

Multiple Sclerosis Charity, The MS Trust, Dispels Exercise Myth

Submitted by: Kin Communications2

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- Around 110,000 people in the UK have MS
- New research shows exercise can help reduce fatigue for people with MS
- MS Trust launches exercise campaign for MS Awareness Week 22 – 28 April

This MS Awareness Week (22-28 April), the MS Trust is calling on people with MS to pop on their pumps and introduce a little activity – big or small – into their daily routine. Staying active doesn't need to mean running marathons or going to the gym, it's about doing it at your own level, at your own pace. Doing it YOUR way.

In the past, those with MS were advised that they shouldn't exercise. It was felt that since many people with MS experienced fatigue and found their symptoms worsened when hot, it was best to avoid activities that could be seen as tiring. The MS Trust wants to dispel this myth.

Regular, moderate exercise is now known to be an important part of maintaining good health and wellbeing for those with MS. In fact, there is evidence that it can help with many MS symptoms, and help shape a better quality of life.

A recent survey conducted by the MS Trust highlighted the positive impact exercise can have, with respondents listing improvements in their mental health, increased strength and reduction in fatigue as the main benefits of staying active with MS.

One respondent with MS said, "Staying active is good for the body and mind, it also makes me feel as though I'm being proactive regarding my own health."

Another commented, "Being active has been a lifeline for me. I firmly believe it has kept my symptoms under control."

Throughout MS Awareness Week the MS Trust will be promoting the benefits of staying active for people with MS; encouraging the MS community to introduce activity - or continue it on a regular basis. Walking, swimming, wheelchair basketball, dance, yoga, gardening . . . it's all about doing it your way. The charity is also launching a series of accessible Pilates workouts, developed alongside a neuro-physiotherapist, which people can follow at home.

Paralympic swimmer Stephanie Millward MBE, who was diagnosed with MS aged 18, is supporting the MS Trust's latest campaign. Stephanie commented: "I fully support this incredible campaign as I know all too well the importance of activity. For me, it makes me so happy and positive but also keeps my MS symptoms in check. People will guess that I will advocate swimming and, of course, I do as I attempt to win an eleventh medal at my fourth Paralympic Games, in Tokyo 2020. But I am delighted to be given an opportunity to recommend to other people with MS, to try anything active that appeals and just see if it makes a difference.

“Besides the pool, I use the gym three times a week, which I love and have a specific programme, but I have gained so much core-strength from a weekly horse-riding session (thanks to Riding for the Disabled) and only this year was I introduced to yoga. To anyone reading this, I urge you to try some exercise, no matter what it is. Following my MS diagnosis in 1999, I did nothing for the best part of eight years – literally nothing and suffered as a consequence - until I was persuaded to get back into a pool. Please try some gentle exercise and don’t make the same mistake I did for all those years – good luck!”

David Martin, CEO of the MS Trust, added: “Research shows us that regular and moderate exercise has many benefits for people living with MS, both physically and mentally. We hope that by shining a spotlight on exercise during MS Awareness Week, we can encourage people with MS all over the UK to introduce a little activity into their daily routine.

“We recognise that MS can affect people in many different ways and not everyone will be able to go for a run, get to a pool, or go to the gym, so our campaign is all about making exercise as accessible as possible.”

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITOR

Case studies are available for comment – please get in touch for further information.

For more information on the campaign, including case studies, please contact Thomas@kincomms.co.uk or 02039587175.

To find out more about exercise and MS, see www.mstrust.org.uk/exercise.

About MS

Multiple sclerosis is a condition that affects the nerves in the brain and spinal cord. It is a lifelong condition, usually diagnosed in people in their 20s and 30s, and can cause a wide variety of symptoms, including eyesight problems, fatigue, balance problems, altered sensations and cognitive issues. Around 110,000 people in the UK live with MS and it affects around three times as many women as men. There is a wide range of disease modifying therapies, but there is currently no cure.

About the MS Trust

The MS Trust is a charity which works to make a difference today for the 110,000 people living with MS in the UK. We produce practical, reliable information, online and in print, and offer a telephone and email enquiry service to anyone who needs to know more about MS.

We fight to make sure everyone affected by MS can access good quality, specialist care. We offer a full range of support to both specialists and health professionals with an interest in MS, including online information, publications, newsletters and professional development. We work in partnership with health professionals to improve MS services now and in the future, and we fund MS specialist nurses in the areas of greatest need.