

Activity myth-busters fact sheet

You don't have to be fit to be healthy.

True. It is easy to confuse fitness and health. However, being fit and being healthy mean different things. You can be both fit and healthy, but this may not always be the case. Fitness may have more to do with genetics than physical activity. Also, you may be fit through playing sport or running regularly, but you can still be unhealthy as a result of other lifestyle factors such as alcohol dependency, poor nutrition or smoking or from infectious disease. Understanding the difference between fitness and health is important.

No pain, no gain.

False! Muscle soreness or pain is a sign that you may be over-doing it or working too hard for your current fitness level. Slow down and build up gradually.

Walking can be a great workout.

True. Walking uses most of your body's muscles and joints, so it's a great all-over body workout. It's also ideal for people who haven't been physically active for a while, those recovering from illness or overweight people. Beginning with ten minutes a day and building up gradually, both in pace and duration of your walk, will have positive benefits.

If you are ill, it's better to put off your activity routine.

True. In fact, it can be dangerous to do some physical activities if you are ill. Check with your doctor first.

Warming up before vigorous activity makes a difference.

True. It's always wise to do some warm-up exercises to prepare yourself before any vigorous activity such as jogging, aerobics, fast cycling; or playing sports like football, squash and netball. Warming up by walking on the spot and muscle stretches increases blood flow to the heart to prepare for the activity ahead. It also increases blood flow to and flexibility of the muscles, which helps prevent injury.

If you have an injury, you still may be able to enjoy some physical activity.

True, but... It's best to talk to your doctor about what you can and can't do. There may be a low weight-bearing activity like yoga or swimming that you can do.