



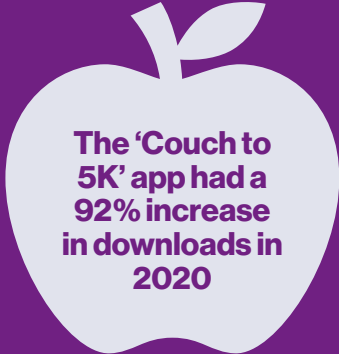
Employee Advice Guide:

# Are you fit to get back to work after lockdown?

# Getting back in the saddle

As lockdown lifts and we swap our dining tables for office desks once again, it is important that we don't lose sight of our health, wellbeing and fitness. It would be all too easy to slip back into old bad habits once we get embroiled in the humdrum of daily commutes and sedentary office or desk jobs.

So, whether you discovered a new-found love of boot camping outdoors, joined Joe Wicks in his PE workout during the pandemic or were one of the 858,000 Couch to 5K app downloaders, try to keep it up. Keep going and don't undo all the good you've done so far.



**The 'Couch to 5K' app had a 92% increase in downloads in 2020**



## On your bike

Returning to the real world of work may mean you are more time-stretched as keep-fit time is once again replaced by traffic jams on the daily commute.

Or, if you are one of the people who doesn't do the official recommended amount of 150 minutes of physical activity a week, then perhaps now is the time to ramp up your fitness regime, just in time for Cycle to Work Day on Thursday August 5th?

Some employers are signed up to the Government's Cycle to Work scheme, which aims to encourage people to lead healthier and more environmentally friendly lifestyles. The scheme allows employees to spend tax-free money on bikes and equipment with a saving of up to 42% which is a great incentive to take up cycling to work – and weekend pleasure. Throw in the fuel savings and it's a win-win.



**August 5th**

# On your bike

Cycling enjoyed a lockdown boom, with soaring bike sales and participation increasing by 1.2 million, thanks to good weather, empty roads, gym and swimming pool closures and bike shops remaining open.

The love of cycling shows no sign of waning in 2021, thanks largely to the growing popularity of indoor cycling platforms Peloton, Zwift and Rouvy – so there's no excuse to blame the Great British weather for not saddling up!

The environmental and personal health benefits of ditching the car in favour of a bike, along with governmental support, means that cycling is riding high at the moment. What better way to get fit – and get to work faster – by avoiding the motorway commuter car parks and city centre gridlocks?



**Bicycle sales  
increased by 63%  
year-on-year  
between April  
and June 2020**



**When it comes to exercise, there really is something for everyone, no matter your age, lifestyle or fitness level – you just have to find your ‘thing’.**

**Here, we look at some new fitness trends to try, from HIIT to eye yoga, which may give you the inspiration you’re looking for to get going and get active...**

## **1 Feel the heat with HIIT**

With work and home life schedules stretched, it’s no wonder people are turning to micro-HIIT workouts – short bursts of high intensity interval training lasting between three and 20 minutes (the recommended maximum time, three times a week).

The technique burns calories fast and can be done at home, requiring little space and limited equipment.




**More than two thirds of people in England are overweight or obese**



## 2 The great outdoors

Lockdown saw a significant rise in outdoor fitness boot camps, alongside more countryside walkers. Fresh air fitness workouts look set to continue in popularity, despite the gyms reopening, so if the thought of getting hot and sweaty indoors is a huge turn off, try burning some calories outside with a military style class or running club – or for a gentler workout, join a local walking group.

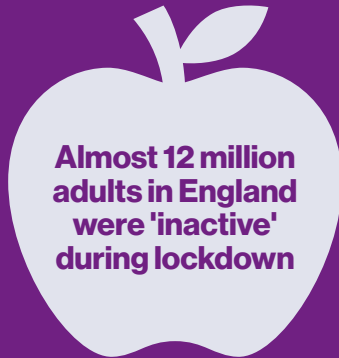


**Number of  
people running  
outdoors was up  
by 731,000**



### 3 Fighting fit

Boxercise was big in the 1990s but fight fitness has now evolved to incorporate more contemporary styles of martial arts, meaning that combat-themed classes are likely to soar in popularity. Are you singing the Rocky theme tune in your head yet?!



## 4 Roll your eyes

A survey by the College of Optometrists revealed that one in five adults believe their eyesight has deteriorated during lockdown, with one in three blaming spending too much time in front of screens. Eye yoga is ideal for eyes fatigued by virtual meetings.

It involves tiny movements to stretch, move and gently massage the eyes and surrounding muscles, helping to release tension and eye strain. Simply look up, down, left and right for 10 seconds each, gently kneading the brow bone, and 'palming' (cupping your hands over your eyes). These exercises are effective, quick and can be done anywhere, anytime.



**1 in 5  
adults think  
their eyesight  
deteriorated in  
lockdown**





## 5 Just a virtual game

Virtual fitness surged in popularity while people were stuck at home during lockdown. From platforms that allow subscribers to train or compete in a virtual world to video games that get you moving, there are options for all ages and fitness levels.

From digital at-home cycling programs to online cardio and relaxation workouts, users can log-in to live or pre-recorded workouts and share their progress with their 'classmates'.

The video game industry has also recognised that they can also cash in on the fitness furore by incorporating fitness into their games by using body movement as the main controller.

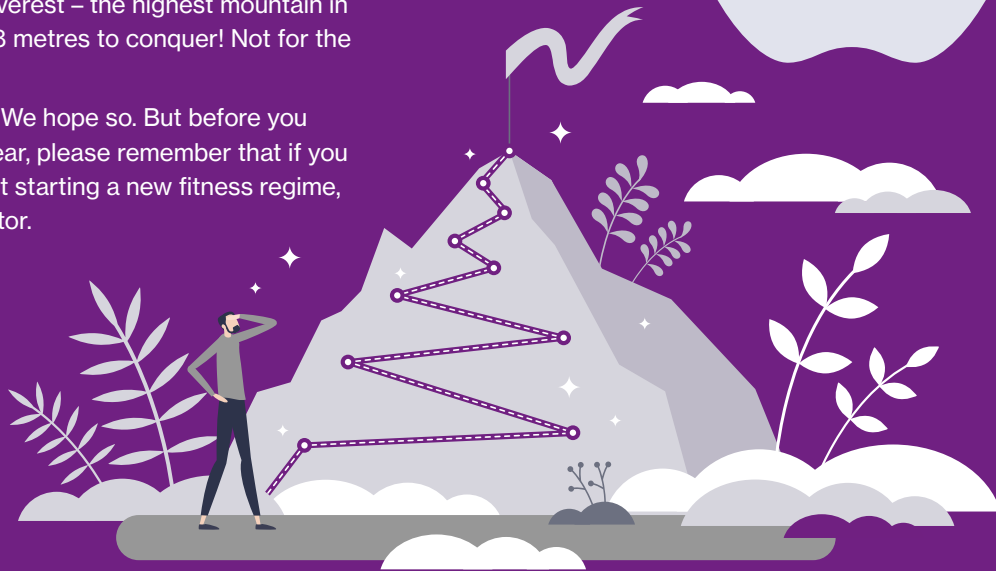
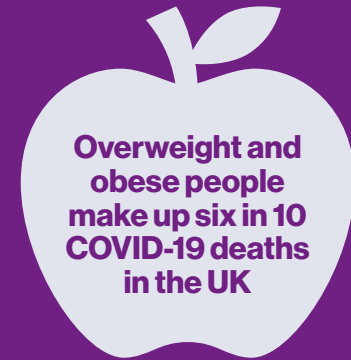
**There were  
876,000 hospital  
admissions in  
2020 related to  
obesity**



## 6 Everesting

For those of you who have embraced exercise in lockdown and are ready to take your fitness to the next level, Everesting might just do the trick. The premise is simple, the challenge less so. Ascend and descend a hill on bike or on foot as quickly as possible, then repeat until you have climbed Everest – the highest mountain in the world – a mere 8,848 metres to conquer! Not for the faint-hearted!

Has that got you going? We hope so. But before you rush out to buy all the gear, please remember that if you have any concerns about starting a new fitness regime, always consult your doctor.





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