

Move for your mind

A little movement can make a meaningful difference.



Need help now? | 112 - Emergency Services | 1579 - Mental health helpline | 1770 - Richmond Foundation

Good for your body, and for your mind

Movement and exercise can help:



Improve **heart health** and **blood pressure**



Prevent **chronic conditions**



Maintain a **healthy weight**



Lift your **mood** and **ease pressure**



Reduce **anxiety** and **symptoms** of depression



Improve **overall wellbeing** and support **good mental health**



Better **job satisfaction** and **work performance**



Feel more **capable** and build **self-esteem**

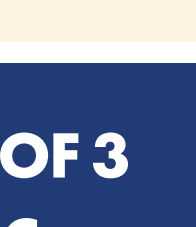


Reset and recover from high-pressure working environments

DIFFERENT NEEDS, DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Make movement work for your working day

Which sounds most like you?



1
My work involves a lot of sitting

Desk-based, seated or screen-based roles



2
My work keeps me moving

Physically demanding or on-your-feet roles



3
I need to pace myself

Living with a health condition, or different abilities and needs

Tips below ↓

1 OF 3

If your work involves a lot of sitting

Desk-based, seated or screen-based roles



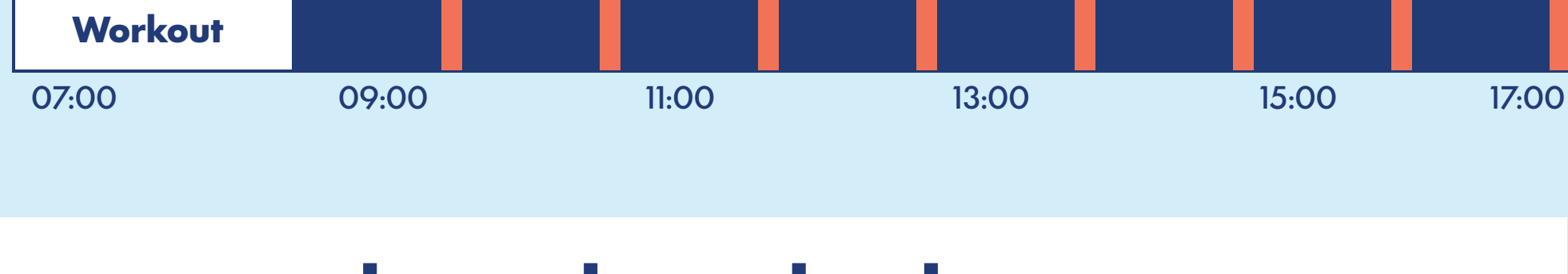
Active does not always mean not sedentary

You can exercise regularly and still spend too much of your working day sitting.

Two working days, same workout

Exercise Sitting Short movement breaks

Active, but sedentary
Long, unbroken sitting



Active, and moving
Sitting broken up often



Take care of your posture throughout the day

- Lean forwards, backwards and sideways
- Shift your weight, sometimes more onto your right buttock and sometimes more onto your left for a few seconds
- Breathe in deeply and out slowly a couple of times to relax and ease your spine
- Support your back using back support or towel to maintain good posture
- Roll your shoulders and rotate your neck
- Keep feet flat on the floor or use a foot rest so your body weight is evenly distributed across your hips
- Use the dynamic “back” setting on your chair, if it has one
- Position your computer screen at eye level to avoid straining your neck and eyes
- Break up your day with regular 2 minute movement breaks

Simple stretches you can do at work

Most of these can be done at your desk, in a few minutes.

Move gently and within a comfortable range. Stop if anything hurts.

1

Back and side stretch
Interlace your fingers and lift your arms over your head, keeping your elbows straight. Press your arms as far back as you can and hold for 5 seconds. To stretch your sides, slowly lean to the left and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat to the right. You can also bring your arms in front of your body, or behind, to stretch your shoulder blades and chest. Hold for 5 seconds.

2

Middle and upper back stretch
Hold your right arm with your left hand, just above the elbow. Gently push your elbow towards your left shoulder and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat with your left arm.

3

Back curl
Grasp your shin and lift your leg off the floor. Bend forward, curling your back, and bring your nose towards your knee. Repeat with the other leg.

Also stretches your legs.

4

Shoulder rolls
Sit or stand up straight. Lift your shoulders up towards your ears, then roll them backwards in a circular motion. Repeat slowly 5 to 10 times, then roll them forwards.

5

Hip stretch
Sit with one leg crossed over the other. Place your arm or elbow on the outside of the crossed leg and gently apply pressure while looking the opposite way. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat with the other leg.

6

Ankle movements
Hold one foot off the floor with your leg straight. Point your toes up and hold for 5 seconds, then point them down. Repeat with the other leg.

7

Seated knee lifts
Sit upright with your feet flat on the floor. Lift one knee towards your chest, as high as is comfortable, then lower your foot. Lift the other knee and keep alternating in a steady marching motion.

8

Standing stretch
Stand with your knees slightly bent. Place your hands on your lower back and gently push your hands forward while leaning back slightly.

More ways to move more and sit less

- Break up long periods of sitting**
Add brief movement throughout the day. Little and often counts.
- Move during everyday tasks**
Stand during a phone call, walk to speak to a colleague or refill your water bottle between tasks.
- Use your breaks**
Take a short walk, or invite a colleague to join you for a walking break.
- Include movement across your day**
Movement through work, active travel and leisure all contributes to your health.
- Choose what works for you**
Pick activities you genuinely enjoy doing.
- Do it together**
Take part in, or organise, team activities or workplace challenges if you find them motivating.

2 OF 3

If your work keeps you moving

Physically demanding or on-your-feet roles



GOOD TO KNOW

Moving at work is not the same as moving for your health

Heavy lifting, repetitive tasks, awkward postures and long hours on your feet can add strain rather than build fitness, especially when there is little time to recover. Balance demanding work with recovery, and with movement you choose to enjoy in your own time.

Look after your body before, during and after your shift

Before

- Warm up gently for a few minutes: shoulders, back, hips and legs
- Check the task, the load and the equipment you will need
- Eat and drink enough to fuel a physical day

During

- Use lifting aids, trolleys and team lifts
- Keep loads close to your body and avoid twisting
- Vary tasks and postures, and take short micro-pauses
- Stay hydrated, especially in the heat

After

- Stretch the muscles you used most
- Rest and recover before your next shift
- Choose different, enjoyable movement in your free time, such as walking, swimming or strength and flexibility exercises



Speak up early.
Aches, pain or discomfort that keep coming back are worth reporting to your supervisor, manager or occupational health. Your employer has a duty to assess and reduce physical risks, and can adjust tasks, equipment or training.

3 OF 3

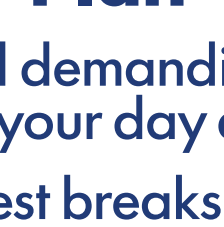
If you need to pace yourself

Living with a health condition, or different abilities and needs



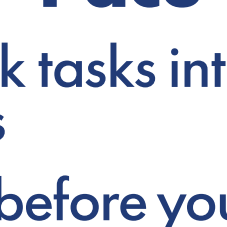
Living with a long-term health condition, disability, pain or fatigue, or coming back after illness or injury? Movement is still possible and valuable. The right amount looks different for everyone, and it can change from day to day.

Try the 3 Ps: Plan, Pace, Prioritise



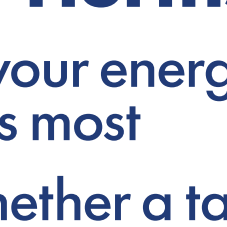
Plan

- Spread demanding tasks across your day and week
- Build rest breaks into your schedule
- Plan movement for the times you usually have more energy



Pace

- Break tasks into smaller steps
- Rest before you feel exhausted, not after
- Switch between sitting, standing and gentle movement

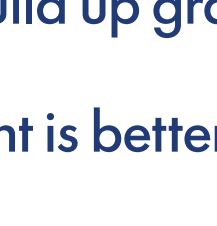


Prioritise

- Focus your energy on what matters most
- Ask whether a task can be shared, simplified or done later
- It is fine to say no, or not yet

Steady beats all or nothing

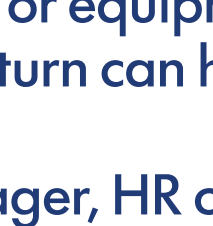
Doing a lot on a good day can lead to a crash afterwards. Pacing means doing a steady, manageable amount most days, then building up gradually.



START LOW, GO SLOW

Begin with a small amount of gentle movement and build up gradually.

Any amount is better than none.



ASK ABOUT ADJUSTMENTS

Changes such as flexible hours, extra rest breaks, adapted duties or equipment, or a phased return can help.

Speak to your manager, HR or occupational health about what would work for you.



If you are unsure what is safe for you, check with your doctor, physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

BEYOND WORK

Overall, how much physical activity should you aim for?

Any amount of physical activity is better than none, and all movement counts. Begin with small amounts and gradually increase what you do.

The World Health Organization recommends that adults aim for:

EVERY WEEK

150-300

minutes of moderate-intensity activity



For example, 30 minutes on 5 days

OR

75-150

minutes of vigorous-intensity activity or an equivalent combination of both.

PLUS

2+ days

of muscle-strengthening activities each week



AND

Spend less time sitting

Replace sitting with movement of any intensity where possible.

These are overall weekly recommendations, not a requirement to complete all activity at work.

Movement should work for you

Movement does not need to be intense or complicated. Brief, regular and realistic activities can support your mental and physical wellbeing.



Need support?

If something is affecting your wellbeing at work, you do not have to manage it alone. Talk to your manager, HR or occupational health team.

Find more healthy lifestyle resources

hdpd.gov.mt