

Checklist



Session time:
45 minutes

You will need

● Training card 8

● Visual card 8



● Summary sheet 8



● Case study 8 

● Local information and services template 

● How active are you? worksheet





Session 8

Increasing your physical activity

The aim of the session is to understand:

- ✓ The impact of physical inactivity on the heart.
- ✓ Practical tips on how to get active.
- ✓ Things to remember when doing activities.

The information you need to get across is:

 10 minutes

What is the impact of physical inactivity on the heart?

In the UK, people who are not physically active are **more likely** to have a heart attack compared with those who do regular physical activity. People who do regular physical activity halve their risk of dying from cardiovascular disease compared with inactive people⁹.

In England, around seven in every ten adults don't do enough physical activity to achieve health benefits¹⁰.

The type of activity recommended for the heart is moderate, rhythmic (aerobic) exercise such as **brisk walking, cycling or swimming**. Walking is particularly good as you can often build it into your daily routine.

Are there any practical tips on how to get active?

Do at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a day on at least five days a week. 'Moderate-intensity activity' means that the activity should make you feel warm and breathe more heavily than normal, but you should still be able to talk. This amount of activity will help protect your heart and help to protect you against coronary heart disease. However, if you are not used to this amount of activity, it is important that you build up to this level over a period of time. You can do the 30 minutes all in one go, or in shorter bouts of at least 10 minutes.

Be active as often as possible. You can get the benefit of being more active from things you do every day – such as walking, doing vigorous housework, heavy digging in the garden or climbing stairs. Why not try getting off the bus one stop earlier, or climb the stairs rather than taking the lift or escalator? Any increase in activity will benefit your health. And everyone can benefit, whatever your level of mobility and fitness, or your age. It's never too late to start.

Avoid sitting for long periods. Break up these periods at least every 30 minutes. For example, if you're watching TV, get up and walk around during the adverts.

Make activity part of your social life. For example, when you go to your local cinema, walk there.

Do a variety of activities. For example, mixing up walking, swimming, gym sessions or tennis will help to keep it interesting.

What do you need to remember when you're doing physical activity?

- Gradually build up the amount of activity you do by starting slowly at a level that suits you, and then gradually build up the time you spend doing the activity and how often you do it.
- Each time you exercise, start slowly for the first few minutes and build up gradually. When you stop exercising, spend some time going more slowly and cooling down.
- Avoid doing activity after a large meal, or when it is very cold or very hot, or at high altitudes.
- Don't exercise if you feel unwell.
- Stop exercising if you feel tired, breathless, dizzy or sick, or if you have pain or feel unwell in any way, and contact your doctor for advice.
- If you have coronary heart disease or any condition for which you are taking prescribed medicine, get advice from your GP before you start exercising.
- Always check with your GP if you're not sure about how much or what sort of exercise you should be doing.

Pre-session preparation

1. Investigate local groups and services. Your local town hall, library, community centre and primary care trust may be able to advise you about exercise and activity programmes in your area. Print out the *Local information and services template* and fill it in [\(USB\)](#)
2. Visit bhf.org.uk to find out about our *Get active* events – your participants might be interested in taking part.
3. Print out *Summary sheet 8*, *Case Study 8* and *How active are you? worksheet* [\(USB\)](#)
4. You will also need the *Food cards*.

Activities

Key activity: Barriers to physical activity

(small groups/pairs)

 5 minutes

Ask the groups to discuss what barriers to physical activity they, their family or friends have experienced, as well as suggesting any solutions on how they could be or have been overcome. Ask the groups/pairs to feed back their suggestions and write them up on a flipchart.

Key activity: Worksheet – How active are you?

(individuals)

 10 minutes

Hand out copies of the *How active are you? worksheet*. Ask the group to complete the sheet by thinking about their activity over the last week. Their answers will indicate whether or not they are physically active enough.

Key activity: Case study – becoming more physically active

(small groups/pairs)

 20 minutes

Case study 8

Name: Shamika

Age: 35

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: African Caribbean

Waist measurement: 110 cm (about 43 inches)

Shamika is 35 years old and lives with her husband and two young children who are five and seven years old. She is overweight, with a waist measurement which is in the 'health is at high risk' category. She wants to increase the amount of physical activity she does to lose weight and reduce her risk of coronary heart disease, as her father died of a heart attack when he was only 52. Because of her weight, she finds exercising difficult and is apprehensive and unsure of how to start increasing her physical activity levels.



Hand out the case study to each small group/pair.

Ask them to focus on and write down how they could help and support Shamika to increase the amount of physical activity she does. Ask them to answer the following questions on the case study: **(10 minutes)**

1. What are Shamika's risk factors for coronary heart disease?

Shamika's known risk factors are:

- physical inactivity
- being overweight
- her family history.

Shamika may have unknown risk factors including:

- high blood pressure
- high blood cholesterol
- smoking
- diabetes.

2. Which of her known risk factors are modifiable, and which are non-modifiable?

Shamika's modifiable risk factors are:

- physical inactivity
- being overweight.

Shamika's non-modifiable risk factors are:

- her family history.

Ask them to discuss:

3. Whether they think Shamika is ready to make a lifestyle change?

- Shamika has obviously tried to do some physical activity but has found it difficult. As she would like more information on how to get started Shamika is ready to start making this lifestyle change.

4. What the potential barriers to Shamika increasing her physical activity levels are and how she could overcome them? (See background information section on page 43.)

Shamika's potential barriers are:

- As she is overweight, she finds exercising difficult.
- She might think of physical activity as sport or going to the gym, and may not realise that there are many other ways to become more active.
- She has young children and may have little time for herself.

Her potential solutions could be:

- Find out what is happening in her local area, eg, walking clubs or activities she could do with her family.
- See if any friends want to make similar changes. They could work together, which will ensure that she has some support and may help with her motivation.
- Set herself a realistic goal, plan how she will achieve it and, to make it real, write it down.
- Increase her motivation by making sure she rewards her achievements.

5. Whether increasing her physical activity levels impact on any other risk factors.

Increasing her physical activity levels:

- may help her to lose weight and improve her body shape
- will help to reduce her risk of Type 2 diabetes
- will help to reduce her risk of having high blood pressure.

6. Any suggestions they have about where she could go for advice and support.

- She could look at community notice boards in her local community centre, library and schools. They may have details of walking clubs etc.
- She could visit the *Walking the way to Health* website at www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk to find out about her local health walk schemes.

Ask each group to nominate a spokesperson and take it in turns for each group to feed back. Ask them to write their suggestions on a flipchart under suitable headings, such as potential barriers and solutions. **(10 minutes)**

At the end of the session

Hand out *Summary sheet 8* and the completed *Local Information and Services template* 

Background information

Although you now have all the basic information you need to deliver Session 8, here's some more detail which you might find useful.

What's stopping you being physically active?

As Shamika's case study shows, some people have many reasons for not being as active as others. Some are real reasons and some are excuses, but whatever the reason, you need to find a way of overcoming these barriers and make a start.

"I don't have the time."

Make physical activity your priority and plan to make time for some activity every day, even if it's just for 10 minutes at a time. Find a certain time each day to do some activity. For example, stretching whenever you're waiting for the kettle to boil or during a TV break, walking more briskly than usual, or always using the stairs instead of a lift or escalator.

"I'm too tired."

You may be surprised that, once you start being more active, you'll have more energy, and feel less tired and more relaxed. If you find that you're very tired, and unable to perform simple exercises, check with your GP that there's no underlying physical reason for this.

"I'm getting too old."

You're never too old to make a start and you will still feel the benefits, perhaps sooner than you think! Many clubs and groups are organised for people of all ages.

"I'm not old enough to worry about this yet."

We know that our bodies start to decline physically after the age of 30, and being inactive speeds up that decline. It's never too soon to start investing in your future.

"I have no-one to do it with."

Invite a friend, relative, neighbour or ask some work colleagues to go for a lunchtime walk with you. If you join a class or group you will meet new people and make new friends.

"My health isn't good enough."

Physical activity can help with most health conditions. Ask your doctor's advice on what sort of activity would help you.

“It’s too expensive.”

Walking is free and so are many other lifestyle activities, such as walking up and down the stairs several times a day or bending and stretching at home. Find out about local groups and opportunities as some offer discount rates for different age brackets.

“There’s nothing to do where I live.”

If that’s the case, be active around your home. And walk to and from local places whenever you can – for example, when you go to the shops, or to a friend’s house.

“I’m too embarrassed.”

You don’t have to go to a gym dressed in sportswear to get active. You could do some brisk walking wearing your normal clothes. You might find it easier if you start by doing some physical activity with a friend.

For more information

bhf.org.uk

BHF booklets:

Looking after your heart (aimed at South Asians, in English and five South Asian languages)

Get active, stay active (in English)

Put your heart into walking (in English)

Get kids on the go (in English)

Physical activity and your heart (in English)

To order these free resources, call the **BHF Orderline** on **0870 600 6566**.

Other organisations:

Active places

website: **www.activeplaces.com** a database of information on sports facilities in England.

www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk – visit the *Walking for Health* website to find your local health walk scheme (with limited information in some South Asian languages).