

Exercise is the focus for this month but, don't worry, we're not going to ask you to run a marathon or start going to the gym 5 times a week! There are some simple exercises which can be done by nearly all of us and by making them a part of our daily lives can, with a little effort, have a big impact.

With very best wishes,

Focus on... Exercises for good health

We all know that a certain amount of exercise is important for good health—both physical and mental—but it can be hard to get going, especially if you have limited mobility or suffer from low mood.

One of the best recommendations I have had which can really help with this, is from someone you may have heard from on the radio or TV— Dr Rangan Chatterjee, also a GP and author of several books. Dr Chatterjee often focuses on low impact exercises suitable for most people and is an advocate for the benefits of fitting these in to your daily routine. Doing this means you're much more likely to form a 'healthy habit' which can be really beneficial to your health. For example, replacing that biscuit with your morning coffee with some toe raises (see overleaf) instead!

Star jumps (or jumping jacks as they are sometimes called) —an old classic, but a great one as they are great for cardiovascular health. If for any reason, particularly if you are older with limited fitness or have knee or shoulder problems, and can't do a standard star jump, don't worry, there's a way of changing the exercise to make it easier and safer for you...

Stand with your feet together and arms down by your sides. Step your right leg out about 50cm and bring your arms up above your head; then bring your arms down by your sides and step your foot in. Then repeat the exercise on your left side. Do this for 30 seconds.



PROJECT FOOD

A helping hand to healthy eating

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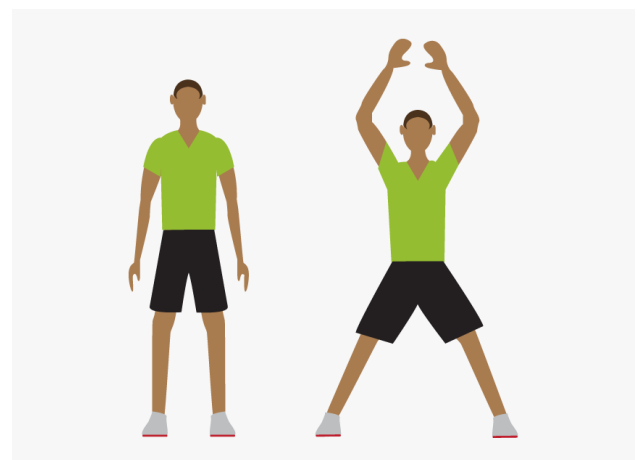
Axminster

EX13 5DU

01297 631782

info@project-food.org.uk

www.project-food.org.uk



Seated exercises

There are also a wide variety of seated exercises for those of you who may have limited mobility. How about trying some **toe raises**, which are good for strengthening your thighs? Sit on a sturdy chair with your feet together and back straight. Then, lift your toes up in the air as far as you can and then back to the floor. Do this 10 times.



Try doing these while settling down to watch your favourite soap or whilst listening to a radio programme.

Remember, with all new exercises, it's always best to start off slowly and then you can always build up as your strength grows.

Veggie Chilli

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil
2 onions, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 peppers, deseeded and chopped
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
1 tsp chilli powder/cayenne pepper
2 tsp ground cumin
2 tins tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato purée
1 tin kidney beans, drained
1 tin chickpeas, drained

Optional

1 courgette, chopped
1 tin green lentils, drained or 125g dried red lentils
Small bunch of fresh coriander, chopped

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat and fry the onions for about ten minutes or until they are soft. Add the garlic together with the chilli/cayenne and cumin for the last couple of minutes.
2. Add the peppers, carrots and cook for five minutes, stirring all the time.
3. Now add the tomatoes, purée, kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils if using, bring to the boil and simmer for about 30 minutes.
4. If using the courgette, add now and simmer for five minutes more. Season to taste.
5. Serve sprinkled with fresh coriander if you like, cooked rice adding some soured

Top tips

- Try serving with some brown rice—it goes really well with chilli and contains much more fibre, vitamins and minerals than standard white rice.
- Adding the lentils is great way to up the protein in a dish. Lentils are full of protein and fibre so are a great choice if you're reducing meat in your diet. They're usually cheap too!
- If you use sweet potato and/or squash is the chilli (they work really well), you may need to either roast them first with the spices (great for adding flavour too) or cut quite small at stage 2 and cook the chilli for a bit longer.
- Chilli (meat or veggie) freezes really well so it's worth making a bigger batch and freezing any