



Physical  
health &  
wellbeing



Support for life

# Top Tips For Staying Work Fit

*Time off work due to ill health can have a serious knock-on effect on your finances, the stress of which can make it even more difficult to recover. Everyone gets ill sometimes but there are simple steps you can take to improve your physical health and reduce the risk of illness or injury.*

## **Diet: are you getting your five a day?**

We are bombarded with information on how to eat healthily, with a new 'superfood' coming out every week. Eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, for vitamins, fibre and general wellbeing, is a long-established cornerstone of a healthy, balanced diet and it doesn't have to include organic quinoa and chia seeds.

### **Try:**

- Taking a packed lunch to work that includes two pieces of fruit and some raw vegetables (carrots, cucumber, peppers etc). You'll save money and (hopefully) won't be tempted by the sandwich shop.

- Soup - it's a fantastic way eat lots of veg, and smoothies do the same trick for fruit
- Adding a piece of fruit to your breakfast; sliced banana on your Weetabix or sliced apple with your toast

## Sleep: 7-8 hours a night

It's so tempting to stay up late, especially if you're knee deep in Netflix and the evening is the only time you get to relax. But being tired means you're less likely to fight off colds and puts you at risk of making mistakes at work or while driving.

### Try:

- Designating one night a week as an 'early night'. Monday is probably the best option. No-one goes out on a Monday...
- Reading for a while before going to sleep, it calms you down and, unlike phones and tablets, books don't emit light, which can make it hard to nod off.
- Avoiding caffeine later in the day. For obvious reasons.

## Get active

The benefits of exercise are endless. It improves your cardiovascular health, helps you maintain a healthy weight, reduces stress and prevents illness. But you don't have to be in the gym five days a week to benefit, even small changes can make a big difference.

### Try:

- Park further away from work and walk the rest of the way
- Take the stairs rather than the lift
- Spend your lunchbreak going for a walk
- No need to hit the gym - try a ten-minute workout at home <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/Tenminuteworkouts.aspx>

## Look after your back

Back pain is a leading cause of time off work in the UK and preventing back problems is much easier than curing them. If your job involves lifting or physical work, make sure you're doing it safely; ask for training if you don't know how. If you're sitting at a desk all day, make sure you take regular breaks and that your chair is adjusted to support your back.

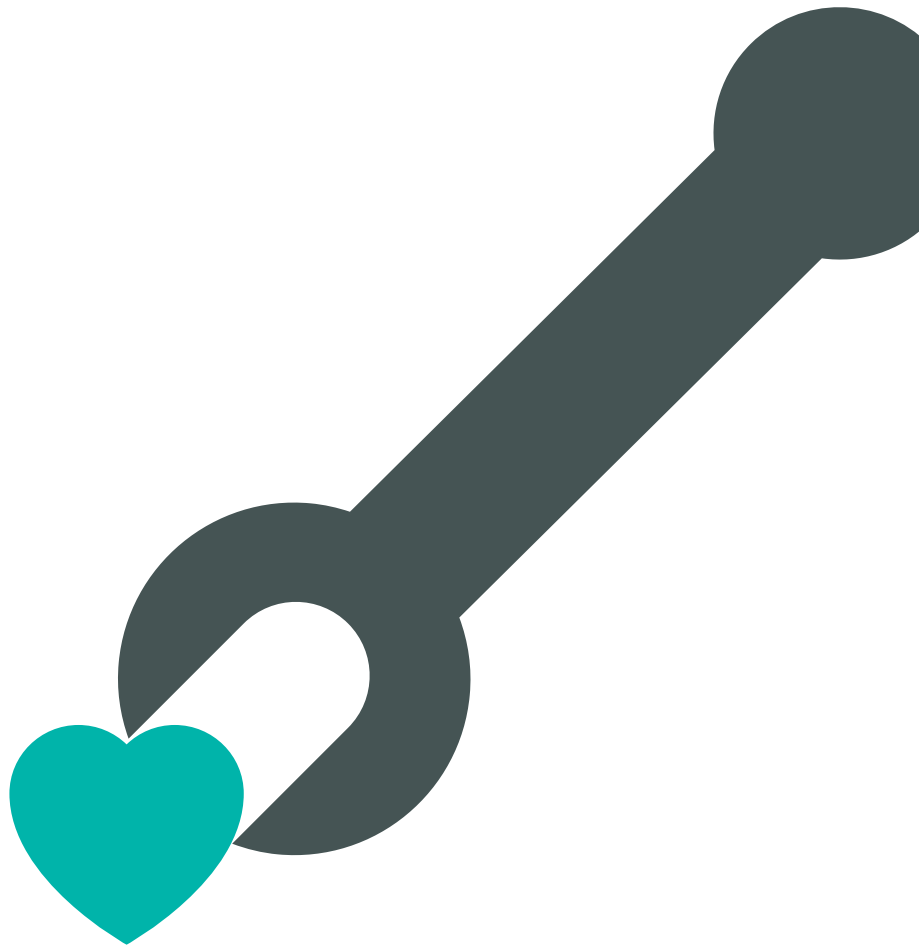
### Try:

- Learn to lift safely. Bend your knees and hips, not your back, when lifting.
- Exercise your back - swimming and walking are excellent options.
- Take a break from sitting every 30 minutes to relieve pressure on your back

For more on back care:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Backpain/Pages/Backpainhome.aspx>





## Further sources of help

- Ten minute workouts  
[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/Tenminuteworkouts.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/Tenminuteworkouts.aspx)
- For more on back care:  
[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Backpain/Pages/Backpainhome.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Backpain/Pages/Backpainhome.aspx)

[www.ben.org.uk](http://www.ben.org.uk)

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**Free, confidential helpline:**  
**08081 311 333**

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