



Members of the House of Sport showed their support for RED January in 2020

Jan 06, 2021 08:30 GMT

## Return to lockdown makes RED January's message of keeping active for mental health more important than ever

News of a [new national lockdown](#) and a return to last March's instruction to stay at home for all but essential purposes has again thrown into sharp relief the important role of exercise and physical activity in boosting mental health.

As stronger measures to contain the spread of covid-19 come into force, so the work to protect mental health increases in importance – and regular

physical activity of all types provides a key outlet for people at a time of increased stress and worry.

While this January presents a near unique set of challenges, the beginning of the year has long offered a focus on mental wellbeing with the shorter days, darker skies and wintry weather all combining to give January a reputation as a challenging time for many.

The evidence, meanwhile, linking regular physical activity to improved mental health has built steadily over recent years, with the NHS and many health professionals now explicitly [recommending exercise as a means to support mental wellbeing](#) for those able to get active in whatever ways work for different individuals.

The growth of campaigns like RED January, [which London Sport announced its continued support for last month](#), comes at a critical time.

As the country adapts to a return to lockdown and the strictest level of measures experienced since the first national restrictions were introduced last March, [RED January](#) provides a community and inspiration to help people get active, discuss mental wellbeing, and, in many cases, raise money to support sport and mental health initiatives.

Research conducted into RED January 2020 found that more than 50% of those taking part experienced less stress and reduced signs of depressive symptoms.

Almost a third raised their activity levels closer to the national CMO recommended levels of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week.

Regular exercise can have a huge impact on people's lives at any time.

But at this time of year, where many find it difficult to build activity into their lives and the stresses and strains of lockdown can seem more challenging than ever, the community and inspiration that RED January provides offers an important support network.

Such support can help people across the country to cope at a critical moment.

The simplicity of its message – to be active every day in January – offers not just motivation to exercise, but a direct means of bolstering mental health at a difficult and distressing time for many.

---

## About London Sport

London Sport is a charity working to ensure more Londoners live happier, healthier lives through access to sport and physical activity. Supported by Sport England and the Mayor of London, we collaborate with those that share our vision, running and supporting projects that help children, young people and the least active adults to embed sport and physical activity into their lives.

For more information on London Sport, visit [www.londonsport.org](http://www.londonsport.org)

## Contacts



### Press Office

Press Contact  
[media@londonsport.org](mailto:media@londonsport.org)

### Anil Manji

Press Contact  
Head of Marketing and Communications  
[anil.manji@londonsport.org](mailto:anil.manji@londonsport.org)