



**NEVER IN A
MILLION YEARS**

12 ways to be active in Waltham Forest

walthamforest.gov.uk/active



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Ready, set, move!

Waltham Forest is a borough where anyone can be active – especially if you think you can't. Our campaign, Never in a Million Years, champions this spirit: *I never thought I could, but I gave it a go, and look at me now.*

For many people, regular physical activity might not feel like an option. You might be worried about keeping motivation, or that you won't be as good as other people. You might have an injury or a disability that stops you doing what you love. You might not feel like it's your thing, or it's something younger people do. It might all feel too expensive, too time-consuming, or you might not know where to start.

But in Waltham Forest there's something for everyone, and that includes you.

Group sessions and supportive leaders help you keep momentum and remind you that everyone, from beginner to pro, is smashing it. Disability-specific sessions help you do what you love, safely – and chair-based classes keep you moving at a gentler pace. Most activities are free or low-cost, which also helps you test the waters if you're not sure.

If sports gear isn't for you, try another way to keep moving, like gardening to community events. And if time's an issue, our guide to working movement into your day might just spark ideas.

Never in a million years? Maybe – but what about today?



Find out what you could do:
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NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS

“...did I think walking could be fun. Now every week I enjoy moving and chatting to new people”

Peter, Feel Good Walks

Walking and jogging

Walking or jogging is simple, free exercise that fits around your life. In Waltham Forest you can join friendly walks, follow mapped routes alone, or turn up to regular jogging groups. There's no special kit needed – just comfortable shoes.

You could:

- Join Feel Good Walks: volunteer –led routes, with different paces and distances.
- Follow Waltham Forest Wanders maps and explore parks, streets, and trails.
- Turn up to Walthamstow parkrun or Leyton Junior parkrun. Walkers welcome.

Cycling

Cycling can be a relaxed ride or a proper workout – and it's great for getting around too. Waltham Forest has 58km of cycle lanes, making it safer and easier to get around, and you don't need to be a pro cyclist with expensive gear.

You could:

- Get free Cycle Confident training: start from scratch or refresh skills
- Join one of several regular friendly group rides, with leaders and route guidance
- Have fun at the COG BMX Club track, for young people and adults.



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“...did I think, approaching 50, I'd get back on a bike. This summer I've cycled all the way to Southend!”

Lucy, Black Women on Wheels



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“...did I think I’d actually
have fun in the water. Now
I’m doing butterfly and
backstroke every morning”

Chris, Swim for Confidence

Swimming

Swimming is a full-body workout that’s gentle on joints, and you can go at your own speed.

In Waltham Forest there are pools for casual swims, confidence-building sessions, and some free options, keeping swimming affordable.

You could:

- If you’re over 60, under 18 or have a disability, swim for free at certain times
- Book ‘Swim for Confidence’ sessions to build skills and self-assurance
- Try women-only and mum swim sessions for more privacy and childcare options.

Activity classes

Classes are a great way to move with others, without planning the workout yourself. You don’t need to be ‘in shape’ to start – most sessions offer options for beginners. Across Waltham Forest you’ll find low-cost and free classes indoors and outdoors.

You could:

- Try free Pilates at Pastures or yoga in Walthamstow and Chingford libraries
- Explore Better and Adult Learning classes, including warm-space table tennis
- Join free Our Parks sessions outside, or low-cost sessions by Salaam Peace.



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“...did I think I could do
Pilates every week in
my 70s. Now I can do
a headstand!”

Frances, Pastures
Centre Pilates



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“...did I think I’d find time for me again. I’ve found my community at chair reggae, spreading joy and love through dance”

Janet, Chair Reggae

Chair-based sessions

Chair-based sessions are proper workouts: they build strength, keep joints moving, and can lift your mood.

They’re ideal if standing is hard, or you’re rebuilding confidence after illness or injury. In Waltham Forest, sessions are social and welcoming.

You could:

- Try Leyton Wellbeing chair sessions: Tai Chi Tuesdays, Keep Fit Wednesdays
- Join free chair-based classes at Orford Road Hub or Aldriche Way Hub
- Look out for music-led chair sessions like reggae at Walthamstow Library.

Sports

Sport can be social and still great exercise, even if you’re not competitive. Many sessions focus on enjoyment and movement, not keeping score. In Waltham Forest you’ll find gentler versions of sports, plus casual games you can drop into.

You could:

- Try free walking football at Pastures Centre with Age UK: friendly and low-impact
- Join free walking cricket at Leyton Sports Ground on Tuesday mornings
- Play Free Parks Tennis at Abbots or Higham Hill Park – beginners welcome!



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“...did I think I’d still be playing football at my age, but here I am, full kit and ready to go!”

Ann,
Walking Football

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“...did I think I'd be in my 70s with two new hips, enjoying daily workouts. But the allotment won't tend itself!”

Dave, Chestnuts Farm Allotments

Gardening and nature

Gardening and nature work is sneaky exercise: digging, lifting, carrying, and plenty of steps. It can also boost your mood. In Waltham Forest there are Friends of Parks groups, allotments, and volunteering that get you moving while helping green spaces.

You could:

- Join a Friends of Parks group for planting, weeding, and light maintenance
- Get an allotment or try community gardening for regular, gentle movement
- Try Green Gym conservation sessions with tools and guidance provided.



Dance and cultural activity

Dancing is a great way to have fun, raise your heart rate and build balance. Cultural activity counts too: parades, community theatre, gigs, and festivals include plenty of movement. In Waltham Forest you can join classes, events, or volunteer roles.

You could:

- Join dance and movement classes, from street styles to beginner fitness
- Try Mile Rainbow CIC's East Asian Rhythms and Movement sessions
- Get moving at carnivals, parades, gigs – or join community theatre!



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“...did I think I'd skip my Saturday lie-in. Now I get up at the crack of dawn for Bollywood fitness class and have energy all weekend!”

Angeles, Bollywood Fitness with Mevy

People with disabilities

Being active should feel welcoming, flexible, and safe – whatever your disability. In Waltham Forest there are inclusive sessions with coaches who adapt activities, plus clubs designed for disabled people.

You could:

- Join Sport for Confidence sessions: coached activities with personalised support
- Try disability-specific clubs: Forest Flyerz hockey or Visually Impaired Cricket
- Try All Ability Cycling, Ace Inclusive Walks, or Firefly frame running sessions.



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“...did I think I'd still be sporty after the MS diagnosis. Now I've adapted it into my life and I'm doing sports I've never done before”

Saima, Sport for Confidence at the Feel Good Centre

Women-only sessions

Women-only sessions can suit you whether you're confident or a bit self-conscious. Some choose them for privacy, comfort, or faith reasons. In Waltham Forest there are women-only options across a range of sports and levels.

You could:

- Join women-only cycle rides with Cycle Sisters, JoyRiders or Black Women on Wheels
- Try women-only activity sessions, like swimming or Bollywood Fitness
- Check out women-only football clubs and sessions, like AFC Leyton.



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“...did I think I'd be active again after years of poor health. Now I do 20-mile rides every week with my Cycle Sisters”

Shanaz, Cycle Sisters

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Young people

For young people, age-specific sessions help you stay safe and have fun. Coaches keep activities at the right level, and it's easier to try things with friends.

You could:

- Try some of the dozens of Space4All drop-in sessions for ages 8 to 18, full of sport and creative activities
- Join free football sessions, including with AFC Leyton and at Salisbury Hall
- Try the free Pastures free multi-sports, Sundays from 9.15am, for ages 4 to 14.

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“...did I think I'd have the confidence to play men's football aged 16. Now I'm in the core squad”

Troy, Lymore GRDNS Football Club

Everyday activity

Everyday movement still counts: walking, stairs, errands, and playing outside all add up. If 'exercise' feels like a big thing, start small and build habits.

You could:

- Swap one short journey for walking or cycling a few times every week
- Turn play into movement: kickabouts, skipping, tag, or park workouts
- Find lots more ideas for everyday movement on our website

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“...did I think I'd move without a gym. Now I do ten minutes in the living room each morning”
Sofia, at home in Chingford

Find all the info on our website.
Scan here:



You can find much more information about these activity types by asking at your local library, or on our website:
walthamforest.gov.uk/active

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