



## Get Active for Mental Well-being

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For Mental Health Awareness Week (14-20 May) we're putting the spotlight on how table tennis can be used as a powerful tool to improve people's mental well-being.

Research has shown that two thirds of us will experience a mental health problem in our lifetime.

While everyone knows that regular exercise is good for us physically, it's also one of the most effective ways to improve your mental health. Getting active can have a positive impact on depression and anxiety, it can relieve stress, improve memory, help you sleep better and make you feel more relaxed and positive about yourself and your life. The good news is, this isn't dependent on hard exercise, even 10 minutes of moderate activity can make a difference.

Table tennis in particular is a fantastic pathway for getting active and lifting the spirits. It's sociable and simply everyone, even those who have never played before, can pick up a bat and have an enjoyable experience. Not only that, it's been proven that learning this new skill (or remembering a long forgotten one) can have a positive impact on those with memory loss problems and dementia.

## Mindful Table Tennis in Bedford

Robert Lindsay, Sports Development Officer with Bedford Borough Council, has been running mental health table tennis sessions with tables provided through our Loop in the Community initiative. The video below was made at one of these sessions and tells the story of participants.

Robert told us:

Our sessions have a regular 10 participants and provide a great option alongside our yoga for those with mental health problems. We have one chap who had been attending for over 2 years now and loves it every week. We also have a range of ages and ethnic backgrounds. There are two gentleman who come with dementia and two young guys who have psychosis. The sport is ideal for focusing attention and I am so pleased with how the session are run.

**How can table tennis improve MENTAL HEALTH?** Loop

**THE FACTS**

**ONE IN FOUR** of us will be affected by mental health problems at some point in our life

**70,000,000 WORKDAYS A YEAR** are lost in the UK every year due to mental illness. This means that mental illness is the leading cause for sickness and absence from work.

**THE EFFECT OF EXERCISE**

**REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN:**

- Reduce the risk of depression
- Reduce anxiety
- Improve self-esteem

**RESEARCH SHOWS:** Lack of physical activity is linked to depression. People with severe mental health problems are more likely to be inactive.

**Just 10 minutes of moderate activity can improve your MENTAL WELLBEING**

**WHY TABLE TENNIS?**

**RESEARCH:** research has found that intense aerobic exercise can help back up increasing positive moods.

**HEALTH BENEFITS**

- Improves cognitive function
- Develops social skills
- Builds confidence and self-esteem

**ADAPTABLE**

- Available for all
- No barriers to play
- Available for all budgets

**FLEXIBLE**

- Easy to deliver in short bouts
- Fits easily into everyday life
- Space efficient

**PLAY HOW YOU WANT**

- No change of clothing/footwear required
- Range of places to play - community centres, cafes, clubs, workplaces, outdoors
- Quick sessions

The Mental Health Foundation

To find out how you can bring all the benefits of table tennis to your community visit: [www.keepintheLoop.co.uk/community](http://www.keepintheLoop.co.uk/community)

Mental Health Foundation

# STRESS

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**MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK**

**14-20 MAY 2018**

Click above for more information on Mental Health Awareness Week

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