

Golf is good for your heart

Golf's powerful combination of stress-busting exercise, fresh air and camaraderie can help promote long term heart health. It can reduce blood pressure and raised cholesterol and cut your risk of stroke and diabetes - especially if combined with a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Walking round the golf course is as good as a run for cutting the risk of heart disease, according to new research from the US National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. A long term study of walkers and runners found that, when the same total energy was used, both activities were associated with reduced risk of high blood pressure and heart disease.

Both groups had reduced risk of high cholesterol and diabetes too. But keep the pace as brisk as possible to reap the heart health benefits – rather than a stroll your heart rate should raise slightly and you should experience a mild sweat.

British Heart Foundation physical activity specialist Lisa Purcell said in the BHF's Heart Matters that "Walking is one of the best ways to get your dose of healthy activity: 150 active minutes spread throughout the week will help keep your heart healthy and your muscles strong." "If you're not used to walking, start slowly and build up gradually," adds Lisa. "Golf can also help improve suppleness and strength, and relax your mind."

A regular round of golf can reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and raised cholesterol. Another study from the American Heart Association shows walking round the golf course regularly will significantly reduce your risk of a stroke. It's also a fantastic stress buster – reducing another heart disease risk factor.

Golf is the perfect way to help you attain the 150 minutes a week of moderate exercise recommended by the Department of Health for heart health. The sport has added heart and cardiovascular benefits of helping you stay happy and calm as well as build strong social networks that can boost your mental wellbeing – all important factors for reducing stress.

To find an activity near you go to getintogolf.org/map or call 0800 118 2766

You'll receive a basic introduction to golf from PGA professionals, together with information about club membership and follow-on coaching opportunities.

Equipment will be provided so all you have to do is turn up on the day in comfortable clothing.

The Get into golf campaign, supported by Sport England and funded by the National Lottery, is now making the game more affordable and welcoming than ever before.

For more information contact info@getintogolf.org

