

Get up and *go!*

Make the most of your time outside work by starting a new activity or sport. Not only will it keep you fit and healthy but you'll look great as well. Impress your colleagues with your exploits – or take them along with you!
By **Kate Maynard**

Walking

'Britain's most popular outdoor recreation.' Anyone can do it, whether it means leaving the car at home, doing a few laps of the park or scaling the nearest hill.

Advantages

The Walking the way to Health Initiative (WHI) encourages those who do little exercise to do regular short walks in their communities. They define a health walk as 'a purposeful, brisk walk undertaken on a regular basis' and say that this can have a positive impact on heart and cardiovascular health. If you walk with a group of people this can also provide a healthy opportunity to socialise and will take your mind off work and anything that's bothering you.

Walking is also free, you can do it whenever you like and you can take the whole family!

Who can do it?

Anyone with two feet and perhaps a raincoat or umbrella!

Find out more

Check out www.whi.org.uk which has a 'walk finder' and helps you create a personalised walking plan.

www.ramblers.org.uk

www.walking-routes.co.uk



T'ai chi

T'ai chi is a series of slow, flowing postures combined with breathing exercises which aim to improve the flow of energy through the body. The most common style of t'ai chi is called the Hand Form.

Advantages

The Hand Form involves moving through a sequence of poses smoothly and gently, which can help increase flexibility and suppleness and which exercises the muscles. Focusing on these movements helps keep the mind calm, thus aiding relaxation. When practised regularly t'ai chi tones and strengthens the muscles and improves your balance and posture.

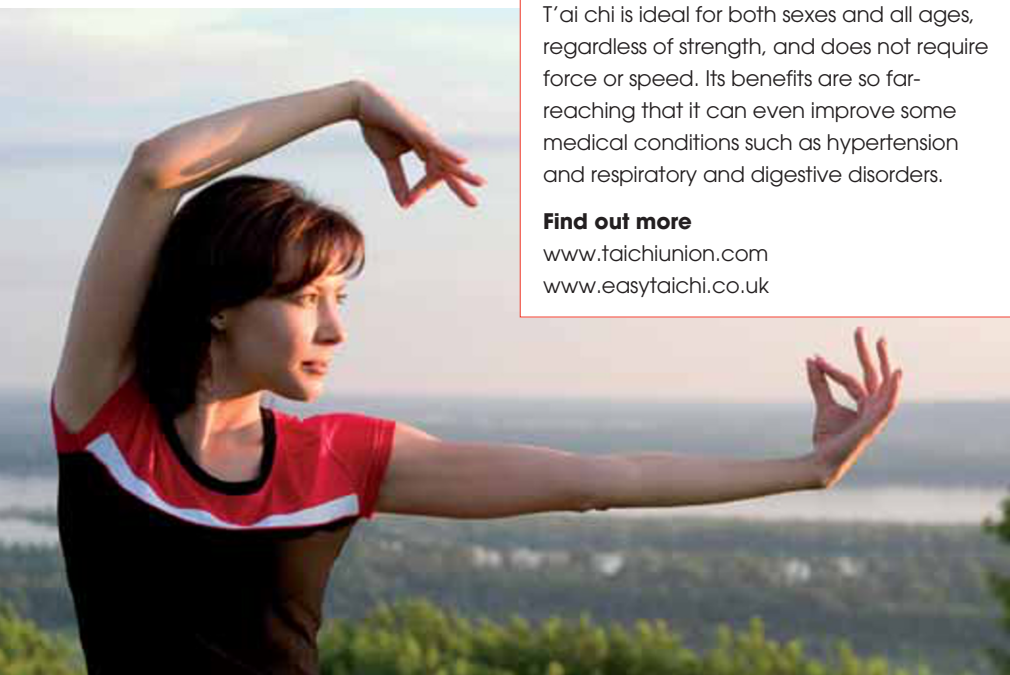
Who can do it?

T'ai chi is ideal for both sexes and all ages, regardless of strength, and does not require force or speed. Its benefits are so far-reaching that it can even improve some medical conditions such as hypertension and respiratory and digestive disorders.

Find out more

www.taichiunion.com

www.easytaichi.co.uk



Swimming

You're never far from a swimming pool, lake or, if you're brave, the English coastline. Swimming is fun and cheaper than joining a gym.

Advantages

Swimming is excellent cardiovascular exercise which is toning for the whole body but has a significantly lower impact on your joints than running or gym workouts. The resistance of the water ensures that you burn calories, is ideal for pregnant women to 'take the weight off', and swimming is an essential life skill for children to have.

Swimming has been shown to help lower and possibly prevent high blood pressure and, like walking, is great for stress relief.

Who can do it?

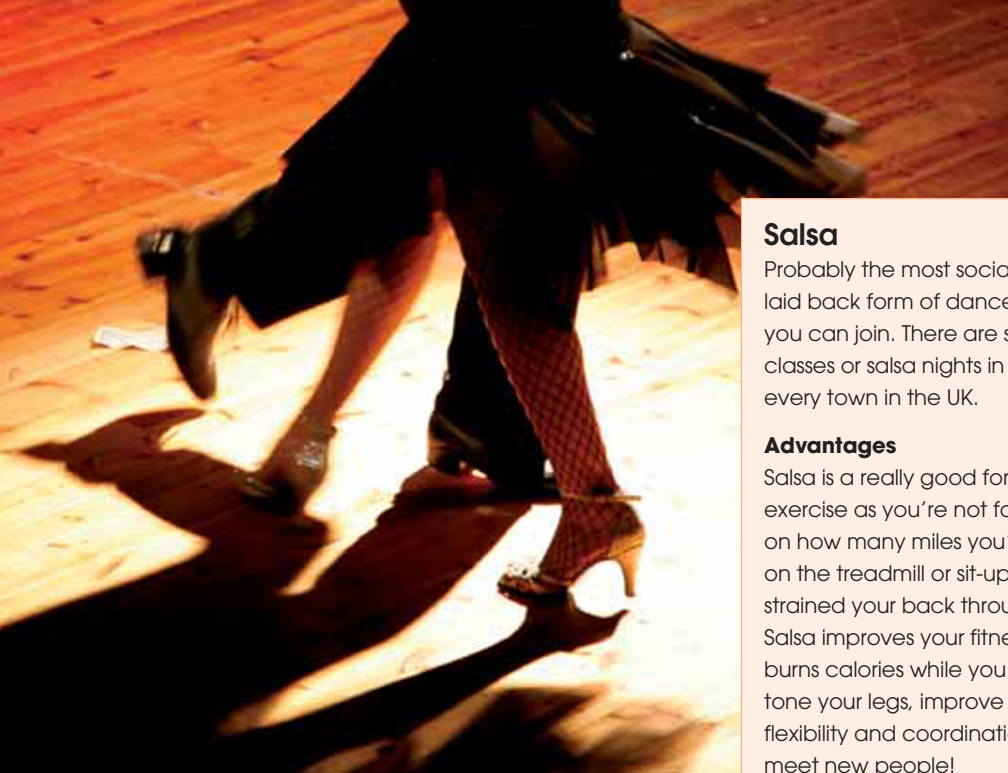
The whole family. If you're not a strong swimmer but have always wanted to gain confidence in the water, most leisure centres offer swimming lessons for adults as well as children.

Find out more

www.britishswimming.org

www.lidos.org.uk





Salsa

Probably the most sociable and laid back form of dance class you can join. There are salsa classes or salsa nights in almost every town in the UK.

Advantages

Salsa is a really good form of exercise as you're not focusing on how many miles you've run on the treadmill or sit-ups you've strained your back through. Salsa improves your fitness and burns calories while you also tone your legs, improve your flexibility and coordination, and meet new people!

Who can do it?

Most salsa classes just involve turning up and joining in. Smooth-soled leather shoes help you swivel and a low heel is advisable for women to begin with. Wear comfortable clothes and don't worry about turning up on your own or not having a partner as classes usually involve swapping partners as you learn and experiment with new moves.

Find out more

www.uksalsa.com
www.salsa-uk.com

Yoga

Most people know a 'yoga nut' who's always going on about the benefits of yoga. They're not making it up! Yoga has numerous benefits and classes are ubiquitous.

Advantages

Yoga teachers place huge emphasis on working at your own level without straining. It isn't about who is the first to get their foot behind their head. Classes focus on breathing exercises

and relaxation combined with a series of postures. Sivananda yoga poses include the 'sun salutation', leg lifts, shoulder stands, bending, balancing and stretching the whole body. Benefits include an increase in strength and suppleness, improvements in circulation, energy and digestion and yoga can aid stress relief and help you lose weight. It is particularly good for strengthening the spine, excellent for DCPs who spend a lot of time chairside.

Who can do it?

Yoga can be practised by all, from complete beginners to those wanting to try the more challenging postures. There is so much choice in types of yoga and in yoga teachers and levels of difficulty that it is worth trying more than one class to find one that suits you.

Find out more

www.yogauk.com
www.yoga.co.uk



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