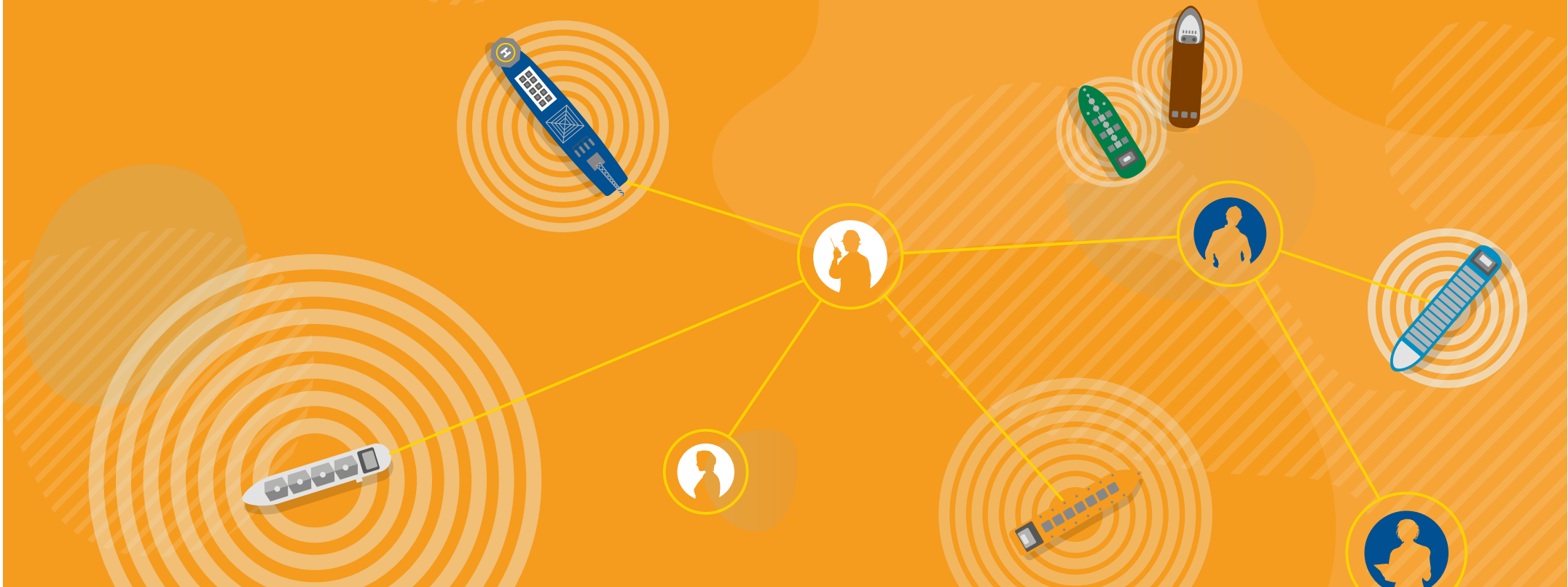


Maritime Wellbeing

Building Healthy Habits Exercise

Maintain your body and mind in optimum condition with focused exercise.



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The Building Healthy Habits – Exercise Programme aims to help Seafarers keep their bodies and minds fit and well. It consists of helpful information and some useful example activities which anyone can try, whatever fitness level / experience they are starting from.

The activities include a selection that can be done alone, with other crew members onboard, or even across a fleet of vessels to help get as many people involved as possible.

We recommend starting slowly and choosing a variety of activities from the three areas included in the booklet, but they can also be arranged according to what works best for each person and what activities they like most.



It is important to read the 'Top Tips' before starting any of the activities.



Stay strong, healthy and safe!

Working on ships can be physically and mentally challenging, so it is very important to look after yourself.

Creating healthy habits during your time onboard is an easy way to make small changes that can help you stay safe and well at work. You can practice these habits at home too, to help build a healthier body and mind for you and your family. Being in good physical and mental health will also help you respond to unexpected situations and activities more successfully, wherever you are!

Getting fit and staying fit onboard is one of the healthiest habits you can create. So, there is no better time to get started than now!

01 FAQ about exercise

My work is already very physical...

Climbing stairs and doing tasks all day that use lifting or pulling may feel like physical exercise. But, although these activities help you stay active, it is still very important that you also practice specific skills and train key muscles to maintain them at the right level.

Focused exercise for your endurance (aerobic exercise), strength, and flexibility can help maintain your body (and your mind) in optimum condition.



After age 30 you can lose up to 3–5% of your muscle mass each decade if you are not physically active.

Resistance exercise or working out with weights 2–3 times per week can help prevent this loss and reduce the risk of functional disability, falls and poor quality of life.

I don't have time to do exercise...

A little goes a long way.



Harvard University researchers recently noted that as little as 15 minutes of focused physical activity a day can boost your life span by three years.

Even 10 – 15 minutes of focused exercise can have a positive effect on health and wellbeing. If you do not have gym facilities for exercise onboard, feel exhausted after your watches or work, or find it hard to 'make time' when you are facing high demands, you can still do it!

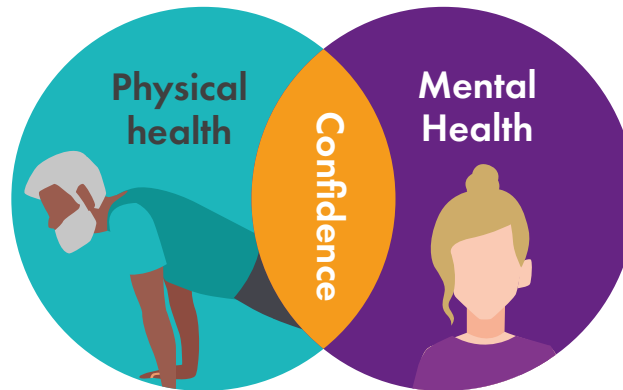
In fact, it is better to start small even if you feel the exercise is too easy – it will make your goals achievable – you can then build up gradually. This will encourage you stick to your commitment and help you maintain a positive mindset.

We will show you some simple exercises later in this programme, that you can easily do in a short period of time and without the need for equipment or much space.

01 FAQ about exercise

Is exercise really that important?

Yes! There are so many ways that exercise can improve your life!



Because your physical body and your mental health are connected, regular focused physical activity can boost your wellbeing and make you feel better. It can also help you cope with the challenges of daily life at sea and ashore.

Working out regularly produces 'feel-good' chemicals in the body which can help with long-term happiness and reduce feelings of stress, anxiety and depression. Even a short, 10-minute, activity can improve your mental alertness, energy and positive mood. It can also boost your mental health by making you feel more relaxed and increasing your confidence.



Being physically active is associated with a **reduced risk of some cancers.**

Some other benefits of regular exercise can include:

- reduces weight
- improves body shape
- improves blood circulation
- lowers blood pressure
- prevents diabetes
- improves cholesterol
- increases muscle strength
- makes your heart stronger
- improves sleep quality
- improves energy levels



Not exercising may increase your risk of premature death more than cardiovascular disease, diabetes and even smoking

01 FAQ about exercise

How does exercise help you stay safe at work?

Exercise can help you be safer and perform better at work by keeping your body fit and improving your thinking, learning, and judgment skills. For example, it:

- improves concentration
- improves memory
- improves self-confidence
- helps you
 - » move around more easily
 - » feel less tired
 - » recover faster



Your body can become more agile (able to move more quickly and easily) through exercise and strength training, which could **improve your balance and help prevent falls and other injuries**

Other added benefits...

Exercise helps keep your body young!



Men and women in their 70s who exercise regularly have the heart, lung and muscle fitness of healthy people 30 years younger.

Exercising with other people or setting exercise challenges onboard can also help crewmates have fun together and build better relationships as a result – stay strong together on board!



01 FAQ about exercise

Where should I start?

Acknowledge the barriers

Exercise is great for your body and mind, but it can be hard to get started if there are things standing in your way, from the amount of work you have to get done first, onboard facilities available, or how fit and active you are to start with.

Take control

Focus on what you can do not what you can't: choose short, simple, easy exercises that do not need equipment or much space; if you can, pick a set time to exercise that will usually fit in around work and stick to it as much as possible.

Start small

10-15 minutes at a time is a good start (this does not include the physical activity you already do for work) and then slowly build up. Plan when you are going to exercise and be consistent. Set yourself goals and track progress.



Goals are easier to reach when they are:

- **Specific rather than general** (e.g. "I will run for 10 minutes at 14.00 three times a week" NOT "I will go for a run this week")
- **Challenging but achievable** (e.g. "I want to work out three times a week for 15 mins" NOT "I will spend one hour working out every day")
- **Divided into short-term mini-goals** e.g.
 - » Every day in January and February I will wake up 10 minutes earlier to exercise for 5-10 minutes."
 - » Every day in March and April I will wake up 15 minutes earlier to exercise for 15-20 minutes."

Keep going!

You may find a routine that you are able to do for a while (e.g. 30 mins per day after work) and then because of a change in your work schedule you start missing days and eventually feel like stopping. Although it may seem hard to keep going, focus on what you can still do, for a shorter period, at a different time or perhaps not every day. Just don't give up!

01 Quick Quiz

How much do you know already about the importance of exercise!?

1. Which type of exercise will keep your body and mind in top condition?

- a. Endurance
- b. Strength
- c. Flexibility
- d. A balance of a, b and c

2. Exercise helps you stay safe at work because it can...?

- a. Improve your concentration when standing a watch
- b. Make hauling ropes easier
- c. Help you move around tight spaces
- d. All of the above

3. True or False:

You can only do exercise if you have a gym and weights?

4. True or False:

Walking, climbing stairs, squats and push-ups are all types of endurance exercise?

5. Table tennis and basketball

- a. Are only for good players
- b. Are just to get fit
- c. Are just for fun with your mates
- d. Are fun ways to get fit whatever your ability

6. A burpee is a

- a. Sport played in a team of 6 with a soft ball
- b. Noise made after eating too much rice
- c. Form of endurance exercise
- d. Type of elastic band for stretching

7. Which of the following do you need to remember when doing exercise?

- a. Drink plenty of water
- b. Breathe regularly
- c. Take a rest between exercises
- d. Warm up before and cool down after
- e. All of the above [a, b, c, d]
- f. None of the above [a, b, c, d]

8. True or False:

Exercise is good for your mental as well as your physical health?

Go to page **13** to see the correct answers!

02 Types of exercise

A balance of the three following types of focused exercise can help you stay well at sea:

 **Endurance**,  **strength**, and  **flexibility training**.

Endurance training is also called aerobic exercise. It includes activities that increase your breathing and heart rate such as walking, jogging, stair climbing, rowing, etc.

Building your endurance is important and **can reduce the risk of many conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke**. It also makes your everyday physical activities easier to do, whether it is watches in the engine room, climbing up and down the pump room stairs or working on deck.

Health organizations recommend we get **at least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week** (i.e. 30 minutes, 5 times a week).

If you move around a lot at work getting plenty of steps, you are already doing some aerobic exercise. However, it is still important to supplement your fitness levels for example playing basketball, table tennis or doing another activity that gets your heart pumping and releases those 'feel good' chemicals!



Endurance top tips:

Gradually build up endurance exercise, especially if you haven't been active for a long time.

Start out with 10-15 minutes at a time.

Warm up before any activity e.g. 5 minutes brisk walking or another low intensity aerobic activity like jogging on the spot.

Cool down after any activity e.g. 5 minutes stretching, brisk walking or another low intensity aerobic activity like jogging on the spot.

Focus on your breathing - do not hold your breath; breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth.

Stay hydrated during exercise.

Listen to your body - hold off on exercise when you're sick or feeling very fatigued.

Endurance



02 Types of exercise

Strength



Strength training is also very important and can help you keep your muscles healthy at any age.

Building muscle and bone strength can improve your quality of life, help prevent painful conditions such as sore back, knees or shoulders and help manage the signs and symptoms of many chronic conditions such as diabetes and depression.

You do many physical jobs onboard - moving equipment on deck, shifting spares in the engine room, maintenance with mechanical tools and spanner, rigging pilot ladders, storing operations or cleaning the accommodation – and strength training can improve your ability to do these jobs safely.

Strengthening your core muscles helps with movements that involve bending, reaching, pulling, pushing and twisting. Exercising to help keep your upper and lower body muscles strong also helps with other physical tasks (e.g. loading stores and equipment) and helps prevent injuries. Manual labour jobs often involve putting pressure on the muscles, bones, and joints over and over again, so this is very important.

The stronger and healthier your body is, the longer and more safely you will be able to complete tasks which are physically demanding.



Health organizations recommend we do moderate to high intensity muscle strengthening activity e.g. body weight or resistance / weight training at least twice a week, in addition to the recommended endurance activity.



02 Types of exercise

Strength



Strength top tips:

Check with a medical professional before starting strength training if you have a chronic condition e.g. diabetes, heart disease etc, or if you're older than 40 and you haven't exercised recently.

Warm up before and cool down after any activity e.g. 5 minutes brisk walking or another low intensity aerobic activity like jogging on the spot. Stretching is a good way to cool down.

Focus on form, not weight - when learning a strength training routine, many experts suggest to start with no weight. Line your body up correctly for each exercise and move smoothly through each one. When using weights, move slowly and control the way you lift them up and put them down (do not just drop them!).

Choose the right weight - this should be a weight or resistance level heavy enough to make your muscles feel tired after about 12 to 15 repetitions.

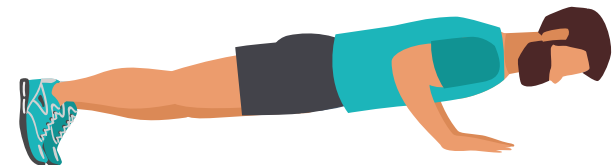
Slowly increase the number of sets / repetitions (for bodyweight exercises), weight or resistance, when you notice you can very easily do a certain exercise.

Remember to breathe - do not hold your breath; breathe out as you lift, push, or pull, breathe in as you release.

Rest at least one full day between exercising each different muscle group, to give your muscles time to recover.

Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated during exercise.

Listen to your body - do not exercise when you're sick or feeling very tired.



02 Types of exercise

Flexibility



Flexibility training stretches your muscles and helps you to bend and twist for exercise as well as for daily activities onboard. Whether you need to sit at a desk for work or move around tight spaces, flexibility exercises increase the blood flow to your muscles and may help you reduce the risk of physical problems.

Better flexibility helps your muscles to work more effectively too, which may increase your performance in physical activities. It may also help you avoid feeling uncomfortable when in a space for a long time e.g. a long plane journey.

Flexibility training includes stretching exercises to lengthen the muscles and could include activities like yoga or Tai Chi. Many people just do a few minutes flexibility training at the end of their endurance or strength training, for example by stretching to relax muscles and improve range of motion (how far you can comfortably extend your joints). You can also take a few minutes in the morning when you get out of bed to stretch and / or before you perform any physically active duties onboard to help get your body ready.



Strength top tips:

Check with your doctor/physical therapist/a medical professional about the best way for you to stretch if you have any health concerns. If you have a health condition or an injury, you might need to change your stretching techniques e.g. if you already have a strained muscle, stretching it may cause more harm.

Warm up before stretching e.g. take a relaxed walk; even better, stretch after your endurance or strength training when your muscles are already warm.

Use correct stretching techniques and try to move smoothly – stretch in a slow and relaxed way.

Focus on major muscle groups e.g. calves, thighs, hips, lower back, neck and shoulders. Make sure that you stretch both sides equally.

Hold each stretch for at least 30–60 seconds and keep any movement smooth, do not bounce or make sharp, rough movements.

Do not force a joint more than is comfortable – stretch to the point of tightness but avoid pain or a lot of discomfort.

Remember to breathe – do not hold your breath; continue to breathe while stretching – this can also help you relax.

03 Creating healthy habits together

You do not have to do this alone.

Find ways to get fit and stay fit together with your crewmates. It is not only good for your health, but can be a great way to get to know your team outside of work and have fun.

There are many ways you can get fit together for example:

Sports day (e.g. Sports Sunday)

This may depend on your vessel type and the facilities you have available. You could consider a series of ping pong matches, a basketball tournament or even an inter-crew game of table football. Anything like this could both boost your energy and raise the team spirit by exercising and spending some quality time together.

Regular group activities

What skills and expertise do you have onboard - could you organize a weekly yoga, tai chi, Zumba activity for example?

Fitness challenges or competitions

Whether you have a rowing machine, a treadmill, or simply a space big enough to do a sit up, team goals and friendly rivalry can really keep you motivated.

For example, sign your crewmates up for a step-count scoreboard or encourage them to build up to the 30-day plank / press up challenge; a well-organized port to port or cross-ocean table tennis championship could really create some excitement onboard for both players and the people watching!

For vessels with smaller crew sizes, you could perhaps compete with another vessel in the fleet. If you have on-line access, you could suggest starting a virtual group within your company to encourage each other even when you are at home. Or you could challenge the superintendents...!

The virtual world

If used safely, technology can also be a fun way to get active in the limited space available onboard, for example with exercise-specific workout gaming consoles.

Physical Trainers

If your company already has an exercise programme, that's great! Whoever leads your activities on-board, it is important for everyone to understand that safely practicing healthy habits helps keep both your body and your mind fit and well!



01 Quick Quiz answers

How much do you know already about the importance of exercise!?

1. Which type of exercise will keep your body and mind in top condition?

d. A combination of strength, flexibility and endurance is important to include in your routine. Read more in the 'types of exercise' section.

2. Exercise helps you stay safe at work because it can...?

d. Exercise helps you stay safe at work for example because it improves your concentration and memory, makes physical activities easier and can help prevent painful conditions. Find out how, in the 'types of exercise' section.

3. True or False:

You can only do exercise if you have a gym and weights?

False; none of the activities you will find in this programme require any equipment.

4. True or False:

Walking, climbing stairs, squats and push-ups are all types of endurance exercise?

False; Endurance activities are ones that increase your breathing and heart rate such as walking and climbing stairs. Squats and push-ups help strengthen key muscles and your core.

5. Table tennis and basketball

d. Finding ways to get fit and stay fit together with your crewmates is not only good for your health, but can be a great way to get to know your team outside of work and have fun.

6. A burpee is a

c. Form of endurance exercise. How to do a burpee can be found in the activity cards for endurance. It engages all the major muscle groups, improves cardiovascular health and agility.

7. Which of the following do you need to remember when doing exercise?

e. It is really important to warm up your muscles, stay hydrated, breathe regularly, take rest between activities and cool down after exercising. Read more in the 'types of exercise' section.

8. True or False:

Exercise is good for your mental as well as your physical health?

True; Read in the FAQ why exercise is so very important to our mental as well as our physical health.