

A Heart-Healthy Lifestyle: A Complete Guide from Peace & Grace

At Peace & Grace, we believe that wellbeing is built through small, meaningful choices that strengthen the body, calm the mind, and uplift the spirit. Heart disease remains one of the leading causes of illness in the UK, yet most risk factors are preventable. By empowering individuals with knowledge, practical skills, and supportive community spaces, we help people live healthier, happier, longer lives.

This guide brings together the core principles of a heart-healthy lifestyle — and shows how Peace & Grace is walking alongside you every step of the way.

Eat to Nourish Your Heart

Food is one of the most powerful tools for protecting your heart. Every meal is an opportunity to support your body with nutrients that reduce inflammation, stabilise blood pressure, and improve cholesterol.

Heart-healthy eating focuses on:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains such as oats, brown rice, quinoa
- Lean proteins: beans, lentils, fish, skinless poultry
- Healthy fats: nuts, seeds, olive oil, avocados
- Lower-salt, lower-sugar choices

Cooking at home is especially beneficial. It gives you control over ingredients and encourages healthier cooking methods. Even simple swaps — grilling instead of frying, herbs instead of salt — make a big difference.

Move Your Body Every Day

Your heart is a muscle, and movement keeps it strong.

Aim for:

- 150 minutes of moderate activity per week
- Strength training twice weekly
- Short movement breaks during long periods of sitting
- Activities you enjoy — walking, dancing, gardening, swimming

Movement should feel joyful, not stressful. Every step counts.

Manage Stress with Intentional Calm

Stress affects the heart more than many people realise. Chronic stress raises blood pressure and disrupts sleep.

Heart-healthy stress management includes:

- Mindfulness or deep breathing
- Gentle stretching
- Listening to calming music
- Spending time outdoors
- Connecting with supportive people

Small moments of calm throughout the day help restore balance.

Prioritise Restorative Sleep

Adults need 7–9 hours of quality sleep each night. Good sleep regulates blood pressure, appetite, and mood.

Support better sleep by:

- Keeping a consistent bedtime
- Reducing screen time before bed
- Creating a quiet, cool sleep environment

Sleep is a foundation for every other healthy habit.

🚫 Reduce Key Risk Factors

A heart-healthy lifestyle also means addressing habits that increase risk:

- Avoid smoking or seek support to quit
- Limit alcohol
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Attend regular health checks for blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose

These steps significantly reduce the likelihood of heart disease.



How Peace & Grace Supports Heart-Healthy Living

Peace & Grace is committed to empowering individuals and families with practical tools, supportive community spaces, and life-changing knowledge. Our programmes are designed to make heart-healthy living achievable, enjoyable, and sustainable.

Our Core Programmes

1. Heart-Healthy Cooking Workshops

Participants learn to prepare nutritious meals using affordable ingredients. Each session includes hands-on cooking, guidance on heart-healthy nutrients, and practical tips for adapting everyday recipes. Everyone receives laminated recipe cards to take home.

2. Physical Activity & Movement Sessions

Gentle, accessible movement sessions help participants increase their physical activity levels over 12 weeks. We encourage personal goal-setting and celebrate progress at every stage.

3. Wellbeing & Mental Health Support

Using recognised tools such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, we help participants understand and improve their emotional wellbeing. Sessions include mindfulness, breathing techniques, and supportive group discussions.

4. CPR & Emergency Response Training

Our CPR workshops empower community members with lifesaving skills, increasing confidence and preparedness.

5. Creative & Therapeutic Activities

Art-based wellbeing sessions support emotional expression, reduce stress, and strengthen community connection.

Upcoming Initiatives

Peace & Grace is expanding its heart-health mission with new initiatives:

- Community Heart Health Days — free drop-in events offering blood pressure checks, nutrition advice, and mini-workshops.
- Family Cooking Nights — bringing parents and children together to learn healthy cooking skills.
- Outdoor Movement Clubs — gentle walking groups and nature-based wellbeing sessions.
- Digital Resource Hub — downloadable recipes, wellbeing guides, and video tutorials.

If you'd like, I can create promotional copy for each initiative.

Useful Heart-Health Resources

Local Support in Barking & Dagenham

Your community resources for heart-healthy living, wellbeing, and lifestyle support.

Barking & Dagenham Public Health & Wellbeing

Local programmes, health advice, and community wellbeing support. **Visit:**

<https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing> ([lbdd.gov.uk in Bing](https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing))

Healthy Lifestyle Support (LBDD)

Help with weight management, physical activity, healthy eating, and smoking cessation. **Visit:**

<https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/healthy-lifestyle-support> ([lbdd.gov.uk in Bing](https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/healthy-lifestyle-support))

Everyone Health Barking & Dagenham

Free services include stop-smoking support, weight management, and health coaching. **Visit:**

<https://www.everyonehealth.co.uk/bd> ([everyonehealth.co.uk in Bing](https://www.everyonehealth.co.uk/bd))

Barking & Dagenham Wellbeing Hub

Mental health support, community groups, and wellbeing activities. **Visit:**

<https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/wellbeing>

Local Leisure Centres (Becontree & Abbey)

Affordable fitness classes, swimming, gym access, and community activity programmes. **Visit:**

<https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/leisure-centres> ([lbdd.gov.uk in Bing](https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/leisure-centres))

Community Food Clubs

Low-cost access to healthy food, cooking support, and nutrition initiatives. **Visit:**

<https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/community-food-clubs> ([lbdd.gov.uk in Bing](https://www.lbdd.gov.uk/community-food-clubs))

Social Prescribing Service (BD Primary Care Network)

Connects residents to local health, wellbeing, and lifestyle support. **Visit:**

<https://www.bdpcn.nhs.uk/social-prescribing> ([bdpcn.nhs.uk in Bing](https://www.bdpcn.nhs.uk/social-prescribing))

Carers Hub Barking & Dagenham

Support for carers' wellbeing, including stress management and health advice. **Visit:**

<https://www.carershubbdd.org.uk> ([carershubbdd.org.uk in Bing](https://www.carershubbdd.org.uk))

National Resources

- **British Heart Foundation** — <https://www.bhf.org.uk>
- **NHS Healthy Living** — <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well>
- **Heart Research UK** — <https://heartresearch.org.uk> ([heartresearch.org.uk in Bing](https://heartresearch.org.uk))
- **NHS One You** — <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou>
- **Change4Life** — <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life> ([nhs.uk in Bing](https://www.nhs.uk/change4life))

