



Keep Well

Advice and Information
for Older Adults

Stay Active

Stay Connected

Switch Off

Eat Well

Mind Your Mood





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We have created a series of information broadcasts to accompany this booklet.

They are available at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/115609018461867/633261790916576>



Introduction | Réamhrá

The Age Friendly programme is rolled out in each County in Ireland. Its aim is to address the challenges faced by our older people. This programme is co-ordinated by Mayo County Council, making our county a better place to grow old in.

Age Friendly works to improve the services and facilities that our older people have identified as being important to them, and the wider community, as they live healthy and active lives.

Our projects, in conjunction with other organisations, include:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Social Participation
- Communication and Education
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Health and Wellbeing

Minding our Health as we Age, from Age Friendly Mayo, is aligned with the government's "Keep Well" Campaign which is aimed at showing people of all ages how we can mind our own physical and mental health and wellbeing by adding healthy and helpful habits to our daily and weekly routines. This booklet will focus on keeping active, eating well, minding our mental health, and learning how to switch off. It will provide guidelines, information, and tips on things that will help us keep well as we age.



STAY ACTIVE

Keep Active, Keep Steady, Keep Strong. Indoors and Out.

“Exercise not only changes your body; it changes your mind, your attitude, and your mood.”

The Benefits of Staying Active



Good for the Body

Keeping on the move and exercising daily will help us to keep our muscles strong, improve our balance, help manage our weight and boost our mood and energy levels.



Good for the Mind

Our mood is lifted by the release of endorphins, which happens when we exercise and also by the sense of achievement we experience by setting and achieving our aims and goals.

Long-term Goals when Keeping Active

Adults of all ages should be physically active at a moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes a day, five times a week, aiming for 150 minutes a week.

For the best results and to reduce our risk of falls this activity should be a mix of:

- Strength exercises 2-3 times a week
- Balance Exercises 3 times a week
- Cardiovascular exercises 5 times a week eg. walking, gardening, cycling, dancing, housework etc.

Keep Active, Keep Steady, Keep Strong. Indoors and Out.

Start small and build slowly to the guidelines above. This can be achieved by doing both formal exercise and using informal ways to boost our activity levels.

Formal Exercise includes:

- Walking programmes
- Virtual exercise classes, a new and supportive way to exercise at home.
- Tracking your daily step count and building up your number of steps over days or weeks. Contact Age Friendly Mayo to request a free Age Friendly Pedometer to help you to count your steps each day.

Informal Activities includes:

- Housework
- Gardening
- Dancing
- Going up and down stairs
- Washing the car
- Walking rather than driving

Another way to informally increase our activity levels is to add boosts of exercise into our day but not all in one go. If you have been sitting for 30 minutes or more we would recommend you stand, straighten up and move around for a minute or two before resuming your task for example:

- Marching while sitting on or behind your chair during the ads of your favourite TV programme
- While the kettle boils hold the counter and do some knee bends, heel lifts or hip strengthening exercises
- Walking up and down your stairs a few extra times during the day.

For exercise to be effective the aim should be to work at a moderate intensity. You should be able to chat comfortably while exercising but unable to sing without getting out of breath.

All this activity adds up to make you stronger and fitter and may reduce your risk of falls especially if you are able to do your activity boosts in standing.

Walking Programme

A daily walk is a great place to start and is suitable for all walking abilities.

You should aim to:

- Walk regularly (5 days a week)
- Walk at a moderate intensity (with a little bit of breathlessness)
- Walk all in one go (30 minutes plus) or in manageable amounts spread out through the day (5-10 minutes at a time)
- Consider using a diary to keep track of your walking achievements



Points to remember before starting this walking programme

Formal Exercise includes:

- Talk to your GP if you have had a prolonged period of inactivity or have underlying medical conditions
- If you are really struggling with your walking or balance you may benefit from a referral to your Community Physiotherapist. This can be done by contacting your GP or PHN

Indoors

- A walk from the kitchen to your front door and back again may be a great start if you haven't walked much lately. Repeat this until your legs start to feel tired.
- Note how many laps you have done and how long it took. Gradually increase this walking time to five or ten minute bursts.

Outdoors

- A walk outdoors is a great mood booster.
- If you haven't walked outdoors for a while, ask a family member or carer to come with you for confidence.
- Start your outdoor walking to your gate and back, then progress to two doors down and back gradually going further in both distance and time as you get stronger.
- Begin with 5 or 10 min manageable amounts spread throughout the day.
- If you are a confident and regular walker, complete your 30 min plus in one go.
- To get the most out of your walk try different routes or if you do a loop vary the way you do it. This provides different challenges to the body and will improve your strength, fitness and balance.

Safety tips to consider

- Always use your walking aid if you have one as this may allow you to walk further with more confidence.
- Check that your walking aid is in good repair and the ferrules (rubber) on your stick or frame do not show signs of wear (right top).
- It is important that the walking aid is at the correct height for you (right bottom).
- Always wear comfortable and supportive shoes when walking indoors or outdoors.
- Be prepared for the weather outdoors and on a wet or stormy day it may be safer to increase your exercise indoors rather than go for a walk.



Virtual Exercise Options

Make Movement Your Mission



Daily live videos three times daily to encourage everyone to move more frequently throughout the day for muscles, mind and wellbeing.

Daily at 8am, 12pm and 4pm

If you are a member of Facebook, search for Make Movement Your Mission and request to join the group, then you can access the classes for free.

Siel Bleu Ireland

Life enhancing exercise programmes for Older Adults with the aim of improving overall wellbeing.

Facebook Live at 11am and YouTube at 2pm.

If you are a member of Facebook, search for Siel Bleu Ireland, like their page and you can view their classes daily through Facebook.

Mayo Sports Partnership

Mayo Sports Partnership (MSP) organise a range of classes and events across a variety of activities to keep you active regardless of age or ability during this time. If you are a member of Facebook search for Mayo Sports Partnership, like their page for more information and ideas on how to keep active. MSP and the National network of Local Sports Partnership have developed a number of booklets to help you stay active.

To get your hands on a free copy of Older Adults Home Exercise Plan, contact us on 094-9064632 or visit <https://www.mayo.ie/sports-partnership/active-age>

Remember!

- Start small and build your minutes, steps and distance slowly.
- Aim to have a mix of formal exercise, informal activity and exercise boosts throughout the day.
- If you feel unwell stop exercising, rest and consult your GP before you start again.
- Increasing your daily activity levels will help you to Keep Active, Keep Steady, Keep Strong.





STAY CONNECTED

People are creatures of habit, and routines offer a way to promote health and wellness through structure and organisation. Staying connected with friends and loved ones, as well as maintaining a routine can greatly improve your health.

The Benefits of a Routine



Feel in control

Having a routine creates structure in your life and allows you to feel in control. This helps reduce stress by knowing what to expect throughout the day.



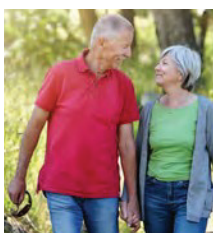
Sleep better

Maintaining a consistent sleep routine will help regulate the body's internal clock. This will allow you to get a much better sleep each night.



Keep your mind busy

Maintaining a healthy routine will keep your mind active and busy throughout the day. This can help promote healthy brain functioning and provide opportunities to exercise your brain.



Maintain function

Whether it's walking around in the garden or doing some chores inside, keeping your body moving can help keep your muscles strong and healthy.

Here's to taking the first step...

Taking the first step is not always easy. We have five tips to help you on your way to creating a healthy routine.

Plan and prepare



Setting small goals each day can help create a sense of fulfillment when they are achieved. Using a timetable or a diary can be helpful to jot down your plans for the day or week.



Seize the day

Having a regular morning routine can help prepare you for the day ahead. Have a healthy breakfast and attend to personal hygiene tasks.



Make it meaningful

Remember, this routine is all yours. Be creative and find new ways to do the things you love. Try to plan something each day that you can look forward to.



Find a balance

Although it is important to keep busy and exercise your body and mind, take time to unwind and relax every day. It's important to take time for yourself.



Stay connected to People

“Connecting with others give us a sense of inclusion, connection, interaction, safety and community.”

Social connections are the threads that bind together to create a community. Take the following steps to stay connected:

- Take the time to chat – we can get through this together
- Ask your neighbour how they're doing
- Let your neighbour have your contact details
- Keep in regular contact by telephone or video call

As an individual, you can also make positive changes to prevent you from feeling socially isolated or alone:

Pick up the Phone

Call your grandkids, family members or friends – or even an acquaintance you haven't spoken to in years. Your call might make their day as well as your own!

Try out Technology

If you have a friend or family member who can help you connect with technology, you can set up video calls with a group of friends, host a movie night together, or even join a club or class together.

Exercise at a safe distance

Ask a friend or family member for a "physically distanced" walk and chat and improve both your physical and emotional wellbeing.

Reach Out

If you feel do feel lonely, there are supports and services to which you can reach out for a chat, a regular call back, or to sign up for a befriending initiative in your local area.

Useful Resources to Stay Connected

- Samaritans telephone service is available 24 hours a day. Freephone 116 123
- Alone Befriending Service in Mayo: 098 - 24419 / 094 - 9371830 / 094 - 9021378
- Mayo County Council Covid Helpline: 094 - 9064660
- HSE Helpline: 1850 24 1850

Need some ideas?

Why not try to follow the Sample Routine below:



Morning

- 8am | Breakfast
- 9am | Personal care
- 10am | Read the newspaper
- 12pm | Ring a friend

Afternoon 1pm | Lunch

- 2pm | Short walk
- 3pm | Video call with grandchildren / family

Evening

- 5pm | Dinner
- 6pm | Household chores
- 7pm | Watch TV
- 9pm | Relax before bed



SWITCH OFF

Keeping your brain active is essential for brain health. Keep active by challenging yourself regularly, you can do this by:



Learning

Learning a new language - this stimulates different areas of your brain
Doing Puzzles, Crosswords and Quizzes - keeps your mind sharp
Doing crafts or cooking promotes memory, attention & hand-eye coordination
Connect with online courses or language classes from our library service:
www.librariesireland.ie/join-your-library or Telephone: 091 509094 / 509388



Switch off technology

Take time to switch off technology and find a way to relax and provide self-care – take a bath, go for a walk, read a book, write in a reflective journal, pick up a hobby – whatever it is, take some time out for you.



Get a good night's sleep

Sleep is essential for our brain health to remove toxins from the brain and to help us store our memories. When we sleep well, we are more alert and focused.

The perfect amount of sleep needed is different for everyone, but it is recommended that adults get 6-9 hours sleep.

Close the curtains! Sleeping in a dark room supports the body to produce melatonin, which is an important hormone to help us sleep.

Turn off the TV before bed. The blue light from screens can impact our Circadian rhythm and make it harder to fall asleep.



EAT WELL

“Eating healthily, combined with regular physical activity, can help a person live a full and active life, preserving independence into older age.”

Tips for good nutrition for older people to boost immunity



Eat Plenty of Fibre

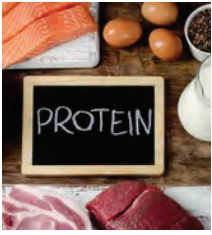
Eat lots of different sources of fibre including root vegetables, fruit, seeds, nuts, wholegrains and oats. It is even better to eat vegetables and fruits with the skins left on. Fibre promotes the growth of good gut bacteria, improves bowel health and therefore helps with immunity.

Aim to increase your fruit and vegetable intake by one more portion per day than what it currently is. The more variety and colour the better.



Stay Hydrated

Ensure you are having enough fluids throughout the day, this includes tea, coffee, water, juice, any other of your favourite drinks. It is important that your overall fluid intake is at least 1.5 litres or 8 glasses of fluid daily. Staying hydrated reduces the risks of confusion, falls, urinary tract infections, pressure sores and constipation.



Keep up your protein intake

Protein can help maintain strength in muscles such as our heart and lung muscle. As we grew older, we start to lose our muscle mass therefore it is important to include two portions of protein in our diet per day. Protein sources include, nuts, beans, eggs , meat and fish. Having these sources in our diet daily will help maintain muscle strength and decrease risk of falls.



Monitor your weight

Many people think that they do not need to eat as much as they get older because they are not as active. It is very important that older people do not start losing weight unintentionally. If you start losing a small amount of weight unintentionally you increase the risk of disease, deterioration in overall health and delay recovery from illness.

If you are experiencing weight loss or loss of appetite please consult with your GP.

A close-up photograph of two men smiling warmly. The man in the foreground is older, with grey hair, wearing a light blue polo shirt. The man behind him is younger, with dark hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt. They are outdoors with green foliage in the background.

MIND YOUR MOOD



Benefits of Minding your Mood

Human beings have the amazing ability to think about future events. 'Thinking ahead' means that we can anticipate obstacles or problems. This gives us the opportunity to plan solutions.



What should you do if you are having a bad day?

Our message to keep your daily routine, stay active, mind your mood, switch off & stay connected are all really great strategies to keep well during this difficult time.

However, there may be days when doing all of these things just isn't enough and they alone may not work for you. We will all experience those days, and that's ok! The important thing is that we recognise the need for self-care and self-compassion and developing your own techniques and strategies that work best for you on days like these.

If, however, you find that day after day these feelings are still overwhelming, interfering with your appetite, sleep, mood or energy, then maybe it's time to get some professional support and talk to your GP.

What types of self-care strategies may help?

For many people, what is familiar is often the most comforting and soothing at these times. Self-care comes in different forms, and what works for you may not work for your friend or neighbour.



For some, self-care will look like writing a diary, reading the local paper, watching the football match on TV, or getting outside in nature & breathing in the lovely fresh air. For all of these activities we need to be present. We may become more aware of the moment we are in, who is there, how we feel and the types of thoughts that we are experiencing.

Mindfulness and meditation techniques have been found to be really successful at building and maintaining our emotional resilience and coping skills, especially if we practice on a regular basis.

What is mindfulness practice?

Mindfulness is about being aware of ourselves now, in the present moment. Not dwelling on the past or fretting about the future, but bringing our attention and focus to the here and now.

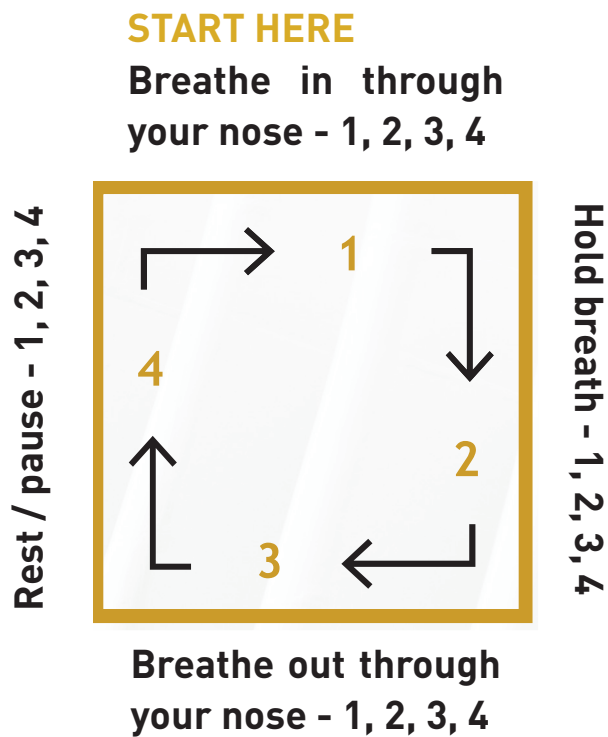
We can practice mindfulness for very short periods of time. Just two minutes of mindful practice can calm our brains, especially the part of our brain that feels stress, and it can activate the part of our brain that feels peace.

Follow this mindfulness exercise to get started:

1. Set your timer for 3, 5, 10 or 30 minutes.
2. Sit comfortably in a chair, feet flat on the floor.
3. Gently close your eyes or softly focus on a point in front of you.
4. Begin to notice your breathing, the movement of air moving through your nostrils.
5. If your mind wanders off and you find yourself thinking of other things, gently bring your attention back to your breath.

Repeat steps 1-4.

Do this as often as you want, but at least 4 times per go.





Mayo COVID-19 Community Call Helpline

Tel: **094 - 9046440**

Email: **covidsupport@mayococo.ie**

Our Helpline is here to link you in with our partners in the Community Call if you need:

- Collection & delivery of groceries, prescriptions or other essential household items
- Delivery of Meals
- Assistance with other medical or health needs

We know these are difficult and anxious times, so please also give us a call if you need:

- Someone to talk to or other social supports
- Access to our range of online library services
- Library Books/Services delivered to your home

Our Helpline is open 9am to 5pm every day.

Outside of these times our out of hour service will take your message for a call back.





Useful Contact Numbers

It is important to realise that we are here to help you through this time. If you have any concerns for your health please contact your GP or one of the numbers below.

HSE infoline - 1850 24 1850

Provides information about health services, entitlements and how to access HSE health and social services in your area.

SeniorLine – 1800 80 45 91 (Freephone)

SeniorLine is a national confidential listening service for older people provided by trained older volunteers. Callers can talk to one of the older volunteers and all calls are taken in the strictest of confidence.

ALONE - 0818 222 024

The helpline, which is running in collaboration with the Department of Health and the HSE, is available to all older people

Social Welfare Services, Department of Social Protection Email: state.con@welfare.ie (071) 915 7100 or 1890 500 000

The Department is available to provide advice and support on income/pension services.

Text “HELLO” to 50808 for a calming chat & support

This text line is a HSE funded service for those going through a mental health or emotional crisis.

Generation Tech Helpline Free Phone - 01 96 33 2 88 www.generationtech.ie

Generation Tech volunteers give free over-the-phone help to older adults with IT or Technical issues. Open Monday-Friday 8am - 8pm

www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople

Here you will find services for older adults in Ireland including home support and community services, benefits and financial entitlements and helpful safety and protection advice.

Emergency services Dial **112** or **999** www.hse.ie

This KEEP WELL campaign is brought to you with thanks to Healthy Ireland an initiative of the Government of Ireland with funding from the Healthy Ireland Fund and the Sláintecare fund delivered by Pobal'

Keep Well
Advice and Information
for Older Adults



SláinteCare.
Right Care. Right Place. Right Time.

