



Living Well

Issue 1 | Summer 2026



6

Walk this way –
the amazing benefits
of walking



26

Find your passion
– my journey with
Skull Drummery



Local voices, real stories and expert advice to
help you **live well** in East Sussex



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We have endeavoured to ensure that the information provided in this booklet is accurate and evidence based by working with local experts. However, scientific research is always making advances so details could be subject to change.

We have also attempted to provide non-digital options for contact details/finding out more information but sadly this has not always been possible.



Welcome from the editor

The aim of this new free booklet is to provide information on how we can live better whatever our age, health, personal or financial circumstances – to be the best you can be! It is a lively mix of expert advice and information, people’s stories, healthy recipes, walks, and ideas for new activities to try out. This edition mainly looks at our physical health but future editions will look at other issues that are important as we age.

Living longer

We live at a time when most of us will live longer than previous generations. This is due to medical advances but also because there is so much more information and evidence to support an ageing population.

For example, while the evidence for maintaining a healthy diet and doing some level of physical activity is now well known, there is now more research on the importance, for example, of having a good night’s sleep. Please do look at the article on sleep on page 12 where you might also be pleased to learn that naps are recommended.

Looking at bad habits

We also take the opportunity to look at the best ways to make healthy behaviours our go-to actions. See page 15 for behaviour change advice.

These are just a couple of examples of articles and advice in our first issue as we look to help you spend those extra later years in the best health possible.

What residents want

When we asked some residents what they would find helpful, many suggested that hints and tips would be useful, so you will find them distributed throughout the booklet. One hint that I intend to follow is to increase my intake of bananas, as not only are they a healthy and portable snack, but if eaten in the evening they may help to encourage a good night’s sleep.

You also told us that you wanted to increase your number of social connections and find new hobbies and activities. On page 24 we have included details of activities across the county which can be done for free or low cost, as we are very aware that poverty, loneliness, and stress all impact our health.

Rising demand for services is one reason why we have chosen to produce this booklet now, but it also fits with one of East Sussex County Council’s aims to help people to help themselves.

We passionately want to encourage you to live your best middle and later life!



Tell us what you think

We’d love to hear your thoughts on this issue of Living Well. Scan the QR code below to complete our 2-minute survey and help us improve future issues.

If you’d rather get in touch directly, email editor.wellbeing@eastsussex.gov.uk or phone 07783 847944 and leave a message.

Tried one of the ideas in this issue? Share your pictures with us!



The big interview

Dr Binodh Chathanath,
GP at Little Common Surgery
and Clinical Director, Bexhill
Primary Care Network

“A lot of people believe that getting older means getting ill, but ageing is not a disease. You don’t have to become ill as you become older, you can still remain healthy.”



LIVING WELL EDITOR (LWE): Welcome to Living Well Binodh. So, what sparked your interest in becoming a GP with an interest in ageing?

Dr BINODH CHATHANATH, GP at LITTLE COMMON SURGERY and CLINICAL DIRECTOR, BEXHILL PRIMARY CARE NETWORK (BC):

I became a GP in 2007, so I’ve been doing this for almost 20 years. I grew up in a huge family with everybody living together, so I was very close to older generations—not just my mum and dad, but their siblings and parents too. I saw first hand how people age, and how they are cared for as they do so.

LWE: How do people think about their health as they get older?

BC: A lot of people believe that getting older means getting ill, but ageing is not a disease. You don’t necessarily become ill as you become older, you can still remain healthy. So, ageing itself is not the problem—managing our ageing process and getting better at preventing things that can be prevented is the issue.

If you take the view that you’re going to become ill and weaker because you’re getting older, then you start to think, well I can’t do this or that anymore, and you put up barriers around yourself and start to become more sedentary. And the more time you spend sitting down, the more you risk your muscles losing strength, which then makes being physically active more difficult.

LWE: Sounds like a self-fulfilling prophecy that could be prevented. So, what kind of things do people come and see you with regarding their physical health as they get older?

BC: With our older patients, many of the issues we see people for are preventable.

Some of the main issues we see are around cardiovascular health (our heart health), frailty, and people with conditions like diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is on the rise among older people. We also see back pain, joint conditions, respiratory conditions, various cancers, cognitive decline and other issues.

LWE: What are the main things that stop these problems from starting, and from getting worse?

BC: Routine screening is key. It’s important we monitor people—check blood pressure, look for diabetes early, screen bone density, check hearing and vision. NHS Health checks from the age of 40 are really good. I understand why some people are reluctant to go for health checks—it can be scary to confront something we’re worried about—but it really is better to pick things up early and identify any problems.

And if you’re given a medication, it’s important that you take it as prescribed. It’s a big problem—about two-thirds of the people who are prescribed long-term medication are not taking it as directed, which can make health conditions harder to manage. If you’re concerned about your medication, don’t just stop it or lower it, double check with your healthcare professional.

The other main thing is the idea of a healthy lifestyle, which people are thinking about more. This means things like not smoking, cutting down alcohol, drinking enough water, eating healthily and with the right portion size, and exercising—being physically active and maintaining your strength.

LWE: How do we best look after ourselves?

BC: We should all be as physically active as possible, and it’s important to maintain your strength—our muscles help us stand up, walk around, lift things, they’re essential.

If you’re finding it harder to go up the stairs or up a slope, or if you find yourself feeling a little unsteady on your feet, this might be a subtle sign that you need to improve your strength and balance. Don’t assume it’s simply part of getting older. Small changes can often be improved if you act early.

There are many ways to do this, either by yourself or with other people. Strength and balance exercises, Tai Chi, things like that which can be done in a group. And if you don’t want to go to a group, you can do it at home. There are good videos available online.

Then look at your nutrition and your weight. Are you eating healthily? Are you getting enough protein in your diet? Do you need supplements? Vitamin D is important for your bone strength and supplements can help if you’re not getting enough sunshine especially in the winter months.

LWE: Where should people go to get good information about how to look after themselves?

BC: There are loads of resources out there. The British Heart Foundation gives really good information on heart health and health generally. The information has to come from a trusted source. The Stroke association, Alzheimer’s Society, health coaches, social prescribers, and community pharmacies are all good sources.

We’re seeing more problems around what people believe is good for their health. There’s huge exposure to social media, and unfortunately not all of it is accurate.

It’s important to check information against trusted sources and be mindful of what we’re reading and absorbing, and how that shapes our approach to health.

LWE: What’s your final message?

BC: Prevention is the best cure. Don’t be afraid to talk to a health professional. We’re here to help, even if you feel a bit embarrassed about asking questions. None of us have all the answers, but by talking, we can better understand each other and get the right support.

And a key thing is, I always tell people, strength is important. Stay strong physically, always. It will help your mental health as well.

LWE: Thanks Binodh

BC: Thanks Living Well.

Walk this way

We all know that walking is a cheap and enjoyable form of exercise, in company or on our own.

There are amazing benefits, which include:

Physical health benefits

- 1 Improves heart health**
Walking strengthens the heart, lowers blood pressure, and improves circulation, reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Helps maintain a healthy weight**
Walking burns calories and boosts metabolism, making it easier to manage weight.
- 3 Strengthens muscles and bones**
Walking engages leg muscles and helps maintain bone density, reducing the risk of osteoporosis.
- 4 Supports joint health**
Regular walking can help strengthen the immune system, making you less susceptible to illness.
- 5 Boosts immunity**
Regular walking can help strengthen the immune system, making you less susceptible to illness.

Mental and emotional benefits

- 6 Reduces stress and anxiety**
Walking, especially outdoors, promotes relaxation and lowers cortisol levels.
- 7 Improves mood**
Physical activity triggers endorphins, which can help combat depression and boost overall happiness.
- 8 Enhances brain function**
Walking increases blood flow to the brain, improving memory, focus, and creativity.

Lifestyle

- 9 Increases energy levels**
Walking improves oxygen flow and circulation, making you feel more energised throughout the day.
- 10 Promotes longevity**
Studies show that regular walking is linked to a longer life expectancy.

So why are we not walking more?

Sometimes the motivation to go for regular walks is missing, so here are some ideas:

- Arrange to meet a friend as you are less likely to cancel or miss something you have planned ahead. It is even better if you make it a regular event such as every Sunday at 2pm.
- If walking alone, listen to a podcast if you have a smartphone. Alternatively, enjoy the



sounds of nature such as the birds.

- Try out a walking group. We have details of various groups in the booklet.
- We have included some walks in the booklet, including walks that are accessible to people reliant on [CM2.1]wheelchairs or other mobility aids, and parents/grandparents with children in buggies.
- Look for some new routes to keep you excited. There are details of walks of various lengths across East Sussex that can be accessed online or via the library service www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisure-tourism/circular
- Other walk sites include:
walks.gojauntly.com/walking/gb/england/east-sussex and

southdowns.gov.uk/get-active/south-downs-walks/miles-without-stiles/

If you are new to walking in the countryside, remember most of our countryside is privately owned, and there is no general right of public access. Apart from open access areas, getting into the countryside is usually by the network of public rights of way, see below for details.

 **Footpath:**
open to walkers only

 **Bridleway:**
open to walkers, horse riders, and cyclists

 **Restricted byway:**
open to walkers, cyclists, horse riders and horse drawn vehicles

 **Byway open to all traffic:**
open to walkers, cyclists, horse riders, horse drawn vehicles and motor vehicles

 **Open access land:**
areas available to people to explore without having to stay on paths

Remember to close gates, keep dogs on leads where livestock are present, take litter home with you, and, if walking alone, let someone know where you are going.

Borrow My Doggy

A dog is a great motivator for a walk. It is usually a non-negotiable requirement that they need walking! However, owning a dog is expensive and may not be possible due to accommodation restrictions, lifestyle, allergies, etc. We spoke to residents about Borrow My Doggy, which seems to offer many benefits without the commitment and expense.

A Sunday routine that changed everything

One parent shared how borrowing Dan, a toy poodle, gave their family a reason to get outside every Sunday.

"Walking Dan has been great for my mental and physical health," they said. "It gives our Sundays (often a bit glum) a lovely routine and ensures we get out for a long walk. Dan gets so incredibly excited about his walk and the treats he knows are coming his way, that it really lifts our spirits. We look forward to it whatever the weather. It's the best of both worlds and I'd recommend it to anyone who wants the joy of a dog without the full-time responsibility."

Healing through walks

Another borrower described Ted, a spaniel-Labrador cross, as their "canine support worker." They looked into Borrow My Doggy as a way to bring a new dimension to walks, as they had been through some challenging times as a family and felt that the presence of an animal might help.

"We were very lucky to find a nearby family with a beautiful spaniel-Labrador cross called Ted, which they had posted on the site. Over a period of three years, we walked Ted regularly and whenever we wanted."

Ted helped them through grief and lockdown loneliness, making walks a source of comfort and resilience.

Friendship beyond the leash

Borrow My Doggy isn't just about exercise; it's about connection. One user borrowed a terrier named Wookie and ended up gaining a best friend in the dog's owner.

And if you are struggling to walk your own dog

"I have my own dog (a Jack Russell) and have fostered several dogs in the past. I needed someone to look after them for an afternoon once a week. I found a lovely husband and wife close by who had recently lost their beloved dog."

The bottom line

Borrow My Doggy is more than a pet-sharing service; it's a lifestyle boost. It helps you stay active, reduces stress, and brings joy into your life. If you've ever wished for the companionship of a dog without the full-time responsibility, this could be your perfect solution.

'We had the opportunity to gain more experience looking after dogs and enjoyed spending time with them.'

Tips for getting started

- Sign up on the Borrow My Doggy app or at borrowmydoggy.com and create a profile.
- If you are not online, it is also worth looking at small ads in shop windows, local newsletters or becoming a Good Neighbour volunteer, where local dog walking opportunities may be available.



1-2-3 walks

One, two and three mile nature walk maps

If you want to get into walking and are looking for nice and easy walk ideas that are a distance you can manage, our 123 website has over 100 maps for one, two and three mile routes around local parks, woods, nature reserves and rural footpaths.

Free maps

Home printer friendly, one page B&W

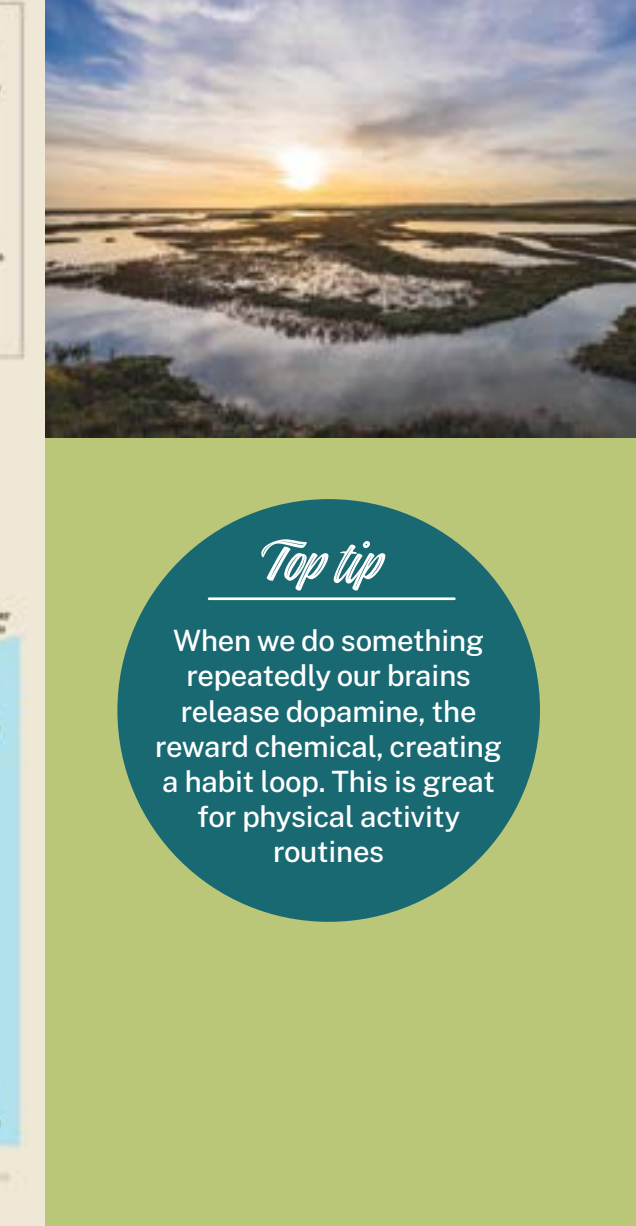
Or follow on Map My Walk app on your smartphone

Lots of photos, difficulty ratings, parking and terrain details



Website: 123walks.org

Rye Harbour nature reserve



Top tip

When we do something repeatedly our brains release dopamine, the reward chemical, creating a habit loop. This is great for physical activity routines

Towards the east of our county, and to the south of Rye Town, lies the 475-hectare of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, which was formed by wind and the sea. It is a marvellous place to visit, view wildlife and walk.

What will I find there?

There is the Sussex Wildlife Trust Discovery Centre with a café, shop, and information centre. There are toilets (including accessible toilets and baby changing facilities) and free parking in the Icklesham Parish Council village car park (donations welcome in the box at the car park) including accessible bays. The railway station is a 10-minute walk away and there is a regular bus service to Rye Harbour village.

Access for all

Accessibility features suitable for people with mobility issues and families with buggies include:

- parking
- café
- bird hides
- toilets
- walks

There are also two mobility scooters available for hire. They can be booked in advance:

Phone: 01797 360960

Email: RHDCoffice@sussexwt.org.uk

Wellbeing walks

They also run weekly wellbeing walks, but for independent walkers, please see some options below.

For further information, please contact:

Phone: 01797 360960

Email: rye.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk

Circular walks

On the map below, there are numbers 1 to 15. These correspond to white numbers you will find on posts, stone blocks, or waste bins as route markers for these walks.

Rye Harbour route numbers

1 – 4

This is a short circular route of 3.3km/2miles. It passes three birdwatching hides and is wheelchair and pushchair friendly with benches along the way. Some of the route has lightly uneven terrain, but it is entirely step-free.

Rye Harbour route numbers

1 – 2 – 5 – 7

This is a medium circular route of 6.9km/4.3 miles. It includes a look at the Mary Stanford Lifeboat House, from 7 return along the shingle track through Rye Harbour Farm.

Rye Harbour route numbers

1 – 2 – 5 – 15

This is a long circular route of 9.7km/6 miles. It includes a walk to Camber Castle, the birdwatching hide nearby, and the viewpoint.

Rye Harbour route numbers

1 – 2 – 6

to Winchelsea Beach car park

This route is entirely on tarmac roads and is 4.8km/3 miles (each way).

Please note the main pathway starting at Rye Harbour, passing the Mary Stanford Lifeboat House, and exiting the nature reserve near Winchelsea Beach is fully wheelchair accessible. In winter months, this route is frequented by heavy lorries moving shingle for the Environment Agency, though there are several passing places to allow the trucks to pass safely.

Sleep like a pro



Remember when you could fall asleep anywhere? After 40, those days can feel like a distant memory. But try not to worry too much, as this will only make things worse, and better sleep is still possible, though it may take some retraining on your part.

Why sleep gets tricky after 40

As we age, our sleep patterns can change. Your body spends less time in deep, restorative sleep and more time tossing and turning. Hormonal shifts, stress, and even late-night scrolling can mess with your sleep. But here's the good news, small changes can make a big difference.

Embrace the power of routine

Your body loves predictability, and if you have children, this is probably something you aimed to achieve with little ones from babyhood onwards. The same training is good for adults. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day – even on weekends. Yes, that means resisting the temptation to binge-watch until 2am. Your future self will thank you.

Daytime naps

The good news is that daytime naps can improve alertness, memory, mood, and performance by boosting brain health, reducing stress, and enhancing focus. Keep them short (20-30 mins) in the early afternoon to avoid grogginess and nighttime sleep interference. It is best to set an alarm to ensure you do not over-sleep.

Cool it down

Your bedroom should be cool, dark, and quiet. Aim for around 65°F (18°C). Though there is some evidence from Swiss researchers that cold feet can disturb sleep, so maybe wear some socks in the winter months.

Cut the caffeine

Caffeine can linger in your system for up to eight hours, so switch to decaffeinated drinks, including herbal teas, after lunch. Also, whilst we all need to keep hydrated, it is a good idea to restrict the

number and size of drinks in the evening if you do not want to wake up to make a bathroom stop.

Move your body – but not right before bed

Exercise is fantastic for sleep, but timing matters. A brisk walk or yoga during the day works wonders. Just avoid intense workouts late at night, as that is not part of a gentle wind down, and sleep will be harder to achieve.

Turn off the tech

No screens an hour before bed is a good rule to follow. Read a book, listen to calming music or carry out other quieter activities. Though the exception are sleep apps that people use to help them fall asleep. Listening to stories and audiobooks, if not too stimulating, can also help you to get to sleep.

Mind your mind

Stress is the ultimate sleep thief. Simple practices like deep breathing, meditation, or relaxing all your joints one by one can quieten the mind. If all else fails, picture yourself on a beach or somewhere else in nature.

Get back out of bed?

Some people suggest that if you do not fall asleep, within 15 minutes, you should get out of bed and go to do something else until you feel ready to go back to bed. This, however, might be difficult if the house is cold or if you are likely to disturb other householders.

Bottom line

Sleep after 40 doesn't have to be a battle. We're advised to get between seven and nine hours of continuous sleep, but sleep is more complicated than getting the 'right' amount. There is also some evidence that people are less likely to have falls if they are sleeping well.

Top tip

Eat the rainbow! By eating fruits and vegetables of different colours, you are likely to achieve a good range of vitamins and minerals

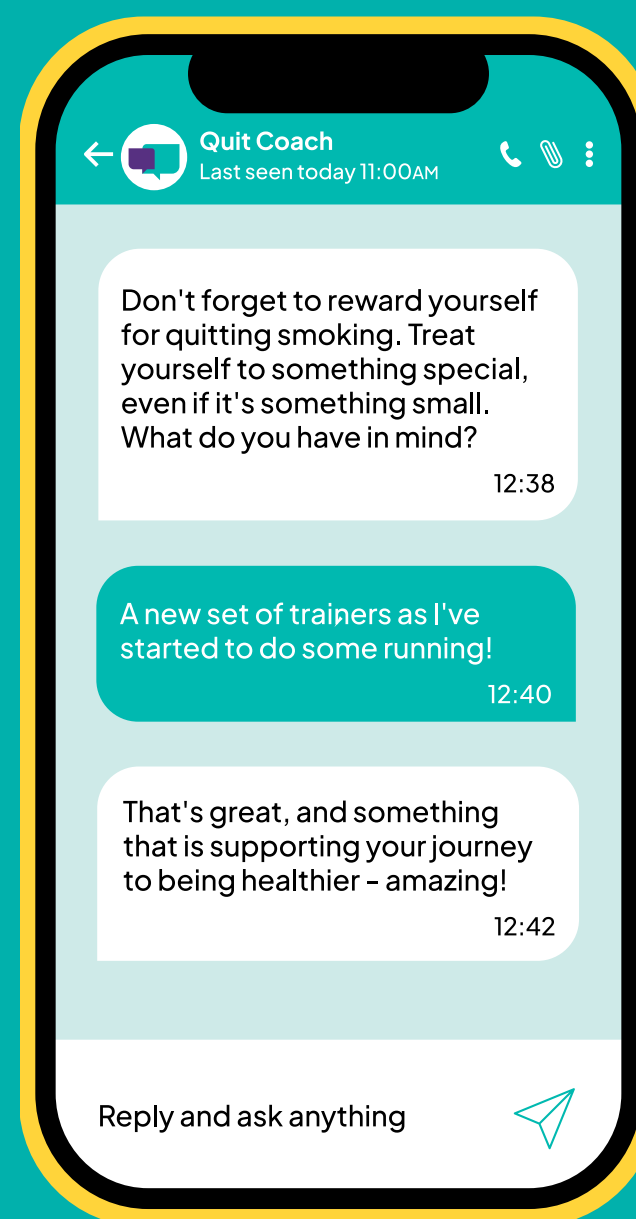


ONE YOU
EAST SUSSEX

Your AI Quit Coach is Here to Help

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Night or Day, 365 Days a Year



Set Your Quit Date

Choose the day you want to quit, and your Quit Coach will send you personalised, encouraging messages to keep you motivated every step of the way.

oneyoueastsussex.quitcoach.co.uk



Menopause matters

“I thought I was losing my mind. At first, it wasn’t the hot flushes – it was forgetting words and crying at adverts! Once I finally talked to my GP and a few friends, I realised I wasn’t alone. Now I walk every day, take Vitamin D and use HRT. I feel more like myself again – but a wiser version.” Marie, 56

Menopause is a part of getting older but, like other changes, it can feel overwhelming.

It usually begins between ages 45 and 55, though it can occur earlier or later. About 5 to 10% of women experience menopause before 45 years old. This is called early menopause. Certain health conditions, medication, and hormonal gender reassignment can also trigger menopause.

Menopause means your ovaries slow down and you have not had a period for 12 months in a row. The time before menopause, called perimenopause, can feel much more eventful. It can affect a person’s life, relationships, and even work. Everyone experiences body and hormonal changes in their own way, and race, culture, and ethnicity play a big role in that. These factors also affect how people look for help with their health.

- Common symptoms include
- hot flushes
 - night sweats
 - mood changes
 - anxiety
 - difficulty sleeping
 - lack of concentration and focus
 - joint aches
 - skin changes

These symptoms do not affect everyone. For some people, changes can be surprisingly subtle. Lower hormone levels responsible for menopause can also impact bone strength, heart health, and mental wellbeing.

What can help

Knowledge and understanding
Increasing awareness of early menopause, perimenopause, and menopause can help people understand and manage this phase of life.

During perimenopause, periods can come and go or stop for a while. But the body can still release eggs, meaning it is possible to get pregnant therefore contraception and sexual health need to be considered.

- Lifestyle changes
- Here are some simple lifestyle changes that can help to manage symptoms:
- regular movement and exercise
 - relaxation techniques
 - improve sleep routines
 - reduced alcohol intake
 - balanced diet

Support
Talking to a healthcare professional can help you find the best treatment options. It’s important to raise any worries or concerns as soon as you can.

Keeping track of your symptoms in a diary or an app can help you get the right care. Treatments might include medicine like Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) to help with symptoms and keep your heart and bones healthy. Testosterone therapy is another option that can help with symptoms and support libido. Other options, including vitamins and supplements, which may help with your symptoms.

If menopause symptoms are impacting your work, do explore any support that may be available in the workplace.

Connection
Sharing your feelings with friends, family, colleagues, or support groups can help you feel supported and understand what’s happening. But be careful on social media! There is a lot of confusing advice online about menopause, so look for evidence-based information.

The psychology of change: why physical wellbeing starts in the mind



When we talk about getting healthier, most of us jump straight to things like willpower and motivation (or the lack of it!). But the truth is, for most of us, lasting change doesn’t come from forcing ourselves into tough routines, it starts much earlier, in the mind.

Habits: the small things that make a big difference
Think about habits for a moment. Almost half of what we do each day is automatic – little routines we repeat without thinking. For example, that first cup of tea or coffee in the morning.

That’s good news! It means improving our physical wellbeing doesn’t have to involve huge, dramatic life overhauls. Instead, it’s the small, consistent tweaks that make the biggest difference. When we design habits that work with us, not against us, change feels a whole lot easier.

Understanding the COM B model
One helpful way to understand this is through the COM B model, which says new positive behaviours happen when capability, opportunity and motivation all line up.

Want to be more active? It’s not just about wanting it.

You need the:

- capability – both physical and mental
- opportunity -like time, space, or support
- motivation-both the emotional ‘I feel like it today’ kind and the thoughtful ‘this is good for me’ kind

If one of those pieces is missing, things tend to go wrong. But when they line up, behaviour (the ‘B’) change feels much more natural.

Habit stacking: a simple strategy that works
Another simple trick is something called habit stacking. It’s exactly what it sounds like – adding a new habit onto something you already do. Let’s say you already brush your teeth every morning. Adding a quick five minute stretch right after gives your new habit a built in cue. Over time, these tiny additions add up to meaningful improvements in how we feel physically.

Emotion and mindset matter
Emotions play a big role too. Many of us carry stress, guilt, or old frustrations around exercise or healthy eating, which make starting (or restarting) feel more difficult than it should. Remember to celebrate even small wins, like drinking more water or taking a brisk walk, as they are all important steps.

The power of social influence
And we can’t forget one of the biggest influences of all: other people. Joining a walking group, checking in with a friend, or surrounding yourself with people who also care about their wellbeing can make sticking with new habits so much easier. Change doesn’t have to be a solo project.

Progress over perfection
In the end, behaviour change isn’t about being perfect. It’s about noticing our patterns and gently steering them in a direction that supports us. With a bit of understanding and a few small steps, we can build healthier routines that last – not overnight, but one habit at a time.

One You for a better you!

Do you want to take steps to stop smoking, lose weight, drink less, and move more with a **FREE** health and wellbeing service? Then One You East Sussex could be the way to get back to a healthier you. Here we look at just one part of the service.

Weightier issues

One You East Sussex offers free weight control classes that run across the county. You'll learn about nutrition and a range of other topics that can help you reach and maintain a healthy weight. Plus some courses also include a free gym and/or swim pass.

The goal of the course is to help participants lose 5% of their bodyweight over a 12-week period! To qualify, residents of East Sussex need to have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or above, or 27 or above for those from some minority ethnic backgrounds. BMI is a tool that measures weight in relation to height.

Courses can be in-person or online.

Linda's story

We moved to St Leonards six and a half years ago. I began to feel that we had made a huge mistake, as we didn't know the area or anyone who lived here. In my honest opinion, I had never felt so lonely, depressed, and unfit in my entire life. I went to see my GP, who immediately advised me to try to lose some weight and exercise! She gave me a One You East Sussex leaflet, and I contacted them and enrolled.

The course was absolutely free. The only thing I had to lose was weight!! I was doing really well and lost weight consistently every week. I made a big effort to walk daily, increasing my steps gradually until I was actually achieving 10,000 steps and enjoying exercise. This is a sentence I never thought I would say!

I made some lovely friends on the course; my life started to get so much better. 'One You' made me have a completely different attitude to food, which I've continued to embrace. The course ended, but I still had a lot of weight to lose. I was determined to carry on, but I needed something to bridge the gap now that my 'One You' sessions had ended. I found and turned to Active Hastings.

Thank you to 'One You' and 'Active Hastings'. I managed to lose 7 stone and feel fitter now, than I have for years.

<https://oneyoueastsussex.org.uk/programmes/health-wellbeing-coaching>

"One You East Sussex offers free weight control classes that run across the county. You'll learn about nutrition and a range of other topics that can help you reach and maintain a healthy weight."



EAST SUSSEX, READY FOR A NEW YOU?

ONE YOU EAST SUSSEX

Funded by East Sussex County Council

Falling over or having a fall?

We have all fallen over many times, especially in childhood, but as we age, the fall magically changes to 'having a fall' which can be more serious.

It is a big cause of hospital admissions and can lead to injuries and long-term complications. It can also lead to a lack of confidence and loss of independence.

Falls are not an inevitable part of ageing. Here are some tips for reducing your risk

- A few regular exercises can help improve balance and muscle strength
- Fall-proofing your home needn't be costly. For example, keep some lights on at night, replace old slippers, clear clutter, and tape down rugs and remove worn carpets
- Practise how you will get off the floor if you fall



Flying High with Seaford Cycling Without Age: from cabin crew attendant to pilot

While employed by British Airways in the engineering department at Gatwick, I had the opportunity, aged 63, to train as cabin crew. I passed all the rigorous safety exams and spent the last two years of my working life flying to America, Canada, Hong Kong, and the Caribbean. On retirement, I moved with my wife to Seaford, where we have been involved with various local organisations.

Last year, I became aware of Seaford Cycling Without Age (CWA) and applied to become a 'pilot' – the term for volunteer trishaw cycle riders. Following a DBS check, we are shown how to operate and ride the battery assisted trishaws, mainly along the seafront from Splash Point to Newhaven. Many of our passengers might not otherwise get out of doors to enjoy sea views and breezes, plus our company, with perhaps a cuppa along the way. We can choose when and how often we want to 'pilot'.

Since starting in May 2025, I have been volunteering with other pilots on Thursday afternoons to provide outings along the seafront. We are currently taking out residents from seven care homes in Seaford. Volunteers also support Seaford town activities including open days at Seaford Head School, Bonfire Society events, Remembrance Sunday, and Christmas Magic. During care home summer fairs, we can take a passenger who uses a wheelchair in one trishaw and 2 relatives or friends in another.

We also take individual bookings for a fun ride along the seafront or around our town; if a pilot is available and the weather is favourable, we are always happy to oblige. For my first solo outing, I collected 2 ladies from their home, brought them down to the seafront, and took them from Buckle

car park to Splash Point and back. We stopped for ice creams, and my two ladies enjoyed it so much that they said people like us should get an MBE – what a tremendous compliment.

We don't charge for outings, but donations are always gratefully received. Mr Cycles in Broad Street helps service the 3 trishaws, while a skilled volunteer carries out minor repairs to keep them on the road. We are very grateful to all who bought raffle tickets for our Christmas draw.

In my 80th year, I really enjoy this activity, which also helps keep me fit. If you would like to join us or just book an outing, phone: 07596734170.



Image – Community Action East Sussex

Find local volunteering opportunities with Tribe

Browse opportunities that suit your
availability, location and interests

tribeproject.org/volunteering



If you'd like more information on finding volunteering opportunities you can contact our partners working in your local community.

In Rother contact Rother Voluntary Action: 01424 217259.

In Hastings contact Hastings Voluntary Action: 01424 444010.

In Eastbourne and Wealden contact Community Action: 0300 1246810.

In Lewes District contact Sussex Community Development Association: 01273 517250.

Search Now



Do you have a problem that affects your bones, joints and muscles?

Top tip

Losing excess weight can help lower blood pressure, as your heart doesn't have to work so hard to pump blood around your body

Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions affect the bone, joints, and muscles. East Sussex MSK Community Partnership (ESMSK) is your local NHS service for people living with MSK conditions. We also support people managing long-term pain or rheumatology conditions.

Did you know?

MSK conditions affect around one in three people in the UK. They're one of the most common reasons for visiting a GP. Symptoms can include:

- pain
- stiffness
- swelling
- tiredness

All these symptoms can make daily tasks harder and affect your independence.

What we do

Our team includes physiotherapists, specialist clinicians, and support staff. They work together to make sure you get the right care when you need it. We look after patients aged 16 and over who are registered with a GP in East Sussex.

On our website, you can find information about common muscle and joint problems, plus exercises that help keep your joints moving and your muscles strong. You can also find links to local support, fun activities, and services that can help you stay active and independent.

How to access our service

If you think you may need MSK support, you can be referred by your GP. You can also self-refer directly for physiotherapy; there's no need to see a GP first.

<https://eastsussexmsk.nhs.uk/gethelp/>

Or, to learn more, visit
<https://eastsussexmsk.nhs.uk>

Helpful hints to keep you moving well

Stay active

Don't be afraid of movement. Gentle activity keeps joints healthy and muscles strong. Find something you enjoy!

There are local groups for almost everything, from bowls and swimming to walking, gardening, or gentle exercise classes. Visit your local leisure centre or look at our events listing at the back of this booklet.

Try to sit less often

Did you know that sitting for 8[CM5.1] hours or more a day can carry similar health risks to smoking or obesity?

Stand up regularly, stretch, or take short walks when you can. Every bit of movement counts.

Use warmth or cold

A hot water bottle or heat pack can ease stiffness. While an ice pack can help reduce pain or swelling after activity.

Keep your joints flexible

Stretching and strengthening exercises can help keep you flexible. You'll find easy-to-follow guides on our website to help you.



**East Sussex MSK
Community Partnership**

Physiotherapy Self-Referral

Do you have a problem that affects your bones, joints or muscles?

If you are registered with a local GP you can refer yourself online to see an NHS physiotherapist.

Scan the QR code, or go to:
eastsussexmsk.nhs.uk/gethelp





The Forest Way

The Forest Way runs from East Grinstead to Groombridge along an old railway line and passes through or close to:

- East Grinstead
- Forest Row
- Hartfield
- Withyham
- Groombridge

There are also circular trails, varying in length and difficulty, leading from the main route.

The Park lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so it has a lot to offer walkers and cyclists.

Accessibility

The surfaced track is easily accessed by all users, including people with disabilities, with seats and picnic benches along the entire route. There are toilet facilities at Forest Row and pubs and cafes in the villages such as, Groombridge, Hartfield, and Forest Row. Please be aware that it is a shared route with cyclists and horse riders.

Getting there

Trains to East Grinstead or Eridge stations. Buses serve Forest Row, Hartfield, Withyham, and Groombridge.

Please see eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public for information on bus services.

Parking available at:

- Forest Row
- Hartfield
- Groombridge

Top tip

Don't forget to have regular eye tests, as they can often detect the early signs of many eye and general health conditions before you become aware of any symptoms





Find your passion

Being active is important for keeping our minds and bodies healthy, but it can be hard to stay motivated. One of the best ways to keep going is to choose activities you enjoy, so being active becomes a positive and natural part of your week.

You might need to try a few different activities before you find one you really enjoy. So don't give up if the first one isn't quite right for you.

Enjoyment

When exercise feels fun or important to us, it stops feeling like a chore. It becomes something we genuinely enjoy. Trying something new can bring joy and help you meet new people.

Positive impact on mood and confidence

When we enjoy an activity, it can leave us feeling full of energy and uplifted. This makes us want to keep doing it. Over time, having activity as part of our routine can help us feel better emotionally and can build confidence as we get better at it.

Opportunities for connection

Physical activity often brings people together in groups. This could be in more structured clubs or simple meet-ups with others who enjoy the same activities. When people share an interest or enjoy the same activity, it's easier to start conversations and get to know each other.

For example, you might ask someone:

- Did you see the game last night?
- Where did you get your racquet?
- How long have you been playing?

Resilience through enjoyment

We often talk about the need to be resilient, which can mean not giving up when things get hard. Sometimes life, illness, or injury can interrupt our routines. But when we really enjoy an activity, we are more likely to go back to it or find a new way to do it during tough times. The enjoyment we get from the activity can help us keep going.

Our future self

As interests and abilities change, enjoyable activities can evolve with them. When moving your body feels good, you want to keep doing it instead of stopping after a short time.

We have some amazing case stories on the next few pages to inspire you.

Top tip

Alcohol contains more calories than many people realise – often similar to fast-food portions, even before mixers and added sugars

Community yoga

Approximately 12 women, mainly aged 50–75, from ethnically diverse backgrounds, many with caring roles or chronic conditions, participated in weekly yoga sessions in Eastbourne last year.

Twenty-four weekly one-hour yoga sessions focused on: gentle strength training, balance and stability, breathwork and relaxation, and progressive routines suitable for varying levels. Ruth, in her sixties and a full-time carer, joined the Stronger for Life yoga sessions earlier this year.

Me time

For Ruth, the classes offered something she rarely experiences: one uninterrupted hour focused entirely on her own wellbeing.

When she first started, she struggled to keep up as she was a beginner. But with encouragement from the instructor, her confidence grew. She went from being unable to hold a balance pose to maintaining it for 100 counts, a personal milestone she celebrated with pride.

"Because I'm feeling better, it rolls into my personal life. It makes me feel stronger and fitter."

Healthy ageing

Ruth believes staying active is essential as we age, especially for maintaining balance and preventing falls. Although she suggested a gentler start for beginners, she described the programme as "fantastic" and felt the support helped her achieve far more than she expected.

Diversity Resource International (DRI) who facilitated the yoga sessions will be organising two new walking groups in 2026.



"It gives me that one hour to be all about me... I can improve my health and mix with different cultures."



Aches and pains?

Simple, gentle exercise can really help

Improving strength and balance to help you age well



We all know we should be a little bit more active, but are you worried about doing too much?

With our guidance, you can enjoy all the benefits of activities which are just right for you.



For details on our various activities visit: activehastings.org.uk/strongerforlife or call the Active Hastings team on 01424 451051

#GettingHastingsMoving   



Drumming



Top tip

Aim to eat two portions of unprocessed, preferably oily, fish per week

My journey with Skull Drummery

I joined Skull Drummery in March 2025 after seeing a Facebook post inviting anyone interested to come along to a coffee, cake, and drumming evening. Skull Drummery is a bonfire drumming group based in Lewes, and having watched them march during Bonfire, I had always fancied giving it a try. The open evening finally encouraged me to take the plunge.

One of the best things was that a group of us signed up at the same time, so I never felt like the only one who didn't know what I was doing. We learned together, compared notes on where to buy equipment and costume, and supported each other through those early rehearsals.

The band has three types of drummers – Tom, Snare, and Bass. New members begin on the Tom drums, as they play the main tune. The group is very welcoming, with members from Lewes and beyond, representing a wide mix of ages, backgrounds, and experience levels. You don't need any musical experience to join, although some members have played drums or other instruments before.

“The energy is incredible, and seeing the reaction of the crowds – so much positive feedback and enthusiasm – makes it even better.”

During the bonfire season, the band is invited to take part in various processions. You are encouraged to attend as many as you can, but there's no expectation to be at every single one. I hadn't been to many different bonfires before joining, and I've loved discovering how each has its own unique atmosphere. Marching on 5th November in Lewes has definitely been my favourite so far, with Newick Bonfire coming a close second. Drumming at bonfire events really makes you feel part of the community, celebrating a tradition that goes back centuries and is unique to Sussex.

Outside the bonfire season, we also perform at summer events such as running races and local fun days. I'm looking forward to drumming at a Wassail and at the anniversary of Guy Fawkes' execution in January.

Why do I love it?

There is something almost pagan and deeply powerful about drumming in a group. The energy is incredible, and seeing the reaction of the crowds – so much positive feedback and enthusiasm – makes it even better. I also love the dressing up and the creativity members bring to customising their outfits. I don't normally enjoy autumn, with the shorter days and less daylight, but being part of Bonfire has genuinely made me embrace the season. And of course, there's the social side: rehearsals and events are always full of friendly faces if you want to get involved.

If you are interested in finding out more, we rehearse on Tuesdays at the Scout Hut in Ham Lane, Lewes, 6:30-8:30 pm. skulldrummerymembership@gmail.com. You can also find us on Facebook (SkullDrummery) and Instagram (@skulldrummery).





Bowls

Top tip

Losing excess weight can help lower blood pressure as your heart doesn't have to work so hard to pump blood around your body



My husband and I decided to try a new hobby that we could do together. We joined an indoor bowls club and we both loved it and have made many new friends while keeping fit. The club is welcoming to all ages and abilities, with some wonderful social events, and we were able to give it a try before committing to a membership.

Bowls can be played in friendly competition with people you meet at the club. For those who are more competitive, they may be able to progress into County or National competitions.

Being part of a bowls club has been fantastic for me and my husband. Other members have also found the club's welcoming and friendly atmosphere beneficial for their wellbeing. We feel like one big family, looking out for each other.

We had a new member join us at the beginning of our bowls season in spring 2025. One of our

members approached her while she was walking her dog near the club, as she seemed interested in the game. After talking with her, she explained that her husband had recently died and that she has some health problems that make certain things hard to do. She wanted to get fitter, meet new people, and make more friends. So, she decided to give our taster a try.

During the season, she enjoyed the sessions so much that she encouraged her friends to try bowling too. By the end of the season, she had joined the club, came to our social events, and felt happy being part of the club.

Since she started bowling, she has become more confident and learned new skills. But even more importantly, she has made a group of friends. She has even become confident enough to enter friendly competitions, both at home and away.



Community orchard

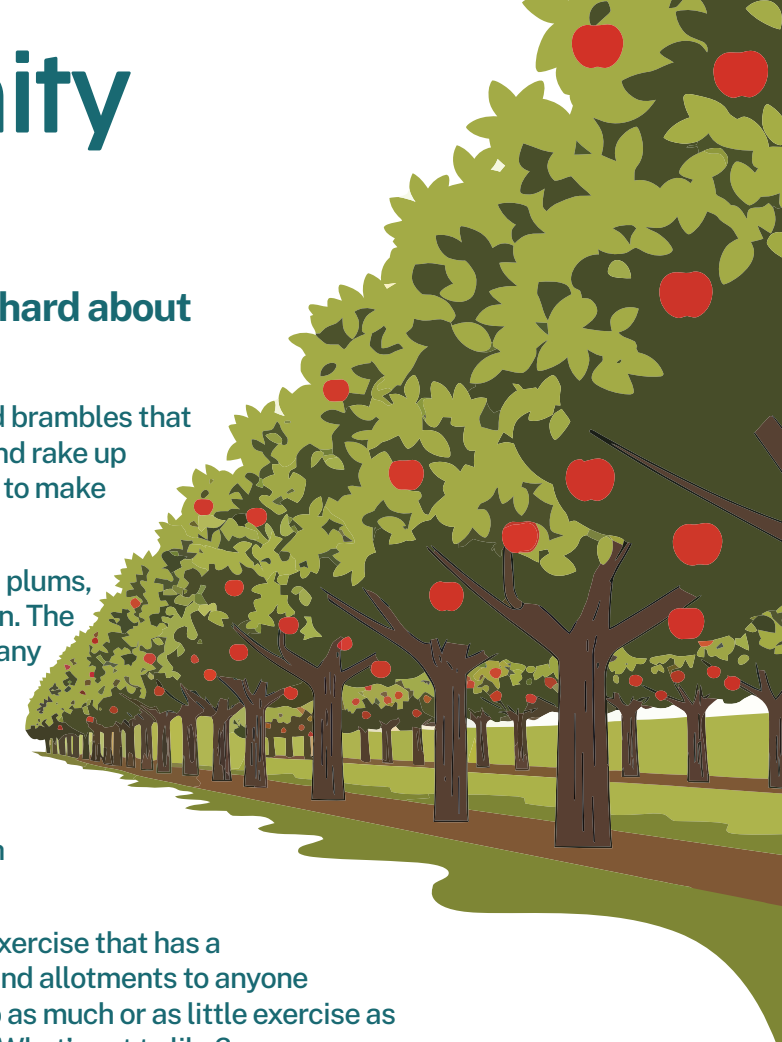
I became a volunteer at a community orchard about 10 years ago.

We all help to look after the orchard. We trim bushes and brambles that have grown too big, clear grass from around the trees, and rake up the cuttings. We prune too, and we use the cut branches to make living hedges.

Eventually, the fruit starts to grow, and we begin picking plums, pears, apples, and quince. This continues into the autumn. The orchard has grown a lot over the years, and now it has many different types of heritage apples, pears, and plums.

The orchard is made for everyone to share. We are all eager to try the delicious fruit and think about the desserts, jellies, chutneys, and juices we'll make. But for me, the best part has been feeling connected to each other and to nature.

Helping in the orchard also means I get outside and do exercise that has a real purpose. I would recommend community orchards and allotments to anyone who doesn't like gyms or sports. You can get fresh air, do as much or as little exercise as you like, make new friends, and get free fruit at the end! What's not to like?



SHIFT

Sexual health for the over 45s

Shifting perceptions and helping people to have happy, healthy sex lives.

SHIFT - sexual health for the over 45s

We believe that everyone can have healthy and happy sex and relationships, no matter how old you are. Though our bodies change as we age, life does not stop at 45, 65, or even 85, and neither should your ability to have good sex.



To speak confidently to your sexual health clinic, call 0300 013 2050 or visit: shift-sexual-health.eu



Today I volunteered at parkrun!

For those that have not heard about the phenomenon that is parkrun, it started 21 years ago in Bushy Park in London and has grown to a national, and even international, 5 K run, jog, or walk that takes place at 9am on Saturday mornings. Although, it is called parkrun, events do not always take place in parks but also on promenades, woods, and even a number of prisons!

My running story

I have been running parkruns since my 50s, when I thought I would just test myself to see if I could do it knowing that if it got too tough, I could just stop or walk away at any point. Nobody is going to make you finish the course!

I do not have a body that screams runner, although I do like walking, so it was not an easy first step for me. But years later, I am still turning up regularly to run 5K.

Volunteering

parkruns are dependent on volunteers to make events happen, so I took my turn at volunteering last Saturday. I turned up at 8.30 am to get my high vis jacket and walkie talkie, as I was to be the tail walker.

I usually turn up just before the run starts, so arriving early was a great opportunity to talk to other volunteers and find out about their motivation for being there. Amongst others, I met a young woman with her baby who comes from my home town, so we had lots to talk about.



Top tip

To maintain hydration, try drinking a glass of water with every meal. As we age we cannot always rely on feeling thirsty to recognise that we need fluids



Parkrun Locations:
Malling (Lewes),
Seaford Beach,
Eastbourne,
Hastings and
Uckfield

And we're off!

At 9am, the event started, and I took up my position at the back of the 500-plus group. I would be the person that helped if anyone was experiencing difficulties, and it also means that anyone who was participating in the event was guaranteed not to come in last!

The participants were varied and of all ages and abilities including some very good runners, joggers, walkers, a blind runner with guide runner, and people with dogs or pushing buggies. I was just behind the parkwalkers who are there to encourage people to just walk the course. A 5K walk is a great way to improve fitness too.

An opportunity to talk

I found myself walking with a woman who was a first-timer and although she didn't complete the whole 5K, she spoke about her determination to improve her physical health by walking parkruns. She had been a carer for her dad until his recent death, so she recognised that now was the time to become more physically active and to get out and about to meet people. We had a great chat, and I think that was helped by the fact that our conversation was side by side rather than face to face which often allows us to speak more openly.

Thank you

As I walked the 5K, I was often thanked by participants with a cheery 'thank you, marshal' or 'thank you, tail walker' as they ran past me. I found it interesting that those shout-outs really improved my day and my own wellbeing. I suppose we all like to be appreciated.

Coffee time

When I crossed the finishing line, I handed back my high vis jacket and walkie-talkie and then went to the park café to enjoy a well-earned drink and to sit in the sunshine. At the café, I bumped into a friend from long ago, and we have agreed to meet up for a drink. If I hadn't been at parkrun, that might not have happened, thus emphasising the need to get out there.

Over to you

So why not find out about your local parkrun? You could volunteer, participate, or do both over the next few weeks or months! There are plenty of different volunteering opportunities to suit you, and if you are someone who likes children, there are Sunday morning 2K runs for 4-14-year-olds at some locations, where you can also volunteer. The tail walker for those events sometimes gets to wear ears and a tail, which make me want to volunteer for that too!

From nothing to something: why small steps bring the biggest health benefits



When it comes to physical activity, many people imagine long gym sessions, intense workouts, or running miles at a time. But for adults aged 40 to 90, the most powerful benefits often come from something much simpler: moving from doing nothing to doing something.

Small increases in activity can have a remarkable impact on your health, confidence, and overall wellbeing. In fact, NHS guidelines emphasise that every minute of movement counts, and you don't need to be highly active to experience meaningful improvements.

Why small steps matter most

If you've been inactive for months or years, your body responds quickly and dramatically to gentle movement. The first gains tend to be the biggest. A short daily walk, light stretching, or chair-based mobility can improve circulation, help manage weight, reduce breathlessness, and boost mood. Moving a little reduces stiffness, supports joint health, and strengthens muscles that help you stay independent.

For people with long-term conditions, such as heart or lung issues, small increases in activity can reduce the risk of hospital admissions and enhance quality of life.

Activities with gentle movement have had a profound impact on residents' health, including a bowls session in Eastbourne for people with lung conditions: *"People come here who haven't been out of their home in two years, and it's giving us all a reason to get out and become part of a bigger community. I am stronger because I am using muscles that otherwise I wouldn't. I feel more relaxed and energetic, and I can see the difference in everyone here."*

NHS-recommended activities you can start today

The NHS encourages a mix of strength, balance, and cardiovascular activity, all of which can be done safely at home or in your local community:

1. Walking (5–10 minutes):



Improves heart health and can gradually increase stamina. Start small, use a mobility aid if needed, and build up slowly.

2. Strength exercises (2–3 times per week):



Help protect bones and maintain independence. Examples include:

- Sit-to-stand: from a sturdy chair, stand up and sit down slowly.
- Wall push-ups: hands on the wall, gently push your body away and back.
- Hand grip exercises: squeezing a soft ball strengthens hands and forearms.

3. Balance exercises:



Reduce the risk of falls and maintain confidence:

- Heel-to-toe walking along a countertop for support
- Standing on one leg with a chair nearby

4. Chair-based movements:



Perfect for those with mobility limitations:

- Marching feet while seated
- Gentle arm raises
- Slow torso twists

Ping for Parkinson's!

One of the main messages of this booklet is that physical activity has a positive impact both physically and mentally.



And if you have Parkinson's, it can help manage your symptoms. The more physically active you are, the easier it is to live well with Parkinson's. It can be as important as getting the right dose of medication, according to Parkinson's UK. They suggest that being active for 2.5 hours a week can help manage Parkinson's symptoms.

The right physical activity is different for everyone. It could be playing table tennis for an hour, taking a walk with the dog, or practising everyday movements, like walking up the stairs.

Exercise options

In East Sussex, there are many options for people with Parkinson's.

Options include gym-based exercise in Uckfield, physio-led classes in Bexhill and Crowborough, hydrotherapy in Eastbourne, table tennis in Seaford, and dance in Lewes. These are just a few examples, and there are also online classes available.

Further details can be found here [Parkinson's UK activity finder](#), freephone phone 0808 800 0303, email hello@parkinsons.org.uk, or via text relay 18001 0808 800 0303.

Lewes table tennis club

I took the opportunity to pop into a club in Lewes that is held weekly at Christ Church Hall. It is a sociable Parkinson's table tennis session (ping for Parkinson's!) with no need to book in advance, and with bats and balls provided. Participants will need to complete a little paperwork when they first attend - after that, they can just turn up and play.

It was a very lively session with players of various abilities, and as one gentleman told me, he forgets everything whilst he is playing, as the table tennis becomes his sole focus.

Hot drinks, and sometimes cake, are available, and with friends, supporters, and volunteers in attendance, there was also plenty of conversation, so it has a lot to recommend it.

Top tip

Exercise for 10-15 minutes after eating for greater benefit for your heart



Top tip

Take any prescribed medication as instructed. Medicines can help where lifestyle may not

Charleston Farmhouse near Firle

Charleston and its surrounding downland are rich in medieval, Georgian, and Bloomsbury era history. Charleston Farmhouse is a 17th century flint dwelling that became, from 1916 onward, the rural retreat of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. Their home evolved into a vibrant outpost of the Bloomsbury Group, with artists, writers, economists, and political thinkers visiting regularly. The very attractive farmhouse garden is free to visit, although access to the house requires payment.

Access and facilities

In addition to Charleston Farmhouse and gardens, there is a wheelchair accessible gallery, toilets, and a café on site. The café is currently open from Wednesday to Sunday. The Old Coach Road featured in these walks has the advantage of being accessible to some mobility vehicles, such as Trampers, as it is a hard, though uneven, surface. It is also great for all walkers when the surrounding countryside is muddy.

Getting there

Follow the signs off the A27 to Charleston and the free parking area.

Access to the Old Coach Road (the start of all four walks)

The nearby Old Coach Road featured in these walks is a historic route – a centuries old trackway used before turnpike roads existed. Farmers, tradesmen, and early mail coaches used this route as they travelled between Lewes, Firle, and Eastbourne.

The Old Coach Road is south of the Charleston site and features in all of the walks. Proceed from Charleston Farmhouse with the pond on your left and walk down the drive. Turn right and then left, following the concrete track towards Tilton, passing large barns. Head south, towards the Downs and you will reach the Old Coach Road junction.

1. Old Coach Road – Firle Beacon Circular

Distance: 6 miles / 9.5 km approx.

Difficulty: Moderate, but includes a steep climb

Join the Old Coach Road and turn right at the T junction and head west, where eventually the great sweep of the Firle Estate opens to your right. The estate has been owned by the Gage family since the late medieval period.

Turn left and climb to Firle Beacon on signposted paths. It is a high point that has been a vantage site for thousands of years. Near the summit lie several Bronze Age barrows, burial mounds dating to around 2000–1500 BCE. The ridge also formed part of a chain of signal beacons used in Tudor and Stuart times and revived during the Napoleonic Wars to warn of invasion.

Return via the South Downs Way, passing dew ponds – hand dug in the 19th century to collect rainwater for sheep flocks grazing the chalk ridge – before descending back to the Old Coach Road and Charleston.

2. Old Coach Road Alciston – Berwick Circular (also shorter linear accessible walk)

Distance: 7 miles / 11 km approx.

Difficulty: Easy–moderate

At the junction of the Old Coach Road, turn left (eastwards) and continue along the track, which includes crossing Bo Peep Lane, to eventually reach a triangular wooden bench waymark. Turn left (north) into Alciston, a village with deep medieval roots. The highlight is its vast 14th

century tithe barn, one of the largest in Sussex. The settlement's layout – flint cottages, large barns, narrow lanes – preserves the physical footprint of a medieval farming community.

Continue to St Andrew's Church, with its striking Norman origins and characteristic flint-and-chalk construction. The walk will then go across fields, so it may be necessary, for accessibility reasons, to turn around and retrace the original route back to Charleston.

For those heading on, take the footpaths to Berwick Church. Here you encounter one of the most remarkable 20th century artistic projects in England: the Bloomsbury murals, painted during World War II by Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, and Quentin Bell as part of a local revival of church decoration. Return via field paths to rejoin the Old Coach Road.

3. Linear Walk: Old Coach Road – Alfriston

Distance: approx. 4.5 miles / 7 km

Difficulty: Easy

Follow the Old Coach Road east until you arrive in Alfriston, a village recorded in the Domesday Book (1086). Its medieval core remains intact. Highlights include St Andrew's Church and Alfriston Clergy House (both 14th century), timber-framed inns, barns, and the medieval street grid. The Clergy House was the first building ever bought by the National Trust in 1896. There are also many opportunities for lunch, tea, and drinks in the village.

Return the same way or arrange transport from Alfriston.

4. Old Coach Road – Firle Village Loop

Distance: 3.5 miles / 5.5 km approx.

Difficulty: Easy

Take the Old Coach Road west toward Firle, passing the edges of the vast Firle Estate.

Drop into Firle Village, an exceptionally well preserved Georgian estate village. Firle Place, The Ram Inn, a historic coaching inn serving travellers long before turnpike roads, and St Peter's Church are local attractions.

Paths across traditional estate farmland and restored flint barns lead you back to Charleston. For a more accessible route, return the way you came on the surfaced paths.



Making positive change in your community



Do you organise community events, meetings, and activities?



People across East Sussex are coming together with neighbours to make positive change in their community. Residents are getting active, being creative, and organising events – and it doesn't have to be complicated!

Those involved describe feeling better, more confident, and more connected. They have learned new skills, met new people, and found a stronger sense of community and belonging. Taking part has helped them see their neighbourhood differently and recognise the potential that exists when people work together.

This is their advice for anyone wanting to make a difference locally:

Start by looking around you. Every community has an abundance of skills, passions, and resources. Think about what matters to you and talk to neighbours about what is already happening. There may be activities you can join or others with similar interests who can help bring ideas to life.

Keep things simple.

Take small, manageable steps – building slowly helps others feel able to join in and makes the work more sustainable.

Don't work alone.

Connecting with others opens doors to resources, knowledge, and learning. Collaboration reduces duplication and burnout and strengthens the sense that change is a collective effort rather than an individual task.

Use low, or no-cost approaches.

Ask local businesses to share leftover stock or space. Use community noticeboards and social media to gather interest and items. Share skills instead of buying services or try a 'give what you can' approach.

Make everyone feel welcome.

Creating an environment where people feel seen, safe, and accepted builds trust and broadens the range of voices involved. Invite people to contribute in ways that match their interests or strengths.

Connect across differences.

Working with people of different ages, backgrounds, or cultures sparks new ideas, deepens understanding, and enriches the experience for everyone.

Capture what changes and celebrate progress.

Take photos, gather comments, or record short videos. Reflect on what matters to you and to others taking part, and on what may matter to funders if you want to develop your work further.

Where can you get support?

If you'd like to discuss any of this advice or receive support, please contact your Local Infrastructure Organisation. They can help you to develop, strengthen, or sustain your activity:

Action in Rural Sussex
(covering rural East Sussex)

01273 473422

Community Action
(covering Eastbourne and Wealden)

0300 124 6810

HVA (covering Hastings)

01424 444 010

RVA (covering Rother)

01424 217 259

SCDA (covering Lewes District)

01273 517250

For examples, tools, and inspiration, explore the Making It Happen Learning Resource Pack: Learning Resource Pack – Making It Happen

Community activities are fantastic ways for people to come together and connect with each other and their local area.

It's important to think about inclusivity at all stages of your activity, from planning, to publicity, and evaluation.

The 'Hints and tips for inclusive events, activities and meetings' leaflet aims to help you make sure your activity is open and welcoming to everyone, and to encourage more people to attend.



For more information or for copies of the leaflet, please contact us by email at asc.equalityteam@eastsussex.gov.uk or phone 01273 481242.

Try out our seasonal recipes – Breakfast

Banana bread porridge



Breakfast



5 mins



1 serving



Veggie

A good source of fibre, this family friendly recipe is the perfect way to start your morning!

⚠ Contains gluten

⚠ Contains milk

Ingredients

50g porridge oats

200ml milk

1 medium banana

¼ tsp cinnamon

Sprinkle of raisins

Method

1 Measure out the oats.

2 Measure out the milk.

3 Mash the banana.

4 Combine oats, milk and mashed banana in a bowl and either heat in the microwave or on a hob over a medium heat for 2-3 minutes or until desired porridge consistency.

5 Sprinkle on cinnamon and raisins.

What's in a serving

ENERGY 466kJ 110kcal 6%	FAT 1.9g 3%	
SATURATES 0.7g 4%	SUGARS 10g 11%	SALT 0.06g 1%



Tips and tweaks: Fancy it with a savoury twist? Add a teaspoon of peanut butter to the centre before eating.

Try out our seasonal recipes – Snacking

Cinnamon apple crisps



Snack



1hr 10 mins



2 servings



Gluten free

Vegan

These cinnamon apple crisps make the perfect on the go snack. Simple to make and high in fibre too.

Ingredients

2 large apples (golden delicious or granny smiths work well)

1 tbsp cinnamon

Method

1 Preheat the oven to 170°C/325°F/Gas 3 and line a baking tray with baking parchment.

2 Remove the core of the apples and slice into thin slices (about 2mm). Use a mandolin slicer if you have one.

3 Lay out on the tray and dust with the cinnamon.

4 Bake for 1 hour, turning the slices over halfway through, until they are dried out and golden.

What's in a serving

ENERGY 614kJ 145kcal 7%	FAT 1.2g 2%	
SATURATES 0.3g 2%	SUGARS 27g 30%	SALT 0g 0%



Tips and tweaks: To serve, spread some all natural peanut butter on the apple for an even more delicious snack.

Try out our seasonal recipes – Main

Broccoli pesto pasta

 Main  20 mins  2 servings



This delicious plate of pasta is perfect for a speedy supper, using whole grain pasta to boost your fibre for the day.

 Contains gluten  Contains treenuts

Ingredients

100g broccoli
150g wholemeal pasta
110g frozen peas
2 tbsp olive oil
20g cashew nuts
40g baby spinach
2 cloves garlic

Method

- 1 Cut the broccoli into florets and steam or boil until tender.
- 2 Put your pasta on to boil in lightly salted water, cooking per packet instructions, adding the frozen peas 3 minutes before the pasta is cooked to defrost and reheat.
- 3 In a blender, blend olive oil, cashew nuts, garlic (crushed or grated), spinach and a pinch of salt.
- 4 Add the cooked broccoli to the blender and blend until smooth pesto consistency. Add a splash of broccoli water to the blender if needed.
- 5 Strain the pasta and peas. Place back in the saucepan, add the broccoli pesto and mix before serving.

What's in a serving

ENERGY 2,084kJ 498kcal	FAT 20g	SATURATES 3.3g	SUGARS 7.1g	SALT 0.44g
25%	29%	17%	8%	7%



Tips and tweaks: Not a fan of peas? Swap for frozen sweetcorn instead!

Try out our seasonal recipes – Dessert

Coconut banana bread

 Dessert  1 hr 20 mins  10 servings



Love soft, squidgy banana bread? Try this lower sugar version for a bang of fibre and sweet banana goodness.

 Contains eggs  Contains gluten
 Contains milk

Ingredients

285g plain flour
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
½ tsp salt
50g desiccated coconut
50g ground almonds
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground mixed spice
110g unsalted butter
100g caster sugar
2 free-range eggs
3 ripe bananas, mashed
3 tbsp semi-skimmed milk

Method

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.
- 2 Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda and salt into a large mixing bowl.
- 3 Add the desiccated coconut, ground almonds and spices to the flour and mix until evenly blended.
- 4 In another bowl, cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy.
- 5 Add the eggs, mashed bananas and milk to the butter and sugar mixture and mix well.
- 6 Fold in the flour mixture.
- 7 Lightly grease a 2lb loaf tin and pour the cake mixture into the tin.
- 8 Put in the oven and bake for about an hour until the cake is well-risen and golden-brown.
- 9 Remove from the oven and cool in the tin for a few minutes, then turn out and allow to cool for 20 minutes before serving.

What's in a serving

ENERGY 1,398kJ 334kcal	FAT 16g	SATURATES 9.2g	SUGARS 16g	SALT 0.58g
17%	23%	46%	18%	10%



Tips and tweaks: It's easy to turn this dairy free by using a vegetable spread and your favourite milk alternative.

Events listing – Health

Health

She Runs Lewes

A free monthly women-only social 5K fun run.
fikkiw@SheRunsLewes on Instagram

Parkinsons UK Activity Finder

0808 8000303
Text relay 18001 0808 8000303
hello@parkinsons.org.uk
<https://localsupport.parkinsons.org.uk>

Stay Active Longer

Eastbourne, Bishopstone Station,
Peacehaven Newhaven
NHS-Approved exercises for healthier ageing.
These classes are suitable for most abilities
and health conditions.

07773 022429
marymovesit@gmail.com

Battle Move it or Lose it

Guide Hall in Battle Recreation Ground
A fitness class designed specifically for the over-
60s to help people to stay healthier by improving
strength and balance.

07773 790753
lucy.jenner@moveitorloseit.co.uk

Flimwell Neuro Moves

The Farmhouse, Downash Farm
One to one Pilates-based movement solutions
based on your brain's unique response to every
movement.

07940 231338
amanda@kempilates.com

Sidley Martlets Outdoor Lawn Bowls

Sidley Martlets Bowls Club
A lovely secluded 6 rink outdoor club
on Sidley recreation ground

07891 827950
steveparkin@aol.com

Hastings Exercise Group and Weighted Neuro Gym Session for Neurological Conditions

Summerfields Leisure Centre
A participant-led fitness session with flexible
options to suit your interests, finances, abilities

and energy levels. Options include chair-based
exercise, mini bowls, stretching, general fitness
activities and weighted exercise class in the gym.

01424 451051
activehastings@hastings.gov.uk

Clubs/activities

Skull Drummery

Scout Hut, Ham Lane
From all walks of life, with a passion for
drumming and friendships forged in the
heat of bonfire tradition.

skulldrummerymembership@gmail.com
<https://skulldrummery.co.uk>

Lewes FC

The Rookery, Ham Lane
Weekly sessions provide a consistent, welcoming
space where participants (18 + and any ability)
can stay active, connect with others, and engage
in a positive footballing experience.

info@lewesfootballfoundation.org
www.lewesfootballfoundation.org/football-for-wellbeing

Exercising

MAYFACS

Mayfield and Five Ashes Community Services
Men on the Move is a weekly 'walk and talk' group
for men, to bring people together to explore the
local area, build connections and get some
low-level exercise!

01435 873888
www.mayfacs.org.uk

Bexhill 20/20 Heath

Bexhill Leisure Centre
Exercises with adaptations and alternatives to
improve mobility and strength.

07872 525432
2020exercisereferral@gmail.com
<https://eequ.org/book/creating-a-healthier-you-with-2020-health-4665>

Events listing – Excercising

Wealden Community Orchards sites

www.wealden.gov.uk/climate-change/wealden-community-orchard-grant-programme

Crowborough Community Orchard

www.crowboroughcommunityorchard.org

Seaford Community Orchard

www.gardeningin.org/projects/seaford-community-orchard

admin@gardeningin.org

01323 406945

07375 920863

Ringmer Community Orchard

www.commoncause.org.uk/ringmer-community-orchard

commoncausecoop@gmail.com

Peacehaven Community Orchard

Centenary Park

www.peacehaventowncouncil.gov.uk/community/community-engagement/community-orchard

Church Wood Community Orchard

Hollington

www.facebook.com/p/Church-Wood-Community-Orchard-100064668045417

churchwood.co@mail.com

Freedom Leisure

Hailsham Leisure Centre

Swimming Pool, Studio classes and gym

01323 846755
hailshamenquiries@freedom-leisure.co.uk
~www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/hailsham-leisure-centre

Bexhill Leisure Centre

Studio classes, gym and sauna

01424 731171
bexhillcentreenquiries@freedom-leisure.co.uk
www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/bexhill-leisure-centre

Bexhill Leisure Pool

Swimming Pool and gym

01424 731508
bexhillpoolenquiries@freedom-leisure.co.uk
www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/bexhill-leisure-pool

Summerfield Leisure Centre (Hastings)

Swimming Pool, studio classes, squash, climbing
wall and multi ball gaming wall

01424 457691
summerfieldsenquiries@freedom-leisure.co.uk
www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/summerfields-leisure-centre

Falaise Fitness Centre (Hastings)

Gym and classes and outdoor bowling and putting

01424 457692
falaise.user@freedom-leisure.co.uk
www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/falaise-fitness-centre

Uckfield Leisure Centre

Swimming Pool , gym and studio classes, indoor
and outdoor sports including football, pickleball
and table tennis

01825 761160
uckfieldenquiries@freedom-leisure.co.uk
www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/uckfield-leisure-centre

Crowborough Leisure Centre

Swimming Pool, studio classes, gym and other
activities

01892 665488
crowboroughenquiries@freedom-leisure.co.uk
www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/crowborough-leisure-centre

Events listing – Bowling / Allotments

Bowling

Polegrove Bowls Club (Bexhill)

activerother@polegrovebowlsclub.org.uk
<https://polegrovebowlsclub.org.uk>

Eastbourne and District bowls club (indoors)

01323 506009
www.ediba.co.uk/contact-form
www.ediba.co.uk

Colemans Hatch Bowling Club

07947 058934
merrythought3@gmail.com
www.colemanshatch-bc.co.uk

East Dean and Friston Bowling Club

Frank Vine 01323 422029
Chris Ray 01323 422208
<https://eastdeanvillage.org.uk/Clubs%20and%20Societies/bowling-club.html>

Rye Bowls Club

01797 280457 or 07855 876629
<https://ryesussex.uk/directory/activities/bowls/listing/rye-bowls-club>

Seaford Bowling Club

01323 899845 or 07710 546224
secretary@seafordbowlingclub.co.uk
www.seafordbowlingclub.co.uk

Egerton Park Indoor Bowls Club

01424 733354
martin_phillimore@hotmail.co.uk
<https://epibc.co.uk>

Hellingly Bowls Club

roger.hellinglybc@gmail.com
<https://hellinglybowlsclub.co.uk>

Battle Bowls Club

Alison 01424 254299
Stuart 07766 838697
memsec@battlebowlsclub.org.uk
captain@battlebowlsclub.org.uk
<https://battlebowlsclub.org.uk>

Wealden Bowls Centre

01825 767690
wealdenbowlsclub@gmail.com
www.bowlswealden.co.uk

St. Leonard's Bowls Club

vearesjoy@gmail.com
<https://stleonardsbowlsclub.com>

Horam Bowling Club

gina.gingell@hotmail.co.uk
<https://horambowlingclub.co.uk>

Newhaven Bowling Club

07766 601125
nbowlscsocialmedia@gmail.com
<https://newhavenbowlingclub.weebly.com>

Crowborough Wolfe Bowling Club

01892 611792
crowboroughwolfebc@gmail.com
www.crowboroughbowls.com

Wadhurst Bowls Club

01892 785689
wadhurstbowlsclubsecretary@gmail.com
www.wadhurstbc.com

Buxted Park Bowls Club

01435 830986
buxtedbowlsclub@outlook.com
<https://buxtedparkbowlsclub.co.uk>

Allotments

National Allotment Society

Find out about allotments and what you can gain from having one

01536 266576
contact@thenas.org.uk
<https://thenas.org.uk/findinganallotment>

East Sussex Allotments

Contact local Town/Parish Councils for costs and availability of allotments in your area

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/your-council/about/service-provision/parish-town/contact



EAST SUSSEX COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICE

Bringing communities together
Discover what's available in your local area



Scan the QR code to visit the ESCIS website

Community events and organisations listed for FREE
info@escis.org.uk

Events listing – Walks / Outdoor Gym

Walks

TVC {The Conservation Volunteers}

East Sussex Health Walks
Free walks approximately 1 hour long

Lorna 07740 899559
Office 01424 444675
lorna.neville@tcv.org.uk
www.tcv.org.uk/southeast/sussex/east-sussex-healthy-walks

123 Walks – East Sussex

Details of one, two and three mile checked walks in parks, nature reserves and rural footpaths for you to try

Lorna 07740 899559
Office 01424 444675
lorna.neville@tcv.org.uk
https://123walks.org

Sussex Ramblers

Walks arranged each week. 3 trial walks available before membership required

www.sussexramblers.org.uk/walks/walks-programme.html

Sussex Walking Group

The Social Walking Group meets once a month and our events consist of a morning walk of about 4 miles followed by a pub lunch and then a short afternoon stroll.

07808 720887
janblackstock@yahoo.co.uk
https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/local-groups/sussex-walking-group

Hastings Country Park

Four self-guided walks in Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve.

www.friendsofhastingscountrypark.org/explore?view=article&id=129:four-self-guided-walks-in-hastings-country-park-nature-reserve&catid=13:explore

Outdoor Gym

Meridan Park, Peacehaven

Jubilee Outdoor Gym is open to all and free to use throughout the year. It has a comprehensive range of cardio and resistance exercise equipment.

www.peacehaventowncouncil.gov.uk/parks-and-recreation/meridian-park

Buxted Recreation Ground

Forester's Green, Forest Row

Western Road Recreation Ground, Hailsham

Maurice Thornton Playing Fields, Hailsham

Pevensey Bay Recreation Ground

Polegate War Memorial Recreation Ground

Different sites have different gym equipment, please visit or look at the website for further details.

www.healthywealden.co.uk/find-parks/business-category/outdoor-gym

Jarvis Brook Recreation Ground

www.crowboroughcouncil.gov.uk/services/parks-open-spaces

Freshair fitness

Find Your Nearest Fresh Air Fitness Outdoor Gym

www.freshairfitness.co.uk/site-installations



Active Rother

For news and examples of opportunities to be active in Rother.

Visit www.activerother.org.uk

Defiant Sports

Connecting Through Sport



What we offer:

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- Boccia
- Youth & Adult Social Clubs
- One-To-One lessons
- Multi-Sport
- Much more!

Find out more about our 1-2-1 lessons, bespoke sessions and venue hire on our website

We are a sports non-profit working to make sports more inclusive for those with disabilities, neurodiversities; and those from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds

We want to help everyone to support their wellbeing. Get in touch to see what we can do for you

Contact Us

- 07887 755856
- info@defiantsports.org.uk
- www.defiantsports.org.uk
- Defiant Sports Inclusion Hub, Archery Recreations, BN22 8RA, Eastbourne

Find out more



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East Sussex
County Council

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done for myself"

Health in Mind is the free NHS Talking Therapies service for people experiencing emotional stress and symptoms of anxiety or low mood. We're here for all East Sussex residents over 18.

We offer a wide range of support to make seeking help as convenient, quick, and straightforward as possible. From courses & online programmes to a wide range of one-to-one therapies, we can be your guide to better mental health.

Taking early action to improve your emotional health prevents symptoms worsening and means quicker access to treatment. Our advice is not to wait. Get in touch with us today. Our team is ready to help you make positive changes.

The quickest way to contact us is to complete a self-referral on our website. Your doctor can also support you if preferred.

www.healthinmind.org.uk

Or call us on 0300 00 30 130

 @HiMEastSussex

 @NHSHealthinMindEastSussex

All age activities

40 years +

We start to lose muscle mass in our thirties, and it is important for all of us to maintain muscle strength as we age. It can impact our heart health, metabolism, and likelihood of injury.

Strength training requires resistance, which can be as simple as press ups or squats! As you progress you may need to add weights to your routine.

Improving your balance now will be very helpful as you age. Try to stand on one leg for one minute, standing close to something immovable in case you need to steady yourself. You will get better at this if you continue – so try closing your eyes for an extra challenge.

Age 50–60 years

Cardio (brisk walking, swimming, jogging, cycling, and classes) and strength and balance training are so important now (see above).

Hormonal changes can result in bone weakening, so try to increase your protein intake – chicken, lean meat, fish, tofu, eggs, yogurt, beans, lentils, nuts, cheese, and milk.

Rest and recovery are also important.

Age 60–70 years

If exercise feels more daunting, consider joining groups or classes. It can improve your motivation and improve your social life!

Household tasks like gardening, housework, and carrying shopping count as physical activity.

70 years +

Confidence in everyday activities can lower, so don't focus on personal bests. Keep working on your balance and strength to prevent falls. Daily tasks can help keep you active too, like climbing stairs, gardening, or carrying shopping.

See the exercises on page 32 for further ideas.





Living Well

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If you would like to make any comments about the booklet, the content or suggestions for future articles please email editor.wellbeing@eastsussex.gov.uk or if you are not online you can call us on 07783 847944 and leave a message.

East Sussex
County Council

