



**OSCAR KILO**  
Family Life

# **Keeping fit as a family**

**Tips for shift workers  
and their loved ones**

# Family fitness

Exercise might not sound too appealing to someone just getting off a late-night shift (or someone contemplating a day of work or parenting). But you can start slow.

All it takes is a few minutes of low-intensity movement – for example just walking - to trigger the release of pain-relieving endorphins. Every stretch releases tension and every movement makes oxygen flow a little faster.

Keeping fit is really important – helping to strengthen not just your muscles, but the bond between you and your loved ones.



# Encouraging yourself and your partner to keep fit

If you live with someone who's in the police and you both need a bit of extra encouragement to keep fit, there are plenty of reasons to stay in shape:

- › **Better performance at work:** exercise can help someone meet the challenges of policing, like shift work, unpredictable duties and exposure to potentially upsetting experiences. It can boost mood, reduce stress and improve decision making
- › **Improved overall health:** regular physical activity can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and some types of cancer
- › **Healthier, happier children:** as well as all the above benefits, including improved mood, regular exercise is essential for the healthy development of children – and children who start exercising when they're young are more likely to continue being physically active as adolescents and adults
- › **Stronger family ties:** exercise can be a fun social activity that brings your family closer together





**“Exercise is essential for your mental health and happiness. I’ve realised over the years, that people mention those benefits more than the physical; sleeping better, having more energy, feeling happier, less stressed and being more patient with the kids.”**

**Joe Wicks, Body Coach.**

# How much exercise should I do?

Around one in three men and nearly half of women in the UK are not active enough for good health, and three quarters of children aren't doing enough exercise either according to a global study by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Are you and your loved ones getting up and about enough? Check the NHS physical activity guidelines below, to see:

## Babies

(under one year)

- Should be active throughout the day, every day, in a variety of ways, including crawling
- This should include at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day when they're awake

## Toddlers

(aged one to two)

- Physical activity every day for at least 180 minutes is recommended, including playing outdoors
- This should include a mix of light activity, like standing up and moving around, mixed with more energetic activities like skipping, hopping and running





## **Pre-schoolers**

(aged three to four)

- At least 180 minutes a day
- This includes at least 60 minutes a day of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity

## **Children and young people**

(five to 18)

- 60 minutes of aerobic activity every day (walking to school, swimming, cycling) is recommended
- This includes three days a week of activities that involve muscle and bone strengthening exercises (for example ballet, gymnastics, football and climbing)



## **Adults**

**(19 to 65+)**

- **Should be doing at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity every week**
- **Including strength exercises on two or more days a week that work all the major muscles (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms)**



# Family friendly exercises

Whether you've got children, no matter how young or old, and whatever your level of fitness, there are lots of different exercises to choose from to suit your circumstances.

## As a duo

Walking is a great way to get out and about as a pair. Activities like tennis, badminton and cycling, are also excellent exercise options for duos.

We've also developed a range of eight free fitness videos led by Lou Dutch who is the lead for fitness in Dorset Police.

You can view these here: [www.oscarkilo.org.uk/services/healthy-living/physical-wellbeing](http://www.oscarkilo.org.uk/services/healthy-living/physical-wellbeing)

## Very young children

Keeping active as a family with young children is as easy as getting out for a walk with the pram or pushchair (or with a jogging stroller if you want to make it a bit more intense). You could also try an equipment-free home workout for those times you're unable to get out of the house, for example incorporating stretching, planks, squats and jumps (there are some good equipment-free workout suggestions on You Tube).





## As a family

A small circuit (with or without equipment) can be good fun for the whole family – lean into the chaos and don't expect perfection, even a little movement will have benefits. You could try a family bike ride. Some gyms also offer family fitness classes, these are really convenient because you've got an expert on hand to take you through a routine.

Household chores, like taking the rubbish out, tidying up and vacuuming, can also provide plenty of physical activity. Make things more interesting by turning tasks into games, like seeing who can tidy away their toys the quickest.

Dancing is another great way to inject some impromptu activity into your everyday family life. From jiggling along to nursery rhymes to tangoing through the living room, it's fun, fast and straightforward.

You might also want to check out the free Cosmic Yoga for kids series on YouTube (fun for grownups too):

[www.youtube.com/CosmicKidsYoga](http://www.youtube.com/CosmicKidsYoga)

And Joe Wick's 'wake up with Joe' lockdown workouts are all freely available on YouTube: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9sciRMnE1c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9sciRMnE1c)

## Fast and furious

If you need family workouts to be short and sweet, intense exercise like a high intensity interval training (also known as HIIT), sprints and skipping all fit the bill.



# Golden rules for exercising as a shift worker

- › Make it convenient – exercise on the days and at times that work best for all of you. This might be before a shift, after school or at the weekend
- › Learn from the past – reflect on what works and what doesn't and update your exercise plan as needed. This is important to ensure you keep enjoying exercise
- › Make it fun – this might mean doing the same activity every time or mixing it up





## Find out more

To get the most out of your exercise, healthy eating and sleep are even more important than ever, so check out our guides on nutrition and sleep.

**Are you getting enough sleep?** Find out by going through this quick PDF checklist.

**Mission Nutrition:** Building healthier diets for officers, staff and their families

**Craving better sleep?** 11 tips for shift workers and their families

**Further sleep advice for shift workers** – a two-page practical PDF from The Sleep Charity.



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**If you have a family member or close friend who works in the police,  
we're here for you too. It's a role that throws up unique challenges  
and this can have a wider impact on the wellbeing of families.**

**You'll find more resources and support  
for families and friends on our website:**



**[www.oscarkilo.org.uk/family-life](http://www.oscarkilo.org.uk/family-life)**