



A-Z of Activities

Exercise and physical activities

Regular exercise has many benefits. It can strengthen bones, prevent falls and make people feel happier. Exercise doesn't only mean keeping fit and jogging. There are lots of physical activities suitable for residents who have limited mobility and strength – ball games, darts, skittles, and the list goes on.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Chief Medical Officers for the UK recommend 30 minutes of physical activity a day on five or more days a week. The 30 minutes can be broken down into 10-minute bursts.

See the checklist for exercise and physical activities

What the activity can do for the residents	What do you need?	What to be aware of
<p>Movement – sitting, standing, walking, bending, stretching, balance and coordination, improve mobility and strength, help prevent falls.</p> <p>Sensory – seeing and hearing instructions, body awareness.</p> <p>Emotional – ease tension and aid relaxation, opportunity to compete, increase confidence, brighten mood by the release of endorphins (natural substances released by the body during exercise).</p> <p>Cognitive – understanding and following instructions and 'rules' of the game, sequence, memory.</p> <p>Social – having fun, interacting with others.</p>	<p>Facilities Space with a selection of equipment.</p> <p>Staff/skills You can run simple physical activities such as skittles. However, you will need training for specific exercise programmes.</p>	<p>You need to be aware of residents' medical conditions and how these may affect their ability to exercise. If a resident is feeling pain or discomfort then stop.</p> <p>A number of organisations run training courses that you or other staff members could attend. Alternatively, the care home could consider employing somebody on a sessional basis to provide this type of activity, for example, Tai Chi.</p>



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Apart from walking, all these activities can be done from a chair and many from a bed.

- **Balloons and ball games:** Use balls of different sizes and textures to kick, throw, pass around.
- **Batons and scarves:** Wave in time to music, or passed around the group.
- **Carpet bowls:** Can be played seated or standing.
- **Competition:** Create competitions around familiar domestic activities that involve movement (for example, folding sheets, winding wool).
- **Dance**
- **Darts**
- **Domestic activities:** Include dusting, carpet sweeping and sorting the laundry.
- **Exercises:** Seek advice from a physiotherapist, registered exercise or fitness instructor. For advice and ideas [visit NHS Choices](#).
- **Indoor hockey:** Play seated using rolled up newspapers.
- **Hoopla**
- **Netball/basketball:** Put a mounted net in the middle of a circle.
- **Parachute:** Each member of the group holds a handle of the parachute and helps to move it up and down.
- **Skittles**
- **Target:** Place a target in a circle or between two rows of people.
- **Video games:** Some games are interactive involving upper or full body movement.
- **Walking:** Encourage residents to walk every day – take a turn around the garden, water the pot plants, renew the bird feeder, collect the post, etc.