



The Sensory Alliance  
Health  
Activity Pack



## Who this is for

This activity pack is for people who have sensory impairments who would like to improve their mental and physical health, or meet new people.

## What is it?

It contains a variety of different exercises and stretches to get you moving more and feeling happier and healthier while we navigate the new normal.

This activity pack has useful links to community organisations in your borough as well as mental health resources from our partner MIND.

This pack is absolutely free, and you can continue to use this as little or often as you would like, you can even get the family involved.

Alongside this pack you will also have access to online zoom fitness and exercise classes to keep you motivated and feeling good.

The pack is broken down in to four key areas:

- looking after your mental health
- trying new things
- meeting new people
- moving more

# Sensory Alliance is here to help get you



looking after  
your mental  
health

On cards

1 | 2 | 3



trying new  
things

On cards

4 | 5 | 6



meeting new  
people

On cards

7 | 8 | 9



moving  
more

On cards

10 | 11 | 12 | 13  
14 | 15 | 16 | 17

## *Who created this resource?*

The Sensory Alliance is a strong partnership between three charities: British Blind Sport, SENSE and UK Deaf Sport. Both collectively and individually we have seen an impact of Covid-19 on the services and programmes we deliver to communities, as well as our partners closure of outreach activities.

## *Why it's needed*

Not having access to clubs and activities during the pandemic has meant that communities we engage with have been deprived of the benefits that sport and activity can bring to them. We have seen an increase in isolation and know that alongside the impact on physical health, there is a growing concern for mental wellbeing of those with a sensory impairment.





In partnership with experienced yoga teachers, Sense deliver a range of yoga classes across the country, to people of all ages with sensory impairments and complex disabilities.

There are many benefits to taking part in yoga regularly, including:

- Being mindful of your body.
- Helping you to focus on being in the present moment.
- Improving your strength, balance and mobility.
- Supporting you to make new friendships and socialise.
- Creating both calming and uplifting energy.
- Making you more aware of your body and the space around you.
- Making you feel good.
- Making everyday tasks and chores (such as housework, shopping, or getting changed) more manageable.

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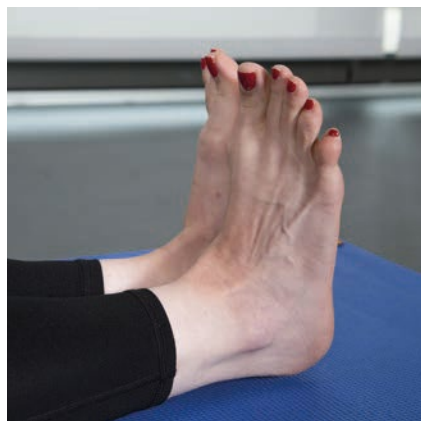
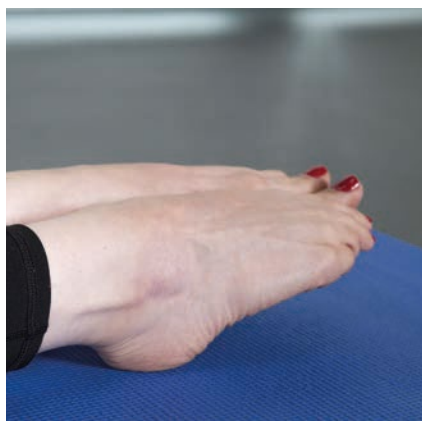
Our thanks for the content of this card go to Sense

## Warm up

To warm up, teachers usually follow what are called “anti- rheumatic” exercises. These may sound complicated, but they are simply gentle exercises which work through the joints, including the neck, shoulders, back, hips, wrists and ankles. They can be done sitting on a mat or a chair.

You may work through a sequence of movements like the following:

- Bring one of your arms across your body with your elbow bent, using your opposite hand to guide and hold it in place.
- At the same time, turn your head to face in the direction your arm is pointing. Slowly come back to centre, repeating on the opposite side.
- Hold both arms out in front of you and make a fist with both hands. Then, extend your fingers so that they point forwards.
- With your legs straight out in front of you, point your toes towards the floor, creating a straight line with your legs and feet



# Shapes

Create different yoga shapes or 'poses.' These will vary depending on your teacher, but these are the most common:

- Forward bends
- Back bends
- Twists
- Lengthening
- Balance

You may work through a sequence of these movements, such as the following.

## **Example 1**

- Sit forward on your chair, sitting up straight with your feet flat on the floor and your hands resting on your knees.
- Slowly bring your hands back towards your hips as you arch your back, opening up the shoulders and lifting your head to look towards the ceiling.
- Then go the opposite way, bringing your hands past your knees as you round forward at the shoulders and bring your head to look downwards.

**Check in with your breathing, and provide different techniques to help you align your breath with the movement.**



## Cool down

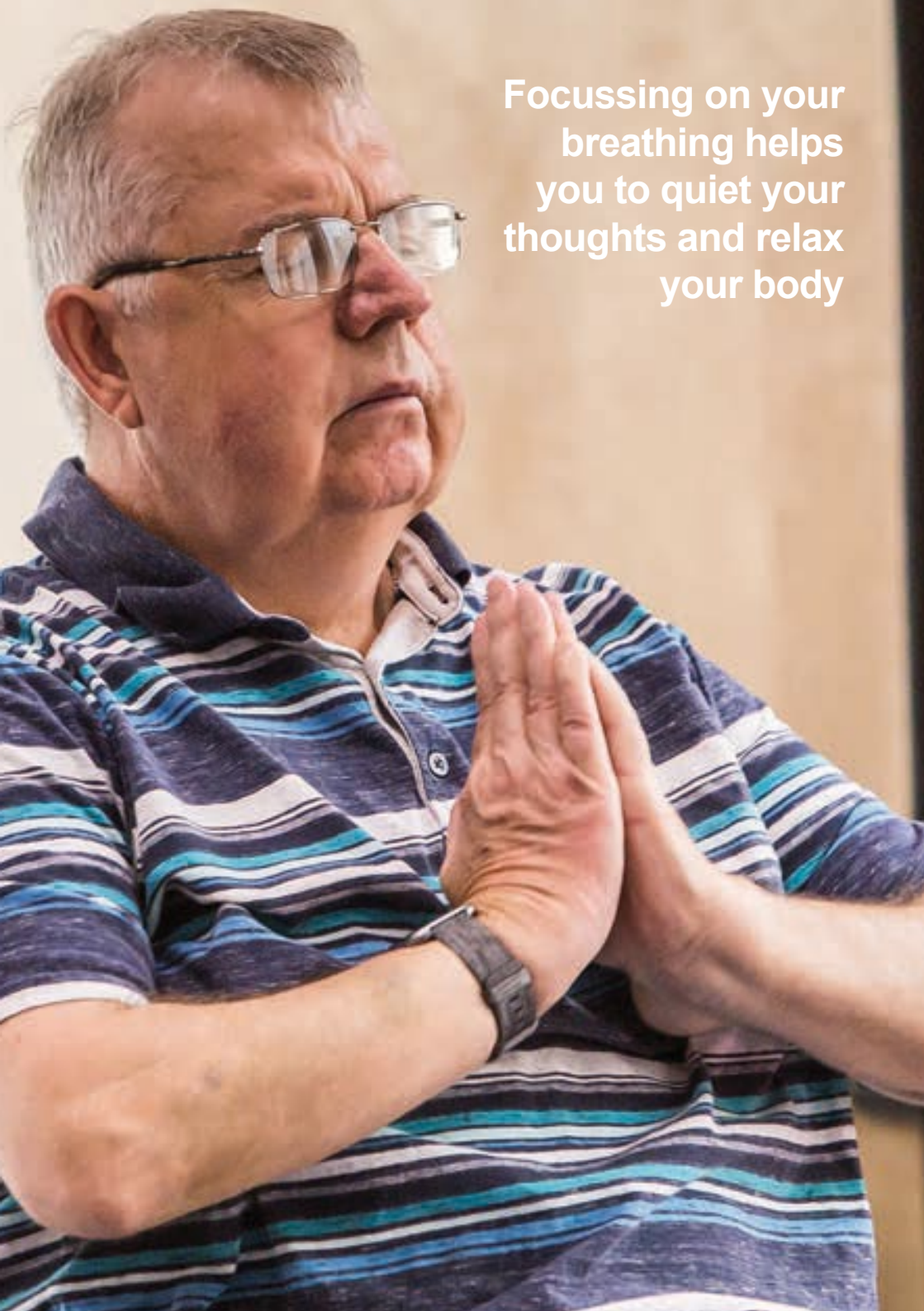
Like any activity it is important to cool down at the end. A yoga cool-down often focuses on:

**Your breathing** – focussing on your breathing helps you to quiet your thoughts and relax your body.

**Mindfulness** – being aware of your thoughts and feelings as they happen, this can help us to think clearly and create positive change.

**Relaxation** – helps us to slow down and relax our bodies after giving them a workout.

**Meditation** – helps you to quiet your thoughts and support you to be still.

A middle-aged man with short grey hair and glasses is shown in profile, looking upwards and to the right. He has a serious, contemplative expression. His hands are clasped together in a prayer-like gesture, held in front of his chest. He is wearing a polo shirt with horizontal stripes in shades of blue, teal, and white. A dark wristwatch is visible on his left wrist. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**Focussing on your  
breathing helps  
you to quiet your  
thoughts and relax  
your body**

# Sensory Walk: Mindfulness

mental  
health

## What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness 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.

When out on a walk, take a moment to try some of the mindfulness activities below to engage your senses with your surroundings and calm your mind.

**Tip!** Try to clear your mind of any thoughts, let them pass your mind like buses.

### Go Barefoot

Notice the feel of the ground on the soles of your feet

### Watch the Clouds

Breathe in and out as you watch the clouds roll by and change shape.

### Blowing Bubbles

Great for focusing on deep breathing, watch the bubbles float into the air

### Rock Stacking

Try stacking rocks of different sizes, steady your breathing to help concentrate

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### **Play 'I-Spy'**

Classic game to help you notice your surroundings

### **Nature Art**

Get your hands dirty by collecting natural materials to make murals and pictures

### **Smell the Flowers**

Slowly breathe and think about the sensations.

### **Play 'I-Hear'**

Clear your mind and concentrate on the sounds around you

### **Wildlife**

Spend time watching and listening to wildlife.

### **Skipping Stones**

Listen to the sounds the rocks make as they hit the water.

### **Put your phone away!**

Minimise distractions on your walk

### **Sit down for 10 minutes**

Park bench or under a tree, take time to notice your surroundings



**It's important to keep active all year round. But getting active when we're feeling low or anxious can be difficult. Walking a great place to start regardless of fitness or ability level, and Spring is an amazing time to renew your exercise goals.**

Try logging how many steps or how far you walk each week. Make notes of how you feel before and after you go for a walk and try to remember something memorable.

Use the table below to help keep track of your walks, making notes of memorable moments. Most phones are able to track and monitor your steps and distance.

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# Find a Guide Database

something  
new

British Blind Sport has partnered with England Athletics to offer a simple way to Find A Guide to help blind and partially sighted runners lace up and get running.

Running is a great way to get fit, enjoy the outdoors and meet other people. If you are 18 or older you can now simply search for guide runners near you using your postcode. All the friendly guide runners have attended a Sight Loss Awareness and Guide Running workshop, are DBS checked, passionate about running and are waiting to help support you.



To access this free database, head over to:  
[www.findaguide.co.uk](http://www.findaguide.co.uk)

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Our thanks for the content of this card go to British Blind Sport and England Athletics

# How to map out sensory walk

something  
new

When planning a sensory walk, it is important to consider how you will make it accessible to all of the individuals you are supporting. You will know how to best support the people in your group and how to adapt activities to meet their needs.

Before you lead the walk you should familiarise yourself with the route in order to:

- Check that paths are safe and wide enough for wheelchairs.
- Make sure that paths are level and unobstructed, avoiding steep hills.
- Think about how you will get to the starting point and back home again.

A map stick is useful tool to explain to someone with complex disabilities how far has been travelled on the walk. The stick should have different tactile markers on it, including at the beginning and the end, which the individual can feel to help them to understand where they are on the walk. You can easily create your own stick before going on the walk.

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Our thanks for the content of this card go to Sense Arts, Sue Mattocks and The Outdoor Guide.

## **Involving everyone in the planning**

Involving everyone in planning can greatly add to the experience of the walkers – supporting them to make choices and enjoy a sense of achievement.

Having a visual representation of the route, such as a map with pictures, can help participants to know what to expect. You may be able to offer different routes for them to choose from, or help plan a new one. Ask the participants what senses they would like to explore on the walk and plan these sensory activities together.

## **Using a map**

There are many maps, apps and online resources available to help you plan a route. Always ensure you have checked a route before going with people you support in case of any route closures or new hazards.

You may want to create a ‘route card’ by printing a map and circling the places you intend to stop at. It’s a good idea to share your route with someone at home in case of an emergency.

## **Length and time**

Think about how long it will take to walk the route. The average walking speed is three miles per hour, but the people you support may walk more slowly and get tired more easily. Plan a route based on the participants, and plan in time for completing activities, looking at points of interest, and making unexpected stops.

## Choosing a route

Think about the best place to start your walk.

If you are meeting other people, a free car park is often a good starting point. If you are planning a walk in an urban area, a train or bus station may be a good meeting point.

Your route can be more interesting if you plan to walk in a loop as you will have new experiences along the whole length of the walk.

## Plan waypoints

Waypoints are pre-planned points along your route, which are good places to stop for a break, or to complete the mindfulness activities described in part two of this resource. Include these waypoints on your map, map stick or route card when planning with the people you support. Involve them in making decisions where possible, to help decide when and where to stop, and which activities to do when they are there.

Make sure waypoints are planned at regular intervals to make sure that the participants do not become tired or lose interest. Think about how long you intend to stop at each waypoint when planning your route. You may also wish to schedule waypoints for toilet and refreshment breaks. Ensure that you have checked that accessible facilities are available before setting off.



## Checking for hazards

The safety of your route is very important – and it is advised that you complete a risk assessment of the route you are planning to take. Contact your line manager or care provider for a risk assessment template.

There are a number of potential hazards you may want to consider in your risk assessment, including:

- Adverse weather conditions.
- Crossing busy roads and level crossings.
- Coastal dangers.
- Low light.
- Steep terrain.

## Preparing to leave

Make sure you have necessary provisions before setting off, such as:

- Mobile phone and emergency contact numbers.
- Food and water.
- Appropriate clothing for the weather.
- Medications.





## How to lead your walk

Now you have planned the walk route and thought about safety, follow these steps to ensure your walk is enjoyable from start to finish.

- 1.** Start with a welcome, ask how everyone is feeling and check everyone is ready to start the walk.
- 2.** Start the walk, mentioning any sensory highlights as you walk around, allowing people to explore sensations and begin to engage with the environment around them.
- 3.** Stop at scheduled waypoints along the way; trying mindfulness or creative activities which can help create a meaningful experience. You can find some ideas suggested in part two of this resource.
- 4.** Continue the walk, identifying more sensory highlights as you go.
- 5.** Finish the walk and encourage the participants to reflect on what they enjoyed most. If in a group, you may wish to end the walk in a caf  for a drink.
- 6.** Celebrate the achievement and look over any items you may have collected during the activities. You may wish to enhance the memory and encourage others to take part by sharing photos and videos of the day with friends, family and colleagues.

# Safety When Running

something  
new

Before going out for your run, it's important to ensure you are fully prepared for your exercise and have thought through all safety considerations. Here is some top tips for pre-planning your next run!

- Make sure you run in good daylight, if that's not possible aim to stay on well-lit routes or even wear a head torch.
- Ensure you have clothing appropriate for your run. High-visibility clothing is optimal, especially when running in busy areas or near roads.
- If you are blind or partially sighted, you can purchase hi-vis clothing that also allow others to identify both yourself and your guide! Head over to the BBS website for more info.
- Make sure you know your route and are familiar with the area. Consider downloading the What3Words app, especially when running in rural areas as it can help the emergency services locate your exact position.

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- Take a phone out with you in case you need to call someone for assistance.
- Enjoy running in company, either with a running guide or a relevant running group.
- When running on roads, where possible always run on the side facing oncoming traffic.
- Switch up your routine! Try not to keep to the exact same running routine, e.g. same route at the same time.

## Useful links

BBS Hi-Vis clothing:

**[iproports.co.uk/product-category/club-zone/british-blind-sport/british-blind-sport-hi-vis-kit/](https://iproports.co.uk/product-category/club-zone/british-blind-sport/british-blind-sport-hi-vis-kit/)**

What3Words app:

**[what3words.com/](https://what3words.com/)**

Find a Guide database:

**[findaguide.co.uk](https://findaguide.co.uk)**

RunTogether:

**[runtogether.co.uk](https://runtogether.co.uk)**





# Join a Walking Group

meeting  
new people

## Benefits

Walking is a popular activity that you can do alone or in a group. It enables people to get outside, be active and connect with nature.

There are many benefits, including:

- Improved social connections
- Reduced anxiety and stress
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved mood and sleep quality



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## Where Can I Join?

There are many organisations that offer walking groups and opportunities in your local area.

### Ramblers

Whether you're walking to improve your health or simply for the pleasure of exploring your local area on foot, Rambler's walks make enjoying the great outdoors easy.

There walks take place across London, run all year round and accommodate a range of ages and walking abilities. They have over 500 volunteer groups across England, Scotland and Wales, most of which run several walks every week.

#### **Find a local walk here:**

[www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking.aspx](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking.aspx)

### Walking for Health

Walking for Health are England's largest network of health walk schemes, helping thousands of people across the country lead a more active lifestyle. Our group walks are led by friendly, specially trained volunteers who are on hand to provide encouragement and support, and make sure no one gets left behind.

There walks are short and over easy terrain. They are open to everyone, but are especially aimed at those who are least active.

#### **Find a local walk here:**

[www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder)



## Sensory Walks

Sensory walks allow you to use your senses to connect with your surroundings whilst you stay active.

Sense have partnered with Ordnance Survey to help you find sensory walking routes.

The walks are designed for people with sensory impairments and complex disabilities, but can be enjoyed by anyone. You can go alone or in a group, you don't need any specialist equipment and the walks can be any length you like. You can go on foot, use a wheelchair or walker – sensory walks are inclusive for all.

### Find your local walk here:

[www.sense.org.uk/get-support/arts-sport-and-wellbeing/sense-sport/our-programme/sensory-walks/](http://www.sense.org.uk/get-support/arts-sport-and-wellbeing/sense-sport/our-programme/sensory-walks/)



The activity finder, available on the Sense website, currently lists over one hundred activities tailored to the different needs of people with disabilities, and activities can be enjoyed with families, carers and support staff.

The resources currently come in multiple different formats, including, video content with British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation, captioning and auto description, Easy Read resources, and live zoom sessions that can be booked in advance. As the country moves out of lockdown, physical events will also be added to the website.

The content includes activities ranging from inclusive yoga to sound baths, and was created together with partners across the disability, sports and arts sectors, as well as with disabled artists, practitioners, instructors and coaches.

<https://www.sense.org.uk/arts-sports-and-wellbeing/explore-our-activities/>

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## Case Study

Janet is deafblind and due to her medication has to make sure that she exercises regularly. Sarah has been supporting Janet, who has just turned 56, for 12 years and the pair have had many adventures together. For Janet's emotional, mental and physical wellbeing, exercise plays an incredibly important role. So during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, she was at a loss.

Fortunately, Sense Active have provided a wealth of opportunities to stay active virtually delivering live sessions, creating pre-recorded videos and providing written activities. These sessions have done this incredible pair the world of good. For Sarah, it has enabled her to still provide essential support during the lockdown and for Janet, she can now take part in activities that are vital for her overall wellbeing.

## About the activities

### Tai-Chi, Mondays, 2-3pm

**Coach: Miz Rahman**

Enjoy gentle, flowing movements and channel positive energy, wherever you are. Instructed by Miz Rahman live on Zoom. This session can be completed seated, or standing and is suitable for all ability levels. You will need some water, and a clear space to exercise in and a chair. Feel free to stay online after the class to socialise with other participants.

<https://active.sense.org.uk/Course/004182f8-09f5-4415-91d6-3b4ec3288b33>

### Deaf Yoga, Thursdays 6pm-7pm

**Coach: Penny Pearce**

Follow instructor Penny through a series of Yoga postures to develop strength, resilience and enhance wellbeing. This class is taught in sign language on Zoom and is suitable for D/deaf adults of beginner to intermediate ability level.

<https://active.sense.org.uk/Course/ad64ba21-55ea-48d0-b46a-6704ab384872>

### Need more information?

If you'd like to speak to us about any aspect of this activity you can get in touch with Sense

**T:** 07976 707281 • **E:** [michael.barrett@sense.org.uk](mailto:michael.barrett@sense.org.uk)

# Joining a Running Group

meeting  
new people

## Benefits

So, you've hit the 5k mark... go you! You're enjoying running and want to take the next steps. There are many opportunities to join a running group and many benefits in doing so:

- Making new friends and team camaraderie
- Adds structure to your run training
- Enjoy running in a variety of different outdoor spaces
- Gaining inspiration from others around you
- Allows a competitive edge and an opportunity to join races!

## Where Can I Join?

There are many organisations that offer inclusive running clubs and opportunities within your local area. Read overleaf to find out more...



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Our thanks for the content of this card go to British Blind Sport, England Athletics, Park Run and Achilles International.

## England Athletics RunTogether

RunTogether provides fun, friendly, supportive and inclusive running opportunities for everyone: whatever your ability or time availability. RunTogether believe running / jogging is more fun and easier to become part of your lifestyle when shared with others. Try one of their group runs to find out for yourself.

**[runtogether.co.uk](http://runtogether.co.uk) or  
[englandathletics.org/find-an-athletics-club/](http://englandathletics.org/find-an-athletics-club/)**

## Parkrun UK

Parkruns are free, weekly, community events all around the world. Saturday morning events are 5k and take place in parks and open spaces.

Parkrun is a positive, welcoming and inclusive experience where there is no time limit and no one finishes last. Everyone is welcome to come along, whether you walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate.

**[parkrun.org.uk](http://parkrun.org.uk)**

## Achilles International

The mission of Achilles International is to empower people with all types of disabilities to participate in mainstream running events in order to promote personal achievement.

Whilst their programs focus on running, the truth is, running is simply the tool for accomplishing Achilles International's main objective: to bring hope, inspiration and the joys of achievement to all.

**[achillesinternational.org](http://achillesinternational.org)**



# Sensory exercises

moving  
more

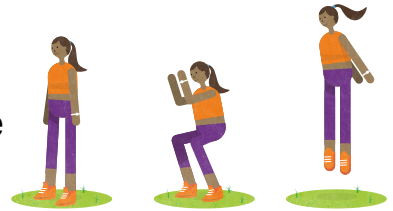
The following movement based exercises aim to improve mobility and coordination. These exercises have been designed for people with complex disabilities but can be enjoyed by anyone.

## Squat Jumps

**Make it easier:** only bend knees

**Make it harder:** take a wider stance

**More sensory:** try barefoot on different surfaces



## Chair squats

**Make it easier:** use a taller chair

**Make it harder:** remove the chair

**More sensory:** place tactile targets on the chair

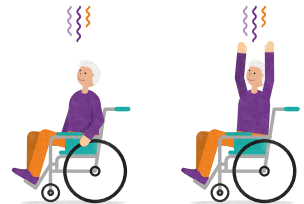


## Seated Reach

**Make it easier:** one arm at a time

**Make it harder:** move the target each time

**More sensory:** place tactile targets above



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## Arm Circles

**Make it easier:** one arm at a time

**Make it harder:** hold something heavy

**More sensory:** hold tactile objects in hands



## Side Bends

**Make it easier:** don't raise arms

**Make it harder:** hold for 30 seconds

**More sensory:** place a tactile target to reach such as a balloon



## Head Swivels

**Make it easier:** smaller range of movement

**Make it harder:** touch shoulder with chin

**More sensory:** add stimulation such as a fan blowing air



## Standing Lunges

**Make it easier:** take a smaller step

**Make it harder:** take a longer lunge

**More sensory:** try barefoot on different surfaces





## Leg Raises

**Make it easier:** smaller range of movement

**Make it harder:** place multiple targets

**More sensory:** try barefoot with tactile targets



## Heel Raises

**Make it easier:** smaller range of movement

**Make it harder:** use both feet

**More sensory:** place a tactile object under the feet



## Top Tips

Support participants by gently guiding their body or ask them to feel and mirror your movements.

Use household objects or surfaces to make exercises more sensory.

Support someone individually or enjoy exercises as a group.

# Couch to 5k

moving  
more

This programme is designed to get you running 5k in just 9 weeks. Thousands of people across the UK have used it to improve their fitness levels.

## Need a guide?

Head over to [runtogether.co.uk/running-support/find-a-guide/](https://runtogether.co.uk/running-support/find-a-guide/)

**Don't forget**  
to have rest  
days in between  
runs!

## Week one

For your three runs in week one, you will begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then alternate one minute of running and one-and-a-half minutes of walking, for a total of 20 minutes.

## Week two

For your three runs in week two, you will begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then alternate one-and-a-half minutes of running with two minutes of walking, for a total of 20 minutes.

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Our thanks for the content of this card go to the NHS and British Blind Sport

### **Week three**

For your three runs in week three, you will begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then two repetitions of one-and-a-half minutes of running, one-and-a-half minutes of walking, three minutes of running and three minutes of walking.

### **Week four**

For your three runs in week four, you will begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then three minutes of running, one-and-a-half minutes of walking, five minutes of running, two-and-a-half minutes of walking, three minutes of running, one-and-a-half minutes of walking and five minutes of running.

### **Week five - There are three different runs this week:**

- Run one: a brisk five-minute walk, then five minutes of running, three minutes of walking, five minutes of running, three minutes of walking and five minutes of running.
- Run two: a brisk five-minute walk, then eight minutes of running, five minutes of walking and eight minutes of running.
- Run three: a brisk five-minute walk, then 20 minutes of running, with no walking.

### **Week six - There are three different runs this week:**

- Run one: a brisk five-minute walk, then five minutes of running, three minutes of walking, eight minutes of running, three minutes of walking and five minutes of running.

- Run two: a brisk five-minute walk, then 10 minutes of running, three minutes of walking and 10 minutes of running.
- Run three: a brisk five-minute walk, then 25 minutes of running with no walking.

### **Week seven**

For your three runs in week seven, you will begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then 25 minutes of running.

### **Week eight**

For your three runs in week eight, you will begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then 28 minutes of running.

### **Week nine**

For your three runs in week nine, you will begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then 30 minutes of running.

### **Monitoring your runs?**

Log how your runs make you feel, do you find they're getting easier?

How many miles are you tracking each run?

### **Equipment**

Need a running tether with your guide or some bibs for others to identify you? Head over to the BBS shop!

**[britishblindsport.org.uk/shop/](http://britishblindsport.org.uk/shop/)**

# Get Active Bingo

moving  
more

Inside is a Active Bingo sheet, which lists activities which help to get you moving more. How many can you complete over the coming weeks?

Tick off your achievements to win a line or a full house



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Our thanks for the content of this card go to Mind.



Use the stairs or an outside step to perform step-ups



Loosen off your shoulders by moving your arms around in circles, then switch directions



Try to get up and move around for two minutes every hour during the day



Try juggling with your tea towels or rolled up socks



Take a moment to relax by taking a big breath in through the nose and out through the mouths



Walk to the end of your garden or around your flat



See how high you can raise your knees by marching on the spots



Dance around the kitchen or lounge to your favourite song



Do some gardening, or clean the windows



Balance on one leg holding onto a worktop for support,hold for ten seconds then swap legs



Stretch out your body by reaching up and then down towards your toes

Use the laundry basket as a target and see how many items of clothing you can throw in

Practice shadow boxing by punching up into the air, to the sides and out in front of you

Get outside for some fresh air and a brisk walk

Bounce on the bed or change the sheets really shaking out the duvet covers

Play volleyball with a balloon, soft ball or cuddly toy

See how many star jumps you can complete in one minute

Lift your heels from the ground whilst pressing down on your toes, hold onto a worktop for support

Walk around while talking on the phone or listening to music

Do the macarena or another dance of your choice

# Active at Home Programme

moving  
more

To help keep our members and service users stay #ActiveAtHome, we at BBS have worked with our inclusive trainers to develop a programme to keep you healthy and active in the comfort of your own home.

## Our programme consists of 3 parts;

- A live workout week at the beginning of each month, with a different exercise class each night of the week at 6pm
- Each instructor provides a pre-recorded video, designed to help you progress and build stamina in their specific class. The idea is you do the same class on the same day of the week, each week, to get you ready for the next live workout week at the beginning of the following month.
- An #ActiveAtHome Challenge is set by a different instructor each month. Participants compete in these challenges and post their results in our Facebook group. At the end of the month, the winner of the challenge wins a prize!

For more information about our programme, please head over to our website: <https://britishblindsport.org.uk/the-active-at-home-programme/>

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Our thanks for the content of this card go to British Blind Sport and Active at Home Delivery Partners



# Sitting exercises

moving  
more

These gentle sitting exercises can be done at home and will help improve your mobility and prevent falls.

Do not worry if you have not done much exercise for a while, these seated exercises are gentle and easy to follow.

For these exercises, choose a solid, stable chair that does not have wheels. You should be able to sit with your feet flat on the floor and knees bent at right angles. Avoid chairs with arms, as these will restrict your movement.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing and keep some water handy.

Build up slowly and aim to gradually increase the repetitions of each exercise over time. Try to do these exercises at least twice a week and combine them with the other routines in this series:

- flexibility exercises
- balance exercises
- strength exercises

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Our thanks for the content of this card go to the NHS and British Blind Sport

## Chest stretch

This stretch is good for posture.

**A.** Sit upright and away from the back of the chair. Pull your shoulders back and down. Extend your arms out to the side.



**B.** Gently push your chest forward and up until you feel a stretch across your chest.

Hold for 5 to 10 seconds and repeat 5 times.

## Upper-body twist

This stretch will develop and maintain flexibility in the upper back.

**A.** Sit upright with your feet flat on the floor, cross your arms and reach for your shoulders.



**B.** Without moving your hips, turn your upper body to the left as far as is comfortable. Hold for 5 seconds.

**C.** Repeat on the right side.

Do 5 times on each side.

## Hip marching

This exercise will strengthen hips and thighs, and improve flexibility.

- A.** Sit upright and do not lean on the back of the chair. Hold on to the sides of the chair.
- B.** Lift your left leg with your knee bent as far as is comfortable. Place your foot down with control.
- C.** Repeat with the opposite leg.

Do 5 lifts with each leg.

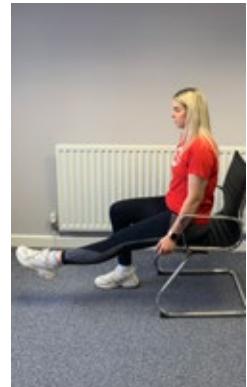


## Ankle stretch

This stretch will improve ankle flexibility and lower the risk of developing a blood clot.

- A.** Sit upright, hold on to the side of the chair and straighten your left leg with your foot off the floor.
- B.** With your leg straight and raised, point your toes away from you.
- C.** Point your toes back towards you.

Try 2 sets of 5 stretches with each foot.



## Arm raises

This exercise builds shoulder strength.

**A.** Sit upright with your arms by your sides.



**B.** With palms forwards, raise both arms out and to the side, and up as far as is comfortable.



**C.** Return to the starting position.

Keep your shoulders down and arms straight throughout. Breathe out as you raise your arms and breathe in as you lower them. Repeat 5 times.

## Neck rotation

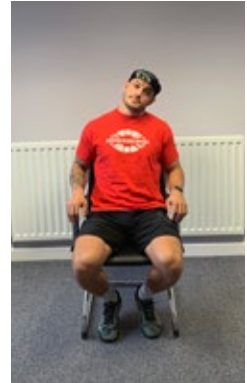
This stretch is good for improving neck mobility and flexibility.

**A.** Sit upright with your shoulders down. Look straight ahead.

**B.** Slowly turn your head towards your left shoulder as far as is comfortable. Hold for 5 seconds and return to the starting position.

**C.** Repeat on the right.

Do 3 rotations on each side.



## Neck stretch

This stretch is good for loosening tight neck muscles.

**A.** Sitting upright, look straight ahead and hold your left shoulder down with your right hand.



**B.** Slowly tilt your head to the right while holding your shoulder down.

**C.** Repeat on the opposite side.

Hold each stretch for 5 seconds and repeat 3 times on each side.

# Flexibility exercises

moving  
more

These flexibility exercises can be done at home to help improve your health and mobility.

Do not worry if you have not done much exercise for a while, the exercises are gentle and easy to follow.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing and keep some water handy. Build up slowly and aim to gradually increase the repetitions of each exercise over time.

Try to do these exercises at least twice a week and combine them with the other routines in this series.

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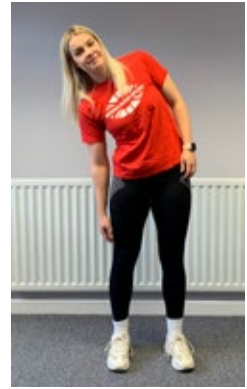
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## Sideways bend

Helps restore flexibility to the lower back.

- A. Stand upright with your feet hip-width apart and arms by your sides.
- B. Slide your left arm down your side as far as is comfortable. As you lower your arm, you should feel a stretch on the opposite hip.
- C. Repeat with your right arm.

Hold for 2 seconds and perform 3 on each side.



## Calf stretch

Good for loosening tight calf muscles.

- A. Place your hands against a wall for stability. Bend the right leg and step the left leg back at least a foot's distance, keeping it straight. Both feet should be flat on the floor.
- B. The left calf muscle is stretched by keeping the left leg as straight as possible and the left heel on the floor.
- C. Repeat with the opposite leg.

Perform 3 on each side.



## Neck stretch

This stretch is good for loosening tight neck muscles.

**A.** Sitting upright, look straight ahead and hold your left shoulder down with your right hand.



**B.** Slowly tilt your head to the right while holding your shoulder down.

**C.** Repeat on the opposite side.

Hold each stretch for 5 seconds and repeat 3 times on each side.

## Neck rotation

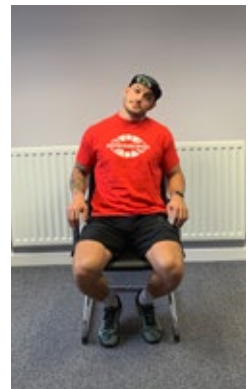
This stretch is good for improving neck mobility and flexibility.

**A.** Sit upright with your shoulders down. Look straight ahead.

**B.** Slowly turn your head towards your left shoulder as far as is comfortable. Hold for 5 seconds and return to the starting position.

**C.** Repeat on the right.

Do 3 rotations on each side.





# Balance exercises

moving  
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These simple balance exercises can be done at home to help improve your health and mobility.

Do not worry if you have not done much exercise for a while, these balance exercises are gentle and easy to follow.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing and keep some water handy. Build up slowly and aim to gradually increase the repetitions of each exercise over time.

Consider doing the exercises near a wall or a stable chair just in case you lose your balance.

Try to do these exercises at least twice a week and combine them with the other routines in this series:

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## Sideways walking

- A.** Stand with your feet together, knees slightly bent.
- B.** Step sideways in a slow and controlled manner, moving one foot to the side first.
- C.** Move the other to join it.



Avoid dropping your hips as you step. Perform 10 steps each way or step from one side of the room to the other.

## Simple grapevine

This involves walking sideways by crossing one foot over the other.

- A.** Start by crossing your right foot over your left.
- B.** Bring your left foot to join it.



Attempt 5 cross-steps on each side. If necessary, put your fingers against a wall for stability. The smaller the step, the more you work on your balance.

## Heel-to-toe walk

- A.** Standing upright, place your right heel on the floor directly in front of your left toe.
- B.** Then do the same with your left heel. Make sure you keep looking forward at all times. If necessary, put your fingers against a wall for stability.



Try to perform at least 5 steps. As you progress, move away from the wall.

## One-leg stand

- A.** Start by standing facing the wall, with your arms outstretched and your fingertips touching the wall.
- B.** Lift your left leg, keep your hips level and keep a slight bend in the opposite leg. Gently place your foot back on the floor.

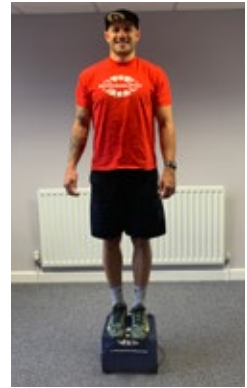


Hold the lift for 5 to 10 seconds and perform 3 on each side.

## Step-up

Use a step, preferably with a railing or near a wall, to use as support.

- A. Step up with your right leg.
- B. Bring your left leg up to join it.
- C. Step down again and return to the start position.



The key for building balance is to step up and down slowly and in a controll



# Strength exercises

moving  
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Strength exercises like these can be done at home to improve your health and mobility.

Do not worry if you have not done much for a while, these strength exercises are gentle and easy to follow.

For the chair-based exercises, choose a solid, stable chair that does not have wheels and that will not slip on the surface it is on.

You should be able to sit with your feet flat on the floor and your knees bent at right angles. Avoid chairs with arms, as these will restrict your movement.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing and keep some water handy.

Build up slowly and aim to gradually increase the repetitions of each exercise over time.

Try to do these exercises at least twice a week and combine them with the other routines in this series:

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## Sit-to-stand

- A.** Sit on the edge of the chair, feet hip-width apart. Lean slightly forwards.
- B.** Stand up slowly using your legs, not arms. Keep looking forward and do not look down.
- C.** Stand upright and then slowly sit down, using your hands or arms just to guide you if possible.

Aim for 5 slow repetitions. The slower, the better.



## Mini-squats

- A.** Rest your hands on the back of the chair for stability and stand with your feet hip-width apart.
- B.** Slowly bend your knees as far as is comfortable, keeping them facing forwards. Aim to get them over your big toe. Keep your back straight at all times.

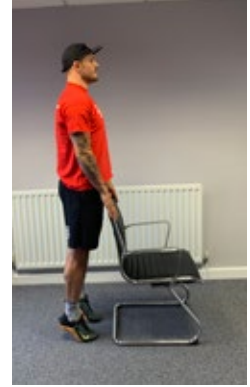


- C.** Gently come up to standing, squeezing (clenching) your buttocks as you do so.

Repeat 5 times.

## Calf raises

- A.** Rest your hands on the back of a chair for stability.
- B.** Lift both heels off the floor as far as is comfortable. The movement should be slow and controlled.



Repeat 5 times. To make this more difficult, perform the exercise without support.

## Sideways leg lift

- A.** Rest your hands on the back of a chair for stability.
- B.** Raise your left leg to the side as far as is comfortable, keeping your back and hips straight. Avoid tilting to the right.
- C.** Return to the starting position. Now raise your right leg to the side as far as possible.

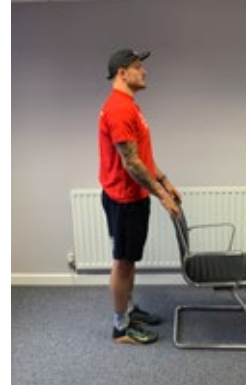
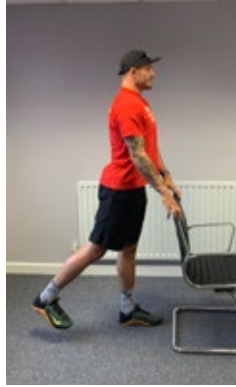


Raise and lower each leg 5 times.

## Leg extension

**A.** Rest your hands on the back of a chair for stability.

**B.** Standing upright, raise your left leg backwards, keeping it straight. Avoid arching your back as you take your leg back. You should feel the effort in the back of your thigh and bottom.



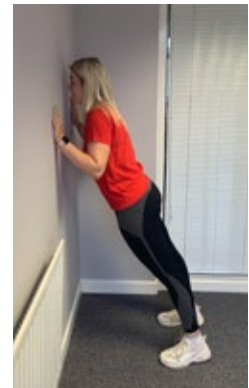
**C.** Repeat with the right leg.

Hold the lift for 5 seconds and repeat 5 times with each leg.

Hold the lift for 5 seconds and repeat 5 times with each leg.

## Wall press-up

**A.** Stand at arm's length from the wall. Place your hands flat against the wall at chest level, with your fingers pointing upwards.



**B.** With your back straight, slowly bend your arms, keeping your elbows by your side. Aim to close the gap between your chest and the wall.

**C.** Slowly return to the start.

Attempt 3 sets of 5 to 10 repetitions.

