

Staying well during busy periods

Purpose:

To promote being in good physical condition during busy periods to enable workers to perform their tasks efficiently, reduce the risk of injuries, and build resilience to better manage any challenges.

Why:

To reduce the risk of injury, accidents, and stress-related issues and improve work performance during busy periods on the farm.

TIAH Capability Framework area:

This aligns with the knowledge and skills in the Health and Safety area.

<https://tiah.org/tiah-capability-framework>

Talk leader instructions:

- Prepare to do the talk in a suitable/quiet location with no distractions
- Consider using some of the resources as part of the talk, e.g., showing a video
- Engage with participants, ask questions, and give everyday examples
- Conclude with a brief review
- Get everyone to sign the form. Make sure to write the name of the farm and the date. Keep a copy in your Health and Safety records
- Ensure all participants have access to a copy of this document to refer to once the session has finished. This could be electronic and emailed or printed

Notes:

Background

Good health is crucial for successful farming, and it's easy to neglect our wellbeing during busy times like lambing season or harvest time. In this Toolbox Talk, we'll discuss practical tips to ensure you stay fit, eat healthily, and get enough rest during demanding periods.

Main learning points



5 minutes

1. Get fit before a busy period

Exercise is vital for both physical and mental wellbeing. Before the hectic period, such as when the lambing season begins or before harvest, consider incorporating the following into your routine to get fit and prepare your body:

- **Cardiovascular exercise:** Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking or cycling, most days of the week
- **Strength training:** Strengthen your core and muscles with activities like weightlifting, bodyweight exercises, or resistance training
- **Flexibility training:** Stretching helps improve flexibility and reduce the risk of injuries. Include stretches in your routine to keep your body agile

2. Eat healthily even when you're busy or working long hours

Proper nutrition is the fuel your body needs for the demanding tasks on the farm. These tips can help to ensure a healthy diet:

- **Meal planning:** Prepare meals in advance during less busy periods so you have nutritious options available when things get hectic. Make sure there are lots of handy healthy snacks that you can grab and eat during busy times, and plan to make packed lunch boxes. Using a weekly meal planner can also be helpful, and think about turning leftovers from an evening meal, such as a cottage pie or chilli, into a tasty filling for a wholemeal wrap for lunch the next day. Why not share your favourite healthy lunch recipe with the team?



- **Stay hydrated:** Dehydration can lead to fatigue. Carry a water bottle (especially if you're working on a tractor) and make a conscious effort to stay hydrated throughout the day. Make sure you get at least 6 to 8 cups or glasses of fluid a day
- **Balanced meals:** Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains in your meals. A balanced diet provides the nutrients needed for sustained energy. Bananas, other fruits, cereal, and protein bars are great as healthy snacks that you can quickly grab and eat on the go

3. Get enough rest:

Adequate rest is essential for recovery and maintaining overall health.

- **Create a restful environment:** Make your bedroom conducive to sleep by keeping it dark, quiet, and cool. Consider using blackout curtains and earplugs if needed

Notes:

Suggestions/ ideas:

Get enough rest, continued...

- **Power naps:** If possible, take short power naps during the day to recharge. Even a 20-minute nap can improve alertness and performance
- **When possible, establish a routine:** Aim for a consistent sleep schedule. Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day helps regulate your body's internal clock

4. Incorporate positive strategies to reduce stress into your day

- Make time for yourself. Regularly do something that you enjoy, e.g. going to a match, listening to music, reading, gaming, doing a hobby, gardening, etc
- A 'problem shared is a problem halved'. Simply talking to someone you trust can help if you're feeling overwhelmed
- Don't try to please everybody. Learn to say no
- Focus your energy on things that you have control over and accept that there are some things you can't change
- Take a look at how you organise your time. Prioritise tasks, make lists and reward yourself for completing tasks

Discussion points



Q. What activities do you enjoy doing that will help you get fit before the busy period, and what will you commit to doing?

Examples might include DIY, gardening, Yoga, weightlifting, Tai chi, using resistance bands, walking, aerobics, dancing, sports, bike riding, swimming, hiking, stretches, circuit training, fitness videos, running/ jogging, and spinning.

Q. What types of healthy meals could you prepare in advance and put in the freezer so you can just heat them up when you need to?

Ideas might include cooking batches of lean beef or vegetable chilli, stew or casseroles, chicken and/or vegetable curry, soups, fish pie, shepherd's pie or a plant-based version, lamb tagine, vegetable or lamb moussaka.

Q. What types of healthy snacks and drinks can we get/make available on site?

Examples might include yoghurts, fruit, nutrition bars, cereal, smoothies, breakfast bars, falafel, tuna lunch packs, pasta salad, protein shakes, nuts, and dried fruit. Water, flasks of tea or coffee, fruit or vegetable juice.

Q. Are there any other suggestions or ideas to stay healthy and well during busy periods?

e.g. Identify a comfortable, quiet place for people to have a power nap or rest if needed.

Summary/Wrap-up



Prepare yourself physically before the busy period, so you're strong and can more easily cope with the physical demands of the job. To stay healthy during busy periods, plan things like meals and healthy snacks in advance so you don't have to think about it too much when you're tired and working long or unpredictable hours. You also need to consciously make sure you have time to rest, do something you enjoy and stay in contact with others for your mental wellbeing.

Resources:

BBC Good Food: Lunch recipes: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/occasions/lunch>

Delicious magazine: Lunch recipes to take to work: <https://www.deliciousmagazine.co.uk/collections/lunch-recipes-to-take-to-work>

NHS: Exercise guidelines and workouts to help improve your fitness and wellbeing: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/>

Farm Well: Fit for harvest: <https://farmwell.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/01/Fit-for-harvest.pdf>

FarmWell: Personal Resilience: <https://farmwell.org.uk/personal-resilience/>

NHS Eatwell Guide:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/528193/Eatwell_guide_colour.pdf

NHS: Water, drinks and hydration:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/water-drinks-nutrition/#:~:text=The%20Eatwell%20Guide%20says%20we,tea%20and%20coffee%2C%20all%20count>

Farm Safety Foundation: The Little Book of Minding Your Head: <https://www.yellowwellies.org/the-little-book-of-minding-your-head-download-your-copy-here/>

NHS: Every mind matters: <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters>

AHDB: Support for farmers: <https://ahdb.org.uk/support-for-farmers>

Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Toolbox Talk participants

Toolbox Talk: **Staying well during busy periods**

Name of farmDate

Talk leader name.....

Name	Signature	Date