



Understanding the link between mental and physical health

People with mental ill health may find that they experience migraines, headaches, fatigue and stomach problems. Whilst people who suffer a physical injury may find they suffer with low mood, sadness or anger.

Our minds and bodies are not separate so it's no surprise that mental ill health can impact your body and vice versa.

In fact, new research by King's College London has shown that people with mental health conditions can suffer from poorer physical health and have more age-related diseases than the general population.

How mental ill health can impact physical health

- 1 Low motivation and energy**
Mental health problems can impact your energy, drive and motivation to look after yourself and exercise
- 2 Difficulty with planning and organising**
If your mental health problem impacts concentration, you may find it tricky to arrange and/or attend medical appointments
- 3 Less likely to receive medical help**
Your GP or another healthcare professional may think your physical symptoms are a consequence of mental illness and are less likely to investigate them further.





How does physical activity improve mental health?

Stimulates the body and improves mood

Study-upon-study has proven that physical activity has a positive impact on our mood. A Mental Health Foundation study found that people felt more awake, calmer and more content after physical activity than people who were inactive.



Manage depression and anxiety

Exercise is a fantastic tool for helping individuals to overcome depression and manage anxiety.

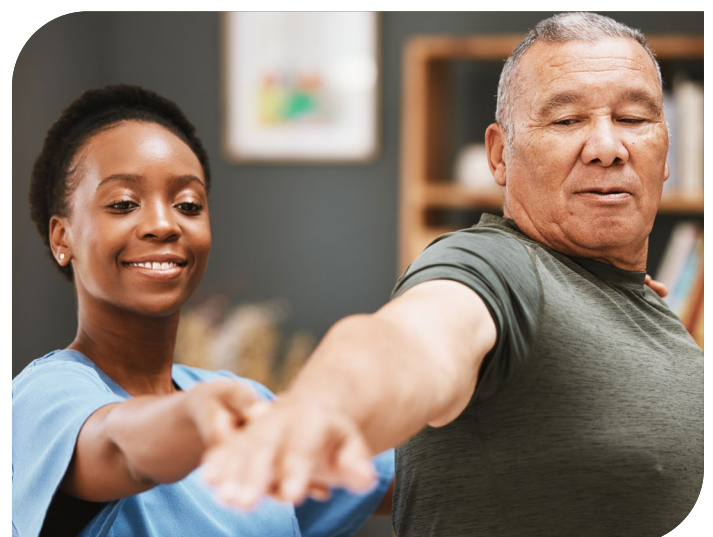
Reduces stress

Exercise can have direct stress-busting benefits because it bumps the production of your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters called endorphins.



Boosts self-esteem

Movement and physical activity can greatly impact how we feel about ourselves and our perceived self-worth. People with higher self-esteem tend to better manage stress.



How to overcome barriers to exercise

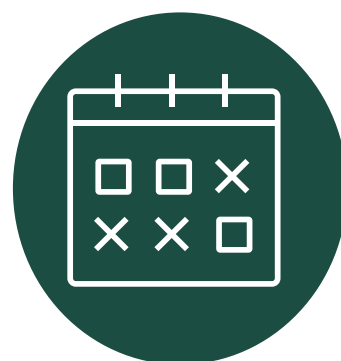
It can feel difficult to make changes to your life and it's normal to feel nervous about trying something new. However, there are a few things you can try to overcome the barriers that are standing in your way:



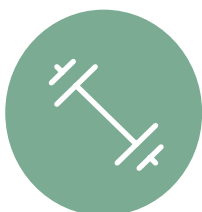
Set goals
and targets



Embed activities
into daily life



Schedule time
in your diary



Start small
and slow



Make the most
of the outdoors



Choose an activity
that you love, not
one that will feel
like a chore



Buddy up with a
friend or family
member



The myths and reality of back pain

Did you know...

Low back pain is the **single leading cause of disability worldwide** and the condition for which the greatest number of people may benefit from rehabilitation*.

The number of people leaving the workplace because of neck and back problems has **risen by 62,000** since 2019**.

Four in five adults experience low back pain at some point in their lives*.**

* World Health Organisation ** ONS *** National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke



Three back pain myths, busted

More often than not, acute back pain comes on without any specific injury to your back. But whether it's acute or chronic, back pain can be distressing and prevent you from carrying out day-to-day activities.

Despite how common it is, there are many myths and misunderstandings about back pain that can prolong discomfort and delay recovery. If you suffer from back pain, it's important to understand the facts.

Here are three myths about back pain that our musculoskeletal experts regularly hear from patients:



Myth one: "Bed rest is best"

Although rest is important to recovery, the best thing to do is to carry on with normal activities, modify exercise and switch to low-impact exercises like walking and swimming. When a pain is related to nerve compression, a disc issue or joint degeneration, inactivity can worsen pain.



Myth two: "After tests and scans on my back, the results are normal. I must be imagining my back pain"

Your healthcare specialist may have carried out a series of tests to check for specific diseases and it's usually good news if your results are negative. But this does not mean your pain isn't real. Back pain can occur for a number of reasons and you are not imagining the pain you're feeling.



Myth three: "Surgery is the only solution for chronic back pain"

Back pain is most often caused by issues that do not require surgery. Non-surgical treatments such as physical therapy, medications, injections and lifestyle modifications are often effective in managing and reducing chronic back pain.



When should you seek help from a healthcare professional?

If your pain persists, becomes chronic (has lasted 12 weeks or longer) or you're worried about your back pain, contact your GP. They may refer you to a physiotherapist or a specialist spinal team to help with your recovery or investigate your condition further.