

Tool 2: Risk enablement

We have purposefully kept safety advice simple. The ideas suggested to increase physical activity are simple and mostly part of everyday life. However, you must carry out a basic risk assessment as part of the planning process for any activity. This will allow you to anticipate any risks involved, and importantly find ways to minimise those risks where possible.

Using risk assessments ensure that proper thought and preparation is given to supporting an individual to enjoy physical activity. However, the starting point is to understand the risk **BENEFITS** to make every effort for that person to be able to do the activity, rather than finding a reason not to and for them to fail. The purpose of this is to plan for enjoyment and success as well as safety.

Risk **BENEFITS** involve listing the benefits of taking part in any activity compared with the risks and then applying a level of risk to each activity.

The key message is that the benefits of physical activity by far outweigh the risks.

Activity	Benefits	Hazard	Risk	Control
Walking to the post box.	Increases mobility. Sense of wellbeing. Increases appetite. Out in the fresh air.	Small side road en route.	Low	Accompanied by a member of staff or volunteer.
Additional examples.			Medium	
Additional examples.			High	



Applying a level of risk, next steps and actions

Low Proceed
Medium Consult with senior staff before carrying out activity
High Review activity and discuss with manager

Many of these steps are what you normally do as part of your work. If you are unsure, get advice from a senior colleague and/or specialist help from a local physiotherapist or occupational therapist. Your organisation will have its own health and safety policies and procedures, but you might want to look at the ways in which the 'Care... about physical activity' resource pack may raise new questions.

For all activities - check for signs of over-exertion/enthusiasm and build in rest and pit stops and ensure plenty of fluids are available.

Further information

National Association for Providers of Activities for Older People (2012): Activity at the Heart of Care – a Guide to Planning.

Department of Health (2010): Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained: Risk Guidance for People with Dementia.

This guidance has been compiled with assistance from AGILE (Physiotherapists working with older people) and the National Association for Providers of Activities for Older People.