

Top 10 Simple Health Checks You Can Do At Home

Paycare



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In a world where we're constantly on the go and juggling things that life throws at us, it can be all too easy to put our health on the back-burner and gain a mindset that our personal wellbeing can wait.

Yet there are many quick and easy checks that we can perform on ourselves from the comfort of our own homes, which not only provide us with peace of mind, but could be potentially lifesaving by helping us identify – and seek support and treatment for – any issues sooner rather than later.

Here, we've listed **10 steps** to help you keep in tip-top shape:

1| Abdominal Fat

Unlike the fat found on hips and thighs, abdominal fat (also known as visceral fat) is carried around the stomach and is high density. If you're noticing a change in your clothes fitting or a change in your body's shape, and it's not due to your diet or exercise, it may be worth keeping an eye on it by using a tape measure to monitor your waist size on a regular basis. Consult your doctor if you're worried about any changes, as abdominal fat can often be associated with more serious health issues such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

2| Heart Rate

It may come as a surprise, but your heart rate can reveal a lot about your body and overall health and wellbeing. On average, a healthy resting heart rate is between 60 and 100 beats per minute. The fitter and healthier you are, the lower it should be. To check your heart rate, place a finger on the inside of your wrist whilst rested and count your pulse for ten seconds, then multiply the result by six. If your figure is higher than it should be, one of the ways you can reduce it is by increasing the amount of exercise you do (even if that's walking more regularly and counting your steps using a pedometer or fitness tracker). If you're concerned, do seek advice and guidance on www.nhs.uk, or consult your GP.



3| Heart Rhythm

An irregular heartbeat is more than just the occasional skipped beat, but rather, a continuous irregular rhythm. Catching this early could potentially prevent the risk of a stroke. Shockingly, atrial fibrillation (the official term for the condition of irregular and abnormally fast heartbeats) affects around 1,000,000 people in the UK¹. You may identify this through monitoring your heart rate, but you can also place a finger on your pulse and tap your foot along to the rhythm. If you find that the rhythm is very irregular and you are unable to tap your foot along in time, seek advice from your doctor.

4| Oral Health

Most people don't pay much more attention to their mouths other than brushing their teeth, but it's important to regularly check for any abnormalities such as lumps and bumps that do not heal within a reasonable time, or which keep re-occurring. These can be potential red flags for more serious problems such as gum disease, and mouth cancer.

It's vital that you visit your dentist regularly to ensure that your overall dental health is as it should be, but your doctor may also be able to advise.

5| Breast Exam

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, with one person is diagnosed every 10 minutes. 1 in 8 women in the UK will develop breast cancer in their lifetime, and 1 in 1,000 men. A breast exam can take just five minutes, so set yourself a monthly date and thoroughly check your breasts for any changes to size, colour and shape.

Be sure to check for any lumps and report any abnormalities to a doctor. Fatty lumps are common and often nothing to worry about, but it is always better to be safe and see someone about it than hoping it will go away on its own. Self-checking breasts is a great way to become aware of your own body and of anything that is abnormal, but these should never replace screening appointments.



6| Testicular Exam

Regularly carrying out of a testicular self-exam is important so that you are aware and confident with what is normal for you, and so that you know if something is different. Best performed after a warm shower so that you are relaxed, check the scrotum for any lumps, changes to size, or discomfort. This should be carried out monthly, and always report changes or concerns to your doctor. For more information, visit the NHS advice and guidance section here.

7| Moles

Moles are very common, but in some instances, can be a warning sign for a more serious condition such as skin cancer. Check moles regularly for any changes in size, shape, or colour, and be sure to check for any new moles too. If they have rough edges or are not symmetrical, you should make your GP aware in case they want to do any further exploratory checks. Again, identifying issues early is vital.

8| Wheeze Test

Around 5.4 million people in the UK are currently receiving treatment for asthma, consisting of 1.1 million children (1 in 11) and 4.3 million adults (1 in 12). Whilst it is normal to become short of breath during physical work or cardiovascular exercises, if you find that you are becoming wheezy and struggling to catch your breath during exercise, you should request to be tested for asthma through your GP. It's a common health problem and many people who receive treatment lead normal lives. But if it goes undiagnosed and you don't get the help you need, it can be fatal.



9| Low Iron

Iron deficiency anaemia affects 1 in 10 women in the UK, and despite this, there is still a huge lack of awareness surrounding anaemia and the health issues it can cause, such as fatigue, weakness, heart palpitations, shortness of breath and light-headedness. A lack of Iron in the blood can present itself through visible changes in your body. Some simple checks you can carry out include checking the redness of your gums, stretching out the palm of your hand, and the inside of your eyelids and checking the colour. If any of these appear paler than usual, it could indicate anaemia, for which a blood test would be required.

10| Bowel Awareness

Everyone is different when it comes to bowel movements, and our diets can play a huge role in that. But should you notice any changes in how often you go, or the consistency, and if these changes last longer than three weeks, do contact your GP to check there aren't any underlying problems.

Getting an appointment with your local GP can be difficult if you work when they're open, and there are long waiting times, but your health and wellbeing should be a priority and it's important to not overlook any concerns you have.

Don't forget that as a Paycare Policyholder, you have access to the **GP 24/7 app** and support online via your My Paycare account, where you can book an appointment to speak directly to a qualified and practicing GP at any time of the day or night. You can find out more information [here](#).



Sources

1 | <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/atrial-fibrillation/#whos-affected>