

Let's talk about **STRENGTH**

We spent a year listening to people living with long-term health conditions about their thoughts on strengthening activities. Here are some key learnings to help people gain the improvements to quality of life that strengthening can deliver.

Barriers

People living with LTCs told us what stops them from taking part in strengthening activity.

- **Fear that their condition inhibits them** or they could deteriorate as a result of doing activities
- **Low mood** and a fear of embarrassment
- **Their symptoms** and energy levels vary day to day.

Motivations

But they also told us what motivated them to get started.

- Set a specific, memorable goal which is short-term and related to 'doing more' (e.g. *ability to complete daily activities*) and 'feeling better' (e.g. *managing the condition, improved mood or self-esteem*).
- These tend to be more motivating than longer-term medical benefits.

Testing

We're asking everyone to talk more about strength, and for healthcare professionals to consider testing it as a matter of routine.

For more information and learnings see the full report at:

www.csp.org.uk/strength

6 Tips from people living with LTCs on how to promote and discuss strengthening activity

- 1 Say 'gradually increase' not 'gently increase' (*allows control over the activity and feels more accessible*)
- 2 Use simple language (e.g. *raising your leg*), **avoid jargon/technical words** (e.g. *calf raises*)
- 3 Convey that strengthening is easy, **don't explicitly say it is** (*can be done at home with no special equipment*)
- 4 Show strengthening is accessible (*i.e. at home, with everyday items*) **avoid using patronising terms** (e.g. *lifting 'small' bottles*)
- 5 Talk about choosing from 'approved' exercises to get started
- 6 Say both 'maintaining' and 'improving' strength not one or the other.