

Living well with Huntington's

You can continue to live your life with Huntington's disease (HD) if you focus on keeping your body and mind healthy. Research shows that people at risk, gene positive or diagnosed with HD can help reduce the impact of HD symptoms and delay progression by staying socially, physically and mentally active. Here some simple tips to manage the impact of HD.

1. Maintain your interests and social life

It is important to continue enjoying your hobbies, pursuing your interests and maintaining social interaction as this will increase positive thinking and provide a sense of fulfilment. This can be anything from reading, attending a fitness class, painting or having coffee with friends. Making time for yourself and engaging in activities that interest you are great ways of reducing stress and anxiety.



2. Stimulate your brain

Keeping the brain active is thought to build reserves of healthy brain cells which can reduce the severity and delay the progression of HD. Exercises to strengthen brain function should offer novelty and challenge, but more importantly, be of interest to you. For example, you can read aloud from books, play board games or puzzles, listen to the radio, test your recall by making lists of items, memorising them and see how many items you can recall from the list.



3. Stay physically active and eat well

Try to incorporate exercise and movement into the daily routine. This can be as simple as walking your dog, attending a yoga class or shopping. Make sure you choose an activity you enjoy. As long as you're moving and having fun, you are being physically active and taking control of the impact of HD. Additionally, eating regular, well-balanced meals is essential for your body and brain to function and is another simple way you can enhance your overall health and well-being.

4. Don't let change discourage you

We all experience change in our everyday lives. However, at times it can be unsettling, particularly when dealing with a diagnosis of HD. It is possible to cope with change and maintain a quality of life by doing the following:

- Stay informed of all possible options and difficulties you may face
- Knowing who you can talk to and have a support system you trust
- Plan ahead in relation to finances, legal matters (e.g. powers of attorney, will, etc.), accommodation, employment, how/when to speak to loved ones