**Exercise during lockdown: How to keep going**

**By Dr Clare Fernandes**

1. REMEMBER WHY YOU STARTED

Taking the first step is always the hardest part. Find a way to tap into that motivation you felt at the beginning of the year and use it to your advantage – even when January is long gone and most have given up on their resolutions.

2. MAKE A SCHEDULE/PLAN

It’s beneficial to create a schedule. Blocking out time for exercise will force you to stay on track and remind you to make it a priority instead of putting it on the backburner when other work starts piling up.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/12-week-fitness-plan/> Variety of plans including couch to 5K

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active10/home> App based plan for walking

3. SET GOALS

It may seem obvious, but setting goals for yourself is one way to guarantee you’re constantly reaching for something. Aim to work out a certain number of times a week or set a certain number of miles you want to run at one time. Your goal shouldn’t be your only motivation, but it can help keep you going.

4. DOWNLOAD A FITNESS APP

[Asana Rebel](https://asanarebel.com/) App and tap into your inner yogi or check out the [7 Minute Workout](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/7-minute-workout/id650762525?mt=8) app. The more fun you have exercising, the more likely you are to stick with it.

5. REWARD YOURSELF

Celebrate your wins, even if they’re small. Watch a film, or splurge on new gear you’ve been eyeing. You’ve earned it and you’re more likely to remember those wins the next time you’re struggling to keep going.

6. CHANGE AND ADAPT

You can also try mixing things up and listen to podcasts or audiobooks to keep your interest when music isn’t enough anymore.

Another trick? Try a new exercise. If you’ve only ever done cardio, try doing some weights. If you’ve always lifted, maybe try a bike ride, or another activity that stretches you in a new way.

7. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

It’s difficult to see changes in yourself over time, which is why tracking your progress is beneficial. Keep track of your times or personal bests and fitness wins. Before long, you’ll be able to look back and see just how far you’ve come.

Committing to fitness has physical and mental health benefits. At the end of the day, you’re doing something for you that will make you feel better, and that’s what’s most important.

8. WORK WITH OTHERS

Within household or challenge friends and colleagues to work together on, e.g. Abs challenge.

**Other considerations**

There are particular groups of people for whom exercise helps mitigate symptoms/ health and the reduction in physical lifestyle would prove more challenging to their health because exercise has a direct or indirect therapeutic benefit or for other reasons: seek further help on this topic from your healthcare team if need be.

This list includes, but is not exclusive to those with:

Diabetes

Hypertension

Chronic depression

Chronic anxiety

Arthritis

Schizophrenia

Bipolar disorder

**Resources**

There are a variety of medically approved resources and others that may be helpful:

Quaratrain is recommended by the British Society of Exercise Medicine: set up by Nottingham University specifically for lock down.

The NHS website has a variety of plans to follow.

Sport England has a variety of options for a variety of levels of abilities and also that you can do with your household.

Desk based exercise for working around your desk, but also general exercises designed to help target the area of the body that can be in fixed, static contraction during prolonged desk use to help negate some of the aches and pains associated with this.

And there are other options if you have different physical needs.

**You can do it!**

The need for active physical activity is more important during lockdown as we cannot reap the benefits of passive exercise.

Even 10 minutes of aerobic or non-aerobic exercise can benefit your health currently.

The benefits are multiple, including the mental effects.

Think about the talk test when looking at the ideal amount of exercise you should take per week and try to implement where possible.

There are a variety of things that count as exercise. You should take this into account when deciding what to do, and continue to follow the government guidance for infection control whist doing so.

**Useful sources of information**

1. Sources of a variety of different exercises

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/>

<https://quarantrain.org/> Recommended by BASEM: variety of options and languages

2. Make plans to help with sustainability

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/12-week-fitness-plan/> Variety of plans including couch to 5K

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active10/> Home app based plan for walking

3. Live scheduled training to help you feel part of a community, but also pre-recorded sessions to work around you in a variety of online and app formats:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYlRfn6rYQ> Joe wicks live and recorded sessions

<https://www.instagram.com/nickonhands/?hl=en> Live sessions

<https://visionaware.org/for-seniors/health-and-aging/fitness-and-fun/developing-balance/>

<https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkoutfree> For a variety of abilities and for kids!

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/7-minute-workout/id650762525> HIIT

4. At desk exercises and exercises that will help with the effects of prolonged desk work:

<https://www.nwbh.nhs.uk/healthandwellbeing/PublishingImages/desk-based-exercise/MSK%20challenge%20fund%20desk%20excerise%20booklet.pdf>

<https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/OP-153.15-Neck-exercises.pdf>

<https://www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/leaflets/files/5314Pshoulder.pdf>

<https://www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/leaflets/files/5712Plowbackpain.pdf>

5. Considerations for those who are differently abled:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Documents/chair-workout.jpg>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/>

<https://visionaware.org/for-seniors/health-and-aging/fitness-and-fun/developing-balance/>