

STRONGER MY WAY

LET'S TALK ABOUT STRENGTH!

People living with long-term conditions have specific challenges and barriers when it comes to strengthening. You can empower your patients to improve and maintain their strength, so they can do the things that matter the most.

Why focus on strengthening?



Strength helps maintain function, bone density and balance

This can mean your patient can live independently and not become reliant on support.



Strength helps manage long-term conditions

This makes people feel more in control by managing the condition or its symptoms, which can improve confidence to do even more.



Strength enables aerobic activity

This can simply mean ability to complete daily activities and do more of the things that matter. Finding an emotive ambition can be a powerful motivator.



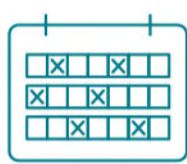
Over 15 million people in England live with a long-term health condition. Less than half of people living with a long-term health condition or disability are meeting the CMO Physical Activity recommendations.¹

ACTIVE LIVES SURVEY, SPORT ENGLAND, 2021



What do the guidelines say?

For adults, and older adults, the UK CMO Physical Activity Guidelines say,



Do strengthening activity at least twice a week



Effective activities should make muscles feel tension, shake, or feel warm



Strongly effective activities include: resistance training; aerobics; ball games and racquet sports



Daily activities also count including: gardening; carrying heavy shopping bags

What people told us



Benefits of strengthening that highly resonate

- Maintain independence
- Ability to complete daily activities
- Manage condition or symptoms (or pain)
- Physical appearance
- Improved confidence
- Improved mood and mental health



Most common barriers

- Fear that their condition inhibits them or they could deteriorate as a result of doing activities
- Fear of embarrassment
- Low mood and little motivation to get started
- Their symptoms vary day to day and are disheartened by the bad days



Overcoming barriers

- Set a specific, short-term, memorable goal
- Offer a range of options, so they can adapt depending on how they feel that day
- Share that strengthening activity is for everyone
- Direct them to Stronger My Way where they can find physio approved resources



How to talk about strengthening

The CSP, supported by Sport England and the Centre for Ageing Better, conducted multiple rounds of interviews and focus groups with people living with long term conditions and healthcare professionals. The findings from this work will help you deliver care to your patients.

Suggest choosing from approved exercises to get started.

Say 'gradually increase', not 'gently increase'. This allows control over the activity and feels more accessible.

Talk about 'maintaining' and 'improving' strength, not one or the other.

Use simple language and avoid jargon, technical words and patronising terms. For example, say 'raising your leg' instead of 'calf raises'.

Convey that strengthening can be easy and accessible, don't explicitly say it is. For example, it can be done at home with no special equipment.

STRONGER MY WAY

More information from our hub

Stronger My Way is a new online hub from the CSP. It provides evidence, training and resources to support you to get people strengthening. Together with your support, the resources you provide to your patients can also instil confidence and motivate to strengthen. csp.org.uk/stronger

REFERENCES

1. Sport England. 2021. Active Lives Adult Survey. Available at: bit.ly/3hxipT5
2. Department of Health and Social Care. 2019. UK CMO Physical Activity Guidelines. Available at: bit.ly/3tnVqzh