

Achieving more with IBD

Physical activity

Top tips

- Being physically active has positive psychological and physical benefits
- Pick the right activity for you
- Exercise helps build bone strength and prevent osteoporosis (brittle bones)
- Even simple exercises done at home can be beneficial

Most people with IBD can enjoy a wide range of physical activities. Such activity can be adapted to the level and intensity of your condition or situation. If you are able to exercise there is no risk of 'overdoing it' with IBD.

Maintaining physical activity has psychological and physical benefits – some of the common psychological benefits gained through exercise are listed below.

- Improved mood
- Reduced anxiety
- Improved ability to cope with stress
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved body image
- Pride in physical accomplishments and confidence in your physical abilities
- Increased satisfaction with oneself
- Increased feelings of energy
- Decreased symptoms associated with depression

Exercise can trigger a cycle of improvement in health: exercise leads to a feeling of well-being, thereby decreasing levels of anxiety and depression. The resulting increase in body strength has a positive effect on muscles, bones and the heart which helps to prevent osteoporosis; this leads to an improvement in self-image and ultimately to feeling better and the ability to do more exercise (see Figure 1).

You will have a good idea of the activities that you can and can't do. Activities need not be intense to provide a benefit, especially if you have bone or joint problems, for example:

Stretch and tone exercises: 10–15 minutes of simple stretching and toning exercises daily at home can be enough to work all of your muscle groups. Some simple exercises are shown below, at the end of this page. The websites indicated below may also be of interest.

nihseniorhealth.gov/exercise/stretchingexercises/01.html
seniorliving.about.com/od/basicexercisseries/ss/stretchexercise.htm

Walking: as this is the simplest and easiest form of exercise it is the best starting point for everyone. As it is low impact, it means that people with joint problems can benefit, and it is extremely convenient. Start slowly, then gradually build up to walking for longer distances, and at a faster rate. Walking to an appointment, or walking for even part of the journey, can be beneficial and easily integrated into daily routine.

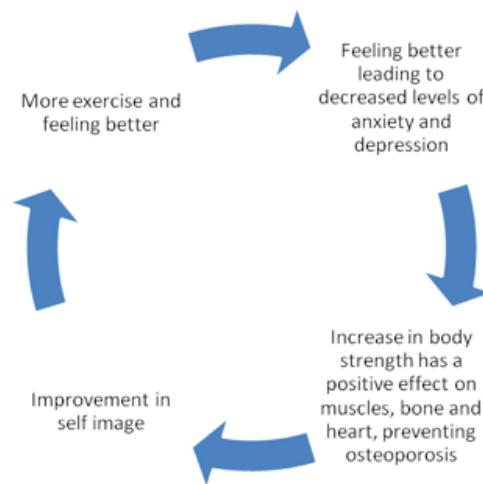


Figure 1: Physical and psychological benefits of exercise

Swimming: swimming involves all the major muscles of the body. The advantage of swimming is that muscles and bones are supported by the water.

Cycling: this is a simple and effective form of exercise for all ages. Like walking, cycling to school or work can be part of the daily schedule, although it may not be so easy for the elderly, or those with joint problems and arthritic pain.

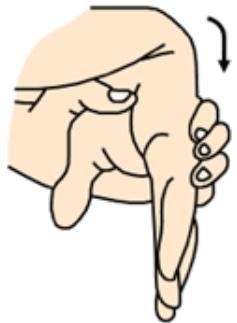
Golf: golf is a low impact sport which allows whole-body exercise and is usually played near a club house where there are facilities at hand.

Osteoporosis is a condition which may be a complication of IBD. In osteoporosis bones become weak, thin and brittle. There is evidence to show that exercise builds up bone and is good for the prevention of osteoporosis.

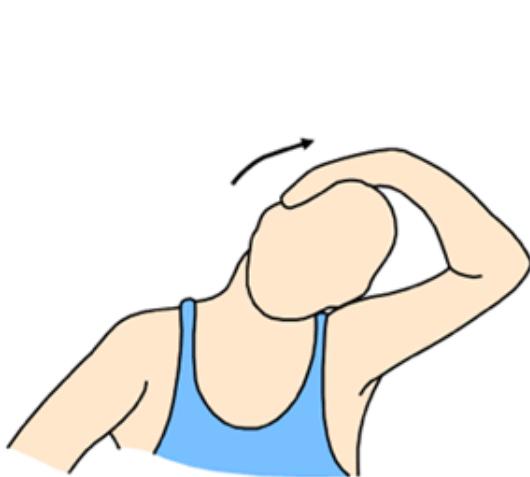
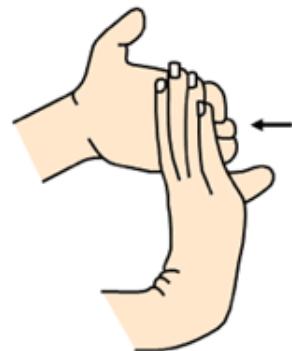
Stretching Diagrams



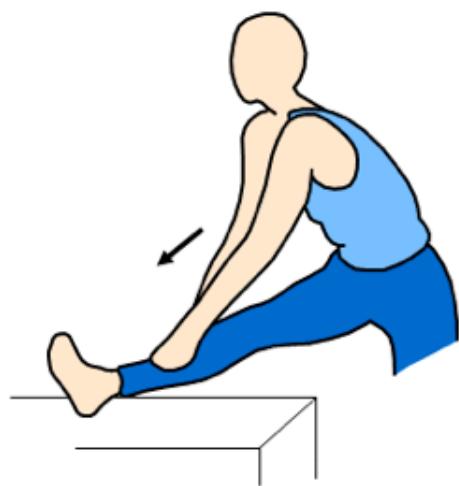
Pectoralis stretch



Wrist stretch



Upper trapezius stretch



Standing hamstring stretch

