



Staying active, happy and healthy

**active
Sunderland**



**Sunderland
City Council**

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Who is this guide for?

Your health is important, but being healthier isn't just about "doing the right thing" - it's about making changes to fit your life and make you feel good. This guide will support you in making choices to help you feel better, every day.

Looking after yourself doesn't have to mean working up a sweat or joining a gym - just a few small changes can make a big difference to your physical and mental health.

If you want to be a little healthier but don't know where to start, this guide is for you.



Move more and be active

Why being active is so important

People who are physically active and a healthy weight live about seven years longer than those who do aren't. The important part is ensuring that those extra years are generally healthier years! Staying active helps delay or prevent chronic illnesses and diseases from developing.

It's more important than ever to be active and to do exercise. Being moderately active can improve our health and wellbeing and it doesn't always mean going to the gym or taking part in an exercise class. Did you know you are active when doing something as simple as your household chores or walking the kids to school?

The benefits of being active:

- boosts your energy levels
- promotes a positive attitude and outlook
- helps you fall asleep faster and sleep more soundly
- improves your self-image and self-confidence
- improves your physical health
- increases our life expectancy
- improves the strength of our muscles and bones
- increases our levels of 'good' cholesterol
- improves our mental wellbeing by alleviating anxiety and stress
- helps maintain a healthy weight
- helps reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes and some cancers

How much exercise should I do?

All of us should do some type of physical activity every day. Any type of activity is good for you. For specific information and guidelines on physical activity levels for you and your family, please visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-infographics-on-physical-activity

As a whole, you should:

- aim to be active every day
- do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week
- do a variety of activities that improve strength, balance and flexibility
- break up periods of inactivity by moving more often

Always speak to your GP if you have any concerns about exercising.

Get moving

No matter how you choose to move, it's all good for your health and wellbeing. Making small changes to your routine by including small bursts of activity across the day all add up and help you be more active. So, whether it's a 10-minute dog walk in the morning, or even doing some housework - every little helps.

Ways to be active at home:

- vacuuming
- laundry
- making the bed
- dusting
- cleaning the bathroom
- sweeping
- washing the dishes
- gardening and mowing the lawn
- washing the car
- ironing
- painting
- cleaning windows

What interests you?

Being active shouldn't feel like a chore, so find something that you enjoy and suits you – you're much more likely to stick with it. Try different things out and see if there are any that work for you. Being active with your family can be a great way to get everyone together and spend quality time together.

Ask friends how they stay active and join them – staying active with someone can help you stick with it.

Walking

Walking is one of the easiest forms of exercise. Just a walk around the block or around your home increases blood flow and benefits your health as listed above. Walking counts as a great form of physical activity and can be done by almost everyone, anywhere, at any time and best of all its FREE. The Active Sunderland Wellness Walking Programme is a free programme of weekly volunteer led walks which take place across the City. Further information can be found at the end of this booklet.

Step up Sunderland



Sunderland has a FREE app you can download to monitor your daily activity levels. 'Step up Sunderland' links to your smart phones health app and records your daily steps.

Why should I download it?

- its FREE!
- it's fun!
- you will be part of a citywide campaign to get more people active and walking
- the app shows you your personal daily/weekly/monthly/annual steps
- you receive daily achievements and badges for the steps you walk and you can join in with walking challenges throughout the year
- you can create some healthy competition with your friends/family/colleagues by adding each other as friends and/or by creating your own teams
- you will receive rewards from our Step up rewards partners across the city who are supporting the campaign



Diet and lifestyle

Healthy eating and your weight

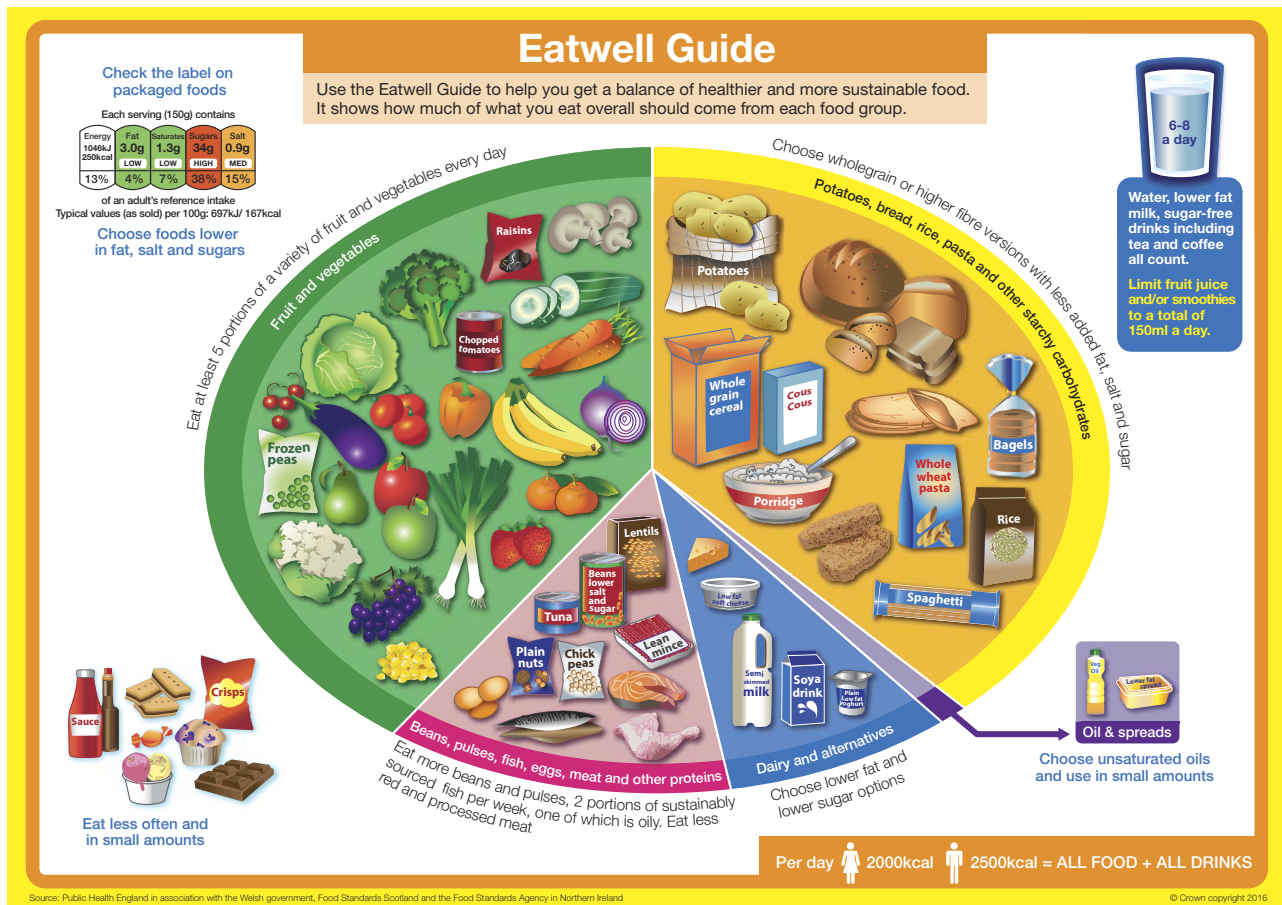
Eating a healthy balanced diet provides your body with essential nutrients to keep you healthy and can help you to maintain a healthy weight. It's not good to be overweight or underweight. If you're concerned about your weight, make sure you talk to your doctor.

It is important not only to eat the right foods but to eat them in the right amounts. Portion size is a very important factor of a healthy balanced diet. For example unsalted nuts such as brazils, cashews, walnuts etc. are a great plant based source of protein and healthier unsaturated fat. They are a great option as a healthy snack but because of their high fat content, if they are consumed in large amounts their calories would quickly add up and begin to outweigh their potential health benefits. The British Nutrition Foundation has produced an excellent resource to give a guide of what food portions should look like, the link is at the end of this booklet.

Making a change to healthier eating can be daunting until we have a better understanding of the different food groups and their roles in our body. Even when this knowledge has been achieved. There are other important factors to consider which can affect our physical and mental health. One of which is financial cost and being able to afford to eat healthy. Some healthy foods can appear to be expensive at first glance but there are many ways that can help us eat well on a budget. Here is a top tip taken from a guide produced by the NHS. Look up cheap recipes. Cheap does not have to mean less tasty. There are plenty of websites offering recipes for cheap eats and leftover ingredients. Check out Change4Life's healthy recipes for some inspiration and easy meal ideas.

Some foods interact with medications or diagnosed health conditions. If you have been told to avoid a certain food you should do so and always speak to your GP if you have any queries or concerns.

The Eatwell Guide



It is important that during a time where illnesses are more present, it is essential to keep our bodies well nourished.

The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we should be eating overall from each food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. You do not need to achieve this balance with every meal, but try to get the balance right over a day or two or even a week. This also includes drinks that we should be having.

The Eatwell Guide divides the food and drinks we consume into 5 main groups:

- Fruit and Vegetables
- Carbohydrates
- Proteins
- Dairy and Alternatives
- Oils and Spreads

It's important to get some fat in your diet, but foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar have been placed outside of the circular image as they're not necessary as part of a healthy, balanced diet and most of us need to cut down on these. Unsaturated fats from plant sources (for example, vegetable oil or olive oil) are healthier types of fat, but all types of fat are high in energy (calories), so they should only be eaten in small amounts.

Most adults consume more calories than they need. On average, women should have around 2,000 calories a day (8,400 kilojoules) and men should have around 2,500 calories a day (10,500 kilojoules).

Please note these figures are a guide for the 'average person' and differs around factors such as age, height, activity levels and body composition. The NHS 'Better Health' campaign offers advice for adults who would like to lose weight to improve their health. Details can be found at the end of this booklet. For further detailed advice and support around achieving a healthy weight please visit your local exercise centre and speak to an exercise professional who provide you with a personal programme tailored for you.

Fruit and vegetables

Most of us are still not eating enough fruit and vegetables. This should make up a third of the food we eat daily.

Aim to eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. You can choose from fresh, frozen, dried or tinned. Remember that fruit juice and smoothies should be limited to no more than a combined total of 150ml a day. Fruit and vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals.

Carbohydrates

Starchy foods should make up just over a third of the food we eat. Choose higher fibre wholegrain varieties, such as whole wheat pasta and brown rice, or simply leave skins on potatoes. There are also higher fibre versions of white bread and pasta. Starchy foods are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in our diet.

Proteins

These foods are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals. Pulses, such as beans, peas and lentils, are good alternatives to meat because they're lower in fat and higher in fibre and protein, too.

Choose lean cuts of meat and mince, and eat less red and processed meat like bacon, ham and sausages.

Aim for at least two portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily, such as salmon or mackerel.

Grilling your food as opposed to frying will lower the fat content and in turn is better for you.

Dairy and alternatives

Milk, cheese, yoghurt and fromage frais are good sources of protein and some vitamins, and they're also an important source of calcium, which helps keep our bones and teeth strong. Try to go for a lower fat milk and lower sugar products where possible, like 1% fat milk, reduced-fat cheese or low-fat plain yoghurt.

Oils and spreads

Unsaturated fats are healthier fats and include vegetable, rapeseed, olive and sunflower oils. Remember all types of fats are high in energy and should be eaten sparingly.

TIP: measure your cooking oil using a teaspoon when frying to avoid extra unnecessary fat.

Salt

Too much salt can be bad for our health. Try to not add salt during cooking and taste your food before deciding to add salt. Reducing your salt intake will over time is best as your taste buds will adjust. Reducing salt intake has a positive impact on your blood pressure which is known to contribute to risk of stroke and other health problems.

How can I make sure I'm eating the right things?

Food labels

All major supermarkets have agreed to help make choosing healthy food easier with a standard label that lets you see how much fat, saturated fat (saturates), sugar and salt is inside. Red is high, amber medium and green low.

For more information on how to read food labels, visit the link at the end of this booklet.

If you're struggling to shop or cook for yourself it can be hard to eat well as the unhealthy option tends to be more convenient. The unhealthy option tends to be more convenient.

Change4Life, which is a Public Health national healthy eating campaign, has excellent resources to help us make healthier choices with food and drinks. Their mobile 'Food Scanner' app allows users to scan the barcode of foods to reveal the fat, sugar and salt content and provide an easy to understand traffic light system to determine if it's something that should be consumed regularly, most of the time or just every now and then.

Alcohol

Like eating well, healthy drinking doesn't mean you can't enjoy a glass of wine or a dram of whisky every now and then – just try to do it in moderation. Drinking too much can damage your liver, brain, blood vessels and increase the risk of some cancers. It doesn't help if you're trying to watch your weight, too, as alcohol contains hidden calories.

You shouldn't regularly drink more than 14 units a week, which is roughly either:

- 6 pints of beer or cider (4% strength)
- 6 medium (175ml) glasses of wine (13% strength)
- 12 small (25ml) glasses of spirits such as gin, whisky or vodka (40% strength)

Having a few alcohol-free days a week and spreading your drinking over the other days (rather than drinking a lot on one day) can help make sure you're not overdoing it.

You should avoid drinking alcohol with certain medicines. Always read leaflets that come with medication and if in doubt, ask your pharmacist. If you feel you need a drink to help you cope with a difficult situation, have a chat with your doctor or someone you trust. Wear Recovery are a Sunderland based charity who can help with alcohol related queries, their details can be found at the end of this booklet.

Smoking

Even if you've smoked for years, it's never too late to stop. Whatever your age, and however long you've smoked for, you'll notice a lot of positive changes to your health if you stop smoking (not to mention on your bank balance!). You're likely to:

- be able to breathe easier
- reduce your risk of developing heart and lung problems (or making them worse)
- reduce your risk of smoking-related cancers
- reduce your risk of having a stroke
- reduce your risk of problems with your eyesight
- recover more quickly after an operation
- feel better overall, and live longer

Most people know how unhealthy smoking is, but find it difficult to give up. You could start by asking your doctor about local one-to-one group support or medication that can help you stop. Sunderland Specialist Stop Smoking Service contact details are also included at the end of this booklet.



Mind and body

Mental wellbeing

Feeling well is not just about looking after your body – your mental wellbeing is just as important. And though physical health plays a part in this, there are other simple things you can do to help look after yourself.

Stress

Most people feel stressed sometimes and some people find stress helpful or even motivating. If stress is affecting your life, there are things you can try that may help. Support is also available if you're finding it hard to cope with stress.

Stress can cause many different symptoms. It might affect how you feel physically, mentally and also how you behave. It's not always easy to recognise when stress is the reason you're feeling or acting differently.

Physical symptoms:

- headaches or dizziness
- muscle tension or pain
- stomach problems
- chest pain or a faster heartbeat

Mental symptoms:

- difficulty concentrating
- struggling to make decisions
- feeling overwhelmed
- constantly worrying
- being forgetful

Changes in behaviour:

- being irritable and snappy
- sleeping too much or too little
- eating too much or too little
- avoiding certain places or people
- drinking or smoking more

Do:

- try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member or health professional. Sunderland and Washington MIND are local mental health charities who are there to talk, their details are at the end of this booklet
- use easy time-management techniques to help you take control
- use calming breathing exercises
- plan ahead for stressful days or events – planning long journeys or making a list of things to remember can really help
- consider peer support, where people use their experiences to help each other. Find out more about peer support on the Mind website (details at the end of this booklet)
- listen to free mental wellbeing audio guides
- search and download relaxation and mindfulness apps or online community apps from the NHS apps library

Don't:

- do not try to do everything at once – set small targets you can easily achieve
- do not focus on the things you cannot change – focus your time and energy into helping yourself feel better
- try not to tell yourself that you're alone – most people feel stressed at some point in their life and support is available
- try not to use alcohol, cigarettes, gambling or drugs to relieve stress – these can all contribute to poor mental health

Mindfulness

Becoming more aware of the present moment can help us enjoy the world around us more and understand ourselves better. When we become more aware of the present moment, we begin to experience afresh things that we have been taking for granted.

How to be more mindful

Reminding yourself to take notice of your thoughts, feelings, body sensations and the world around you is the first step to mindfulness. Even as we go about our daily lives, we can notice the sensations of things, the food we eat, the air moving past the body as we walk.

Try something new

Trying new things, such as sitting in a different seat, going for a different walking route, going somewhere new for lunch, can also help you notice the world in a new way.

Mindfulness meditation involves sitting silently and paying attention to thoughts, sounds, the sensations of breathing or parts of the body, bringing your attention back whenever the mind starts to wander. Yoga and tai-chi can also help with developing awareness of your breathing.

Sleeping well

Sleeping patterns change as you get older, so you may not get as much sleep as you used to. With the right routines, environment and diet, we should still get enough sleep to keep us healthy and feel fully rested during the day. Everyone is different – some people need less sleep than others. What is important is that you get enough quality sleep to function during the day.

If you feel like you're not getting enough sleep, you can improve your sleeping patterns by:

- being more active throughout the day
- going to bed at the same time each night
- not eating or drinking alcohol too close to going to bed
- reducing the amount of caffeine you have during the day, perhaps by switching to decaf tea or coffee
- cutting down on daytime naps
- getting up and doing something for half an hour if you can't get to sleep, before going back to bed.

Memory

You may notice you've become more forgetful or confused, struggle to remember things or follow conversations, or get disorientated in familiar places. This can be worrying, but most of us experience these things from time to time. They can be symptoms of many common conditions, such as stress, depression or vitamin deficiencies. They don't necessarily mean you have dementia.

If you're worried about memory loss, talk to your doctor to find out what's causing it. This can either ease your worries or allow you to get the help and support you need.

Social interaction

Stay in touch with friends, do things that you enjoy and perhaps try some new things too. They can all help you feel good in body and mind. Spending time with family and friends or meeting new people can help you feel less lonely or anxious, and gives you a chance to share experiences, thoughts and ideas.

Please remember to follow the most up to date guidance on social distancing, hand washing and the use of face coverings.

You could enjoy a hobby with other people, get involved in the local community or volunteer. Think about the kind of things you like doing, or something you've always wanted to try. If you can't do some of the things you used to, why not try something totally new?

Talk to the people you care about most whenever you can. You can go online and talk to people you know via video calls or those you don't on forums.

- begin a conversation – communication is key to wellbeing and we all respond to a friendly face
- make time for friends
- keep in touch by phone – the next best thing to catching up in person
- learn to love computers – connect with others and browse the web
- get involved in local community activities – such as sports clubs and family activities in your area
- try do something every day – plan things to look forward to

Volunteering

Volunteering can be a great way to stay involved and meet new people and make new friends. There are many volunteering opportunities available in your local area. The national 'Do It' website lists many of these opportunities, as well as Sunderland City Councils new Volunteer Portal which provides information on volunteering opportunities within the City Council which include roles such as being a Volunteer Walk Leader, Events Assistant, Books at Home Volunteers and much more, details of both are at the end of this booklet.

General physical health

Free NHS Health Checks are available for those aged 40-74 in participating GP practices in Sunderland. Contact your GP Practice to make enquiries if your practice carry out these checks. It is important to get your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly, book your seasonal flu jab, and follow up invitations for NHS cancer screenings.

Useful contact details

Age UK Sunderland

0191 514 1131
enquiries@ageuksunderland.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss

0808 808 0123
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

0300 222 1122
www.alzheimers.org.uk

Drinkaware

An organisation funded by alcohol firms that offers tips on responsible drinking.
020 7766 9900
www.drinkaware.co.uk

WEAR Recovery

Sunderland Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service
0800 234 6798
<https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/services/wear-recovery-sunderland-integrated-drug-alcohol-service/>

Mind

Provides advice and support on mental health issues.

Sunderland Mind
0191 565 7218

Washington Mind
0191 417 8043

Sunderland Specialist Stop Smoking Service

For local support to quit.
0800 169 9913
www.stopsmokingsunderland.nhs.uk

NHS

Call NHS 111, if you are having concerns about your health

Samaritans

If you want to talk through any concerns, worries or troubles

116 123

Silver Line Helpline

If you are aged 55 or over, call for a cheerful chat day or night.

0800 4708090

Coronavirus Government Guidelines

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS Choices

<https://www.nhs.uk>

Sunderland City Council

0191 520 5555

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk>

Change4Life Sunderland

0191 561 4691

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/12536/Change4Life-Sunderland>

<https://www.facebook.com/Change4lifesusunderland>

Active Sunderland

active@sunderland.gov.uk

<https://www.activesunderland.org.uk>

Rise – Formerly Tyne & Wear Sport

07973 786310

info@wearerise.co.uk

<https://www.wearerise.co.uk/>

Sport England

<https://www.sportengland.org>

Change4Life Recipes

www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

Jamie Oliver

www.jamieoliver.com/

Phunky Foods

www.phunkyfoods.co.uk

Bon Appetit

www.bonappetit.com

Food a Fact of Life – British Nutrition Foundation

www.foodafactoflife.org.uk

BBC Cooking on a Budget

www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/budget_dinner_recipe_and_ideas

The Great Grub Club World Cancer Research Fund UK

www.greatgrubclub.com

BBC Good Food

www.bbcgoodfood.com

Ryan Riley, Life Kitchen

www.wcrf-uk.org/uk/recipes/ryan-riley

Do It

National Volunteering Opportunities

<https://do-it.org/>

Sunderland City Council Volunteer Portal

Volunteering opportunities for Sunderland City Council

SunderlandEventMakers@sunderland.gov.uk

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/volunteering>

Step Up Sunderland

Step counter app

www.stepupsunderland.com

Active Sunderland Wellness Walking Programme

Weekly programme of free led walks in Sunderland

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/12578/Wellness-Walking>

NHS Better Health

NHS campaign, promoting weight loss for adults

<https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/>

Local authority community support line

If you want to find out what support is available in your area, and you would prefer to speak to someone, please call your local council on the relevant number below.

Sunderland: 0800 234 6084

The British Nutrition Foundation

https://www.nutrition.org.uk/attachments/article/1193/Find%20your%20balance_1%20page.pdf

Food labels

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-read-food-labels/>

Physical Activity Guidelines

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-infographics-on-physical-activity>

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