

MindWell

# Move Your Way



for better mental health!



**MENTAL  
HEALTH  
AWARENESS  
WEEK**  
13-19 MAY 2024

@MindWell Leeds #MoveYourWayLeeds

# How can moving help

## How can moving improve how you feel?

Studies show that regular exercise is one of the best ways to feel better. It stimulates brain chemicals that can leave you feeling happier, more relaxed and less anxious.

Challenging yourself to try something new and setting small goals can also help boost your confidence and improve your self-esteem.

You might think we're only talking about aerobic activities like jogging or team sports that get your heart beating and blood pumping. But there are many free and easy ways to move your body that anyone can do. Even morning stretching counts!

[Find activity groups in your area](#)



## How do you like to move?

While the NHS recommends some type of physical activity every day and at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week, that might feel scary or out of reach. The most important thing is to understand the many benefits that come from regular movement and exercise and then make positive changes that feel right to you.

We've created this resource to spark ideas and inspire you to Move Your Way. You'll find tips for moving more at home, at work and outside, along with links to MindWell for more in-depth information.

At the back, you'll also find links to over 30 free or low-cost wellbeing and exercise groups to join in Leeds, many of which specifically welcome people experiencing mental health problems.

[How exercise can boost mental wellbeing](#)

## But what if I don't feel like it?

Most people feel this way from time to time. After all, getting out of a warm, cosy bed to go for a jog in the rain doesn't sound like that much fun!

Thankfully there are many ways you can move your body and not all involve putting on a pair of trainers.

Every journey begins with a first step (or a skip, or a pedal), but it also starts with a choice. The choice to try something different and see where it takes you.

If it's been a while since you thought about movement or exercise, you might want to try out a few different options to see what feels good. Make a list and pin it to the fridge—challenge yourself to try at least one new activity a week!



## I can't exercise

Maybe you're recovering from an injury, living with a disability, or simply feeling low on energy. Or perhaps raising your heart rate triggers feelings of anxiety or panic.

Exercising when you're tired, unwell or facing other challenges can be a real struggle. You should always listen to your body and if things feel too difficult, that's perfectly okay.

Instead of being hard on yourself for not exercising, do what you can and consider that rest might be just what you need right now. Alternatively, reaching out to a trusted friend or your GP can provide valuable support in exploring other suitable activities.

With the right support and adaptations, most people can enjoy some kind of physical activity and the benefits that come with moving more.

**If you think exercise will be difficult for you due to medical reasons, make sure to speak with your GP before making any major changes to your routine.**

For more information about the benefits of moving more, along with advice and signposting for common mental health issues like anxiety and depression, visit MindWell - the go to online resource for adult mental health and wellbeing advice in Leeds.

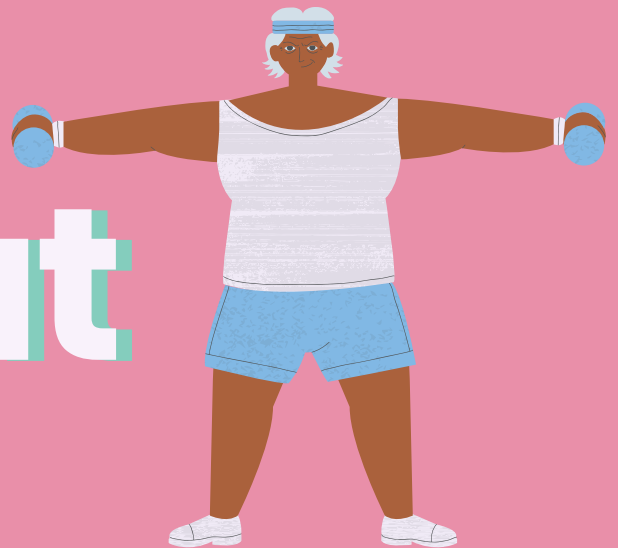
[Find accessible ways to keep active](#)



Move Your  
Way

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# Move more at home

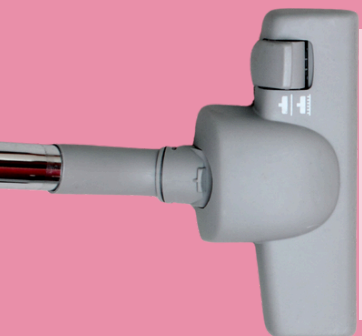


If you're finding it hard to start moving more or you're worried about getting it right, what better place to start than in the comfort of your own home? No fancy equipment required—just a dash of motivation and a willingness to put yourself first for a few moments.

You could rise and shine with a morning stretch—reaching for the stars then touching your knees (or toes, if you're flexible!)

For a quick burst of energy, why not turn up the tunes and dance like no-one's watching, or take an indoor hike up and down the stairs.

Waiting for the kettle to boil could be the perfect time to sneak in some squats or kickboxing. And if you're feeling overwhelmed by chores, why not grab that vacuum cleaner and work up a sweat. You could even get creative and rearrange your furniture!



share how you [#MoveYourWayLeeds](#)



Cleaning can feel like a chore but can be a good way to move more at home.



Stretch it out while watching your favourite TV shows.



Take the stairs for some extra movement.



Use your body weight to workout or try out some home fitness videos.



Turn on the radio and try out some new dance moves!

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Find exercise videos to do at home on MindWell

# Move more at work



Feeling glued to your desk? Don't worry, many people spend a lot of time sitting down at work, but there are plenty of ways you can fit in more movement without changing careers!



To spice up your commute, consider hopping off the bus a few stops early or swapping it entirely for a brisk cycle or walk into work.

If your workplace has stairs, make it a habit to take them instead of the lift and be sure to take mini breaks throughout the day to stretch your arms, shoulders, neck, and back—great for stress relief too! Invite colleagues for lunchtime walks and don't forget to break up your routine by getting up for refreshments or away from your desk—it all adds up to a more active and energised workday.



Standing for short periods is a great way to stretch your legs. If you work from home, consider a standing desk.



If your job allows you to make visits or get out and about, try and get out once a day.



Commuting doesn't have to be stressful. If walking is an option, try hopping off the bus a stop early or exploring a new walking route to work.



Escape the desk at lunchtime! Instead of eating at your desk, why not get some fresh air and invite a colleague along for a stroll?



Remember to take regular breaks throughout your workday. Whether it's for a cuppa or a quick trip to the photocopier, there's always time to move more.

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Find ways to relieve work stress on MindWell



# Move more outside



You don't have to train for a marathon to enjoy moving more outside your home. Whether you're feeling cooped up or eager to soak up some sunshine, there are plenty of outdoor activities to enjoy!

You could venture outside for a leisurely stroll around your neighbourhood or local park, or try some field sports like playing frisbee with friends or a pet. Not only will you get your steps in, but you'll also enjoy the benefits of fresh air and greenery - great for feeling less stressed!

Gentle gardening (or tending to an allotment) is also a great way to move more outside, while also connecting with nature. Check out [local outdoor groups and activities](#) for more ideas.

Remember, even a few minutes outdoors each day can make a [difference to your mood](#).





Join a local team sports group  
(Photo: Your Back Yard)



Join a local walking group  
(Photo: Touchstone)



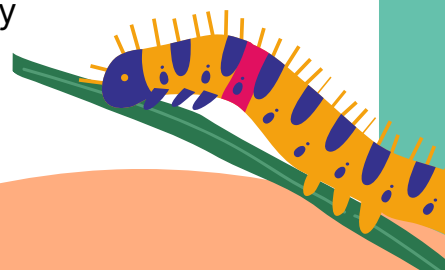
Gardening can be a great way to stay fit and feel the benefit of natural surroundings. For those without a garden [TCV](#) have activity days.



Play outdoor games with friends or family



Join a local fitness class



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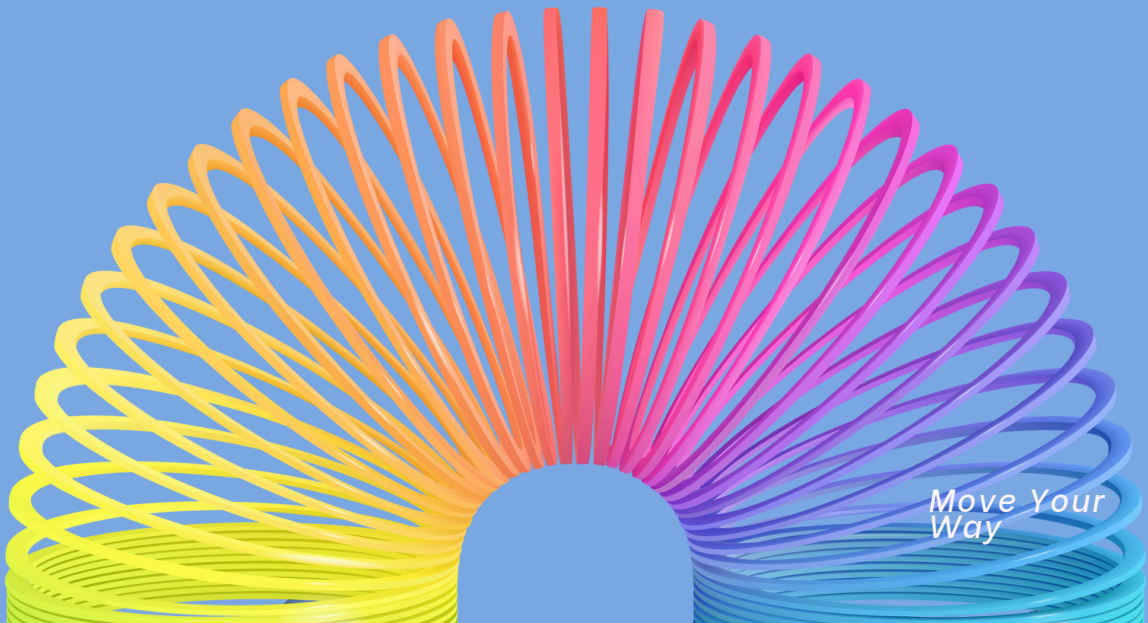
Find more ways to move outdoors on MindWell

# Weird and wonderful ways to move

We've been saying you can move your way and we mean it. If you've tried all the usual ways of moving and want to try something new and exciting, then why not take inspiration from the animal kingdom? Animals have plenty of moves you can copy, from crawling like a bear to hopping like a frog, mimicking animal movements is an excellent way

to challenge your coordination, flexibility and balance while having fun.

So, if you're looking for creative way to move your body, join us in exploring the weird and wonderful world of [animal-inspired movements](#). Get ready to crawl, slither, and hop your way to better health and fitness!





Wave your tentacles like a jellyfish!



Shake your tail feathers like a bird of paradise.



Spread your fingers and arms like a gecko.



Streeeeetch every muscle in your body like a cat after a nap.



Bound on your back legs then sit up straight like a ring-tailed lemur.

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Find more ways to get creative on MindWell

# How do you like to move?

Use these prompts to learn more about how you enjoy movement and what motivates you to stay well...

- When I was younger, I used to like moving by...  
\_\_\_\_\_

- I like to take care of my body by...  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Next time I feel unmotivated to exercise, I'll...  
\_\_\_\_\_

- By moving more and staying fit, I'll be able to... / I'll feel more...  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Even if I don't like it at first, movement usually makes me feel...  
\_\_\_\_\_

- I usually have the most energy to move my body in the...  
\_\_\_\_\_

- It helps to say kind and encouraging words to myself like...  
\_\_\_\_\_

- If I don't meet my exercise goals, I'll try again and...  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Free and low-cost activity groups in Leeds

Find information and links to over 30 free or low-cost physical activity groups in Leeds, along with tips and advice for how exercise can help boost your mental wellbeing.

Some groups specifically welcome people experiencing mental health challenges like anxiety or depression, but all groups are friendly and open to anyone wanting to improve their mental and physical wellbeing through movement or exercise.

Visit [MindWell](#) or scan the QR code or click one of the logos



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<https://bit.ly/MindWell-move-your-way>



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LOVE EXPLORING



Shantona Women's and Family Services

