

**Lifestyle interventions can reduce
(sometimes reversing) your risk of chronic
disease and significantly improve your
Health and Wellbeing.**

Feel fitter, healthier and happier.



'Referenced information booklet for patients and professionals'

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In conjunction with HUB Plus



Introduction on your current state of health and wellbeing.

Lifestyle Medicine is an evidence-based discipline which aims to support patients to prevent, manage and reverse certain chronic conditions, using supported behaviour change skills and techniques to create, and sustain lifestyle changes.

Lifestyle Medicine focuses on helping patients to eat more healthily, stay active, sleep better, improve social connections and mental health, and reduce any harmful substance use. It also considers broader factors impacting on individuals' health and wellbeing including ecological health, poverty, and health inequality.

Lifestyle related Diseases now make up 7 of the worlds to 10 causes of death.

Lifestyle Medicine can help you reduce your risk of (and in some cases reverse) Pre-Diabetes, Diabetes, Obesity, Heart Disease, Stroke, Dementia and Cancer.

These conditions are all know as 'Non-Communicable Diseases' (NCD's) and have become increasingly prevalent due changes in our lifestyles (Pinto et al., 2020). These changes include Increasingly sedentary behaviour, consumption of calorie-dense, ultra-processed foods and reduced physical activity. In addition, other risk factors are occurring due to industrialisation, urbanisation, population growth and trading in harmful substances (Pinto et al., 2020, Peters et al., 2019, Srouf & Touvie 2021).

A marker of this, is the obesity crisis, with 68.6% of men and 59% of women currently overweight or obese in the UK (NHS digital 2022).



Reflect on your state of health and wellbeing.

Are you at a level of health and wellbeing that you are content with? if so, well done indeed!

If not, you may wish to consider the following questions.

Do I wish to make meaningful & sustainable changes to my health?

Am I ready to make those changes and create new healthy habits?

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions.

What is my WHY? (Why do I want to make changes, why is this important to me?)

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What is my goal? (Be as specific and realistic as possible, aim for achievable, a new goal can be set once you reach your first goal! Small steps are fine – you are still moving forward.)

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What is my current situation? (Where am I starting from?)

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What one change can I make first? (What will be your first step?)

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Are there any barriers I may meet, how will I overcome them? (What plans can I put in place to anticipate challenges?).....

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What is my timeframe?

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What is my start date?

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Do I need any other support? (e.g. working alongside a friend making similar changes?)

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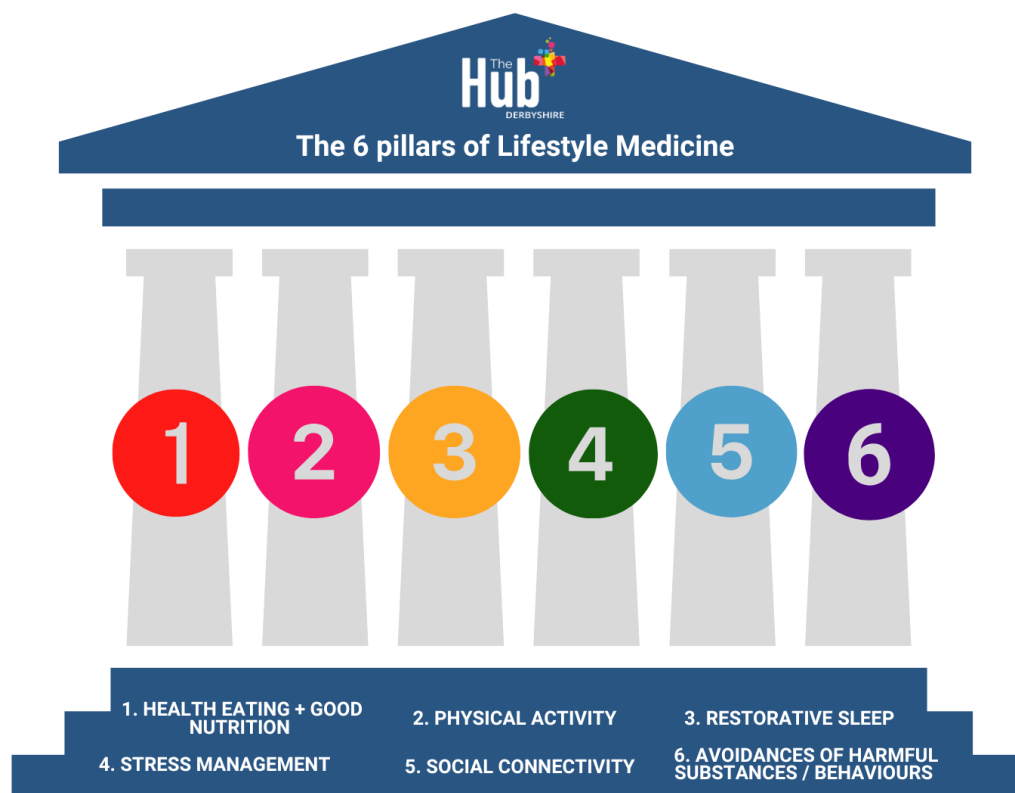
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The 6 pillars of Lifestyle Medicine



1. HEALTH EATING + GOOD NUTRITION

Poor diet is a key risk factor associated with many chronic health conditions. Globally, it's estimated that up to 11 million deaths a year may be associated with unhealthy eating habits – that's one fifth of all deaths. [Lancet 2019 Global Burden of Disease Study]

Put simply: what we eat has the potential to make us sick – but eating healthily also has the potential to make us well. [BSLM 2024]

In the UK, recent studies have demonstrated that on average, just over 50% of the food purchased by households is ultra-processed food. This compares with 14.2% in France and 20.3% in Spain [source; Public Health Nutrition]

Eating a balanced and nutritious diet is essential for maintaining overall health and wellbeing. Evidence strongly supports the role of nutrition in preventing chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers. A diet rich in whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats provides essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that help regulate bodily functions, support the immune system, and reduce inflammation (Slavin, 2005). For instance, diets high in fiber from fruits and vegetables can improve digestive health and reduce the risk of colorectal



cancer (Aune et al., 2011), while omega-3 fatty acids found in fish have been shown to lower the risk of cardiovascular disease by reducing triglycerides and improving cholesterol levels (Kris-Etherton et al., 2002).

Nutrition also plays a crucial role in mental health. Research has shown that a well-balanced diet can positively influence mood and cognitive function. Diets high in refined sugars and unhealthy fats, for example, are associated with a greater risk of depression and cognitive decline, while nutrient-dense diets, including those rich in B vitamins, magnesium, and antioxidants, have been linked to improved mood, better stress management, and enhanced brain health (Jacka et al., 2010; McGill et al., 2017). Moreover, eating well can help regulate weight and prevent obesity, which is a significant risk factor for a range of diseases, including hypertension and sleep apnoea. In short, consuming a nutrient-rich diet supports both physical health and mental clarity, making it a cornerstone of long-term well-being.

BSLM (British Society of Lifestyle Medicine) advises that, in addition to **avoiding ultra-processed foods**, we should aim to ...

- A plant-based diet is eating more fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans, and legumes.
- If choosing meat or fish, choose unprocessed – and if you can choose food with high welfare credentials with less hormones and antibiotics in the processing the better.
- Choose wholegrain or wholemeal varieties of starchy foods such as rice, pasta, and bread.

What are Ultra processed foods?

Ultra-processed food [UPF] and drinks, these are foods which have been processed with the addition of additives and preservatives and are high in salt, fat and sugar.

Ultra-processed foods include things like:

- sweetened drinks
- crisps
- packaged cakes and biscuits
- ice cream.
- sweets and chocolate
- some ready meals
- packaged meat pastries like pies and pasties



[Source; NHS Processed food June 2023]





EAT A VARIETY OF HEALTHY FOODS EACH DAY.

[Ref; Canada's Food Guide Dec 2024]

There is a great deal of information available on the 'Eatwell guide' link below. The NHS has also produced Free Apps to help support good nutritional choices and weight loss.

<u>Eatwell Guide</u>
<u>NHS England » The NHS Digital Weight Management Programme</u>
<u>DASH diet - healthy eating that helps lower blood pressure</u>
<u>Recipes From the Largest Nutrition Study ZOE</u>
<u>Recipe finder - Enjoy Food Diabetes UK</u>
<u>Better Health - NHS</u> – Contains a significant amount of helpful information and links to free Apps as below



2. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity is essential for maintaining overall health, with a wealth of evidence demonstrating its positive impact on both physical and mental well-being. Regular exercise has been shown to reduce the risk of chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers (Warburton et al., 2006). It improves heart health by enhancing circulation, reducing blood pressure, and increasing HDL (good) cholesterol levels, all of which lower the risk of heart disease (Lavie et al., 2015). Exercise also supports weight management by increasing energy expenditure and improving insulin sensitivity, helping to prevent and manage obesity and metabolic syndrome (Church et al., 2011). Additionally, physical activity strengthens muscles and bones, improving mobility and reducing the risk of osteoporosis and falls in older adults (Rogers et al., 2011).

Beyond physical health, exercise has profound benefits for mental well-being. Research indicates that regular physical activity can help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, likely through its effects on neurotransmitter regulation and the reduction of stress hormones like cortisol (Rebar et al., 2015). Exercise also stimulates the release of endorphins and improves sleep quality, both of which contribute to enhanced mood and mental resilience (Sharma et al., 2006). Moreover, consistent physical activity has been associated with improved cognitive function, particularly in aging populations, and can help prevent or delay the onset of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's (Zhao et al).

Get active - Better Health - NHS
5-Minute Kitchen Workout: Quick Fitness Routine / Dr Chatterjee
home Markeaton parkrun Markeaton parkrun



Physical activity for adults and older adults



Benefits health



Improves sleep



Maintains healthy weight



Manages stress



Improves quality of life

Reduces your chance of

Type II Diabetes

-40%

Cardiovascular disease

-35%

Falls, depression etc.

-30%

Joint and back pain

-25%

Cancers (colon and breast) -20%

Some is good,
more is better

Make a start today:
it's never too late

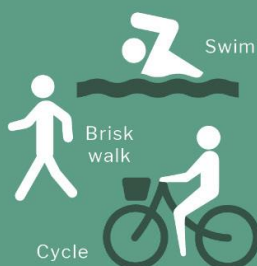
Every minute
counts

Be active

at least
150
minutes
moderate intensity
per week
increased breathing
able to talk

OR
or a combination of both

at least
75
minutes
vigorous intensity
per week
breathing fast
difficulty talking



to keep muscles, bones and joints strong

Build strength

on at least
2
days a week



Minimise sedentary time

Break up periods of inactivity



For older adults, to reduce the
chance of frailty and falls
Improve balance
2 days a week

3. RESTORATIVE SLEEP

Sleep is crucial for overall health, as it plays a vital role in restoring and maintaining both physical and mental well-being. Evidence consistently shows that sleep is essential for cognitive function, including memory consolidation, learning, and problem-solving. During sleep, the brain processes, and stores information from the day, enhancing memory and emotional regulation. Sleep also supports the body's metabolic processes, regulates hormones, and strengthens the immune system. Chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to a higher risk of developing several serious health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. Additionally, insufficient sleep impairs the body's ability to repair cells, regulate blood sugar levels, and manage stress. Adequate, quality sleep improves mood, enhances concentration, and boosts overall performance, making it a cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle.

Research suggests that adults generally need 7-9 hours of sleep per night for optimal functioning, though individual needs may vary. Sleep disorders, such as insomnia or sleep apnoea, can significantly disrupt these processes, leading to long-term health consequences. Therefore, prioritizing good sleep hygiene and addressing sleep issues is vital for maintaining both physical health and mental resilience.

Home - The Sleep Charity
Sleepio - Digital Sleep-Improvement help
BBC Two - Horizon, 2022, How to Sleep Well with Michael Mosley

4. STRESS MANAGEMENT

Chronic stress can have profound and wide-ranging effects on our health, influencing both the body and mind. When we experience stress, the body activates the "fight-or-flight" response, releasing hormones like cortisol and adrenaline to help us cope with immediate threats. While this response is beneficial in short bursts, prolonged or chronic stress can lead to dysregulation of the stress-response system, resulting in negative health outcomes. Research shows that long-term stress contributes to the development of various conditions, including cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. Elevated cortisol levels, for example, can lead to increased abdominal fat accumulation, insulin resistance, and inflammation, all of which are risk factors for metabolic disorders.

Moreover, stress can negatively impact mental health, contributing to anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances. The brain's stress-response pathways, particularly those involving the amygdala and prefrontal cortex, can become overactive or impaired with chronic stress, leading to emotional dysregulation and cognitive decline. In addition, stress can weaken the immune system, making the body more vulnerable to infections and slowing recovery from illness. Strategies like mindfulness, relaxation techniques, and social support have been shown to reduce the adverse health effects of stress by helping to restore balance to the body's stress-response system. Overall, managing stress effectively is essential for maintaining both physical and mental well-being.



<u>Mindfulness - NHS</u>
<u>5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS</u>
<u>Mental health issues - Every Mind Matters - NHS</u>
<u>Get Your Mind Plan - Every Mind Matters - NHS</u>
<u>Mental health - NHS</u>

5. SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

Social connectivity is fundamental to both physical and mental health, with strong evidence showing that maintaining close relationships and a supportive social network can significantly improve well-being. Studies have consistently found that people with strong social ties are at a lower risk of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and even some cancers, and are more likely to live longer (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). Social connections can also help reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and improve immune function, all of which contribute to better overall health. The presence of supportive relationships helps buffer the negative effects of stress by promoting the release of "feel-good" hormones like oxytocin and by providing a sense of belonging and purpose.

Beyond the physical benefits, social engagement is crucial for mental health. Positive social relationships help reduce the risk of depression and anxiety by providing emotional support and fostering a sense of community (Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2014). People with strong social support are better able to cope with life's challenges and are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours, such as regular exercise and proper self-care. Furthermore, social connections contribute to cognitive health, particularly in older adults, by stimulating mental activity and providing opportunities for engagement and learning. Overall, social connectivity is a powerful tool in maintaining both mental and physical health, playing a key role in longevity and quality of life.

6. AVOIDANCES OF HARMFUL SUBSTANCES / BEHAVIOURS

ALCOHOL

If you drink less than 14 units a week, this is considered low-risk drinking.

It's called "**low risk**" rather than "**safe**" because there's no safe drinking level.

The type of illnesses you can develop after 10 to 20 years of regularly drinking more than 14 units a week include:

- mouth cancer, throat cancer and breast cancer
- stroke
- heart disease
- liver disease
- brain damage.
- damage to the nervous system.



- Men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis.
- Spread your drinking over 3 or more days if you regularly drink as much as 14 units a week.
- if you want to cut down, try to have several drink-free days each week.
- 14 units is equivalent to 6 pints of average-strength beer or 10 small glasses (125ml) of lower-strength wine.



This is a link to assess your own alcohol usage; [Alcohol use disorders identification test for consumption \(AUDIT C\)](#)

Access the free App via [Better Health - NHS](#)

SMOKING

Smoking is the main cause of premature death and preventable illness in the UK [[PHE, 2019](#)].

People who smoke have a 50% chance of dying prematurely (on average 10 years earlier) due to smoking [[PHE, 2015b](#)].

After the age of 35 years, a person loses 3 months of life expectancy for every year of continued smoking [[Doll, 1994](#)].

In 2019, 15% of all deaths in adults aged 35 and over in England were attributed to smoking [[ASH, 2021a](#)].

Smoking accounts for approximately 122,000 deaths per year [[Peto, 2015](#)].

Three causes account for 70% of these deaths: lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and vascular disease.

People who smoke spend a significant proportion of their life in poorer health than people who do not smoke [[PHE, 2015b](#)].

For every death caused by smoking, it is estimated that approximately 20 smokers will be suffering from a smoking-related disease, and the cost of smoking to the National Health Service in England is estimated to be £2.5 billion a year [[ASH, 2021a](#)].

More than a quarter of all cancer deaths in the UK can be attributed to smoking (including lung, oral, throat, bladder, kidney, pancreatic, stomach, liver, and cervical cancers) [[ASH, 2017](#)] NICE CKS Aug 2024



Download the free NHS Quit Smoking app
Use the NHS Quit Smoking app this 2025 to help you quit smoking and start breathing more easily.

The app allows you to:

- Track your progress
- See how much you're saving
- Get daily support
- Get inspired by others

Once you reach 28 days smoke-free, you're much more likely to quit for good!

Access to the App via; [Better Health - NHS](#)



Consider contacting 'Livewell' who can help provide support and prescriptions to help you reduce and stop smoking.

DRUGS

A 2017 NHS Digital report on statistics around drug misuse showed that, in England and Wales, 1 in 12 adults (16 to 59 years old) used an illicit drug in the previous year. This is approximately 2.7 million individuals. Around 1 in 3 adults reported using an illicit drug at some point during their lifetime.

Fortunately, the number of people with serious drug problems is small, although these problems can have a big impact on individuals, their families, and the wider community.

Drug usage can cause numerous health issues such as;

- mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, psychosis, personality disorder and suicide
- lung damage
- cardiovascular disease
- blood-borne viruses
- Liver damage
- arthritis and immobility among injectors
- overdose

Gov.UK. Feb 2022

If you have any concerns for yourself, or anyone you know, you may wish to seek help from medical professionals. The following links may also be helpful.



<u>Derby Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service :: Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust</u>
<u>Honest information about drugs FRANK</u>
<u>Other Support Services - ADFAM</u>

GAMBLING

The UK has one of the biggest gambling markets in the world. Previous research has shown that harms associated with gambling are wide-ranging. These include not only harms to the individual gambler but their families, close associates, and wider society. Gambling can cause harm in different ways, including;

- financial
- relationship disruption, conflict or breakdown
- mental and physical health
- cultural
- employment and education
- criminal activity

Gov UK.PHE. Jan2023

If you or someone you know would benefit from advice and support, the below links may be helpful.

<u>About us: East Midlands Gambling Harms Service</u>
<u>About the National Problem Gambling Helpline - National Council on Problem Gambling</u>

