
- Getting active when you're short of time +
- Getting active as a family +
- Printable activity sheets +
- Get creative with your activities +
- Tips on developing a healthy relationship with physical activity +



This section features three resource cards:

- We Are Undefeatable**: An image of a woman in a blue patterned top and white shawl.
- Side by Side**: An image of a person in a white shirt performing a physical activity or exercise.
- Getting active guide**: An image of two people, one in a white shirt and one in a dark shirt, engaged in an activity.

# Our sector support programme



# Training

## Mental Health Awareness in Sport and Physical Activity eLearning

- Online in your own time
- Completed within 2-3 hours

[ukcoaching.org/mental-health](https://ukcoaching.org/mental-health)



## Understand Support Care

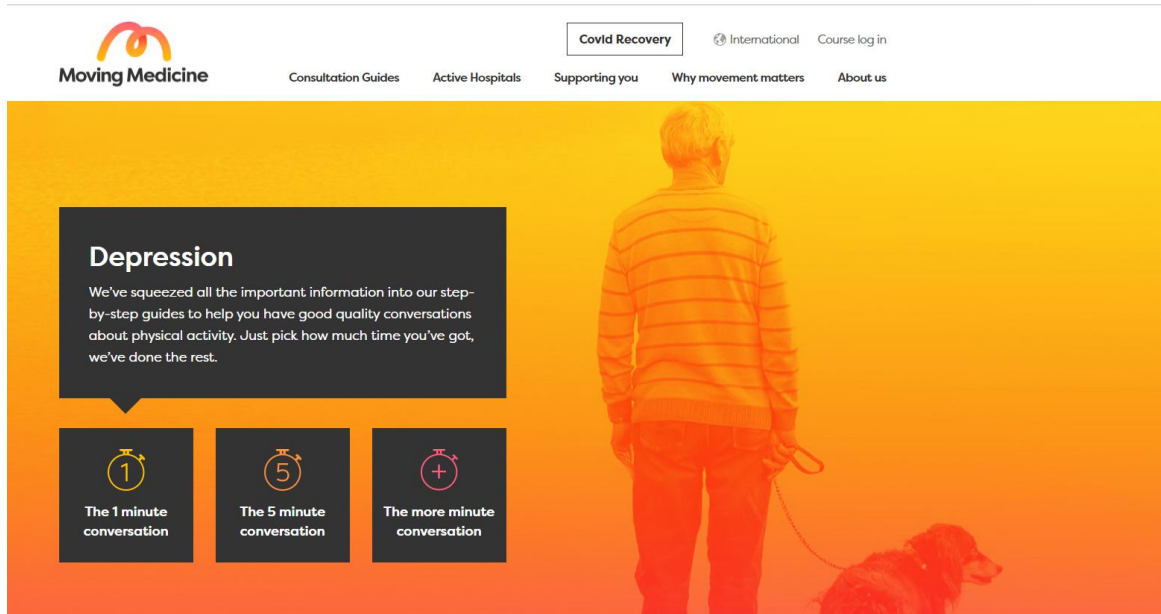
[ukcoaching.org/mental-health](https://ukcoaching.org/mental-health)





**Resources and tools to  
support professionals  
to introduce the  
benefits of physical  
activity**

# Moving Medicine



The screenshot shows the Moving Medicine website interface. At the top left is the Moving Medicine logo. To the right are navigation links: 'Covid Recovery' (highlighted), 'International', and 'Course log in'. Below these are more navigation links: 'Consultation Guides', 'Active Hospitals', 'Supporting you', 'Why movement matters', and 'About us'. The main content area features a large orange-to-yellow gradient background with a silhouette of a person walking a dog. On the left, a dark grey box contains the text 'Depression' and a paragraph: 'We've squeezed all the important information into our step-by-step guides to help you have good quality conversations about physical activity. Just pick how much time you've got, we've done the rest.' Below this are three dark grey boxes with icons and text: 'The 1 minute conversation' (with a '1' icon), 'The 5 minute conversation' (with a '5' icon), and 'The more minute conversation' (with a '+' icon).

Consultation guides for:

- Young people's mental health
- Adult depression
- Adult anxiety

> [movingmedicine.ac.uk](https://movingmedicine.ac.uk)



**I was on  
antidepressants  
and couldn't get  
out of bed, but  
getting active  
changed my life.**



# Continue the conversation....

[mind.org.uk/sport](http://mind.org.uk/sport)

[sport@mind.org.uk](mailto:sport@mind.org.uk)



@MindCharity



#SportMinds



 mind