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GET TOWNS ACTIVE

#TEAMFLORA



ANNUAL ACTIVE TOWNS REPORT
2021

Flora's Annual Active Towns Report aims to investigate just how much time is being dedicated to maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle across the UK and Ireland, as well as looking at the dietary steps that are being made to help support a more active lifestyle.

Margarine brand Flora is looking to encourage people to progress their journey towards a more active lifestyle, helping communities across the UK and Ireland stay happy and healthy across.

Flora has been at the heart of everyday food life for more than 50 years, trusted through the generations as a healthy, tasty and natural kitchen staple, fit to feed our families. With health and activeness being so entwined, it's Flora's mission to help people on their journeys towards a more active lifestyle.

The report is part of the Flora's **Get Towns Active** movement, a drive across the UK and Ireland aiming to help people take steps towards a more active, healthier lifestyle.

The campaign culminates at this year's Virgin Money London Marathon, with TV presenter **Mark Wright** running the marathon with Flora for the first time, with exclusive training and nutrition advice from Flora's Get Towns Active Ambassador **Paula Radcliffe**.

You can follow Mark and the network of Flora Get Towns Active Activists that have been brought together across the UK and Ireland by following **#TeamFlora** and **#GetTownsActive** on social media. The Activists are all dedicated to bringing you the best tips and advice for helping you and your family lead more active lifestyles.

Paula Radcliffe

Three time London
Marathon winner!
Top That!

The biggest advice I would give to someone who is looking to become more active is to start gradually, don't suddenly try and run a marathon first day. Just try to run a couple of miles and then give your body a day off to see how it recovers and responds

Activity levels across the UK and Ireland

Everyone is different, with different interest, hobbies, and lifestyles. That's amazing and something to be encouraged, but it naturally means that the amount of time each of us spends being active every day varies.

Even if you're not an elite level athlete, maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle is incredibly important to your overall health, and the average amount of time a day people are spending doing physical activity is an insight into just how this has changed over the last year.

Compared to last year, Flora research shows there has been a 36% increase in the amount of time people in the UK and Ireland are spending being active per day. That means **the nations are now averaging 45 minutes a day**, compared to 33 minutes in 2020.

A similar trend is true when looking at how many exercise sessions people are doing every week, with the average now at four times per week, up from three in 2020.

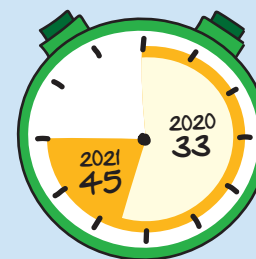
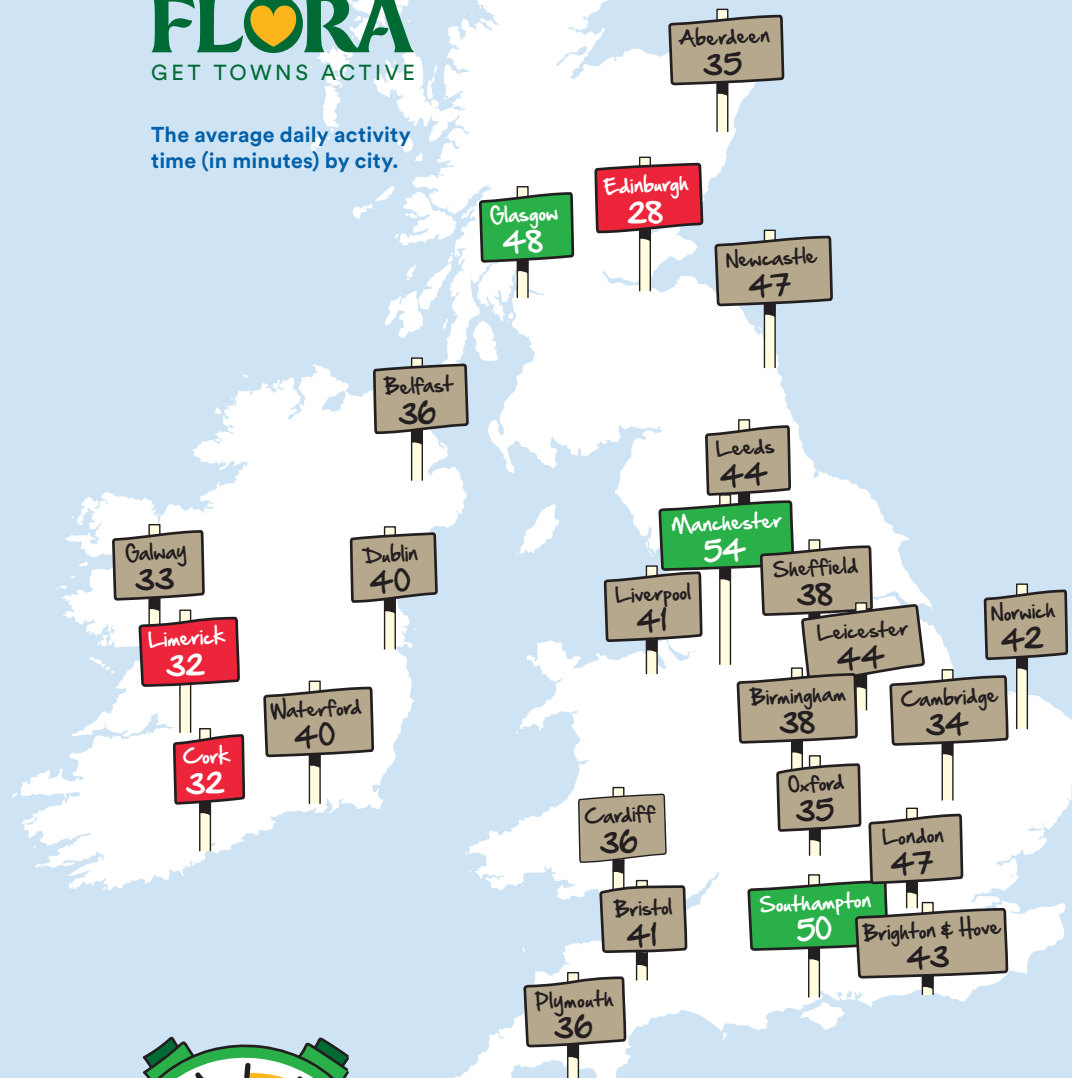
Depending on where you live, the average amount of time people are spending being active differs. **Manchester is crowned as the most active city**, where they are active for nearly an hour a day (54 minutes), a big rise from the 30 minutes they were spending being active last year. Meanwhile, **Edinburgh is the least active** at under half-an-hour per day (28 minutes), which is 4 minutes less than 2020.

Dublin and **Waterford** are the most active cities in Ireland, where the average is 40 minutes per day, but there are three Irish cities towards the bottom of the table, with **Galway** (33 minutes), **Cork** and **Limerick** (32 minutes each) just above Edinburgh in the table.

Despite the positive increase in the amount of activity across the nations, only three in 10 think that the UK and Ireland are healthy and active on the whole. There are many things that might be creating this view, such as the challenges of balancing a healthy and active lifestyle, especially if you have a busy family or work life. However, it's reassuring that we still seem to be finding the time to exercise each day.

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The average daily activity time (in minutes) by city.



The average daily activity time (in minutes) people are active compared to last year.

Diet and activity levels

A healthy, active lifestyle is not all about getting out and getting moving, it's also about eating healthy, nutritious food, and diet is a vitally important part of staying active. Without a balanced intake of food your body won't be able to generate the energy required to stay active, so it's making sure that ingredients such as Flora's tasty and versatile spreads are in your diet to help maintain a healthy diet that contributes to an active lifestyle.

The majority of the UK and Ireland agree with this, with three-quarters stating that a natural, healthy diet is an important part of an active lifestyle. In fact, **nearly two in 10 (17%) put diet above all else**, considering it to be the most important part of leading an active lifestyle.

Over the last year, there also seems to have been a shift in the type of food that people are eating to ensure that they're staying active and healthy. **More than half (54%) have been focusing on making healthier food choices** such as Flora, which is naturally filled with the goodness of Omega 3 and contains less saturated fat than butter, for a healthier heart. **Over a third (36%) have also been opting for more plant-based food options.**

The number of people cooking from scratch is also higher than last year, with 55% saying that they've been focusing on this. Cooking at home is all about straightforward, good food that the whole family can enjoy, which is something Flora are passionate about. Real food, for real people and simple dishes made with care.



Mark Wright
TV personality
& professional
footballer!

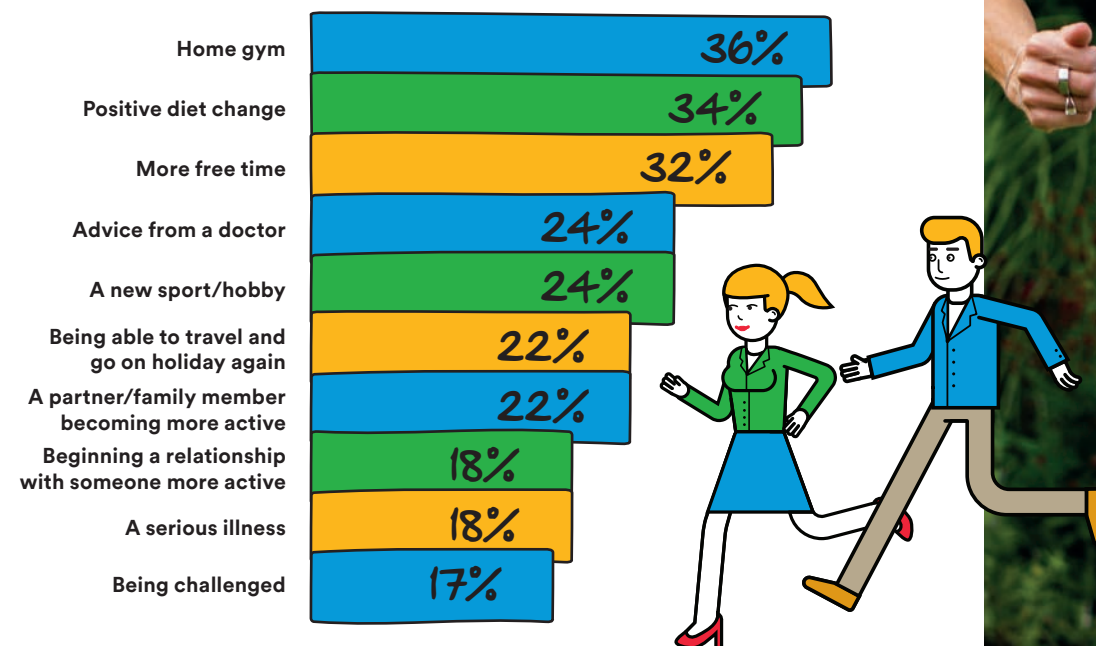
Energy Balls
See [Flora.com](https://www.flora.com) for recipe

How do you motivate yourself to live a more active lifestyle?

There are many things that give people the drive to be more active, but sometimes it can be a struggle to find motivation, and that's okay. Part of a healthy mindset is knowing when to give yourself a break and allow your body the time it needs to be firing on all cylinders. However, there are also **some lifestyle changes that people in the UK and Ireland have said would really encourage them to get out and get active.**

Having access to a home gym would convince the largest amount of people to take the steps towards an active lifestyle, with 36% saying that this would be the ideal way to get them motivated. **Diet, again, is thought of as a big motivator for exercising**, with 34% saying that a positive change in the way they ate would in turn encourage them to be active. But what do people expect will be the outcome of a more active lifestyle? Well, **over half of the UK and Ireland are convinced that being more active would mean that they would be a more positive person** and that they'd be happier overall.

Lifestyle changes that would encourage people to live a more active lifestyle





How does an active lifestyle impact physical and mental health?

There are many positive outcomes from living a more active lifestyle, not only on your physical health, but according to seven in ten people (72%) other aspects of their lives, such as mental health, are improved.

In fact, **three-quarters (73%) believe there is a direct link between living a healthy, active lifestyle and being happy.**

The pandemic and lockdowns changed the way we live our day to day lives, but also how we approach being active and focusing on our physical and mental health. While for some it was a watershed moment and really allowed them to put more effort into looking after themselves and being more active, for others this may not have been the case and their activity levels may have fallen.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) said that the restrictions of the pandemic lockdowns made it difficult for them to be active and that they would have preferred to have been more active during this time than they were.

However, **closing in on half (44%) said that the pandemic had a positive impact on their activity levels**, with the same percentage saying that it helped them take steps to improve their physical and mental health through leading a more active lifestyle.

This isn't the case with everyone though, as many people are finding it difficult to take the steps they need to live a more active lifestyle. **Over half of people in the UK and Ireland find it hard to motivate themselves to be more active (56%)** and just under that amount struggle to maintain activity levels and find themselves falling back into bad habits (47%).

While a base level of activeness is important to ensure you're living a healthy lifestyle, many need help building up the confidence they need to take the first step. In fact, **over three in 10 (31%) avoid being active because they have a fear of being judged for their current fitness levels.**



73% of people that believe there is a direct link between living a healthy, active lifestyle and being happy.



The bottom line

Increasing your activity levels is incredibly important. It doesn't matter if you're a professional ultra-marathon runner or someone who doesn't do much exercise at all, every step is important on your health journey. Even if you're taking the stairs instead of the lift, walking instead of catching the bus or giving the house a good clean, every single action contributes to a healthier lifestyle.

The main thing is to find your community and surround yourself with friends and family who help encourage you to live a healthy, active lifestyle. That's exactly what Flora have looked to do with their **Get Towns Active Activists**, a group of enthusiastic and supportive people from around the UK and Ireland, all sharing their top tips for exercise, nutrition and fun family times to help inspire you to live your best life.

Remember to follow the Get Towns Active Activists ahead of the Virgin Money London Marathon, which many of them will be running, by following the hashtags **#TeamFlora** and **#GetTownsActive** on Instagram.

Sources: All data included in this report is based on consumer research conducted between 5th August and 11th August 2021, comprising 2,034 adults across UK and Ireland.

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