

Sport, Exercise and Activity with Haemophilia

This leaflet explains why sport and activity are very important when you have haemophilia. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Why is exercise so important?

Twenty years ago people with haemophilia would have been discouraged from participating in any kind of sporting activity because of the fear of bleeding. Nowadays people with severe haemophilia are on prophylaxis from an early age and those with mild and moderate forms of the disease are more aware of what to look out for and how to treat themselves. Consequently an active lifestyle is encouraged.

Evidence conclusively supports regular exercise and activity in children and adults regardless of a diagnosis of haemophilia.

NHS England recommends that all adults participate in 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic exercise (i.e. brisk walking) or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic exercise (i.e. running) every week as well as strength exercises on two or more days.

The benefits of exercise are

- Strong and coordinated muscles which **protect joints** from pressure and trauma. This may reduce breakthrough joint bleeds, reduce additional factor use and improve long-term joint health.
- Maintaining **bone density** through weight bearing and resistance exercise preventing osteoporosis.

- Maintaining **joint flexibility**.
- Improved, **balance, coordination and body awareness**, which all help to reduce the incidence of injury, which may cause a bleed.
- Reducing the risk of being **overweight**.
- Reduced **stress and anxiety**. Improved **sleep, self-esteem** and overall **well-being**.
- If your joints are in good condition they will recover quicker from a bleed.

How to choose the right activity

Most sports are safe for people with haemophilia however some sports may increase risk of bleeding more than others. The level of the sport played may be another consideration for example whether the exercise is leisure, club or at elite competition level.

Each person presenting with haemophilia is unique and the choice of the most suitable sports and exercise program needs to be made collaboratively between patient, doctor and physiotherapist. The table below describes some of the sports you may want to consider. This is only a guide.

- **Activities that generally have only very few risks of bleeding.** Activity recommended for all people with haemophilia even if not on treatment.
- **Low risk of bleeding for a patient with mild or moderate haemophilia or for severe haemophilia on prophylactic treatment.**
- **Activity with a moderate to high risk of bleeding if not on treatment or if joint weakness is already present.** In discussion with the treatment team, this activity may be performed by a person with mild or moderate haemophilia, or a person with severe haemophilia on prophylaxis as long as joint condition is monitored.
- **Physical activities with a high risk of bleeding.** Strongly discouraged for all people with haemophilia even if on factor treatment.

SPORT	LEISURE	CLUB	COMPETITION	RECOMMENDED PROTECTION
Archery	●	●	●	Forearm guards
ATV / mountain biking	●	●	●	Helmet, elbow guards
Badminton	●	●	●	Indoor shoes
Baseball	●	●	●	Batting helmet
Basketball	●	●	●	Basketball shoes covering the ankles
Beach volleyball	●	●	●	
BMX	●	●	●	Helmet, elbow guards, wrist guards, knee guards
Bowling	●	●	●	
Contact martial arts and sports (karate, boxing, wrestling, etc.)	●	●	●	Mandatory protection depending on the sport
Cross-country skiing	●	●	●	Proper length skis and poles
Deep-sea diving	●	●	●	Never alone
Diving	●	●	●	
Downhill skiing	●	●	●	Helmet, proper length skis and poles
Fencing	●	●	●	Helmet, gloves
Field hockey	●	●	●	Shin guards
Fitness, strength training	●	●	●	Training by an experienced trainer
Football	●	●	●	Shin guards
Go-carting	●	●	●	Helmet, high-top shoes
Golf	●	●	●	Golf shoes
Handball	●	●	●	Indoor shoes
Horseback riding	●	●	●	Helmet
Indoor climbing	●	●	●	Climbing shoes
Judo	●	●	●	Club only
Motocross	●	●	●	Helmet, boots, protective clothing
Mountain climbing	●	●	●	Good hiking shoes, helmet
Non-contact martial arts (kata, capoeira, tai chi, etc.)	●	●	●	Mandatory protection depending on the sport
Orienteering	●	●	●	Regularly replaced jogging shoes
Parachuting, paragliding, microlighting	●	●	●	Helmet

Road cycling	●	●	●	Helmet, on an appropriate road or bicycle path
Roller skating, rollerblading, ice skating, skateboarding	●	●	●	Helmet, elbow guards, wrist guards, knee guards
Rowing, kayaking, canoeing	●	●	●	Life jacket
Rugby, American football	●	●	●	
Sailing	●	●	●	Life jacket, helmet, never alone
Snowboarding	●	●	●	Helmet, elbow guards, wrist guards, knee guards
Squash	●	●	●	Indoor shoes
Surfing, bodyboarding	●	●	●	Never alone
Swimming	●	●	●	
Table tennis	●	●	●	Indoor shoes
Tennis	●	●	●	Tennis shoes
Track: jumping and sprinting	●	●	●	Running shoes
Track: long-distance running, jogging	●	●	●	Regularly replaced jogging shoes, no flat soles
Track: shot put, javelin, hammer throwing, etc.	●	●	●	Outdoor shoes
Trampoline	●	●	●	Club only
Ultimate frisbee	●	●	●	
Volleyball	●	●	●	Kneepads, indoor shoes
Walking, hiking	●	●	●	Good hiking shoes
Waterskiing	●	●	●	Life jacket
Waterpolo	●	●	●	Cap with ear guards
Weightlifting	●	●	●	
Windsurfing	●	●	●	Life jacket, helmet

What Precautions Should I Take Before Playing Sports?

- If you are on prophylaxis and play a particular sport on a certain day, it may make sense to arrange prophylaxis treatment on that day to provide maximum cover.
- It is important that you wear suitable protective equipment. Again, this applies to anyone playing sport, not just those with haemophilia. It is more important for you as a direct blow could result in a bleed. The table above recommends protective equipment depending on the sport you choose.

If you are in any doubt about taking part in a particular sport, contact the Haemophilia team or the Physiotherapists and they will be able to advise you.

Useful sources of information

Haemophilia Society: <https://haemophilia.org.uk>

NHS resources: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/haemophilia>

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about haemophilia and exercise please contact the Haemophilia team on 020 8725 0763 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email directly the physiotherapy team on haemophiliaphysio@stgeorges.nhs.uk

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm
Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

NHS UK provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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