East Lindsey Active

Green Exercise in the East Midlands

Natural England is funding eight Green Exercise demonstration projects with local partnerships around the country, aimed at increasing levels of physical activity and people’s connections to their local green spaces. Green Exercise can be any informal physical activity that takes place in a green space or the natural environment: from gardening, cycling and walking in urban green areas, to kite flying and conservation projects in the wider countryside.

East Lindsey Active is the Green Exercise pilot project for Natural England’s East Midlands region. It runs a number of walking groups designed to help people to start including gentle walking in their daily routine. Managed in partnership with East Lindsey District Council and Sustrans, the project works closely with GP practices in the coastal strip, taking referrals for individuals who have been prescribed as needing more physical activity. In this way it contributes towards the Government’s recommended five sessions of 30 minutes of physical activity per week.

Mrs Allen used to be an avid walker and would think nothing of heading off into the Lincolnshire Wolds with the Ramblers Association for a ten mile hike. Unfortunately during her forties and early fifties she was blighted by ill health, suffering first from a stroke, then ongoing troubles with her heart. She was forced to start taking things easier.
“As I am sure most people can relate to, when you get out of the habit of keeping fit and active you soon find yourself falling into the trap of doing nothing at all. I wanted to do things to stay active but lacked motivation and a suitable outlet for me to take advantage of.”

Mrs Allen

Concerned about managing the distance, Mrs Allen no longer felt she could go out with her walking group. Furthermore, she felt vulnerable walking on her own and didn’t want to go out by herself.

After seeing a leaflet in her local GP surgery advertising the East Lindsey Active scheme, Mrs Allen went along to one of the advertised walks. Six months later she was an integral member of her local health walk group, even becoming a qualified walk leader.

“The opportunity to get out in my local natural environment has had a massive effect on my health and personal well-being.”

Mrs Allen

Natural England’s Green Exercise pilot programme aims to demonstrate ‘best practise’ for a wide variety of different approaches to providing opportunities to get people active outdoors, and is evaluating the benefits of each project with academic partners.