



The Finnish Rheumatism
Association



REUMATROPPI

-GROUP ACTIVITY MATERIAL

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DEAR READER,

You are currently reading Reumatroppi's group activity material. This material will help you to guide your own Reumatroppi group and to promote your own and as well as other people's health.

The material contains 10 ready-to-use group activity sessions. Each session has a wellbeing theme and related goal. Each group session contains an examination of the scientifically studied health benefits of the theme, discussion, and indoor and outdoor tasks. The material is primarily designed for face-to-face meetings, but it can also be adapted to online meetings.

Physical activity, cultural interests, a healthy lifestyle, and time spent in nature have been studied to promote health and give energy in everyday life. For this reason, these themes form the core of Reumatroppi activities. Reumatroppi activities approach health and wellbeing through joy and a sense of community and togetherness.

Health and wellbeing are a matter of small choices and actions that we all make every day. Reumatroppi activities aim to help us to focus attention on sources of wellbeing in our everyday lives and to encourage us to try out new things. You do not need any special skills to organise the activities, and restricted physical capacity, for instance, is not a barrier to participation.

Reumatroppi activities are based on the principles of functionality and community, and they are free of charge. Reumatroppi groups learn more about the opportunities offered by their surroundings, share knowledge and experiences, and encourage each other to try out new things together.

The Reumatroppi group activity model was tested with rheumatic and musculoskeletal disease associations in autumn 2020. The model was developed based on feedback from volunteer group leaders and participants from 2021–2022. We would like to extend our warm thanks to everyone who participated in the development work!

The Reumatroppi group activity model was developed by the Finnish Rheumatism Association for elderly people living with rheumatic and/or musculoskeletal diseases. The activities are nevertheless suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels, and there's certainly something for everyone in the material.

We hope that you enjoy the group activity sessions with Reumatroppi!



THE REUMATROPPI GROUP ACTIVITY MATERIAL CONTAINS:

- 10 ready-to-use group activity sessions that you can utilise as they are or adapt to your own association and group.
- Scientific information about the associations of various forms of physical activity, cultural hobbies, time spent in nature, and a healthy lifestyle with health and well-being.
- Inspiring conversation starters that encourage people to share their own experiences.

OPTIONS FOR UTILISING THE MATERIAL:

USE THE MATERIAL IN THE ORDER PROVIDED

- A group can gather weekly, like a course, or for instance 4-5 times over the association's spring period and 4-5 times over the autumn period.

MIX AND ADAPT

- Familiarise yourself with the material and pick the themes and tasks that best suit your own needs.
- The material and tasks can be used as a programme for an excursion or event, for recreational breaks at meetings, or at members' evenings.
- The tasks can also be used to motivate members during quieter periods or to organise a fun competition where the most active members are rewarded.

REUMATROPPI GROUP SESSIONS IN BRIEF:

- Meet on the association's premises, at a library, or online, for instance.
- Go through the previous week's tasks and discuss your thoughts about them.
- Introduce the new theme and related goal.
- Explain the theme's association with health and wellbeing using the prepared text.
- Discuss the thoughts and experiences brought up by the theme.
- Carry out a practical, fun task together.
- Set an independent task that members are to work on until the next meeting.
- Go outside for some exercise together or to explore what your surroundings have to offer.

TIPS FOR GROUP LEADERS:

- Consider advertising: Where and how will you reach your target group? Where and when will you meet? Where can members sign up and what is the deadline?
- Collect group members' email addresses and/or telephone numbers during the sign-up phase. If you like, you can create a WhatsApp group chat before the first meeting. If you need to, practise using WhatsApp in advance.
- If you are meeting online, create the event by choosing the online platform and then share the link with the group members. If you need to, practise joining the event and make sure that your audio and video work in advance. At the start of the group session, make sure that your microphone and camera work, and that the group members can see and hear one another.
- Ask your group members for oral or written permission to take photographs and use the pictures in the association's communications, for example. Photos are great marketing material for association's activities.
- Familiarise yourself with the session's theme and goal in advance. Check what the topic of discussion is and the kind of tasks you will do. Prepare the necessary equipment and, if necessary, provide group members with instructions.
- If you like, you can print out independent tasks in advance and give them out to group members before the session ends.
- Stick to the given theme, and make sure that every group session contains discussion and at least one kind of group activity. To help with scheduling, guideline times have been given for each section.
- If you are using a WhatsApp group (or equivalent app), encourage discussion and share your experiences with others before the next meeting. This will encourage others to share their own experiences.
- Aim to create a safe and positive atmosphere for the group where everyone is able to participate in their own way. If necessary, agree on some ground rules.
- Trust in your own abilities and adapt the ready-to-use material to suit your own style. Be inspired and creatively develop new things.
- Take advantage of group members' skills and share responsibilities. Ask for group members' opinions and feedback. Together, make the group your very own.
- Encourage each other and have fun!

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About Reumatroppi activities?

In this session, **we will learn more about Reumatroppi activities and the other group members.**

The goal is to get to know each other and find out what Reumatroppi is all about.

Welcome to Reumatroppi | around 10 min

Wish your group members welcome to Reumatroppi!

Together with your group, discuss what the group activities are about and what makes a good group.

- Reumatroppi sessions are fun time spent with others working on health and wellbeing-related activities.
- Reumatroppi sessions aim to introduce and help members to find various self-management methods that everyone can use to promote their own wellbeing.
- These methods are referred to as “troppi”, which is similar to “remedy” in English. The aim of these remedies is to support possible medical care and to make everyday life more enjoyable.
- Remedies can include things like a variety of physical activity, cultural hobbies, time spent outdoors in nature, or everyday health choices. Remedies encourage us to find the positive things in life and help us to cope.
- Reumatroppi activities encourage members to look at their local environment and learned habits in a new way. Everyday adventures are inspiring and keep the mind active.
- Group sessions include various wellbeing themes and fun group activities. Between sessions, members work on independent tasks and then share their experiences with others.
- Reumatroppi group is a safe place for challenging yourself and trying out new things. There is a good balance of rewarding discussions and group activities.
- Members can share their realisations and successes with others at Reumatroppi sessions. Everyone is on their own personal Reumatroppi journey, but they are not travelling alone.

Group members and the group leader are the key to a successful group:

- They commit to the group and its activities for its entire duration.
- They actively participate in group activities with an open mind.
- They keep the group confidential: other people's affairs are not disclosed outside of the group.
- They give everyone room and the opportunity to participate in the group in their own way.
- They listen to and respect other people's opinions and views.
- They praise and encourage others along the way.

Discussion | around 15 min

- Go back to the concept of remedies. What are your remedies? What brings you joy, what gives you strength, and what helps you to cope?
- Is there a remedy that you haven't focused on recently, but would like to return to? What new things could you try?
- What are your initial thoughts and feelings? What brought you to the group, and what kind of expectations do you have for the Reumatroppi sessions and your own group?
- What do you think makes a good group? What should a good group be like?

Group task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: What do we have in common?

Required equipment/spaces: A stopwatch or other method of timekeeping (optional).

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: In this task, the aim is to find things that the group members have in common. Divide into small groups of around 3-4 in the meeting space. Then explain that the groups' task is to talk to one another and find one health or wellbeing-related thing that they all have in common. Try to avoid things that are self-evident, like "We are all wearing trainers."

Stop the discussion at a suitable point (e.g. after 3-5 minutes) and then tell the group members to divide into new groups. The task of the new group is to find one thing relating to culture, nature, exercise, or lifestyle that all of the group members have in common. Try to focus on something different than what you focused on in the previous group.

Stop the discussion again after a few minutes. Tell the group members to split up once again and to find one more thing that they have in common. Finally, discuss what you learnt. What do you have in common? Did you find things that every member of your group had in common?

Option 2

Task name: Introduction aerobics

Required equipment/spaces: This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: This task is good for introductions or for the first group session. The aerobics can be done while seated or standing.

Read the statements below to the group members one at a time and give them some time to react.

If you would like a challenge, you can agree to keep the movements "on" as you proceed to the next one. You can also come up with your own wellbeing movement statements.

- Stand up or squat if you enjoy reading books or magazines.
- Bow if you like to exercise.
- Raise your left hand if you enjoy spending time in nature.
- Nod if you've ever been to the opera.
- Raise both hands if you eat vegetables every day.
- Wave your hands in the air if you prefer to exercise in groups rather than alone.
- Lift your legs in turn if you drink at least one litre of water per day.
- Move your shoulders in circles if you pick berries or mushrooms in the forest.
- Lift your right leg if you like art.
- Turn around if you like gardening or woodwork.
- Grin if you like to watch films.
- Box if you like to go to the theatre or perform plays.
- Roll your hips if you like adventures.
- Step from side to side if you can sing or play a musical instrument.
- Reach to the ceiling if you like to try out new recipes.
- Shake your whole body if you like to dance, or used to like to dance.
- Spread your arms wide if you are excited to be part of the group!

Independent task | around 5 min

New and forgotten skills

One goal of Reumatroppi activities is to challenge people to venture outside of their comfort zone and to try out new things.

This session's independent task is to come up with a new skill or a skill that you had years ago but have since forgotten, and which you would like to learn or develop over time. The skill can be anything whatsoever: cooking, learning a foreign language, lacemaking, playing guitar, better posture, etc. The skill does not have to be learnt perfectly by any means. It is far more important to take time for yourself to spend on something you enjoy and to put your full effort into it.

**Tell each other what you are going to try, and share your experiences with one another.
Encourage each other along the way!**

Notes:

NEW AND FORGOTTEN

skills

What skill have you always wanted to learn? What about a skill that have that has become rusty over the years?

First think of a skill you want to learn or relearn.
Spend time doing it.

Your chosen skill can be large or small, and you certainly don't need to master it. The main thing is that you try it out and challenge yourself.

Monitor your progress over 4 weeks using the scales below.

The skill I'm going to work on:

How is my practice going?

Week 1 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Week 2 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Week 3 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Week 4 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

How I feel:

Week 1 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊

Week 2 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊

Week 3 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊

Week 4 😊 😊 😊 😊 😊

Other notes:

Outdoor group activity | the rest of the session

Task name: Find someone...

Goal: To get to know one another and perhaps find new topics of discussion to share in the future. A fun competition can break the ice and encourage the group's sense of community.

You will need:

- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing and a water bottle.
- A "Find someone..." task sheet and pen or pencil for every person.

Instructions:

- Go outside, near your meeting place. A small forest, park, or sports field is good.
- Tell the group members that the goal is to fill in the task sheet by finding someone in the group for every square on the sheet of paper. Once you have found a suitable person, write their name in the square.
- Please note: You can only ask one person one square at a time. If one person suits the description in the square, you then have to find someone else and ask them another question. Only after you have asked someone else can you return to the first person. To clarify, you cannot spend the entire task time with a single person, even if they fit the descriptions in several squares.
- Agree together on how you are going to play: Is there a set time period (e.g. 20-30 minutes) in which you have to gather as many names as possible, or is the winner the first person to fill their entire sheet?
- Give everyone a task sheet and a pen. Tell everyone how much time they have and give them permission to start.
- At the end of the game, gather together to go through your answers. Did everyone find someone to fill every square?

Notes:

FIND SOMEONE...

who doesn't
drink coffee.

who keeps a
weather
journal.

who has a
parent with a
name that
starts with T.

who has been
to America.

who has
green socks.

who has
more than 2
siblings.

who listens
to
audiobooks.

who goes ice
swimming.

who prefers
cats to dogs.

who wanted
to be a
doctor as a
child.

who can
navigate by
the stars.

whose name
has 3 syllables.

who likes to
be outside in
the rain.

who likes
Asian food.

whose
favourite
colour is
orange.

who has
tried hot
yoga.

who likes to
sing karaoke

who climbed
trees as a
child,

who has more
than 5 plants
at home.

who feels
younger than
their age.

who likes
Turkish
pepper.

who listens
to rock
music.

who can speak
three
languages.

whose favourite
childhood
memory is
about food.

From goals to action

In this session, **we're going to look at goals.**

The goal is to think about the goals we have in our own lives. We will also set wellbeing goals to work towards.

Introduction to the theme | around 10 min

Encourage the group members to think about their goals using the text below.

- Goals reveal our values and hopes, and help us to achieve them. It is easier to reach our destination when we know where we're going.
- Goals and destinations give life a sense of purpose. Research has shown that people who find their lives to be meaningful experience more positive emotions and higher quality of life than others.
- They also have better functional ability and are more likely to make good health choices than people who do not feel that their lives are meaningful.

The SMART model can help to set goals. A good goal is:

- **Specific:** The goal is clear and specific.
- **Measurable:** How will you know that you're on the right track? What will change as you head towards your goal?
- **Achievable:** A good goal is sufficiently challenging but nevertheless achievable. Rather often, we set ourselves goals that are too challenging in too short a time frame, but we can also be guilty of setting too modest goals over a long time frame. Even small steps are progress – and sometimes more reliable than great leaps.
- **Relevant:** Is the goal relevant and important to you? Changes that you make because of others are only temporarily inspiring.
- **Time-Framed:** What happens today, what happens tomorrow, and what happens in a week? A ready-made schedule and clear interim goals will help you towards your destination.
- With goals, a carrot is often better than a stick: try to head towards something rather than away from it.
- Once your goal is clear, it's worth writing it down or saying it aloud. This will make you more likely to succeed.
- Trust in yourself and your success. Remember to reward yourself for a job well done.

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Discussion | around 15 min

- What do you think is the benefit of goal-setting? Do your goals or their role change at different stages in life?
- Do you have any goals relating to health or wellbeing? What kind of factors support you in achieving your goal? And how can you overcome any obstacles? Share your best tips and advice with one another.
- What motivates you? Do you do things for yourselves, or do you more commonly find yourself doing things because someone asks you or tells you to?
- What do you think about the following statement? “What if, instead of grabbing yourself by the scruff of the neck, you held your hand?”

Shared task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: Eureka moments

Required equipment/spaces: Pieces of paper and pens.

Preparations: For each member, print out the words at the bottom of the instructions and cut the words out on separate pieces of paper. You can also write the words on small pieces of paper in advance. You don't have to use all the words. However, make sure that each participant is given the same words. You can also add your own pieces of paper if you feel that something is missing.

First read the instructions to yourself, then give instructions to the group.

Instructions: Various everyday things and choices are written on the pieces of paper. Tell your group to put the pieces of paper on the table in front of them with the text facing up. Then tell them that the purpose of this fun exercise is to help them to figure out what is important to them by removing the pieces of paper one by one. They have five seconds to make their choice. Once the five seconds have passed, the least important piece of paper is turned over on the table. Once everyone understands the task, begin the first round:

Calmly count down from five: “5–4–3–2–1”. Once you've counted down, make sure that everyone has removed at least one of their pieces of paper. Then count down again from five and make sure that one of the pieces of paper has been turned over. Keep going until only the three most important things, or perhaps the most important thing of all, are left.

What things did you find important? Is there something that was in everyone's “top three”? You don't have to reveal your own choices if it feels too personal.

If you want to add a challenge, speed up the pace of the rounds. The aim is to prevent the participants from dwelling on their choice for too long and to encourage them to make the decision as quickly as possible. This adds fun to the game and might also help them to find out new things about themselves.

books/reading	car	radio
music	Nordic walking	bicycle
(smart) phone	trainers	toothbrush
television	art	bedclothes
nature	showering	computer/internet
chocolate	friends	underwear/clothing
coffee/tea	sauna	exercise
my own bed	salty liquorice	hairbrush/makeup

Option 2

Task name: Unpredictable values

Required equipment/spaces: Pieces of paper with proverbs or sayings written on them. This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors.

Preparations: In advance, prepare some pieces of paper with proverbs or sayings written on them. There are some examples at the end of the instructions, but you can also come up with your own. The most important thing is that the proverb or saying conveys a value. First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: Personal values are intrinsically related to goals. Values reveal what we find important and how we want things to be. As a result, they can also guide us in what we strive for and aim for. Examples of values include wisdom, love, performance, trust, honesty, knowledge, truth, openness, health, power, eco-friendliness, helping others, wealth, beauty, or independence.

There are lots of proverbs and sayings that convey values. Can you recognise them from miming alone?

Divide into two groups, or play as the entire group. Agree on who begins. The task of the person who starts is to act out a proverb or saying. You can agree together whether speech is allowed, or only gestures. However, words relating to the proverb or saying must not be said aloud. The task of the others is to guess the proverb or saying. If you guess correctly, you get a point. You can also play in teams or groups where group members take turns acting out the proverbs or sayings to everyone, and everyone gets to guess which saying the person is acting out.

Examples:

- Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.
- Honesty is the best policy.
- Time is money.
- The early bird catches the worm.
- There's no shame in asking.
- Don't leave for tomorrow what can be done today.
- You live and learn.
- Onwards and upwards.
- A belief does not have the same worth as knowledge.
- The first step is always the hardest.
- Determination prevails over bad luck.
- Where there's a will, there's a way.
- A rolling stone gathers no moss.
- What goes around, comes around.
- Money makes the world go around.
- You must learn to walk before you can run.
- A lie has no legs.
- Don't count your chickens before they've hatched.
- Look high and fall low.
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

At the end, you can discuss the sayings. What values do you think are behind them? Please note: There are no right or wrong answers here.

Reumatroppi's values are functionality, excitement, and community. What are your personal values? What about your association's values? You don't have to reveal your own choices if it feels too personal.

Independent task | around 5 min

Goal-setting

In this session, members will each think about what they want to achieve and what the coming weeks could bring into their lives. Write your own goals, the obstacles in your way, and what you need or what resources you have on the getting to grips with goals task page. Think about who you can ask for strength, help and support if you run low on willpower. It's also worth thinking about how to reward yourself once you have achieved your goal.

**Share photos and videos of things you have done in pursuit of your goals with others.
Encourage each other towards your goals!**

GOAL-SETTING

What do you want to achieve this week, or this year? Write your goals down and think about factors that will help or hinder your success.

GOALS:.....
.....
.....

RESOURCES

CHALLENGES:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

1.

2.

3.

4.

HELP

WHO CAN I ASK FOR HELP OR SUPPORT?

.....

HOW WILL I CELEBRATE MY ACHIEVEMENTS?

.....

**REU
MA**
TROPPI

Outdoor group activity | the rest of the session

Task name: Thinking about goals

Goal: To think about the group's shared goals and link the goal to muscle memory. Thinking of the shared goal strengthens the group's sense of community. Exercising in a natural environment increases creativity and clarifies the thought process.

You will need:

- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing and a water bottle.
- A smartphone with a camera for at least one group member.
- A pen and paper to take notes, if necessary.

Instructions:

- Divide into pairs. You do not need to be acquainted with your partner beforehand. If you like, you can give each pair a pen and paper or tell them to use the notes app on their smartphone.
- Start to walk in pairs to the park, a nearby forest path, or gravel path. Anyone who knows a good route can lead the group with their partner.
- Walk at your own pace and discuss the following with your partner:
 - First, briefly get to know each other.
 - How do you feel about being in the group today?
Why have you come along and what do you want to get out of it?
 - What kind of groups or events do you feel comfortable in/at?
What makes you want to come back to a group?
 - Why do you think this group is meeting?
What could be the group's shared goal?
- Then swap partners and go through the same questions with your new partner.
- At the end, gather at a park bench or other comfortable place and talk about your conversations: What kind of picture did you form together about why the group is meeting? What do you think makes a good, safe group? Make sure that the discussion is open and that anyone who wants to speak has the chance.
- Write down your key thoughts on paper and share a picture of it with everyone.
- Finally, take a happy group picture of everyone and send it to each other on WhatsApp. You can also send other photos or thoughts from your walk. This is also an excellent opportunity to practise using WhatsApp if you need to.

Notes:

Health and wellbeing through physical activity

This session will focus on **health-enhancing physical activity** and exercise recommendations.

The goal is to increase awareness of health-enhancing physical activity and to assess how much of a part it plays in your own life.

Introduction to the theme | around 10 min

Present the importance of exercise and strength training to the group using the text below.

- Health-enhancing physical activity refers to all exercise that has positive effects on health and wellbeing. That means exercise that maintains and promotes for example brain, heart, and vascular health, a healthy weight, musculoskeletal health, and joint mobility.
- Regular exercise also decreases the risk of falls and dementia. Exercise also improves mood and gives more energy for everyday life.
- Exercise is the most important way to retain functional ability as one ages. Functional ability refers to the ability to manage normal everyday actions, such as getting out of bed, preparing food, and hobbies. All of the things that are meaningful or necessary for a good life.
- Exercise works like a targeted drug and produces positive effects in the body parts that you focus on. For example, getting out of a chair might get easier if you practice balancing and do strength training in your legs and core.
- Sufficient exercise that is relative to one's own level of fitness promotes health. Any amount of exercise, however, is better than none at all. Even the first exercise bout stimulates circulation and can give a better night's sleep. When repeated, the positive effects increase.
- The Finnish physical activity recommendation outlines how much physical activity one should do in a week to maintain one's health. Even a lower amount of exercise than recommended is good for health, and anything above the recommendations only provides additional benefits.
- The recommendation for people over 65-years-old is to do versatile physical activity. The recommendation highlights muscle strengthening and balance, as these are proven to have an effect on maintaining functional ability and preventing falls. Muscle strength, balance, and flexibility should be practised at least twice a week.
- One should also do moderate physical activity that increases heart rate for at least 2 hours and 30 minutes per week. The same health benefits can be achieved by increasing the intensity of the physical activity from moderate to vigorous, in which case the required minimum duration is 1 hour and 15 minutes per week.
- Light physical activity should be practised as often as possible. One should also take breaks from sedentary behaviour as often as possible. Even a small amount of exercise counts!
- Getting enough restorative sleep is the foundation of the physical activity recommendations.

- Even adding a small amount of exercise to your everyday routines is well worth it, and you can progress slowly towards your goals. In the best-case scenario, physical exercise can act as a source of strength and give energy in everyday life.



Weekly physical activity recommendation for over 65-year-olds © UKK Institute

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Discussion | around 15 min

- What kind of physical activity does your week involve? Were you already familiar with the Finnish physical activity recommendation? Can you think of an example of physical activity for each part of the recommendation?
- How much physical activity did you do as a child or teenager? What did you do? What do each of you do nowadays?
- Do you have e.g. “secret weapons” to get you moving when the weather is bad, or if you’re tired (e.g. an exercise buddy, pet, step counter)? Share your top tips!
- What good exercise places do you know in your local surroundings? Have you heard of an exercise place that you haven’t visited yet?

Shared task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: Line up

Required equipment/spaces: You may need two objects or, if you’re outside, a tree to mark the starting line and finishing line. This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors.

Preparations: Decide on where the game area starts and finishes. Place the objects to mark the start and finish. First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: Exercise is often linked to various opinions or impressions that can either help you to exercise or hinder you. In this task, you will express your own opinions using physical activity. At the same time, you will get to know one another better and perhaps find some things you have in common. The task includes statements relating to physical activity as well as some general facts that help you to learn more about each other.

First tell the group that one end of the area (or the chosen object or tree) refers to one option and the other end (or the chosen object or tree) refers to the other. Then explain the criterion or statement for which the group members have to line up between the two points (from shortest to tallest, etc.) For example, if the criterion is shoe size, the group members have to arrange themselves in order so that the person with the smallest shoe size is at one end of the area and the person with the largest shoe size is at the other. Everyone else has to line up in order of shoe size between the two. The statements are on a scale from Completely disagree - Completely agree.

Give the group members time to line up and then move on to the next criterion/statement. You can also come up with more criteria and statements yourselves. Discuss the statements and your opinions.

If you want a challenge, agree that the group members have to line up **silently** without using words. At the end of the round, talk about how well you did!

Criteria:

- height from shortest to tallest (easy, works as a warm-up)
- shoe size from smallest to largest
- age from youngest to oldest (difficult without speaking)



- first letter of middle name in alphabetic order from A-Ö
- birth month from January to December
- number of hobbies from fewest to most
- thumb width from narrowest to widest
- hair colour from lightest to darkest

Statements (completely disagree – completely agree):

- I think about the health benefits of physical activity when I am physically active.
- Physical activity is fun.
- I am active.
- I prefer to do exercise with others than by myself.
- My relationship with physical activity has changed over time.
- Being physically active keeps the mind and body energised.
- Physical activity helps to relieve pain and stiffness.
- I feel good after exercising.
- The physical activity recommendations are useful.
- It's difficult to find time for physical activity.

Option 2

Task name: Lottery aerobics

Required equipment/spaces: Pen and paper. This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give instructions to the group. Read the exercise instructions in advance so you know more or less what to expect. You can also come up with more pleasing exercises or exercises that are more suitable for your group.

Instructions: Physical activity doesn't need to be boring or mundane, and sometimes it's good to come up with something new and exciting. You can also exercise without equipment or large spaces. Bodyweight exercises improve mobility and help you to get the right technique.

Do some aerobics where the movements are random – a lottery. The exercises can be done while seated or standing. There are no floor-level exercises, but you can add them yourself if they are suitable for your group. Everyone knows their own fitness levels best, plus how they feel on the day, and should do the exercises as they see fit.

Below is a list of the exercises and corresponding numbers. Ask the group members to say numbers from 1–30 at random. Write the numbers down. A suitable number of exercises is 8–10. If you want to do more rounds with the same exercises, a lower number is enough.

First, do a short warm-up (around 3–5 min) with e.g. these exercises:

- Stand with your feet a little more than shoulder-width apart. Keep your core straight and begin to reach your arms forward and across your body in turn, towards the opposite wall. The heel of your opposite foot may lift up a little as you reach. Start slowly and gradually widen the movement.
- Stand with your feet a little more than shoulder-width apart. Keep your core straight and reach above your head, one arm after the other. At the same time, bend your upper body lightly to the opposite side. Try to feel the stretch in your sides.

- Hold on to the back of a chair or wall, if you need to. Then lift your leg high towards your bellybutton. First do the movement forwards and then open the hip outwards slightly so that you can also feel the movement in your side.
- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees and squat down slightly. Straighten back up and rotate your shoulders backwards at the same time. If you want, you can also keep your arms straight and move them in a circle. Try to keep your movement smooth and flowing.
- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Round your upper back and extend your arms straight out in front of your chest with the backs of your hands against each other. Then, with your thumbs first, open your arms and move them backwards. Bend forward again, and then open your arms backwards again. Try to feel the movement between your shoulder blades and chest.

Aerobics exercises:

1. Shadow boxing
2. Lateral step and bicep curl (step with your feet, bicep curl with your arms)
3. Elbows to knees
4. Side stretch
5. Good morning exercise (bend forwards from the hips with the back straight)
6. Touch your toes roll
7. Air push-up
8. Double-arm kick-back exercise (both arms bent at a 90-degree angle, then extend them backwards)
9. Narrow squat (legs at shoulder-width)
10. Tip-toes/rocking from heels to toes and back
11. Squat with arms straight out in front of you
12. Side arm raise (raise your arms out to the sides to shoulder height)
13. Overhead press (arms at ear-level straight up above the head)
14. Lunge forward
15. Backwards leg lift (keep your leg straight and extend it backwards, feel the movement in your buttocks)
16. Breaststroke
17. Rowing
18. Twist with arms crossed (cross your arms over your chest, controlled twist to the side, hips facing straight forwards)
19. Tap your toes on the ground in front of you, to the side, and behind you
20. Sumo squat (feet more than shoulder-width apart, clench your buttocks as you stand back up)
21. Backstroke (rotate your arms in backwards circles)
22. Lateral leg lift (keep your leg straight and lift it to the side, feel the movement in your buttocks)
23. Double bicep curl (bring your arms out to the side at shoulder level, and then do a bicep curl at the same time)
24. Half-jumping jack (step to the side with one leg and lift the arm on the same side)

25. Shoulder rotation (bring your arms out to the side to shoulder height and rotate them in small circles)
26. Abdominal crunch (raise one knee towards your belly button and bring your hands down from above your head to touch your knee)
27. Shrug your shoulders (bring your shoulders up to your ears and then let them relax again)
28. Straight-leg deadlift (bend towards your toes, clench your bottom as you move upwards)
29. Hurdles (lift your leg up and rotate it to the front or back downwards)
30. Reverse lunge (take a big step backwards, bend with your knee and toes facing the same direction)

At the end, cool down by

- shaking your arms and legs
- reach your fingers down to your toes by rolling your back down vertebra by vertebra
- rotating your hips and shoulders, and twisting your back
- gently stretching the backs of the thighs, neck and shoulders, and sides

Independent task | around 5 min

Exercise card

This time the task is to keep a record of your own exercise and notice how it corresponds to the Finnish physical activity recommendations. Various types of physical activity and suitable examples are marked on the card.

Mark on the card how much and what kind of physical activity you do during the week by colouring in the corresponding number of balls on the right part of the page. One ball equals five minutes of physical activity. All physical activity is counted, and you can accumulate five-minute sessions from shorter exercises.

Share your progress with others. An additional task is to present your favourite type of exercise or physical activity and challenge others to try it.

Notes:

EXERCISE CARD



5 min = ○

Do a wide range of exercise and combine different styles. Colour in the balls and monitor how much of each style of exercise you do each week. Listen to your body and choose your exercise accordingly. Do your familiar exercise, but don't be afraid to try something new. Above all, have fun and enjoy exercising!

MODERATE EXERCISE

= sweating, out of breath, but can talk. E.g. walking, swimming, cycling, yard work, geocaching, etc.

A grid of 40 small circles arranged in 4 rows and 10 columns, used for tracking moderate exercise.

VIGOROUS EXERCISE

= sweating, out of breath, talking is difficult. E.g. (water) jogging, ball games, group exercise, (water) aerobics, etc.

A grid of 40 small circles arranged in 4 rows and 10 columns, used for tracking vigorous exercise.

LIGHT EXERCISE

= no sweating and not out of breath, but you are moving. E.g. everyday chores, time outside, taking stairs, shopping, walking pets, etc.

A grid of 40 small circles arranged in 4 rows and 10 columns, used for tracking light exercise.

MUSCLE STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

E.g. home aerobics, going to the gym, vigorous housework and yard work, carrying shopping bags, rowing, skiing, water aerobics, etc.

A grid of 40 small circles arranged in 4 rows and 10 columns, used for tracking muscle strength and conditioning.

BALANCE, FLEXIBILITY

E.g. yoga, Pilates, dance, stretching, balancing exercises, Asahi, walking along paths, etc.

A grid of 40 small circles arranged in 4 rows and 10 columns, used for tracking balance and flexibility.

Outdoor group activity | the rest of the session

Task name: Quick march to the steps!

Goal: Do a step workout at fitness stairs or nearby stairs. Taking the stairs is the perfect health-enhancing physical activity as it strengthens the muscles, improves fitness, and you do it every day anyway.

You will need:

- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing and a water bottle.
- Local fitness stairs or any other set of stairs or a gentle hill.

Instructions:

- Walk to the stairs or hill of your choice. Once you get there, warm up by swinging your arms in circles, twisting from side to side, shaking your legs and rotating the neck.
- Also do a few short, approx. 3–5 second leg stretches, such as:
 - Place the toes of one foot against a tree, a lamppost or other support. Then lean forwards slightly. You should feel the stretch in your calf. Swap sides.
 - With your other foot, take a small step forward and then, with a straight back, bend over the front leg. You should feel the stretch in the back of the thigh of your front leg. Swap sides. You can also do this stretch as a forward bend with both legs at the same time.
 - Hold on to a tree, lamppost or railing. Then hold your other leg by the ankle and bring your heel towards your buttocks with your knee next to your other knee. You should feel the stretch in the front of the thigh of your bent leg. Swap sides.
 - With one leg, step forwards. Bend the tailbone under the hips and push your hips lightly forwards. You should feel the stretch in the upper thigh of your back leg, in the flexor muscle. Swap sides. You can also place your front leg on a block.
- Now for the stairs! Go up and down the stairs in any way you wish as much as you can and want to today. Step with your whole foot and keep good posture. Hold on to the handrail if you need to. Remember to take breaks and stay hydrated.
- If you want, you can also try out:
 - Go up the stairs by putting both feet on the same stair.
 - Go up the stairs by putting only one foot on one stair at a time.
 - Go up the stairs two at a time.
 - Go up the stairs two stairs up and one stair down.
 - Go down the stairs backwards. Note! Hold on to the handrail.
 - Step onto a stair with one leg and lift the knee of your other leg. Lower your knee and use that leg to step onto the next stair, lifting your opposite leg.
 - Go up or down the stairs sideways.
- Tip: You can also do other muscle-strengthening exercises on the stairs, such as calf raises, push-ups, or squats.
- Take a group picture at the end!

Culture for all

This session's theme is **the association of culture with wellbeing**.
The goal is to think about your own cultural preferences and find more culture to add to your daily life.

Introduction to the theme | around 10 min

Present the health and wellbeing benefits of culture to the group using the text below.

- What do you think culture is? Culture is difficult to define. Usually, we think of it as something that doesn't have a specific purpose, but is nevertheless important and significant in itself.
- Participation in cultural activities prevents various states of pain or discomfort in the mind and body, and treats and rehabilitates illnesses. A cultural interest can also be an important source of strength and support when life gets tough.
- Not all culture is "high culture"; there are plenty of everyday opportunities to be creative and enjoy the positive effects of culture. For example, reading or listening to music are everyday culture at its best.
- Cultural interests activate the whole brain and invigorate our senses. Having cultural interests has been linked with factors such as a lower risk of dementia and depression. Cultural interests also reduce stress, which is extremely good for heart health.
- Cultural interests also promote physical health and wellbeing. For example, dancing and acting involve a variety of movement, and a visit to a museum or exhibition will gain you steps.
- Various cultural experiences can also act as an outlet for expressing your own emotions and learning how to process them. Playing a musical instrument, painting, or crafting often help you to develop new skills and provide a sense of success.
- Enjoying or discussing culture with others can also reduce feelings of loneliness and accumulate "social capital". Good interpersonal relationships and receiving social support from others promote the maintenance of emotional, physical, and motor function.
- Studies show that people who have cultural interests evaluate their health as better than those who do not, and may even live for longer. People with cultural interests are also more likely to have healthier lifestyles than those who do not have any such interests.

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Discussion | around 15 min

- What does culture mean to you? Have you noticed that cultural interests have an effect on how healthy or well you feel?
- What type of culture feels most familiar to you? What feels most unfamiliar? What would give you the courage to try out an unfamiliar cultural interest?
- What kinds of cultural experiences or activities are offered by your municipality? What culture can you experience in your municipality free of charge?

Shared task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: Room for interpretation

Required equipment/spaces: Two sheets of paper and pens or e.g. a chalkboard or flipchart to draw on.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: Art is a key form of culture. The beauty of a piece of art, or the interpretation of an image are always ultimately in the eyes of the beholder. Let's test how similar your group's views are.

Split up into two groups. The groups should agree on the order in which the members will draw, and then line up accordingly. The ones at the back will begin and the ones at the front will end the task. Give the first people in the lines a sheet of paper and a pen. Then explain that the people at the back will now see a picture. The aim is to replicate the picture as accurately as possible by using their finger to draw on the back of the person in front of them.

Then show the people at the back of the lines an example picture (the same for both groups) or a picture you drew yourself. Tell the groups to begin. Try to do the drawing task without speaking!

The next person in the line waits for the picture to be drawn on their back, and then repeats what they felt on the back of the person in front of them. This continues in turn until there is only the person at the front of the line left. The person at the front uses a pen or pencil to draw on the paper what they felt was drawn on their back, or attempts to guess out loud what the picture was.

At the end, check to see which group was closer to the original picture. Then play another round with another picture. Change the order of the line, and groups, if you wish.

If you want to make the task easier, you can show all of the example pictures at the end. The person at the front of line has to guess which of the pictures was drawn.

Example images:



Option 2

Task name: Mind-reader

Required equipment/spaces: A pen and pieces of paper, plus a hat, box, or bag to put the pieces of paper in (optional). This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group. If you wish, you can write different cultural interests and famous cultural figures on the pieces of paper in advance.

Instructions: Drama is also culture. Nevertheless, we rarely play the roles of other people in everyday life. The aim of this task is to guess different cultural activities or hobbies and famous people in culture – with gestures and movements.

Agree on who begins. You can also split into pairs or groups and make it a friendly competition. The person who begins thinks up a cultural interest or figure, and then tries to communicate it to the others using only gestures and expressions. Talking is not allowed. You can also use pre-prepared pieces of paper that the person picks out on their own turn. The others must guess what is being acted. If a person guesses correctly, they get one point, and then it is the next person's turn. Rounds are played for as long as it takes for someone to get 5 points.

You can pick activities or people from these example categories:

- actors: Finnish or international
- famous statues and sculptures in Finland and worldwide
- cultural interests: reading, writing, opera singing, filming, etc.
- famous artists, politicians, singers
- famous scenes from plays or films

If the task is too difficult using only gestures and expressions, you can also include lines: in this case, the person acting can use gestures, expressions, and individual sentences that the person they are depicting would say, or could perhaps be said in connection with the hobby or activity.

Independent task | around 5 min

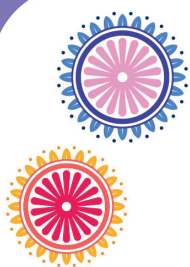
Culture bingo

This time we are playing culture bingo and getting to know more about different forms of culture. The task page contains various ways of enjoying culture in everyday life. The aim is to choose one line (column, row, or diagonal) from the table and do all of the tasks within it before the next meeting or for example over the next month. Once you have completed one line, you can choose another, or even fill in the entire table. The cultural activity in the middle box of the table is for you to choose yourself.

Share pictures of your cultural activities. You can also recommend each other for example recipes, local attractions, current events, and books or podcasts. Share your cultural knowledge and tips!

Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



CULTURE BINGO



Choose a row of five squares from the table below and try to do all of the cultural tasks.

Once you've completed one row, choose another, or fill in the entire table! You can choose the cultural activity in the middle square yourself. Write it on the line provided. Enjoy yourself!

<u>Go</u> and look at statues.	<u>Read</u> a book, poems, or a newspaper.	<u>Sing</u> a favourite childhood song.	<u>Write</u> an aphorism, or poem.	<u>Play</u> a musical instrument.
<u>Dance</u> to your favourite music.	<u>Listen</u> to the radio or a podcast.	<u>Draw</u> , craft, or colour something	<u>Photograph</u> your local scenery.	<u>Try</u> something new.
<u>Write</u> a blog post or journal.	<u>Go</u> to the cinema.	My choice: _____	<u>Listen</u> to new music.	<u>Go</u> to a concert or watch a recording online.
<u>Visit</u> an exhibition or museum.	<u>Do</u> some crafts or woodwork.	<u>Go</u> to the library.	<u>Solve</u> a crossword, jigsaw, or puzzle.	<u>Listen</u> to an audiobook.
<u>Try</u> a new recipe.	<u>Find</u> a power song for yourself.	<u>Do</u> something creative.	<u>Go</u> to a sports event.	<u>Find</u> and read a poem that you like.

Outdoor group activity | the rest of the session

Task name: Local culture

Goal: Learn more about local culture sites and unknown attractions on a group walk. The walk will also teach you more about the local area and add more physical activity to your day.

You will need:

- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing and a water bottle.
- A smartphone with a camera for at least one group member.
- If necessary, the Google Maps mobile app with location services enabled.

Instructions:

- Plan a suitable walk that takes you to key cultural sites in your municipality so that you can learn more about them.
- If possible, try to include at least the following on your route:
 - a library
 - a museum or art gallery
 - the oldest building in your municipality
 - 3 statues or sculptures
 - a church
 - the most popular meeting point in your municipality
 - a theatre
 - a site that is newly completed or otherwise new to the group
- Use the Google Maps mobile app or another app to help you if necessary. You can plan the route in advance or on the day, and get to know the local area in accordance with the group members' wishes and as time allows.
- If you are all familiar with the area, you can also show each other your favourite childhood places or other sites that hold special memories for you. You can also reminisce for a short while in a park or other suitable place.
- Take photographs of your group at interesting, new, different, or exciting cultural sites so that both your group and the site are visible in the picture. Also take photographs of other local cultural sites and send them to your shared WhatsApp group.

Notes:

Nature nurtures

The theme for this session is **nature** and its benefits.

The goal is to learn more about how nature supports wellbeing and to encourage members to notice nature more in their everyday lives.

Introduction to the theme | around 10 min

Present the wellbeing benefits of nature to the group using the text below.

- Nature is a diverse source of wellbeing in all stages of life. Studies have shown that even a brief time spent in nature is good for you, especially for mental wellbeing. People find it especially relaxing to have large forests and waterways nearby.
- Just five minutes outdoors in nature is enough to improve mood. A good fifteen minutes in nature meanwhile is enough to lower the heart rate and blood pressure, and increase a feeling of vitality.
- Often, a feeling of revitalisation is listed as one of the wellbeing benefits of nature. Revitalisation refers to a reduction in stress and the body's recovery from stress. Recovering from stress is important, as long-term stress can make the body susceptible to infection and various illnesses.
- Changes take place slowly in nature, so it offers the perfect counterbalance to the constant flood of stimuli from our smart phones and computers. Beautiful scenery and the sounds and scents of nature automatically attract our attention. This allows our information-processing cognitive functions, such as vigilance and concentration, to rest. Studies show that spending time in nature relaxes the body more effectively than time spent indoors or in a built-up environment.
- Simply looking at pictures of nature and listening to nature sounds have been shown in studies to lower the body's stress level. As such, you can even enjoy the wellbeing effects of nature indoors, if it isn't possible for you to go outside for one reason or another.
- In addition to forests, nature can be found along paths, in parks, fields, gardens, and your own backyard. There are all kinds of nature nearby, and all of them promote wellbeing.
- The more often you spend time outdoors in nature, the greater the wellbeing effects are. What you do outside isn't important – all time spent outdoors in nature is worthwhile.

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Discussion | around 15 min

- What does nature mean to you? What kinds of smells, sounds, memories, and atmospheres come to mind first when you think about nature?
- How is nature present in your living environment? Has the amount or type of nature changed over the years where you live?
- What kinds of wellbeing effects have you noticed while spending time outdoors in nature? Have you noticed that nature could help for instance to relieve sadness, increase energy, or that it has therapeutic effects?
- What kind of nature sites are worth visiting in your local surroundings? Have you visited them yourself?

Shared task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: Nature-themed aerobics

Required equipment/spaces: This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give instructions to the group.

Instructions: Hold a nature-themed group aerobics session. Explain the exercises below to the group one at a time. The exercises can be done while seated or standing. Everyone knows their own fitness levels best, plus how they feel on the day, and should do the exercises as they see fit. A suitable number of repetitions is 10–15 per exercise. You can also do the exercises for a set time period, such as a minute per exercise.

Exercises:

- **Swimming.** Bring your hands to your chest. Start to swim breaststroke by extending your hands out in front of your chest with your palms facing down, and then spread your arms wide out to the side, and then pull them back into your chest. Include your upper body in the movement. You should feel the exercise as a stretch in your shoulder blades and chest.
- **Owl.** Stand or sit up straight. Turn your head and first look calmly to the right, then back to the middle and then turn calmly to the left. Try to keep the rest of your body still and only move your head and neck. Try to look a little further behind you each time. Feel the stretch in your neck and shoulders.
- **Swamp walking.** You are walking through a wet and boggy swamp. Lift your feet high up and keep your arms up too to stop them from getting wet. This exercise challenges your balance and activates the core.
- **Picking berries.** With your one leg, take a step forwards. Squat down and sweep around near the ground with your opposite hand. Then stand back up. Squat again, and this time, sweep around near the ground with your other hand. You should feel this exercise in your thighs and arms.

- **Rowing.** You are rowing an imaginary boat. Move the oars in a wide arc, first forwards, and then backwards. You should feel this exercise in your shoulders.
- **Reaching towards a tree.** With each hand in turn, reach up as if you want to pick a fruit from a tree. Feel how your sides lengthen.
- **Fish.** Imagine that you are holding a fishing rod with both hands. With a wide movement, cast the rod by moving it behind you and then in front of you towards the distant horizon. Then start to reel the line in an exaggerated movement. Once you've reeled it in, cast your rod again. Swap arms to cast.
- **Rock climbing.** Imagine that there is a rock face in front of you. You start to climb the rock by reaching up with your right hand and lifting your left knee at the same time. Lower your hand and knee. Then do the same with the opposite hand and foot so that you reach up with your left hand and lift your right knee. This exercise challenges your balance and activates the core.
- **Cycling.** Sit on a bench and lean backwards slightly. Lift your legs off the ground and start to move your feet in small circles as if you were pedalling a bicycle. If you want, you can also put your arms out in front of you as if you were holding on to imaginary handlebars. Feel how your core is working throughout the entire exercise.
- **Time to think.** Imagine that you are sitting on a tree stump. Close your eyes and let your hands rest in your lap. Feel how the ground feels under your feet. Feel for other feelings in your body. You can move however you feel like, by moving your head in circles or loosening up your arms and legs. Then relax and take a moment to just listen and breathe. Take five deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Once you're ready, open your eyes.

Option 2

Task name: Relaxing forest walk

Required equipment/spaces: YouTube. This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors in nature.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give instructions to the group. First search for nature-themed YouTube videos using the search terms "nature", "nature sounds", or "forest".

Instructions: Studies have shown that watching nature videos and listening to nature sounds can have the same kind of health effects as spending time outside in nature. Ask your group members to think quietly to themselves about how they feel right now. Then play a nature video of your choice. Watch the video together for around five minutes. After your group has watched the video, ask them how they feel again. Do you notice a difference in your mood or how stressed or tense you are?

If you can't use YouTube, you can do the task outside. Go outside and find a peaceful place where you can sit or lie down. Spend five minutes observing how fresh the air is and how looking at and listening to nature can affect your mood and other feelings in your body. At the end, discuss your feelings.

Independent task | around 5 min

Animal-spotting

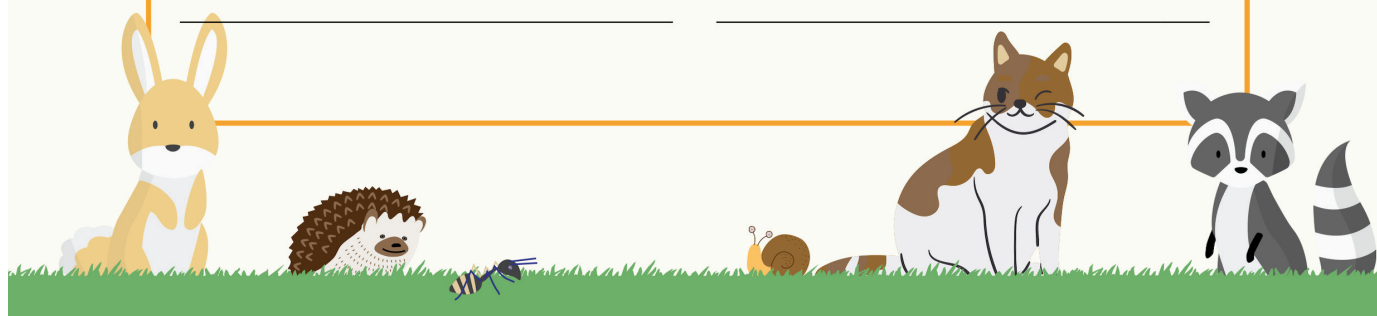
This time, the aim is to move around in nature as much as possible and notice it in your own environment. One fun way to take more notice of nature is to look for animals and watch what they do. Challenge each other to a fun competition to spot as many different animals as you can in a week. The person who spotted the most animals wins!

Try to take pictures of the animals you see and share them with one another. Also share your thoughts, experiences, and pictures of your time outside in nature.

Notes:

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Outdoor group activity | the rest of the session

Task name: Creative nature walk

Goal: Combine storytelling, physical activity, and nature. Physical activity in nature itself is relaxing, and combined with storytelling, it can also provide a new kind of mental stimulus.

You will need:

- The nature walk script. You can read the story in advance, if you wish, so that you can direct the group members.
- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing and a water bottle. If you like, you can take some food with you.
- An open mind and the courage to join in with the story!

Instructions:

- Go outside to somewhere near your meeting place. A forest or park is a good place.
- Start to read the nature walk story below in a clear voice, section by section. Each section ends with ***. Then, as a group, act out the story. More detailed instructions are given inside the brackets.
- Between the sections, walk forwards at your own pace, either along a marked path, or wherever you feel like. Keep together as a group, though. You can move forwards slowly so that everyone has time to focus on the tasks.
- Try to keep an open mind and use all your senses as you spend time in nature. During the walk, you can be completely silent and just enjoy the experience, if you wish.
- You do not need to go through the entire story if there isn't enough time. The most important thing is to focus on what you feel and immerse yourself in the story. You can also come up with your own creative ways to sense and experience the surrounding nature.
- At around halfway through, it's a good idea to turn around and make your way back to your meeting place. End the walk where you started, and enjoy your food at the finish.
- Take a group photo afterwards.

The nature walk script

We set off on a walk deep into nature. As soon as we set off, we noticed the weather: the temperature, the scent, and how it feels on our skin.

[Notice the weather individually or as a group. You can do this silently or share your thoughts and feelings out loud with the group.]

After a short while, we got our bodies moving with a little aerobics session. Each of us in turn picked an exercise and showed it to the others as an example. We did the exercises until everyone who wanted to show us an exercise had done so.

[Group together loosely so that everyone can see each other. Do each exercise e.g. 10 times, and then move on to the next. The exercises can be various movements, twists, stretches, steps, or balances.]

Whew, I nearly broke a sweat! After the aerobics, our journey continued.

After a short walk, we found a quiet place. We did a small mindfulness exercise, because it's so easy to forget to be mindful in everyday life.

[Split up for the exercise, but make sure that everyone can still hear the instructions. Read the following exercise calmly to the group. Pause for a moment at the end of sentences so that everyone has time to react.]

"Sit on a rock, a tree stump, or other good place you can find. You can also stand, if you wish. Find a good position and close your eyes. Take a few slow breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Notice how your lungs and chest move upwards and outwards with each inhale. Your shoulders will also rise a little, and you will feel taller. On each exhale, your lungs will empty and your chest will lower. Take a few deep breaths at your own pace.

Then focus on how you feel. Keep your eyes closed and, in your mind, name five things that you can currently feel with your body. For example, you might feel the ground beneath your feet.

Next pay attention to what you can hear. In your mind, name five things that you can currently hear.

Lastly, pay attention to what you can see. Now you can open your eyes. In your mind, name five things that you can see around you.

There, you've completed the exercise. How do you feel now? You can easily use this exercise wherever and whenever you need a moment to yourself."

That small break did us good. Now we can continue our journey well-rested and with a clear mind.

Wait a second, this is a great place to explore our environment and find out how it feels. As children, investigating the natural world around us was an everyday occurrence, but nowadays we unfortunately do so rarely. Various natural compounds in the ground, leaves, and air calm our bodies and, according to some studies, improve our immune system. So let's pick up some different leaves from the ground and take a look at their colour and see how they feel. We also explored the foliage and tree trunks – the bravest of us even hugged them.

[Investigate different natural materials and surfaces, and feel them with your fingers. Tip: closing your eyes will heighten your sense of touch.]

After a short break, we continued on towards our goal.

Hey! We're not alone here. Nature is alive, and there are all kinds of creatures moving around with us. Let's stop and look at them. Some of us climbed up to get a better look at our surroundings from above, while others crouched down and looked up from there.

[Look at the ground, treetops, and sky. What can you see? Are there any animals or tracks nearby? Do you recognise the birds and insects that you can see? Looking at the sky while crouching or sit-

ting on a low rock makes you see the world from a child's perspective, while climbing on a big rock or simply standing on your tiptoes and then looking around gives you a whole new perspective of yourself and your environment.]

We were coming to the end of our nature walk. Just the last bit to go.

We made it! Now we have felt, smelt, seen, and listened to nature. It's good to end the trip with the last of our senses: taste. We each sat down to enjoy the food we brought with us. Yum! Everything really does taste better in nature.

[Find a suitable place to eat your food. If you wish, you can discuss what you found on your nature walk. How did it feel to follow the story? Do your senses feel sharper?]

Take a happy group photo of everyone at the end.

Notes:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Make sensible everyday choices

In this session, we're going to learn about **the pillars of wellbeing** and small everyday health choices.

The goal is to take a moment to think about your own habits and try to incorporate a small action or choice that will benefit your health into your everyday life.

Introduction to the theme | around 10 min

Present the pillars of wellbeing to the group and how important lifestyle is to health using the text below.

- The pillars of wellbeing are a balanced diet, a variety of physical activity, and sufficient rest. Drinking alcohol in moderation and being a non-smoker also support wellbeing. All of the aforementioned are lifestyle choices, or health behaviours, that we all make every day.
- Everyday choices help us to stay healthy in general and are useful in treating and recovering from various illnesses. For example, a balanced diet and regular exercise are key to preventing and treating cardiovascular diseases.
- Studies have shown that a healthy lifestyle can e.g. maintain and even improve physical functional ability, mental and emotional wellbeing, and social relationships as we grow old. How we spend our days naturally also affects how many we have left.
- The impact of our lifestyle on health never stops being important, so it's never too late to make changes. Perseverance with lifestyle choices is good, because sudden and drastic changes rarely last.
- It is easier to achieve lasting changes when you know a) why you want to make the change, b) you have enough skills to e.g. eat a balanced diet, and c) your environment and loved ones are supportive of your decision.
- Suitable goals and a belief in your own success are also important factors for successful changes. You can program yourself with new habits by repeating them enough in the same situation. You can also seek help and support from peers or professionals.
- Even if you find room for improvements in your own lifestyle, it's good to remember that an individual choice will neither ruin nor save your health. Small streams form big rivers, and even small actions are significant when it comes to our overall wellbeing.
- It is said that for health, it's enough for around 80 per cent of our choices to be good quality. The remaining 20 per cent can include indulging in treats or lounging around watching TV. These "bad" habits can also be good for our mind and body in a way, as long as they are enjoyed in moderation. When it comes to health choices, it is the overall approach that counts.

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Discussion | around 15 min

- Discuss your own lifestyle choices. What are you doing right? What pillars of wellbeing do you have room for improvement in?
- What do you think about communication about health and lifestyle nowadays? Should the style of communications be changed somehow?
- Do any of the group members have experience with making a lifestyle change? What factors helped them to succeed?
- What small actions can you come up with as a group that everyone could easily use to improve their own health and wellbeing in everyday life?

Shared task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: Breaktime aerobics

Required equipment/spaces: This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: Do a short breaktime aerobics session together. The exercises can be done while seated or standing. Everyone knows their own fitness levels best, plus how they feel on the day, and should do the exercises as they see fit.

Exercises:

- **Marching:** March on the spot. Lift your knees high and pace your steps by swinging your arms forwards and backwards at your sides. Take a total of 20 steps.
- **Open the chest:** On an exhale, round the upper back and bring your arms out straight in front of you with the backs of your hands facing. You will feel the stretch in your upper back and between your shoulder blades. Then straighten your back and bring your elbows behind you. You will feel the stretch in your chest muscles. Repeat 10 times.
- **Back twists:** Cross your arms over your chest with opposite hands on opposite shoulders. Keep your back straight and then turn your upper body to the side as much as you can. Your gaze should follow your arms, but your navel should face forwards the whole time. Repeat 8 times on each side.
- **Toes to heels:** Lift your heels off the floor and stand on your tiptoes. Lower your heels back down and then lift your toes. Repeat 10 times.

- **Rope pull:** Reach each hand forward in turn and then pull them backwards as if you were pulling on an imaginary rope. You should feel this exercise in your upper back and shoulder blades. Pull 10 times with each hand.
- **Side stretches:** Lift your left arm up and bend your upper body slightly to the side so that you can feel the stretch in your side. Repeat on the other side. Do 5 slow stretches on both sides.
- **Activating the neck muscles:** Straighten your posture. Then, being careful not to tilt your head down, move your head backwards into the “double chin” position. Try to keep your shoulders relaxed during the exercise. Hold it for a moment and then move your head back to the starting position as a natural extension of your spine. Repeat slowly 10 times.
- **Shrugging and rolling the shoulders:** Let your arms relax and hang by your sides. Then shrug your shoulders towards your ears 10 times. Then roll your shoulders forwards 10 times and backwards 10 times.

Option 2

Task name: Lifestyle quiz

Required equipment/spaces: Paper and pens or pencils, if necessary. Optional: small, healthy rewards for the winners and consolation prizes for the others.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: Below are quiz questions about lifestyle; physical activity, sleep, recovery, and nutrition. Split into pairs or groups, or play as individuals. Agree on an animal for each player, pair, or group. When answering a question, the player, pair, or group have to mimic the sound and gestures of the animal. Good options are e.g. a rabbit, cow, chicken, or goat.

Then read out the question and the answer options one at a time. The team or player who mimic their animal the fastest wins the chance to answer. One point is awarded for a correct answer. If the answer was incorrect, the others can answer and try to steal the point. Afterwards, give the right answer and the extra information that follows. The winner is the player, pair, or group with the most points. At the end, discuss the statements.

You can also hold the quiz in the traditional way and give out a pen and paper to each group member, pair, or group. In that case, read the questions and answer options one by one

and give everyone a moment to write down their answers. Then move on to the next question. Once you've read out all the questions, the pairs swap papers and check each other's answers. One point is awarded for a correct answer. The winner is the person, pair, or group with the most points.

Questions:

1. **If you don't exercise a lot, push yourself to the limit, or stick to a routine, it's not worth exercising at all.**
 - A. True.
 - B. False.

2. Protein is only found in red meat.

- A. True.
- B. False.

3. How much of the human body is fluid? About

- A. 20 %
- B. 40 %
- C. 60 %?

4. Which of the following contain the most vitamin D

- A. bread
- B. vegetables
- C. dairy produce

5. What does progression mean in exercise?

- A. That not all exercise affects everyone in the same way.
- B. That exercise benefits precisely the parts of the body that are exercised.
- C. That you have to gradually increase the difficulty of the exercise.
- D. That the benefits of exercising will quickly return to where you started if you stop exercising.

6. Half a kilogram of vegetables is around

- A. 5–6
- B. 8–9 handfuls a day

7. Recovery only takes place when you're asleep.

- A. True.
- B. False.

8. Which has more fibre?

- A. Boiled potato
- B. Oat flakes

9. Exercise is said to be moderate when your heart rate rises and you get out of breath, but you can still talk while exercising.

- A. True.
- B. False.

10. What kind of diet does a flexitarian have?

- A. A flexitarian diet emphasises the addition of plant or plant-based foods and can involve e.g. vegetarian days, but the diet is not purely vegetarian.
- B. Flexitarians only eat uncooked plant-based food, typically heated to a maximum of 40 degrees Celsius.
- C. Flexitarians do not eat any animal-derived products, such as meat, fish, eggs, dairy, or their derivatives.

11. A sufficient amount of salt per day is a maximum of

- A. 5 g
- B. 10 g
- C. 15 g

12. The need for sleep

- A. Is the same for everyone, regardless of age.
- B. Varies throughout life.

13. Falafels are made from

- A. Lamb.
- B. Barley.
- C. Chickpeas.

14. . A pomelo is

- A. A citrus fruit.
- B. A type of exercise.
- C. A mindfulness method.

15. What is padel?

- A. A racket sport.
- B. A paddle meant for SUP boarding.
- C. A type of barefoot shoe.

Correct answers:

1. *B, false. All physical activity is worthwhile. Daily housework, errands, and short periods of exercise make up a significant share of our total weekly activity. Even light exercise can also have a significant effect on cardiac and joint health.*
2. *B, false. Protein is also found in e.g. fish, eggs, beans, lentils, peas, nuts, soya, and mushroom products. There is also some protein in cereal products. The recommended amount of red meat is half a kilogram per week. It is worth substituting at least some animal-derived protein with plant-based options, as plant proteins promote cardiovascular health.*
3. *C. Up to more than half of the human body is fluid. The amount of fluid varies between individuals due to e.g. sex, age, height, and weight. You should drink around 1–1.5 litres of water or other fluids per day. Vigorous exercise and warm weather slightly increase the need for fluids.*
4. *C. Dairy produce, especially vegetable spreads, to which it is added to e.g. boost calcium absorption. However, even more vitamin D is obtained from fish. The best sources of vitamin D are lamprey and eel, but domestic fish are also rich in vitamin D. You should eat fish at least 2–3 times a week, varying the kinds of fish you eat.*
5. *C. Progression refers to how the body gets used to exercise as your fitness levels increase. Benefits only come from suitably vigorous exercise. For this reason, it is good to increase the difficulty of an exercise at suitable intervals. If a weight that previously felt heavy now feels easily manageable, or even light, you should exercise with a heavier weight. Option A*

is usually called individuality, option B is specificity, and option D is reversibility. Together, options A-D form the basic principles of physical exercise, which can help to achieve the desired results when incorporated into your exercise routine.

6. 5–6 handfuls. One handful, or portion, is a relative concept. One portion equates to e.g. one medium tomato or carrot, 1.5 dl of grated or cooked vegetables, 1 dl berries, or one fruit. One medium apple weighs 170 grams, so you can almost meet the vegetable recommendation with three apples! It is easiest to meet the recommendation by adding vegetables to every meal. A good challenge is to enjoy five different-coloured plants: vegetables, berries, or fruits at every meal.
7. B, false. Recovery mainly takes place during sleep, but daytime breaks and rests also effectively promote recovery. During rest, the mind and body recover from the day's strain and return to a balanced state known as homeostasis. Recovery is promoted by things like a healthy diet, friends, saunaing, a good book, or listening to music. Light exercise can often be a better option than total rest, as it can be hard to get moving again afterwards.
8. B, oat flakes. 2 decilitres of porridge contains around 2.6 grams of dietary fibre, while a single potato contains around 1 gram. The daily minimum fibre intake is 25–35g. Wholegrain foods are the most efficient way to consume fibre. Sufficient fibre intake helps with weight management, lowers blood pressure and blood cholesterol, boosts digestion and maintains the gut's own good bacteria and immunity.
9. A, true. Exercise is moderate when the heart rate increases and you get out of breath, but you can still talk while exercising. Exercise becomes vigorous when it is difficult or impossible to speak during exercise. Both types of aerobic exercise should be done as your fitness levels allow. Aerobic exercise is particularly good for the heart, circulatory system and lungs, and helps with weight management.
10. A. Option B describes a raw diet, and option C is a vegan diet.
11. A, a maximum of 5 grams. The recommended salt intake for adults is just under a teaspoon of salt per day. Around 80% of our daily salt intake comes from food such as bread, cheese, cold cuts and seasonings as hidden salt. Salt should be enjoyed in moderation as it increases blood pressure, and we don't really need added salt at all. Our sense of taste quickly adapts to low-salt foods.
12. B. 7–9 hours of sleep per night is typically enough sleep for an adult. Too little, or conversely, too much sleep can cause brain fog and weaken our ability to concentrate and our reaction time. The best indicator that you have had a good night's sleep is that you wake up feeling rested and refreshed.
13. C. Falafels are a Middle Eastern vegetable ball made from broad beans or chickpeas.
14. A, a citrus fruit. Although rather foreign to Finns, pomelos contain lots of vitamin C, which helps to protect against colds.
15. A, a citrus fruit. Although rather foreign to Finns, pomelos contain lots of vitamin C, which helps to protect against colds.

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Independent task | around 5 min

Leave one, take one

This time we're going to add one small good choice to our week and leave out one choice that isn't so good for us. Your choices can relate to the same thing, or to two different healthy actions. The most important thing is that they are defined clearly and accurately, and that they are an essential part of your everyday routine.

There are two bottles on the "Leave one, take one" task page.

- On the right-hand bottle, write one old bad habit that you are going to decrease or even stop entirely for a week. It could be something like "I will put one less sugar cube into every cup of coffee I drink." or "I will smoke one less cigarette per day."
- On the right-hand bottle, write one new action that is good for your health and promotes wellbeing. Examples include "I will go for a 10 minute walk every day after lunch.", "I will eat one apple/carrot/tomato at every meal." or "I will turn off all my smart devices at 8:00pm every night".

Share your choices with one another. Sharing the choices with others increases the likelihood that you will succeed. Encourage each other if sticking to your choices feels difficult!

Notes:

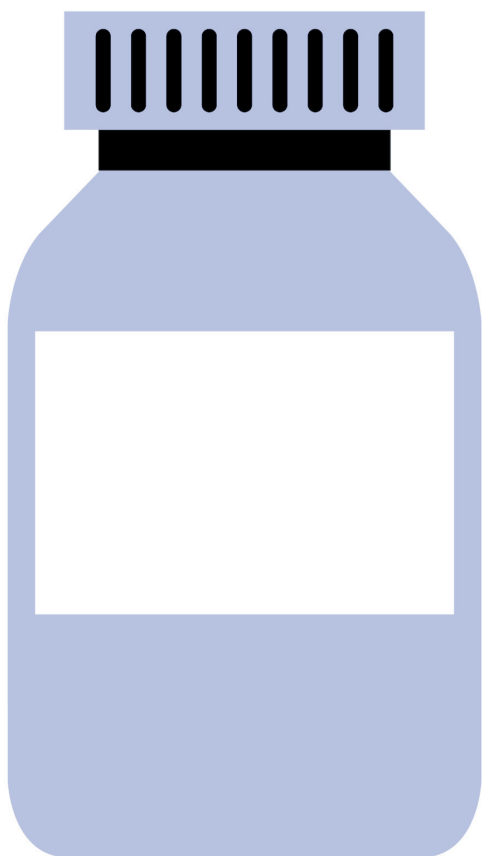
LEAVE ONE, TAKE ONE

**Big changes start with
small actions.**

**Set yourself two small
wellbeing actions and
monitor your progress
for a week.**

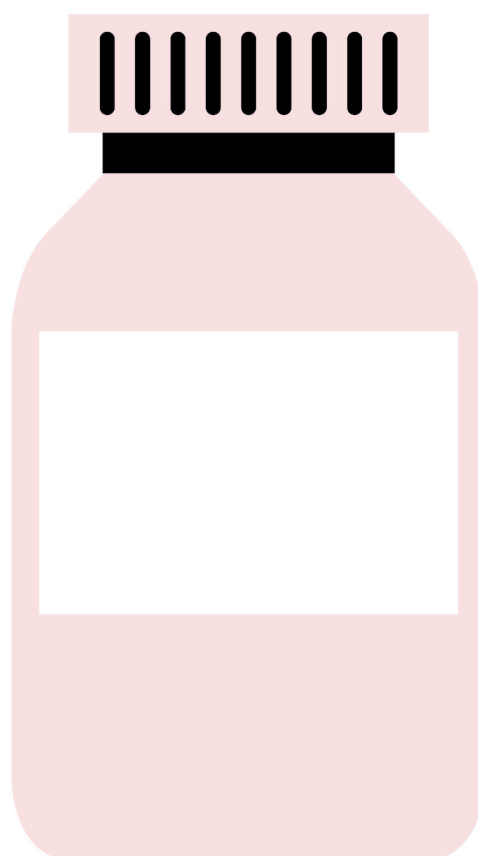
**Leave one BAD habit
and write it on the
label of the bottle.**

**Example: I will put one less
sugar cube into every
cup of coffee I drink."**



**Adopt one new GOOD
habit and write it on the
label of the bottle.**

**Example: I will go for a
20 minute walk
every day.**



**REU
MA**
TROPPI

Outdoor group activity | the rest of the session

Task name: Putting thoughts into action

Goal: To think about our own health and wellbeing goals in fresh outdoor air and concretise related factors through physical activity. Combining thoughts with physical activity strengthens memory traces.

You will need:

- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing and a water bottle.
- A short path with 3–5 landmarks along the way (trees, tree stumps, large rocks, etc.)
You can also do this task on fitness stairs.

Instructions:

- Head to a quiet section of road, path, or fitness stairs in your local area.
If you are doing the task on fitness stairs, make sure that they are appropriate for your group's fitness levels and that there are at least 10 stairs.
- Divide into pairs. Together in pairs, think about your current situation on the way:
 - What could you improve in your lifestyle or what kind of change would you like to achieve?
 - Do you have a long-term health goal that you would like to achieve?
 - Try to come up with at least one area of improvement and/or goal for each other together.
- Once you arrive at the start of the path or the foot of the stairs, make sure that everyone has a goal for change in their mind.
- Then clarify your path to change using the instructions below. Read the instructions to the group one at a time and then give the group time to respond. Move as a group, but allow everyone to reflect on the questions and their own situation. There is no need to talk during the task, but if there is time, it's perfectly fine to share thoughts. It is a good idea to adapt the instructions to the length of the path or stairs. You can also move from landmark to landmark (e.g. between two trees) instead of taking steps, and think of the question along the way.
- Instructions:
 - Walk or take 1–5 steps up according to how many factors you can think of that encourage you to succeed in making your change or reaching your goal.
 - Walk or take 1–5 steps down for how many things you can think of that could slow you down or prevent you from reaching your goal.
 - For every obstacle you can think of, take an equivalent number of steps forwards/upwards, and think of one way to get over the obstacles for each step.
 - Then walk or take 3 steps up and, for every step, think about the characteristics or mental resources you will need on your path to success.
 - Then take 1–3 steps back and think about things that you might have to give up on your journey.
 - You're nearly at the finish: For every remaining step, think of something that you can do to help you to achieve your change or goal a) today, b) this week, c) this month, and d) this year.

- On your last step, think about how you will reward yourself for success while on your journey and once you have succeeded.
- Take the last step upwards and celebrate your victory!
- At the end, discuss the exercise and take a happy group photo to share with the group.

Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Go crazy for volunteering

The theme for this session is **volunteering and charity**.

The goal is to increase positive energy in life and notice small or great opportunities to do good in your everyday life and environment.

Introduction to the theme | around 10 min

Present the wellbeing benefits of volunteering to the group using the text below.

- Volunteering plays a significant role in the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and society. Volunteering gives back to the community and makes the world a better place to live.
- There are also health benefits to volunteering: studies show that people who volunteer feel less pain and have a better physical functional ability than those who do not volunteer.
- Volunteering often involves movement from one place to another and working alone or together with others. It is therefore not surprising that studies have shown that people who volunteer move more and feel that they are healthier on average than people who do not volunteer.
- Volunteering revolves around providing the same amount of good to the provider and the recipient. Studies show that volunteering increases feelings of good mood, reduces depression, and can lead to more positive emotions, such as an increase in satisfaction with life, a sense of meaningfulness, and hope.
- Volunteering also increases social wellbeing, reduces loneliness, and helps to form and maintain social relationships with other people. Participation in various charity events offers the opportunity to try out and learn new things, including about yourself.
- Altruistic good deeds are everyday volunteering at its best. Even a small action, such as smiling at someone walking past, or saying “thank you” to a shop assistant, can be very significant.
- Good deeds also have a way of accumulating: if you are friendly to other people, it’s highly likely that you will be treated in the same way. Your good deed may be the spark that encourages someone else to do something good.

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Discussion | around 15 min

- What kind of volunteering do you do or have you done in the past? What are your experiences of volunteering?
- What volunteering opportunities are there in your municipality? How can you get involved? Are there any open volunteering positions at your association?
- Do you do any unofficial volunteering in your community? Are any of you, for example, a carer or childminder, do you drive your loved ones to places or help them with shopping or digital devices?
- Does doing good deeds come naturally to you, or do you have to consciously think about them? What kinds of small good deeds could you do in your daily life? For example, opening the door for someone, saying hello to the bus driver, picking up litter, thanking a shop assistant, etc.

Shared task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: Drawing a resources hand

Required equipment/spaces: A sheet of A4 paper and a pen or pencil for everyone.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: Doing good deeds isn't just about helping others. You should also take care of your own resources, as having enough of your own makes them easier to share with others. The purpose of this task is to think about your own resources.

Give every group member a pen and paper. Then explain what to draw step by step. Give everyone time to respond and then move on to the next step.

- **The first step** is to trace the outline of your own hand in the middle of the paper.
- Once you have traced the outline of your hand
 - **On the thumb**, write one or more things or people that give you strength in everyday life.
 - **On the index finger**, write one way to treat yourself. What do you like?
 - **On the middle finger**, write one or more compliments to yourself. What are you proud of yourself for?
 - **On the ring finger**, write a golden rule or affirmation.
 - **On the little finger**, write an exercise that relaxes you and gives you strength now and in the future. Everyone should come up with their exercise according to their needs and health. Examples include hugging themselves, swinging their arms, placing their hand on their chest, brushing their hair, kicking their feet, etc. Extra tip: Everyone can show the others their exercises for a quick group fitness session.

You can also give each other positive feedback as follows:

- Place everyone's traced hands around the table.
- Then arrange yourselves so that everyone has someone else's paper in front of them.
- Then write a compliment on the palm of the person's traced hand or on the edges of the paper, if there isn't enough space.
- Then move clockwise and write a compliment on the new paper.
- Continue until everyone has written something nice on every paper. You can - and should - also write on your own paper when you come to it.

Give positive feedback on big or small things, like a nice smile, something a person did or said, or a skill that you admire. The most important thing is that everyone gets a compliment.

Option 2

Task name: Tonnes of encouragement

Required equipment/spaces: Sheets of paper and pens. Magazines, glue, and scissors (optional). Tape and blu-tack if you wish to display the sheets of paper on the wall of your meeting place.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: Work together to make a collage of some words of encouragement and positive thoughts. Tell the group members to write encouraging thoughts and messages, along with nice greetings on the sheets of paper to provide energy and help the others to cope. You can also cut thoughts out of magazines and glue them onto the sheets of paper.

Then collect all the sheets of paper and take a photo to remember this moment by. If you meet regularly at the same place, you can display them on the wall for visitors to enjoy.

If you're really brave, share them around your municipality and spread joy and strength! You can leave the sheets of paper on notice boards, hide them in surprising places, or give them out to people on the street.

Notes:

Independent task | around 5 min

Score good mood points

Everyday good deeds and a positive attitude to life bring a smile to our face and make life better. Good deeds can be anonymous or targeted, and you can delight a loved one or someone you've never met.

This time, we're going to score some good mood points by doing small or big good deeds. Examples of good deeds include praising and thanking strangers or people we know, helping others, positively surprising someone, or donating to a good cause. You can also encourage your friends or family to do good deeds with you. Spread the good!

Share pictures and videos of your good deeds with each other. Discuss how it feels to do good deeds.

Outdoor group activity | the rest of the session

Task name: Doing good deeds for nature

Goal: To combine an afternoon walk with volunteering by litter-picking. Litter-picking focuses our attention on the cleanliness of our surroundings. At the same time, you are doing squats and mobility exercises almost without noticing.

You will need:

- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing and a water bottle.
- Plastic bags for collecting the litter.
- Disposable gloves and/or a litter picker (optional).
- An open mind and a good mood!

Instructions:

- Set off on a walk around your local environment and collect litter in your bags along the way.
- This aim is for every group member to pick up a "week's litter", which is seven pieces of litter per person. Even removing one piece of litter from nature is a good deed!
- You can also turn it into a competition: The person who collects the most litter in five minutes wins! And who can find the "weirdest" litter?
- When you're finished, dispose of the litter appropriately.
- You can continue to litter pick for the entire week, or make it a daily habit.

Score good mood points

Do good deeds in everyday life and collect fun points. Keep a record of your good deeds by keeping a tally of them in the suitable places. You can also write what you did, who you thanked, etc. Count how many good deeds you did at the end.

I said something nice to someone.

I said
thank you.

I did a good deed.

I encouraged or listened to
someone.

I collected, donated, or
recycled something.

I positively
surprised
someone.

**REU
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Activate your brain

The theme for this session is **brain health**.

The goal is to pay attention to things that we can all do to take care of our brains and promote brain health.

Introduction to the theme | around 10 min

Present the theme of brain health to the group using the text below.

- Our brains are responsible for a wide range of different bodily functions, such as thinking, senses, movement, feelings, and behaviour.
- As we age, structural changes take place in our brain, and e.g. our reaction time and memory slow down. Memory disorders, however, are not part of the normal aging process.
- The brain's ability to adapt remains throughout our lives. We can maintain and improve our brain health and function by taking daily care of your brain.
- The brain loves healthy nutrition, regular exercise and sufficient sleep, but it doesn't enjoy being intoxicated.
- Regular mealtimes ensure a steady intake of energy for the brain and keeps our thoughts and focus together. In particular, a sufficient intake of unsaturated fats, low sodium intake, and staying hydrated are all important for brain health.
- A range of physical activity helps to keep the blood vessels healthy and keeps blood pressure under control. Healthy blood vessels help the heart to transport sufficient oxygen and nutrients to the brain.
- Regular exercise can even increase the number of neurons in the brain and promote the retention of memory functions. Taking care of our muscles can also prevent falls, and protect the brain from knocks.
- Good-quality sleep is also important, as the brain cleans, services, and repairs itself during deep sleep phases. For example, new things are stored in the memory when we sleep. Sufficient rest and relaxation are also important for brain wellbeing.
- Social interaction and good interpersonal relationships are good for the brain. Enjoying time socialising and working with others also reduces the body's stress level, keeps the brain working, promotes cardiac health, and elevates mood.
- It is said that an active brain is a healthy brain. In fact, the brain needs something to do, and it needs suitable challenges to feel well. Trying out new things and breaking routines activates a range of different areas of the brain and strengthens the neural connections between them. That's why it's important to go places, do things, participate, experience, and experiment – your brain will thank you! It was Aristotle who said: "If you want to think, you first have to walk to warm up the body."

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Discussion | around 15 min

- Do you think about brain health when you make everyday choices relating to food, exercise, or sleep? Do you have any hobbies that promote brain health?
- Do you enjoy trying new things, or are you a slave to routine? How could you add new experiences to your daily life and find the courage to live in the moment?
- Do you feel that group activities and doing things together has an effect on your wellbeing? What kind of effect?

Shared task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: Brain workout

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: Your brain needs a workout just like your muscles do. Explain the brain workout exercises below to your group members one by one. Test out the exercise for a moment and then move on to the next. You can choose the exercises that are the most fun if you don't have time for them all.

At first glance, they may seem easy, but then prove to be surprisingly difficult. But don't worry even if you don't get it right first time – your brain enjoys a challenge and learning new things!

- Put the palms of your hands on your bottom. Then put them on your stomach, then on top of your shoulders, and then on top of your head. Do the same in reverse, putting your hands first on your shoulders, then your stomach, and then your bottom. If it feels easy, try to speed up. You can add an extra challenge by starting with one hand on top of your head and the other on your bottom, and move them both at the same time.
- This exercise is done sitting down. Tap your left thigh with your left hand. At the same time, rub your right thigh with your right hand from your hip to your knee and back. Try to keep your speed steady. Then try it the other way around: your left hand strokes your thigh and the right hand taps.
- Tap gently on the top of your head with your right hand. At the same time, rub your left hand in circles over your stomach. Swap hands.
- Extend your arms out straight in front of you. First, draw the letter 'i' with one hand by moving your hand up and down. Then draw a triangle with the other hand. Then draw both at the same time with both hands, one draws an 'i' and the other draws a triangle. Swap hands and draw the triangle with your other hand. If this feels easy, try to draw a

square with one hand and a triangle with the other. You can also try out other combinations of shapes or letters.

- Hold your nose with your left hand. Then, reach across with your other hand and grab your left ear. Then swap places: hold your nose with your right hand and then reach across with your left hand to grab your right ear.
- Hold your nose with your left hand. Reach your right hand around the back of your head and grab your left ear. Then straighten your arms out in front of you and do the opposite: your right hand holds your nose and your left hand reaches around the back of your head and grabs your right ear. Increase the speed if it feels too easy.
- Straighten your arms out in front of you. With your arms straight, draw the numbers from zero to nine with your hand so that your right hand draws them normally and your left hand draws a mirror image of each number.
- Straighten your arms out in front of you. With one hand, draw a big figure of eight while you draw a zero with the other hand. Swap hands.
- Move your arms/shoulders in circles in two different directions. Move your left arm in forward circles and your right arm in backwards circles. Swap direction.
- Move one of your feet in a clockwise circle in front of you. Then try to move your hand on the same side in an anticlockwise circle.

Option 2

Task name: Training your working memory

Required equipment/spaces: Various items (8–10) and a stopwatch or other way of keeping time. This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group. Find small items or objects and then gather them on a table or tree stump. The more items there are, the more challenging the game. Also take a stopwatch or count 20 seconds for looking at the items.

Instructions: First read this sentence out to the group: “Working memory refers to our ability to keep things in mind for a short time. Working memory helps us to learn new things, make decisions, and remember things like what to buy from the supermarket.”

Then gather around the items as a group. Ask the group members to look at the items carefully for 20 seconds. Use the stopwatch to count 20 seconds. Once the time is up, ask everyone to close their eyes. When no one is looking, discreetly take away one of the items and put it in your pocket or behind your back. Once you’ve hidden the item, ask everyone to open their eyes.

Then ask which of the items is missing. The first person to identify which item is missing receives a point. After someone has answered correctly, show the item you removed and then put it back. Ask everyone to close their eyes again and then take away another item. The group members have to guess again which of the items is missing. If you want to join in the game, you can pass the stopwatch and responsibility for removing an item to another person and play yourself.

You can play as many rounds as you want. On some rounds, you could take away 2–3 items, and award points for every correctly remembered item. Swapping the places of the items between rounds, or adding new items to the game adds an extra challenge.

Independent task | around 5 min

Brain-healthy actions

The purpose of this session is to focus on our own brain-healthy actions. The actions can be found on the Brain-healthy actions task page, but you can come up with more yourself. The most benefit is achieved by doing the actions as often as possible and turning them into habits.

As the brain enjoys social interaction, the aim is to nurture close personal relationships in different ways over the course of a week. For example, you could take a friend or family member on a walk with you, or prepare some delicious brain-healthy food together.

Share pictures and videos of your brain-healthy actions. Also share what kinds of activities you've thought up together with your friends and family members.

Outdoor group activity | the rest of the session

Task name: Brain training

Goal: To get moving and challenge our brains with alphabet orienteering. Working together is also good for social wellbeing.

You will need:

- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing and a water bottle.
- A smart phone and the Google Maps app (optional).
- Brain-healthy snacks (examples below).

Instructions:

- First, decide together on a word. It could be “Reumatroppi”, “brain”, or the name of your municipality. The longer the word, the more challenging the task.
- Then set out to find places, street signs or buildings with names that contain the letters in your word. For example, if you chose the word “brain”, you could first head to a bank, then to a river, then to a street or road that begins with the letter ‘A’, and so on, until you have found all the letters in your chosen word.
- You can also play alphabet orienteering in pairs or groups, and turn it into a fun competition. In this case, choose a word as a group, and then assign pairs or groups of letters to different teams for them to find. The teams should take pictures of the letters they find to prove that they have succeeded. The fastest team to complete their letters wins!
- You can also take some brain-healthy food along with you, or go to get some as a group after your orienteering. Examples of brain-healthy food include:
 - a sandwich made with wholegrain bread, low-fat spread, and a low-sodium filling with vegetables.
 - nuts or seeds, particularly walnuts (not roasted, salted, or chocolate-covered).
 - colourful berries, vegetables or fruits, ready sliced if you wish.
 - water, coffee, green tea or hot chocolate to drink.
 - a couple of pieces of dark chocolate as dessert

Brain-healthy actions



Look after your brain by doing as many of the brain-healthy actions below as you can during the course of the week. You can also add your own ideas. Share your experiences with the other group members.

- ☐ Read a book
 - ☐ Eaten some vegetables
 - ☐ Spent time outdoors in nature
 - ☐ Enjoyed something that is good for your brain
 - ☐ Met with friends or family
 - ☐ Cooked fish
 - ☐ Done crosswords, sudoku, or crafts
 - ☐ Let your mind rest
 - ☐ Used vegetable oil while cooking
 - ☐ Learnt something new
 - ☐ Listened to music/played an instrument/danced
 - ☐ Paid attention to your fibre intake
 - ☐ Drunk water
 - ☐ Gone for a walk, cycling, swimming, etc.
 - ☐ Slept enough
 - ☐ Eaten regularly
 - ☐ Enjoyed unhealthy food and sweet treats in moderation
 - ☐ Reduced the amount of salt you use
 - ☐
- 

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Feed and nourish

The theme for this session is **the cornerstones of a healthy diet**.

The goal is to learn about what makes a healthy diet and to make small changes to our own diets.

Introduction to the theme | around 10 min

Present the cornerstones of a healthy diet to the group using the text below.

- Food isn't just fuel or a source of pleasure. High-quality and healthy nutrition that contains sufficient energy prevents a number of different diseases and helps us to recover from illnesses more quickly.
- What we eat has significance, particularly to our cardiovascular health. For example, enjoying salt in moderation keeps our blood pressure under control, and eating vegetable fats keeps blood cholesterol in check.
- A good diet also makes it easier to do our daily activities and keeps our mind and body refreshed.
- Portion control and regular mealtimes are key to promoting health and weight management. A steady and sufficient energy intake keeps our body going and reduces bingeing and snacking. For most people, eating 3–5 times a day is suitable.
- You should eat three main meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) per day, along with two or three healthy snacks.
- The need for hydration varies from person to person, but on average, we need to drink 5–8 glasses of fluids a day (in addition to the fluids in food) to keep our body's fluid balance in check and to prevent dehydration. In warm weather and after vigorous exercise, you may need to drink an extra glass of water.
- The plate model is a good aid for making a balanced main meal. The plate model for elderly people is divided into thirds: one third is for vegetables, such as lettuce, grated vegetables, or warm vegetable sides. The second third is for potatoes, rice, pasta, or other grains. The last third is for protein-rich fish, meat or eggs, or for vegetarian food containing legumes, nuts and seeds. A balanced meal also includes an oil-based salad dressing and a drink of milk, buttermilk, or water, and a side of wholegrain bread with vegetable spread. A small bowl of fruit or berries is a good dessert.
- Another guiding principle for a healthy and varied diet is the food pyramid. The pyramid shows the different food groups and how much of each to eat. The basic idea is that the higher up the pyramid a food is, the less often you should eat it. At the bottom of the pyramid are vegetables, fruits and berries. The recommended minimum intake of these is half a kilogram per day. In the middle of the pyramid are cereals and dairy produce, fats, poultry, and fish. At the top of the pyramid are red meat, eggs and high-sodium, fatty, and processed foods, which can be enjoyed occasionally, but should not be included daily in a healthy diet.

- No individual food makes a diet healthy or unhealthy; the overall diet is key. Despite all of the recommendations, it is worth remembering that food should be enjoyed, and that moderation is key.

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Discussion | around 15 min

- Do you think of food as fuel, a treat, or something else? What makes a meal successful, and do you pay attention to your comfort while eating, for example? Does it matter whether you eat alone or with company?
- Do you think you eat healthily? What are you doing right and where is there perhaps room for improvement? How could you change your habits?
- Have you noticed that what you eat and drink has an effect on e.g. your energy levels, pain sensations, or any other feelings?
- Would you admit to having tried out diet tips from magazines or fad diets? If you have, what are your experiences of them?

Shared task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: Hot potato

Required equipment/spaces: A soft object, such as a soft ball, soft toy, sock, or balled-up mittens.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: Split into two teams and stand on opposite sides of the room with a large space in between the teams. Then explain to the group that you are about to say a topic. The teams must come up with something related to the topic as quickly as possible. The game is played using the soft object. Imagine that the object is so hot that it burns your fingers. That's why you have to get rid of it as quickly as possible.

Agree on which team will begin. Give that team the soft object. Now say one of the topics below, or think of one yourself. The team members have to come up with something relating to the topic as quickly as possible, say it out loud, and then throw the object to the other team. The other team then have to think of a different related thing as quickly as possible and then throw the object back. Once something has been said, it cannot be said again. Continue in this way until one of the teams can no longer come up with a related idea or they run out of thinking time.

In that case, the team that answered last receives the point. You can play a certain number of rounds or, for example, until both teams have 5 points.

Example diet-related topics:

- Different fruits/vegetables/berries/root vegetables
- Different dairy products/wholegrain products/sources of unsaturated fats/sources of protein
- Healthy snacks
- Orange/green/red/violet/blue vegetables

Option 2

Task name: Test your knowledge

Required equipment/spaces: A pen and paper (optional).

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group.

Instructions: The aim of this task is to learn more about a healthy diet and to put what we know into practice. Tell the group that you are about to read out some sentences with missing sections. The group need to fill in the missing sections with their own knowledge and creativity. Some of the missing sections require some knowledge, while others can be completed using common sense.

If you wish, you can do the task as a group or turn it into a friendly competition between pairs or teams. In this case, give each team a pen and paper to answer the questions with.

Then read one sentence at a time to the group. When you come to a missing section, you can say something like “beep”. Fill in the missing sections together, in pairs, or in teams. Then move on to the next sentence. The correct answers and example suggestions can be found at the end of the task.

1. The plate model is a good aid for making a balanced meal. The plate model for elderly people is divided into _____ parts.
2. You should eat _____ main meals and _____ snacks per day. Examples of healthy snacks include _____, _____, and _____.
3. A good drink to have with a meal is _____ or _____.
4. The recommended red meat intake per week is _____ grams of cooked meat. Good substitutes for meat include _____ and _____.
5. We should drink around _____ litres of fluids each day, which is about 5–8 glasses including the fluids we get from food. The best drink to quench thirst is _____.
6. The recommended fruit and vegetable intake per day is a minimum of _____ grams per day. This corresponds to around 5–6 handfuls. It is easy to meet the recommendation by incorporating fruit or vegetables into every meal.
7. Fruit and vegetables contain plenty of vitamins and minerals that are necessary for our bodies, but only a little _____. The _____ they contain keep us satisfied, balance our blood sugar, and promote digestion.
8. You should eat fish at least _____ times a week, varying the kinds of fish you eat. Fish is good for our health because it contains _____ and _____.

9. We should eat a maximum of _____ of iodised salt per day. This amount can be obtained from the natural salt found in food, and there is no real need to add salt to our food at all.
10. Foods that are marked with a _____ contain good fats and have a reduced salt content. Some products also have more fibre or less sugar.
11. Proteins are the building blocks for tissue, bones and _____. Every day, our food should provide us with around 1.2–1.4 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. Good sources of protein include _____, _____ and _____.
12. It's good to choose fat-free or low-fat dairy products. Low-fat dairy products include milk that has a maximum of _____% fat and cheese that has a maximum of _____% fat.
13. Good fats keep our joints, brain, and blood vessels healthy. Good sources of unsaturated fats include _____, _____, _____, and _____.
14. _____ keeps our bones strong. We absorb it with vitamin _____, which is formed in sunlight, but can also be found in _____ and _____. The recommendation for people over 75 is 20 micrograms of vitamin _____ per day all year round.

Answers:

1. three;
2. 3; 2–3; fat-free quark and berries, a handful of nuts and a berry smoothie, rye bread, a glass of fat-free sour milk and a piece of fruit. Note: there are also many other options!
3. water, sodium-free mineral water, fat-free milk or sour milk
4. 500; soya, tofu, tempeh, Mifu, vegetable balls, pulled oats, Härkis, etc.
5. 1–1.5; water
6. 500
7. fat/energy; (dietary) fibre
8. 2–3; vitamin D, omega-3 fatty acids
9. 1 teaspoonful
10. The heart
11. Muscles; lean meat (chicken, fish, turkey), fat-free or low-fat dairy products, nuts, beans, legumes, egg, etc.
12. 1; 17
13. vegetable fat spreads, rapeseed oil, avocado, nuts, seeds, almonds
14. Calcium, D; fish, eggs and (fortified) dairy products; D

Reference:

The National Nutrition Council of Finland and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. 2020. Vireyttä seniorivuosiin – ikääntyneiden ruokasuositus. Helsinki: Punamusta Oy.

Independent task | around 5 min

Rabbit food diary

This time, the task is to add vegetables to your diet and test out old and new foods. The rabbit food diary task page contains a story and the aim is to fill it in with your own vegetarian food actions. Prepare for the task by reading the story in advance and then make note of the necessary fruit and vegetables in your weekly grocery shop. It is also a good idea to look for vegetarian recipes in advance. You can fill in the missing sections of the story with your own experiences over the course of the week.

Discuss among yourselves how the week went. Also share other pictures on the topic of healthy food, recipes, and tips with the rest of the group.

Notes:

[illegible]



RABBIT FOOD DIARY

Eating fruit and vegetables is good for you, and it's easy to add them to your diet with small changes. Read the text below carefully and then make the vegetarian food changes in the text. Fill in the missing sections according to your actions and experiences.

I think that vegetables and vegetarian food are _____.

I would describe vegetarian food as _____, _____, and _____.

When I go to the shop, I go through the vegetable aisle and pick up a fruit and vegetable that I've never seen before: _____ and _____. I tasted them. They tasted _____ and reminded me of _____ and _____.

On my treat day I prepared some vegetables and dipping sauce.

I served _____, _____, and my own favourite _____.

One day I felt like I wanted to experiment, and I decided to make vegetarian food. I found a new vegetarian recipe: _____. It was _____ to prepare. The food tasted _____. Next time I could try _____.

When I was a child, I hated _____. In the spirit of trying vegetarian food, I nevertheless decided to try it again after all these years. It tasted _____.

I ate fruit salad as a snack.

It contained _____, _____, _____, and _____.

All in all my week went _____, and adding fruit and vegetables to my diet was _____.

In the future, I will _____.



Outdoor group activity | the rest of the session

Task name: Shopping trip

Goal: Learn more about health food and what our local shop sells. At the same time, we will increase our awareness of choices for a healthy diet and increase our activity for the day.

You will need:

- A phone with an internet connection for at least one group member.
- Imagination and a playful sense of competition!

Instructions:

- Head to your local shop.
- In the shop, split into two teams and then as teams, search for the following (perhaps using Google to help):
 - a plant-based source of protein.
 - a product that contains lots of iron.
 - a product that contains lots of vitamin B12.
 - a good source of vitamin C.
 - bread that is high in fibre.
 - a product that was manufactured using less salt.
 - a good source of protein.
 - a healthy snack that isn't fruit, berries, or vegetables.
 - an interesting new product you want to try.
- You can also come up with more products to look for, or explore new products.
- Use Google to find out how much fibre bread has to contain before it can be called high in fibre.
- Take a photo of the products you find. Compare your findings with others.
- Also share any tips and recipes that you can use the products you find in.

Notes:

Remedy for the future

In this session, we will be looking back at the **highlights of the Reumatroppi group** and celebrating the success of our group! **The goal** is to remind the group of the successes and realisations they have had along the way and to set goals for the future.

Discussion | around 30 min

Discuss the past weeks together as a group.

- What successes, realisations, or new experiences have you had? Did you succeed in improving your wellbeing? Did anyone excel themselves? How?
- Did you find you have more energy? Did you find any new resources or ideas to improve your health and wellbeing in everyday life? Do you feel like your quality of life improved during the group sessions? What affected it?
- What did you learn about yourself and wellbeing during the group sessions? What will you take with you from the group? Do you intend to continue something you started or tried out in the group?
- What was best about the group? What did you get from the group? Is there anything you could improve on in the future?

Shared task | around 20–30 min

Option 1

Task name: Who am I?

Required equipment/spaces: Pieces of paper on which the names of characters from fairytales or cartoons are written. A hat or bag to put the pieces of paper into.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group. First prepare the pieces of paper by writing the names of characters from fairytales or cartoons onto them. The characters could be from cartoons, folklore, animated films, or books. You can also use other characters or people, such as celebrities, or politicians

Instructions: We are once more going to take on some new roles and have some fun as a group. Split into small teams, or play as a group. Then agree on who begins. The person who starts takes a piece of paper out of the hat or bag without looking and then shows it to the others, but **does not look at it themselves**. Their task is to find out which character they have picked by asking Yes/No questions. (E.g. Do I live in Duckburg? Am I an animal?) The person guessing will continue until they think they know who they are. If they guess correctly, it is the next person's turn to take a piece of paper out of the bag or hat and begin guessing.

You can also ask for tips on how a character moves. In that case, the person who is guessing could ask: “How do I normally move?” The others answer with gestures only, no talking. Have fun and get into the parts of your characters. Creativity is key here!

Option 2

Task name: Looking back

Required equipment/spaces: Various pictures, postcards, or small items. Paper and pens (optional). This task can be carried out indoors or outdoors.

Preparations: First read the instructions to yourself, then give the instructions to the group. Ask the group members to bring along a picture or object that means something to them. The picture can communicate something about its owner or their thoughts at the end of the group. You can also agree on another topic.

Instructions: A picture is often worth more than a thousand words. Sometimes it’s easier to put your thoughts into words if you can get some distance from them. Explore the group’s feelings about the group sessions and that the sessions are ending using the pictures and items that the members brought with them. If the group members did not bring pictures or items, offer them one that you brought with or, or find something suitable nearby.

First split into pairs. Then, in pairs, explain to your partner why you chose that picture or item, and what it conveys about you and your feelings. After a short while, swap partners. At the end, discuss any thoughts that came up together. Did you learn something new from each other, even now?

If you want, you can also put all of the items and pictures together and then guess which item belongs to which group member. In this case, give everyone a sheet of paper and a pen. Go through the pictures and items one by one and write your answers down on paper. At the end, go through the correct answers. Did anyone get them all right?

Achieving goals | around 10 min

Go around the group and have everyone mention

- at least one thing that they felt they succeeded in during the Reumatroppi group, along with
- one thing where there is still room for improvement. Make sure that everyone who wants to participate gets a turn.

Then discuss the goals that you set at the start of the group sessions. How have you progressed, have any been achieved?

REMEDY FOR THE FUTURE

What have you always wanted to do, but haven't yet managed for one reason or another?

Write down three of your dreams below and then start turning them into a reality! For each section, list 3 smaller steps (A-C) that will guide you in the right direction. Also think about any obstacles in your path, and how you can overcome them.

Good luck!



DREAM 1: _____

- A.
- B.
- C

Obstacles on my path and how I can overcome them:



DREAM 2: _____

- A.
- B.
- C

Obstacles on my path and how I can overcome them:



DREAM 3: _____

- A.
- B.
- C

Obstacles on my path and how I can overcome them:

Independent task | around 5 min

Remedy for the future

Turning dreams into reality adds meaning to life and helps us to stay active. Although our shared journey as a Reumatroppi group is ending, there's no need to stop here. The Remedy for the future task page will help you to set new short- or long-term goals and dreams.

Keep in touch in the future and let each other know how you are making your dreams come true!

Celebration, conclusion, and thanks | the rest of the session

Task name: Dance, wild child

Goal: Celebrate successful group sessions and recharge our batteries with dancing and good food.

You will need:

- Equipment that can play audio and music that you all enjoy.
- If you want to serve good (and healthy) food (e.g. fruit, berries, smoothies, flavoured mineral water, nuts, dark chocolate, vegetables and dip, home-made baked treats). You can also arrange a potluck, where everyone brings something with them to share with the others.
- You may wish to award small prizes for a dance competition.
- Have fun and see you on the dance floor!

Instructions:

- Play some lively music and have a dance party! Dance to your heart's content, however you want.
- You can also hold a dance competition where the funniest and most creative moves win. You can participate on your own, in pairs, or as teams. The others can vote on who had the best moves.
- If there are dancers in your group, they can teach the others
- a few dance moves so that you can dance together. Don't be afraid to combine different styles! You can also learn a dance from music videos or instructional videos that you can find on YouTube.

Finally, thank everyone for participating in the group! Remember to ask for feedback, suggestions for improvement, and comments for the future.

[illegible]



*We hope that you enjoy the group
activity sessions with Reumatroppi!*