

| SQUEEZE healthy IN |

Your guide
to squeezing in
healthy living

Supported by



LEADING THE
SELF-CARE REVOLUTION





"Please don't take the attitude that you can just 'walk it off' or try to forget about it. Visit your doctor; ask for help – addressing issues early will really help in giving you tips on how you can work preventative measures into your daily routine. It's like running a car; if you run it into the ground it can often be too late to fix it."

Johnny Vegas

The importance of self-care

Self-care is an important way of maintaining independence and making sure that you are physically, mentally and emotionally as good as you can be.

It is an important factor in maintaining a healthy relationship with yourself. It can help to increase positive emotions, boost self-confidence and self-esteem and is a positive way to remind yourself and others that your needs are important.

The term self-care can mean anything from an evening of pampering, to taking control of one's mental health. However, self-care isn't only about your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. It is about caring for yourself by eating healthily, getting quality sleep, caring about your hygiene and exercising regularly.

You may feel that some areas of self-care don't need improving; this booklet aims to give you ideas about small changes you could make to get more positive results.

Johnny's story

Actor and comedian Johnny Vegas, known usually for his angry rants, surrealist humour and husky voice, has lent his support to this booklet having seen, first-hand, what it is like to live with and manage a venous leg ulcer through his beloved, late dad, Laurence.

Having witnessed his dad's struggle with coming to terms with the condition and his unusual unwillingness to talk about it, Johnny is passionate that more needs to be done to help people manage venous leg ulcers; to encourage conversations that would banish the stigma surrounding them to enable those with them live life to the full.

A letter from Johnny

Dear Dad,

I've signed up to help promote this new initiative regarding healthcare, specifically lower limb circulatory issues. I know it's not something you were ever really comfy talking about. But I've said I'll help because there was more both of us could've done and might be able to do in the future, seeing as I've inherited your 'egg in the nest' hairline, gift of the gab and desire to ignore symptoms in favour of frivolity.

You were never vain; I mean you insisted on wearing socks with sandals in Spain – now that is proper leg shame.

Dad you recovered from an aneurysm, beat cancer and made everyone who looked after you laugh all the way through. Mum told you off for flirting. And we all got funny looks for calling you Frankenstein before your head scars healed from the brain op.

So why, when your legs got bad, as had those of your siblings, did you shut down about it? Why did it stop being something we all got through together?

I know you didn't like bothering your GP, even though you claimed he gave you a prescription for dark rum. Who knew you were a master forger? I know you were the type to just do your best to 'walk it off', but you can't deny that you treated this differently. It wasn't the way you walked, it was the way you looked, proper ashamed, as if your legs had done wrong by you, and in turn us. It was never completely irreversible, but more could've been done by all of us.

Let's call a spade a spade. I've a theory. I know you'd rather not hear it but here goes, because one day I'll have to try and practice what I preach. This wasn't internal, we could all see, but none of us were judging you for, only you did that. Your legs looked different, but it was hardly a scene from Hammer House of Laurence. Yes, there was swelling and skin that needed daily application of cream. Mum applied it and ordinarily that would've counted as foreplay for you, so why did you choose to act like this was a curse, the lowering of Tutankhamen's circulatory bandages?

So now we've got this COVID-19 crisis and many folk are isolating – much like you did with your legs at the start. The big difference is that they have to isolate. They are having to ask for help and are doing what they can with preventative self-care; exercises, keeping on top of their diet and skin care.

They can't allow pride, fear or unnecessary shame to come before a fall and that's why I'm involved with this Squeeze In booklet. You prove that even the bravest of people can still do with a 'safe distanced' nudge in the right direction.

I hope you don't mind me sharing something so personal with those most in need right now, but knowing how caring and compassionate a person you were I'd dare to say that if you were still with us, you'd be in the bay window, wearing a kilt and writing this yourself, if you thought it'd help.

Johnny



What is a leg ulcer?

A leg ulcer is a long-lasting wound that takes more than 2 weeks to heal. They usually develop on the inside of the leg, just above the ankle, but can be located anywhere from below the knee down to the foot.

Leg ulcers affect many adults with poor circulation. The three most common types are caused by either a problem in the veins, arteries or a combination of both.

The most common type is called a venous leg ulcer, which involves the poor return of blood back to the heart.

Being able to self-care when you have a venous leg ulcer can increase your independence, enabling you to fill your days with more of the things you like to do, as you reduce your reliance on others. Self-care doesn't mean caring for yourself alone; it could be about gaining a better understanding of how to care for legs to reduce the number of visits from nurses/carers, because you are able to apply your garments and lead a more active life.



SQUEEZE care IN

Skincare + leg-care

If you have a venous leg ulcer, one of the most practical ways that you can practice self-care with your leg condition is by looking after your skin. Skin conditions, including itchy skin due to varicose eczema, are common with venous disease.

Washing your legs daily using unscented Ph balanced soap will help prevent irritation – avoid hot baths as this can increase the amount of blood in your veins. It is important to keep your skin clean, inspect between your toes to make sure they are clean and dry, and check for any cracks or fungal infections.

Check your legs regularly for any changes like breaks, cracks or swelling as these can lead to further issues. If broken areas are not healing within 2 weeks, you should visit your GP for advice.

Regularly moisturising your skin, with unscented products every night before bed, helps to prevent the skin from becoming dry and brittle, and helps to prevent it from splitting and forming new ulcers.



You should have been recommended a suitable moisturiser for your skin, continue to apply this at least daily and remember to always apply in line with the hair growth to avoid inflammation of the hair follicles. Use this time to check your legs for any changes including breaks in the skin, change in foot colour, excessive itching and the condition of your feet and toenails.

If possible, avoid walking around the house in bare feet – wear slippers if you can.

Taking care of your skin reduces the risk of infection, which in turn reduces the risk of delayed healing. For more information visit [L&R self-care](#)

If you have a venous leg ulcer your healthcare professional will have recommended a suitable dressing to cover the wound. This is generally worn under compression therapy and will absorb any excessive moisture or fluid which will protect the skin around your wound. Please follow advice from your healthcare professional on dressing your leg ulcer.

SQUEEZE compression IN

Compression therapy is used for the treatment and prevention of venous leg ulcers and other lower limb conditions. It improves venous circulation and helps to reduce swelling by squeezing your legs and encouraging blood to flow back towards your heart.

Although it may feel strange when the garment is first applied, it is really important for you to wear your compression exactly as directed by your nurse or healthcare professional. Any discomfort should reduce as your ulcer starts to heal and any swelling is reduced.

Wearing compression helps to prevent venous leg ulcers, treat active ulceration (using a higher compression level) and reduce the risk of recurrence after your ulcer has healed. It is one of the most effective and simplest ways that you can increase your self-care when it comes to your legs.

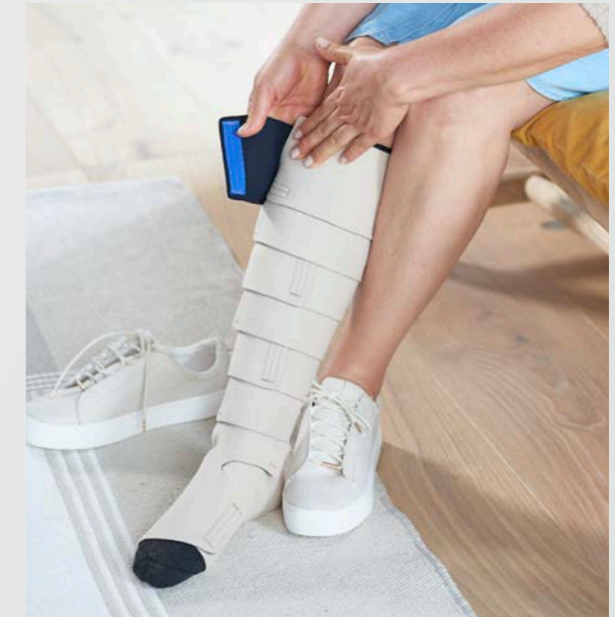


There are two main types of self-care compression



Hosiery: socks and tights

Specially designed, snug-fitting stretchy socks or tights (more like a hold-up than traditional tights) that gently squeeze your leg.



Wraps

Wraps are adjustable garments designed as easy-to-use compression with front-fastening short straps for easier application and readjustment that can be worn with your usual footwear.

Application techniques

Application aids can support you to apply your own compression hosiery



1. Prepare the application aid

To prepare the application aid, first fold it in half and thread the soft, flexible pin through the holes, starting from the widest point, before securing the pin in the pocket at the end. The application aid is now ready to use.

2. Apply the application aid

Slide the application aid over your toes, so that the flexible pin is under the sole of your foot. If applying closed toe hosiery, some people prefer to keep the pin on top.

The application aid should cover your foot, but don't try to pull it too far.



3. Apply your hosiery

Now you can put your hosiery on, without folding it, in the same way you would pull on a boot. Place the heel in position and spread the hosiery evenly over your foot.

4. Adjust the application aid

Now you are ready to move the hosiery up your leg, so you will need to adjust the application aid.

Pull the pin out of the back, and take hold of the black handle at the front.

Pull the application aid up the leg.



5. Adjust your hosiery

Follow the application aid up the leg in stages, easing the hosiery over it each time.

6. Adjust for comfort

Pull the application aid out of the hosiery. Smooth out any wrinkles on the leg.

7. Repeat for the other leg

Pull the application aid out of the hosiery.



Application with rigid aids

Rigid aids act as frames to hold the garment as you put your foot inside of them.

They are useful if you have trouble bending down to place the garment over your foot, as they do not require you to hold the garment.



Hosiery kit application

A hosiery kit is a 2 layer system for the treatment of venous leg ulcers. They are an ideal option for self-care.

Self application

To apply a leg ulcer hosiery kit, first apply the silky closed toe liner followed by the open toe compression top layer



1. Prepare the hosiery

To make the hosiery easier to put on, first turn it inside out. You can do this in 3 simple stages - reach, pinch and fold.
Reach: Simply slip your hand down inside the hosiery as far as the heel
Pinch: Gently grasp the heel and, while still holding the heel
Fold: Fold the top of the hosiery down to turn it inside-out. This will leave the toe area tucked in.

2. Apply the hosiery

Slip your toe into the front of the hosiery and gently pull it up the foot. Now gather the hosiery from the top of the garment and gently pull towards the ankle and calf.

3. Adjust for comfort

Smooth out any wrinkles in the hosiery. Pull the toe section forward. Smooth the ankle and in-step areas, and make sure your toes are not restricted.

4. Apply the compression layer

Once the liner is positioned correctly on the limb, the compression top layer is applied over the liner. This can be done by following steps 1-3 again.

The products shown in these images are Activa® and ActiLymph® Leg Ulcer Hosiery Kits

Carer application

To apply a leg ulcer hosiery kit, first apply the silky closed toe liner followed by the open toe compression top layer



1. Prepare the liner

To make the liner easier to put on, first turn it inside out. You can do this in 3 simple stages - reach, pinch and fold.
Reach: Simply slip your hand down inside the liner, as far as the heel
Pinch: Gently grasp the heel and, while still holding the heel
Fold: Fold the top of the hosiery down to turn it inside out. This will leave the toe area tucked in.

2. Apply the liner

Slip the wearer's toes into the toe area of the liner, ensuring the toes and heel are in the correct position. Gently pull the liner up over the foot, heel, and ankle. Now gather the liner from the top of the garment and gently pull up the limb. Do not force it.

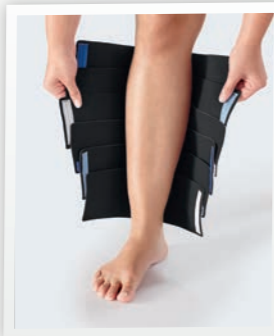
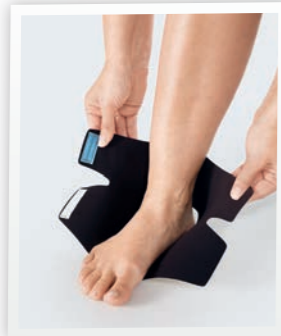
3. Adjust for comfort

Smooth out any wrinkles on the liner. Pull the toe section forward. Smooth the ankle and in-step areas and make sure the wearer's toes are not restricted.

4. Apply the compression layer

Once the liner is positioned correctly and is comfortably on the wearer's limb, the second compression layer is applied over the liner. This can be done by following steps 1 to 3 again (Images 3-5). The hosiery kit should be pulled up to the bend at the back of the wearer's knee.

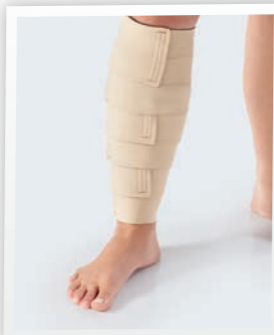
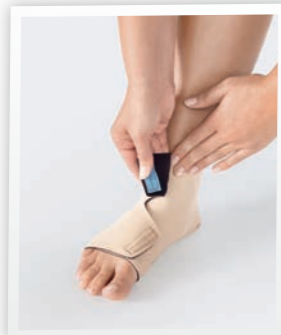
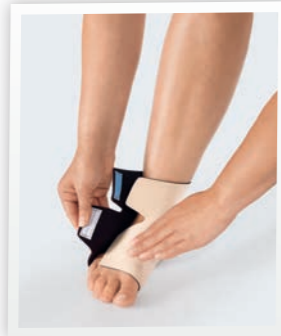
Wrap application



Self application

Preparation and application of the sock liner is the same as the two previous sections. Please use the pictures on the previous page as a guide to leg and hand positions.

1. First apply the liner, then apply the foot garment, followed by the calf garment.
2. Pull the VELCRO® fasteners at full stretch and attach in place
3. Start with the white fastener and then the light blue fastener and then the dark blue fastener
4. Ensure the calf garment is overlapped with the foot garment by 1cm
5. Attach the white fastener at the bottom of the calf garment first followed by a horizontal and then vertical pattern.



For full instructions for use, please see the patient information leaflet that accompanies your wrap system.

If you are unsure whether you are doing it right, a nurse or other healthcare professional will be able to give you some tips and tricks to make sure that you are comfortable and secure.

The product that is shown in these images is ReadyWrap®



Carer application

Preparation and application of the sock liner is the same as the two previous sections. Please use the pictures on the previous page as a guide to leg and hand positions.

1. Once you have applied the liner, put on the foot garment, followed by the calf garment.
2. Pull the VELCRO® fasteners at full stretch and attach in place
3. Start with the white fastener and then the light blue fastener and then the dark blue fastener
4. Ensure the calf garment is overlapped with the foot garment by 1cm
5. Attach the white fastener at the bottom of the calf garment first followed by a horizontal and then vertical pattern



For full instructions for use, please see the patient information leaflet that accompanies your wrap system.

If you are unsure whether you are applying it correctly, ask the nurse or other healthcare professional who will be able to give you some tips and tricks.



SQUEEZE good food IN

When looking at your overall health, it is important to consider the impact of your diet on your wellbeing.

Protein is important in building and repairing muscle, skin and other body tissues. It also helps to fight infection, carry oxygen around your body and is important in promoting wound healing. By ensuring that your diet is rich in protein, you are fuelling the healing process from the inside.

So which foods are full of protein?

- lean meat, poultry and fish
- eggs
- dairy products like milk, yoghurt and cheese
- seeds and nuts
- beans and legumes (such as lentils and chickpeas)
- soy products like tofu
- some grain and cereal-based products are also sources of protein but are generally not as high in protein as meat and meat alternative products.*

To help make getting protein easier, we've included some recipes with the protein element in bold. The components of all recipes can be substituted but it's important to include a source of protein in every meal.

*<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/protein>

Easy swaps

Having a healthy diet is important for everyone looking to improve their self-care. However, being conscious of what you're eating doesn't have to be daunting, which is why we've put together this list of easy swaps to get you started on the right track.



Using **low-calorie cooking sprays** instead of oils helps to reduce the fat content of your meals. They also require less quantity, helping to save money.



Ready meals are often made with convenience in mind rather than nutritional benefit. Swapping your choices for those made by brands such as **WW** or **Slimming World** will help to make sure you are getting the nutritional benefits without compromising on convenience.

Swapping your mince for **less than 5% fat mince** or even **turkey mince** can help to reduce the fat content of your meals.



Swapping **half of the mince quantity** in meals like Bolognese **for lentils** is a great way to make your sauces more filling while also saving money.

We recommend choosing **wholemeal bread** over its white and granary alternatives where possible.



Swapping fruit juices for **no added sugar fruit squash** will still give you that refreshing flavour but could save you a considerable number of calories. Or, better yet, just eat the fruit.



Snacking on nuts as opposed to crisps helps to boost your protein intake.



When buying **tinned tuna**, ensure that you are buying it in water or brine rather than oil to reduce your fat intake.

Breakfast

Breakfast gives you a much-needed boost of energy in the morning and helps to kickstart your metabolism. We understand that sometimes breakfast falls to the bottom of your to-do list which is why these breakfast ideas are quick and easy so that you can get on with your day.



Overnight oats

Mix 40g of oats with 100g of **fat-free yoghurt** (any flavour). Add as much frozen fruit as you fancy. Leave in the fridge overnight to enjoy the following morning.



Protein-rich cereals

Many of your favourite cereals have introduced high-protein ranges which you may choose to incorporate into your breakfast routine. If this is not possible, choose cereals with high-fibre contents that are low in sugar. Swapping your milk for **Greek yoghurt** will also help to keep you fuller for longer.

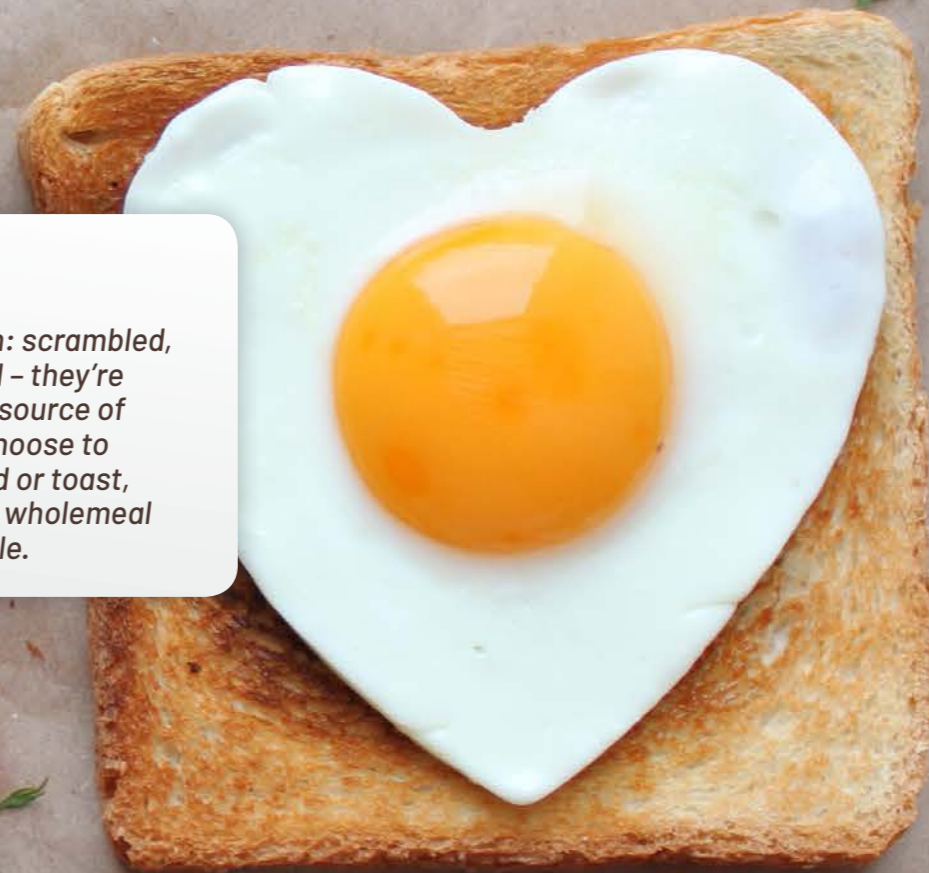
Eggs

Any way you like them: scrambled, poached, boiled, fried – they're delicious and a great source of protein. Should you choose to enjoy them with bread or toast, we recommend using wholemeal options where possible.



Peanut butter on toast + fruit (bananas, raspberries etc.)

Peanut butter on toast is a great way to get some extra protein into your breakfast. We recommend using wholemeal bread where possible and topping with fruits like sliced bananas or raspberries.



Lunch

It's easy to skip lunch, especially when you are busy in the daytime. Ensuring that you eat something substantial for lunch can help to curb snack cravings later in the day and is, therefore, a good way to set yourself up for a positive afternoon.

Jacket potato

Jacket potatoes are a good option for lunch but try to avoid creamy toppings or covering it in mayonnaise. **Tuna** (swap mayo for natural yoghurt to still get that creamy flavour), **baked beans** and grated **reduced-fat cheese** are all great options for topping your potato. If you use butter try to use it sparingly.



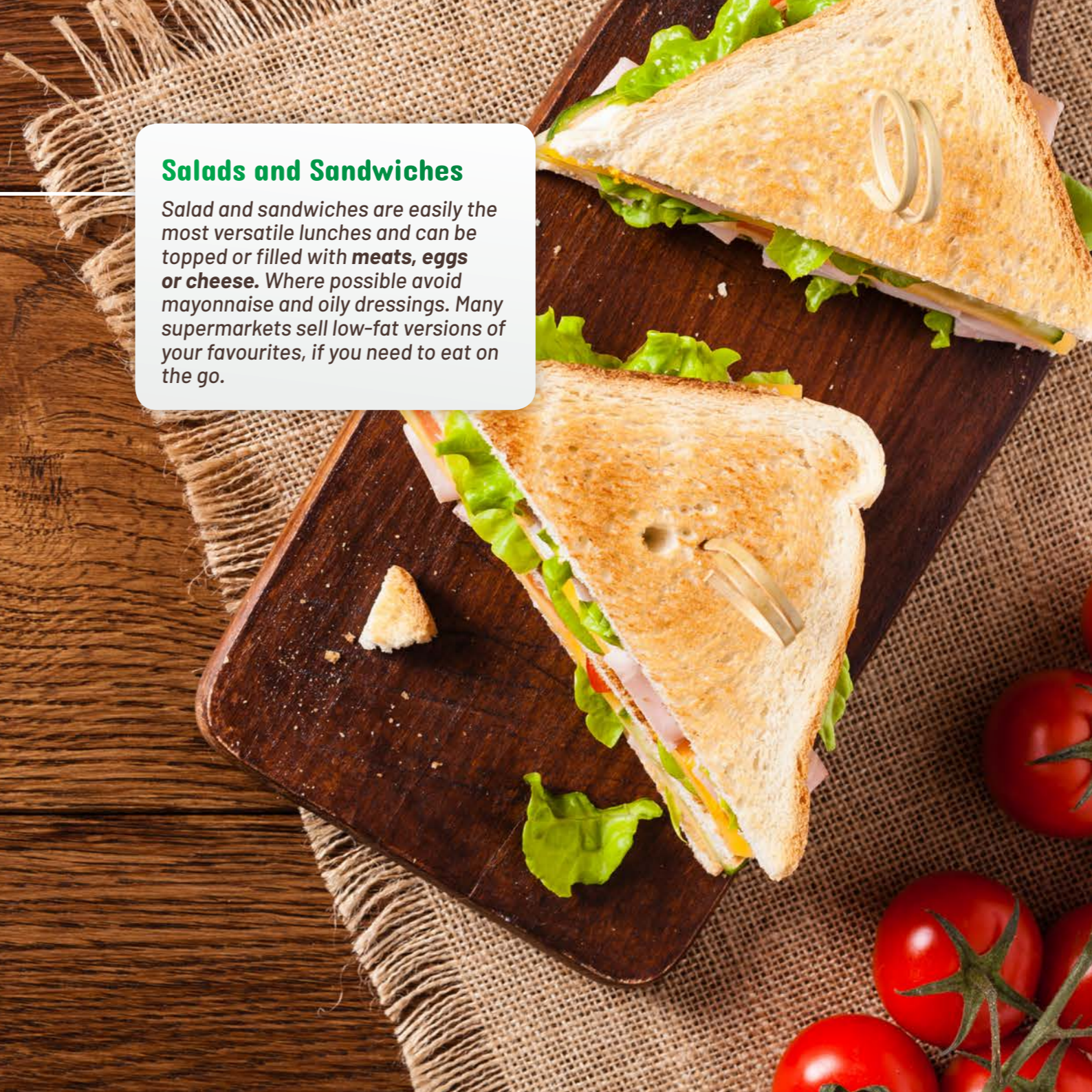
Frittata

Frittata is a great way to use up all of your unwanted vegetables and **lean meats**. Fry them all off in a large frying pan and then add enough beaten **eggs** to cover them all. Serve a slice with salad and save the rest for another day. Storing it in the fridge means that you can have something ready to go for the next few days.



Salads and Sandwiches

Salad and sandwiches are easily the most versatile lunches and can be topped or filled with **meats, eggs or cheese**. Where possible avoid mayonnaise and oily dressings. Many supermarkets sell low-fat versions of your favourites, if you need to eat on the go.



Dinner

After a busy day, it's easy to reach for convenience when it comes to dinner and that's ok as long as you're making healthy choices and considering the amount of protein in the meal. For days when you do want to make something from scratch, here are a few ideas to get you started.

Sausage casserole

Swapping your usual **sausages** for low-fat alternatives and adding lots of **mixed beans and pulses** to your usual sausage casserole recipe increases the protein content, reduces calorie intake and will also help to keep you fuller for longer.



Chilli / Bolognese

Mince (beef, turkey, pork) is one of the most versatile ingredients you can have in your fridge. By making a large batch of mince with onion and chopped tomatoes you can turn it into Bolognese by adding herbs or chilli con carne by adding kidney beans and spices – a really easy base to have saved in the freezer for emergencies.



Pasta carbonara

Cook your pasta as usual (we suggest using whole wheat pasta where possible). Mix 1 egg with 1 tbsp of **fat-free fromage frais** and 1 tbsp of parmesan. Once the pasta is cooked, mix the egg mixture into the pasta. The heat from the pasta will cook the eggs. Mix with any cooked **lean meats** or vegetables that you like.



Curry

Chopped tomatoes, spices and **natural yoghurt** make really simple curry sauces without the high calories associated with the takeaway. Cook **chicken**, any other **lean meats** or **chickpeas** in a pan, add the chopped tomatoes and some tikka spice (or other curry spice) and simmer to thicken. Add as much yoghurt as you feel is necessary.



Snacks

Healthy eating isn't about sucking the enjoyment out of food, it's about making conscious swaps to ensure that what you're putting into your body is giving you the nutrients you need. We know that snacking is important and sometimes nothing will satisfy a sweet-tooth craving, which is why we've come up with a few ideas of snacks and treats for you to enjoy throughout the day.

Roasted Chickpeas

Chickpeas are so versatile and can be enjoyed instead of crisps or nuts. Roasting chickpeas for around 30 minutes with spices or even soy sauce, makes them crispy and full of flavour. These can be made in bulk to store in the fridge as they keep really well, so you'll always have some on hand if you get peckish.



Apple with peanut butter

Slices of apple with **peanut butter** is a good way of making fruit feel more exciting, the protein in peanut butter will also help you to feel fuller for longer.



Hummus

Hummus with toasted pitta bread is a delicious and filling snack to keep you going until dinner time.



Quark

Quark is a great high-protein alternative to yoghurt and can be flavoured any way you like. We like to add a teaspoon of jam or even some hot chocolate powder to create a cheesecake-like dessert.



SQUEEZE a meal plan IN

Thursday

Breakfast Overnight oats

Lunch *Baked beans* on wholemeal toast

Dinner Pasta Carbonara (see recipe)

Snacks Fruit with *low-fat yoghurt*



Monday

Breakfast *Scrambled eggs* on wholemeal toast

Lunch *Ham* and mushroom *frittata*

Dinner Pasta *bolognese*

Snacks *Hummus* and pitta bread.



Friday

Breakfast *Peanut Butter* on toast with fruit

Lunch Jacket potato with *tinned tuna* mixed with natural yoghurt

Dinner *Sausage* and *bean* casserole with mashed potato

Snacks *Quark* with hot chocolate powder



Tuesday

Breakfast 2 Weetabix with sliced banana

Lunch Leftover *ham* and mushroom *frittata*

Dinner *Chilli con carne* (using leftover Bolognese)

Snacks Roasted *chickpeas*



Saturday

Breakfast 2 Weetabix with sliced banana

Lunch *Chicken* and / or *boiled egg* salad

Dinner *Chickpea* curry with flatbread

Snacks Apple slices with *peanut butter*



Wednesday

Breakfast *Boiled eggs* with wholemeal toast

Lunch Jacket potato topped with leftover *chilli con carne*

Dinner *Cod* with new potatoes and mushy peas

Snacks Apple slices with *peanut butter*



Sunday

Breakfast *0% fat Greek yoghurt* with fruit and honey

Lunch Jacket potato with *baked beans* and *grated cheese*

Dinner *Roasted chicken breast* with new potatoes and vegetables

Snacks *Quark* with jam mixed in



Stay hydrated

Throughout the day, we lose water through sweat and urination. This fluid needs to be replaced to ensure we don't become dehydrated. Dehydration can cause symptoms such as headaches, dizziness and fatigue, as well as delayed wound healing.

Some wounds can produce a watery discharge to help the healing process and this fluid needs to be replaced. In order to stay well hydrated, you should aim to drink at least 6-8 cups or glasses of fluid each day.

Try and vary this to make it more enjoyable by alternating drinks such as tea, coffee and hot chocolate and cold drinks including sugar-free squash, fruit juices and milk.

Remember, there are other ways to improve your fluid intake by including foods such as soups and jelly. Limit caffeinated drinks – drinking more than 3 cups per day can have a dehydrating affect.





— | SQUEEZE movement IN | —

Movement offers benefits to everyone, even if you have limited mobility. In fact, if you have limited mobility, it's even more essential to enjoy the mind and health-boosting effects of staying active.

When you are wearing compression, you can help it work even more efficiently through movement. Moving your legs and feet regularly can help you maintain muscle and joint activity and improve the effectiveness of compression therapy.

Making a real effort to move around the house is a good way to keep active, this could even include small things like walking up and down the stairs and doing housework. For more information visit [NHS Gym-free workouts](#)

There are lots of ways to make movement a part of your day:

- **Walking**
Try to walk for about 30 minutes per day. If you're worried about going alone, many NHS Trusts and leg clubs offer walking and light exercise groups so you can keep moving and make new friends along the way.
- **Ankle and feet exercises**
If walking is difficult, moving your feet regularly while sitting down will help - try spelling the alphabet with your toes or pointing and flexing your toes. This will help to improve the circulation in your legs, boosting the healing process. Ask your GP or HCP for advice.
- **Light standing exercises**
Incorporating some stretches into your daily routine will help to increase your mobility while also improving your circulation. Things like circling your hips or standing on your tip toes are a few simple examples of stretches you can do. If you find balancing a little tricky, take extra care and use the back of a chair to help you balance.

SQUEEZE exercise IN

If you have restricted mobility, here are a few ideas of exercises you can do while seated.

1. Seated tummy twist

This works your core muscles. From a seated position with a straight back, hold a ball with both hands keeping the ball close to your body and your elbows bent. Slowly rotate your torso to the left as far as comfortable, keeping the rest of the body still. Rotate back to the middle and rotate to the right. Two twists is one set; beginners should start by doing 8 sets.

2. Overhead arm raises

This exercise helps to strengthen your shoulders and arms. Sit in a sturdy (armless) chair – a dining chair would do. Keep both feet flat on the floor and your back straight. Holding a bottle of water in each hand, your arms should be bent to the sides of shoulders with your palms facing forward. Raise arms slowly above your head, pause, then lower them to the starting position. Repeat 8-10 times.

3. Inner thigh squeeze

To activate the thigh muscles, sit on the edge of a sturdy chair, keeping your posture straight. With knees bent, place a ball between your knees. Squeeze the ball by pressing knees together, squeezing for 1-2 seconds. Release while keeping some tension on the ball to keep it from falling. Try doing two sets of 8-10 repetitions.

4. Knee lifts

Knee lifts will work stomach muscles, the muscles that flex the hips and thigh muscles, which are important for sitting and standing. Lift the right knee slowly towards the chest, slowly lowering the knee back to the starting position. Repeat the motion using the left leg. Alternate the legs, repeating the exercise 8-10 times on both sides.

5. Knee extensions

Doing knee extensions will help to strengthen multiple muscles in the legs. Sit near the edge of the chair (this time you need a chair with arms) with knees bent and straight posture. Hold onto the sides of the chair. The right knee should be extended out, pointing toes toward the ceiling. The knee should be slightly bent, not locked. Lower the leg to the starting position, repeating 8-10 times. Switch to the left leg and do 8-10 repetitions.

6. Ankle flexions

Ankle flexions can help to increase flexibility and reduce stiffness in the ankle and aid circulation. Sit in a sturdy chair with one leg bent at the knee and your foot flat on the floor. Extend the other leg, placing only your heel on the floor and gently tense and flex your foot, repeating 8-10 times. Switch to the left leg and do 8-10 repetitions.

7. Ankle circles

Similarly to ankle flexions, ankle circles improve flexibility, reduce stiffness in the ankle and aid circulation. Sit on a sturdy chair; lift one leg straight out in front of you and move the ankle gently in circles, keeping the other leg still with your foot flat in the floor. Rotate both clockwise and anticlockwise completing 8-10 repetitions in each direction. Switch to the left leg and do 8-10 repetitions.

It's important to make sure that whatever you do is a comfortable level of movement. Over-stretching or doing too much too soon can do more damage than good. If you need help working out what you can and can't do, ask a healthcare professional to help you build a plan.

For those who are unable to move as much and spend most of their day sitting, it's important to elevate your legs at footstool height, whenever possible, and move your legs and feet to improve circulation.



If you are more mobile and active, these exercises can be done in addition to your usual exercise routine.

If you are less mobile, these exercises are a way to squeeze in movement and help you take care of your legs.

Movement plan

Deep breathing

Abdominal breathing is the most efficient and relaxed way of getting enough air into your lungs. This type of breathing has two important effects on the body: it is relaxing and regenerative.

While seated, relax your neck and shoulders. Breathe in through your nose for 2 counts. Purse your lips (as if you're going to whistle) and breathe out for a count of 4, tightening your stomach muscles as you release your breath. Repeat for 5 minutes, or 2 minutes if this feels too long.

If you are more mobile and active, these exercises can be done in addition to your usual exercise routine.

If you are less mobile, these exercises are a way to squeeze in movement and help you take care of your legs

Legs 11 | warm up

Ankle circles

While seated, rotate your ankles in a circular motion. Continue this for 8-10 rotations then repeat in the other direction.

The standing or seated march

If you are safe and able to march on the spot bending your knees and lifting your feet. It is perfectly fine to carry out this exercise in the seated position. While sitting with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor, lift alternate legs as if you were marching on the spot. Repeat this to the count of 20.

Calf crunches

While seated, your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, lift your heel off the floor resting on your toes and crunch your calf muscle. Bring your heel back to the floor, complete 8-10 times and then repeat on the opposite side.

Legs 11 | exercise programme

Toe pointing

While seating with one of your legs stretched out straight in front of you, flex your ankle downward so your toes are on or near to the floor. While keeping your heel on the floor bring your foot upwards slowly aiming your toes towards your nose. Hold this position for 15-20 seconds and then return the foot slowly back to the starting position. Repeat this 3 times on each leg.

Foot alphabet

Using your foot and ankle as if it was your hand and wrist, paint in the air the complete alphabet. Repeat one complete cycle with each foot.

Sit to stand

With the chair just behind the back of your knees begin to lower yourself leaning slightly forward as if attempting to sit down. Before you touch the chair, pause then stand up to a full upright position. Repeat 5 times, pause and, if able to, repeat a further 5 times.

Legs 11 | cool down

Ankle circles

While seated, rotate your ankles in a circular motion. Continue this for 8-10 rotations then repeat in the other direction.

Calf crunches

While seated, your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, lift your heel off the floor resting on your toes and crunch your calf muscle. Bring your heel back to the floor, complete 8-10 times and then repeat on the opposite side.



It is a good idea to end your session with some more deep breathing. Repeat the breathing exercise you completed at the start of the session for 5-10 minutes.

SQUEEZE time IN

For family & friends

Keeping healthy is key to ensuring that you can stay active and spend time with friends and family doing the things you love. Healthy eating, weight loss, a good skin care regime and wearing your compression can all prevent a venous leg ulcer. Being active also reduces risk of recurrence.

Some people find that their self-esteem drops when they have venous leg ulcers, and this can lead to people withdrawing from social activities with friends and family. However, it is at this time that it is more important than ever to spend time with family and friends, to form an empowered unit so you can remain socially active. Support groups can also be very beneficial; enabling you to talk to other people living with a venous leg ulcer. Social interaction, whether in person, by phone, text or video link can really help to lift your spirits.

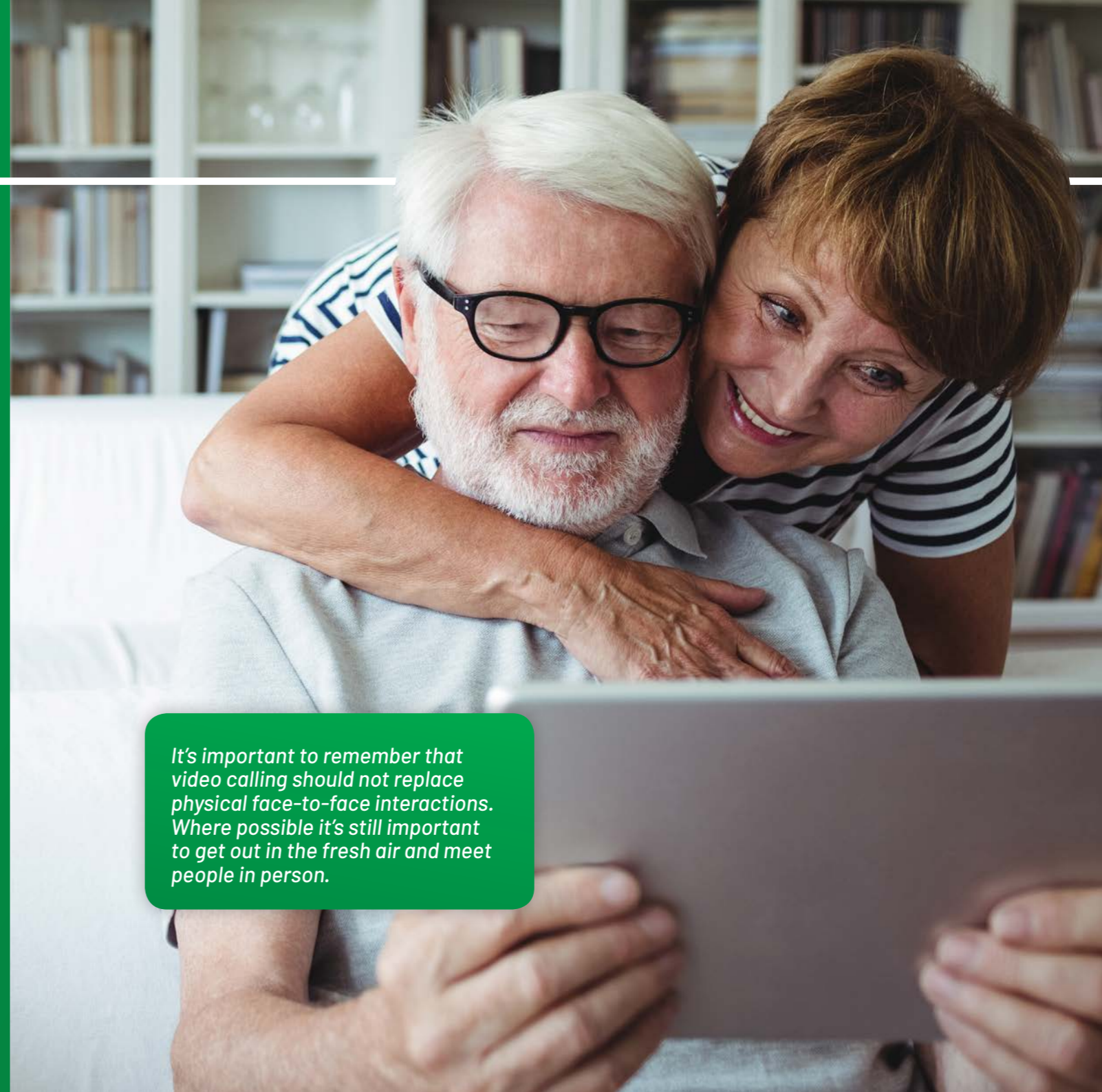
Staying in touch online

Staying in touch with friends and family who live further away from you is easier than it seems. Sometimes, picking up the phone or video calling are the most convenient ways to stay in touch. There are lots of free resources online to help get you started if you don't know how to get set up. The important thing is that you don't allow physical barriers and distance to prevent you from staying social.

Video calling can be done from almost any device that has an internet connection so it's unlikely that you'll need to buy anything new. If you need help or support some banks and internet providers host group classes to give you guidance. You can find lots of videos on YouTube that talk you through simple steps to boost your confidence on the internet, and help you to feel safe and secure while online.

The great thing about video calling is that you can integrate it into your pre-existing routine. You can sit someone down at the dinner table with you or even have a natter over a cup of tea with someone on the other side of the world.

It's important to remember that video calling should not replace physical face-to-face interactions. Where possible it's still important to get out in the fresh air and meet people in person.



— I SQUEEZE you IN I —

Regular nurses' visits and doctors' appointments take time away from doing the things you love and living life to the full. By taking charge of your self-care you can take control back of your life and spend more time doing things you love to do rather than those you have to do.

This doesn't mean going it alone but working with your healthcare provider to understand how you could contribute to your own treatment by, for example, using self-care options such as compression hosiery or ReadyWrap® (with help from family or friends, if necessary) to reduce the number of times you need to see a clinician.

Taking care of your leg health as a preventative measure, as well as to treat your leg ulcer can enable you to do the things you love, whether it's having a bath, watching TV or doing a jigsaw puzzle, without the added pressure and discomfort of leg ulcers.



Red flags to look out for:

- New redness and swelling of the skin around the ulcer which can be accompanied with a high temperature (fever) and/or a feeling of being unwell or loss of appetite
- Any other persistent new discolouration of your legs or toes
- A green or unpleasant discharge or an unpleasant odour coming from the ulcer
- Increased leg pain or discomfort that doesn't resolve with your normal pain killers
- Increased numbness, altered sensation (feeling) or pins and needles that doesn't ease with movement
- Increased swelling to your legs or toes that is unusual for you
- A new wound
- Increased leaking from the leg and/or an existing wound that cannot be contained in your current dressing or compression garment

Signs of an infection according to NICE
(<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/leg-ulcer/symptoms>)

If you notice any of these red flags it is important to contact your healthcare professional immediately.

More self-care resources



L&R Self-care

L&R have a full range of compression garments and skincare products designed to help you take control of your leg health. Visit the new website to find out more about their self-care solutions.

lrsselfcare.co.uk



Lindsay Leg Club

Lindsay Leg Clubs provide community-based treatment, health promotion, education and ongoing care for people who are experiencing leg-related problems. They motivate and empower individuals to take ownership of their care, alleviate pain and reduce any stigma attached to their condition.

legclub.org



Legs Matter

A coalition of healthcare organisations. It's goal is to support, care for and educate anyone with a lower leg or foot problem. Among other things, Legs Matter provides helpful tips and tricks for supporting your condition and caring for your legs.

legsmatter.org



NHS Stop Smoking

Quitting smoking can make drastic improvements to your lifestyle and health in ways you might not expect. The NHS provides information and support to help you quit smoking.

nhs.uk/smokefree

NHS Eat Well

The NHS provides great advice for improving your eating habits and ensuring that you have a balanced and varied diet.

nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well

"My dad and relatives on his side had poor circulation in the lower limbs, swollen legs and feet and broken skin. It could be on the horizon for me so need to get into better habits and adopt this as a routine, like brushing your teeth standing on tiptoes going up and down, similar to aeroplane exercises."

Johnny Vegas



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Join the self-care revolution today

For further information contact our Customer Solutions team on 08450 606707 or email at customersolutions@uk.lrmed.com

You can also visit our website www.lrsselfcare.co.uk where we have a new dedicated webchat to support you.

Please follow this advice as recommended by your healthcare professional, following a full holistic assessment.

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