



COVID-19 CLINICAL SOLUTIONS

What did you do?

We produced a factsheet for healthcare professionals reviewing evidence of how physical activity (PA) and exercise can enhance immunity against common pathogens and a public leaflet on strengthening your immune system.

Who are you?

Dr Alex Wadley and Dr Sam Lucas of the University of Birmingham, School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences.
Dr Brian Johnson, member of the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Clinical Priority of Physical Activity and Lifestyle steering group.

What was the problem?

There is evidence that people are moving less during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is at a time when clinical manifestations of COVID-19 vary considerably among people, with older individuals and those with certain medical conditions becoming seriously ill and requiring hospitalisation. Low levels of PA further exacerbate this.

What was the solution?

Having reviewed the current evidence of how PA and exercise modulate immunity, the team created a factsheet for all health professionals, to improve their scientific and practical (for example, type, intensity, duration, and frequency of exercise) knowledge on how being more active could benefit immunity during the COVID-19 pandemic. This knowledge could then be used in clinical consultations to help people understand more about why they should be more active during this time.

A patient leaflet (endorsed by the RCGP) was also then produced, which could be used in clinical consultations by health professionals to people to help understand more about why they should be more active during this time. Based on the same current scientific evidence of the factsheet, the leaflet is aimed at the most vulnerable people with a practical solution using the clinically proven walking programme, 'PaceUP', as a suggested way to increase walking distances.

Impact so far: The RCGP, Royal College of Nursing (RCN), and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists have all endorsed and promoted the factsheet. The factsheet has also been available for UK medical schools as part of resources on PA.

The patient leaflet has been suggested to pass to the public through clinical consultations, outlets, and public websites to help empower people to move more. It is very popular with patients on testing, who are generally unaware that they can strengthen their immune system with PA.

Where can we find out more?

Please contact Dr Alex Wadley: a.j.wadely@bham.ac.uk

The factsheet is within the condition specific resources of the RCGP toolkit:
[E6555DF011C84C24877B95E80FE0A696.ashx \(rcgp.org.uk\)](https://rcgp.org.uk/condition-specific-resources/E6555DF011C84C24877B95E80FE0A696.ashx)

The factsheet is also within the RCN toolkit on physical activity:
<https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/public-health/physical-activity>

Or the Health Education and Improvement Wales website:
<https://gpcpd.heiw.wales/clinical/motivate-2-move/physical-activity-exercise-and-immune-function/>

The patient leaflet is available from the RCGP physical activity toolkit here:
[F2D163B47FDB464EA36411D100F36B6D.ashx \(rcgp.org.uk\)](https://rcgp.org.uk/physical-activity-toolkit/F2D163B47FDB464EA36411D100F36B6D.ashx)

<https://bjgp.org>