Exercise is a real winner not only in helping you to look after your physical health but also your mental health. Young people should get at least an hour of moderate physical activity a day. It doesn't need to be hard work; it can include things you choose to do as part of your normal daily activities such as walking briskly to school or college or playing games or sports. Basically, anything that makes you feel warm and slightly out of breath is a step in the right direction.
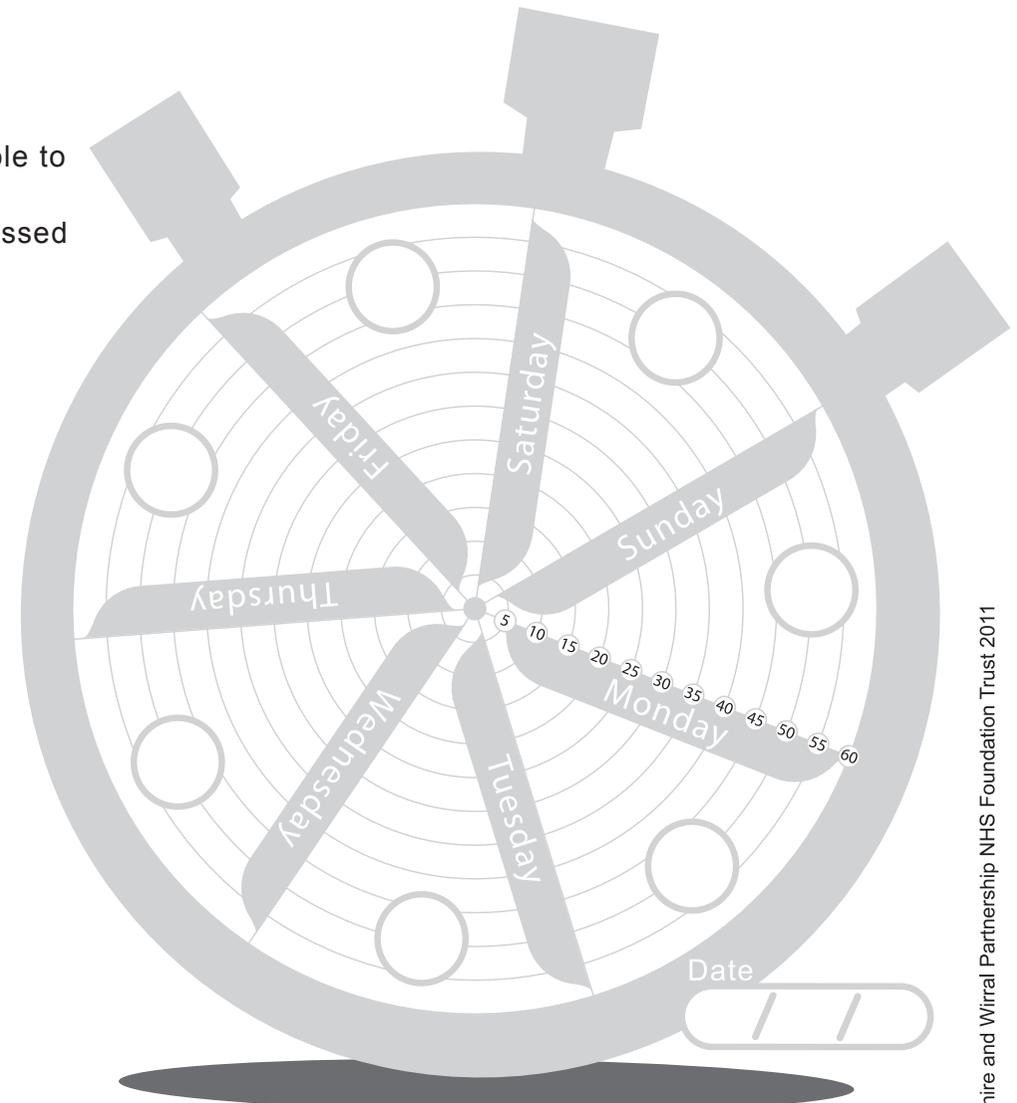
Exercise can help your mental health by:

- ☺ Lifting your mood, reducing stress and anxiety
- ☺ Giving you a sense of achievement and increased confidence
- ☺ Helping you to sleep
- ☺ Giving you more energy, so that you feel less tired and better able to concentrate
- ☺ Burning off the chemicals that make us feel bad when we're stressed
- ☺ Keeping your brain and other vital organs healthy
- ☺ Meeting and spending time with others

The secret to success is to build up gradually and develop a long-term approach to making exercise a lifestyle choice.

Use the diagram opposite to track your progress over the weeks ahead. Print out extra sheets as and when you need them. Shade in the number of minutes of exercise you do each day. You could use different colours to keep track of the types of exercise you do or how active you were, or add your own emoticons ☺ to the empty circles to measure how you felt.

Try to increase the time you spend and how much you push yourself; but remember it's not a race. In fact you can over do it, so strike a balance that you are happy with and include regular rest days.

You can find lots of advice and ideas on the Internet about how you can safely improve your level of fitness. As with information you find on the Internet this tracking sheet is provided for general information only, and should not replace the medical advice of your own doctor or any other health care professional.

ON TRACK MYmind!

Saturday
Friday
Sunday
Thursday
Monday
5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60
Wednesday
Tuesday

Date ___/___/___