

Press release

New guidance on spending time outdoors

Details on a range of outdoor activities which will be allowed in England from 13 May 2020 subject to social distancing rules.

From: **Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018 to 2021)** ([/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government-2018-2021](#)), **The Rt Hon George Eustice** ([/government/people/george-eustice](#)), **The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP** ([/government/people/dowden](#)) and **The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP** ([/government/people/robert-jenrick](#))

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- From today, people are allowed to spend more time outdoors
- They will be able to go to parks and beaches to sunbathe, have a picnic and go fishing
- Outdoor sports courts can reopen, including tennis and basketball courts as well as golf courses
- People will also be able to see one person from another household, as long as they follow social distance guidance
- This follows scientific advice that the risk of infection outside is significantly lower than inside
- All of the new regulations are subject to social distancing rules

From today (13 May 2020) people in England can spend more time outdoors and enjoy a wider range of activities for any length of time, subject to social distancing rules.

People and their households can relax in the park, sunbathe, go for a picnic and go fishing.

They will also be able to spend time with one member of another household, one-on-one, as long as they adhere to strict social distancing guidelines at all times, staying 2 metres apart.

Outdoor sports facilities can reopen including outdoor tennis courts, golf clubs and basketball courts meaning that people can play a greater range of sport. Again, they will be able to do this alone, with their household or one other person, while adhering to social distancing.

Guidance that said people could only go out to exercise once a day have also been removed.

People will also be able to travel further to enjoy their time outside, with no restrictions on how far they can go to get to the countryside, National Parks and beaches in England.

The advice remains that everybody should continue to avoid public transport other than for essential journeys. Therefore, people should only make these journeys by cycling, walking or driving in a private vehicle.

People also should check in advance of visiting places like National Parks and beaches to make sure they are prepared for visitors.

Today's advice is strictly limited to spending time with your household or with one other person and is subject to social distancing rules.

It remains the case that you cannot gather with more than one member of another household for example to play sports. You also cannot:

- go on holiday
- visit and stay overnight at a holiday home or second home
- visit the homes of friends and family, unless it's to help a vulnerable person, for medical reasons, or to take a child to another household with whom parental responsibilities are shared

More stringent enforcement measures for non-compliance with the new rules have also come into effect today.

Fines have been increased, and will now start at £100, which will be lowered to £50 if paid within 14 days. This will double on each further repeat offence up to £3,200.

This is vital to send a clear message to the small minority who break the law, and to safeguard the country's recovery.

The police will continue to use their common sense, discretion and experience when people are not following the guidelines. As they have throughout, they will engage, explain, encourage and only as a last resort consider enforcement by way of fixed penalty notice.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

"Spending time outdoors, exercising or just enjoying the countryside is essential for our physical health and wellbeing. The restrictions have impacted everyone, but particularly those without much living space or a garden.

"We want to make life as healthy, bearable and social as possible, whilst controlling the virus and saving lives. That is why we have worked to find safe ways to enable more people to spend more time outdoors."

Environment Secretary Rt Hon George Eustice MP said:

"We know that spending time outdoors in green spaces and the countryside is important for our physical and mental wellbeing, especially during this challenging period.

"Our updated guidance advises how to do this safely and I urge people to follow it, continuing to maintain social distancing in order to protect yourself and others."

Culture Secretary Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP said:

"Sport and exercise has huge benefits for our physical and mental health, which is why we need everyone to stay as active as possible.

“Allowing unlimited outdoor exercise will be welcome news to many, but it remains absolutely vital that everyone practices strict social distancing whilst playing sport to keep themselves and others safe.”

National Police Chiefs' Council Chair Martin Hewitt said:

“The efforts of the public mean police officers have rarely had to enforce the government regulations so far. I am confident the vast majority will continue to do their bit and follow guidance in this next stage.

“We are all now able to spend much more time outdoors and each of us need to take responsibility for doing that within the social restrictions set out by the government. Our approach will continue use common sense and discretion, and to engage, explain, encourage and, only as a last resort, enforce.”

To support this change in advice, the government is also publishing guidance on how to do it safely. This includes [guidance on accessing green spaces \(https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-guidance-on-access-to-green-spaces\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-guidance-on-access-to-green-spaces).

[Safer public places during coronavirus in urban centres and green space guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces), also published today, sets out how high streets and areas around transport hubs and parks can be managed and operated safely, giving people confidence to return to public spaces.

This also suggests practical measures owners and operators can take to help people socially distance in public places including making more room for pedestrians and making it easier for people to cycle or walk to work.

Measures suggested in the guidance include:

- introducing new cycle paths or extending existing paths
- making high-streets streets pedestrianised or introducing one-way traffic
- separate entry and exit routes in shops
- changing car parking layouts
- widening footpaths, temporary barriers or spray markings outside shops to support queueing
- signs to encourage people to wait to allow others to pass on footpaths

Developed with local councils and town and city managers as well as landowners, commercial landlords and management companies, the guidance also sets out measures for land around commercial buildings, transport hubs and green spaces including parks and cemeteries.

The government is also publishing guidance today (13 May 2020) on outdoor sport and recreation, to increase people's access to local, outdoor physical activity.

The guidance details how the public can carry out more regular and diverse exercise, and how outdoor sports courts and facility providers can consider reopening, in line with the government's advice.

Further information

The government's [COVID-19 Recovery strategy \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy) can be read online.

People in the shielded group with very specific medical conditions who are likely to be at the greatest risk of serious complications from coronavirus, have been advised to continue to shield until the end of June and to do everything they can to stay at home. The government has a support scheme in place to provide help with access to food and basic supplies, care, medicines and social support.

This guidance is for people in England. When visiting Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, you must adhere to the advice of the devolved administrations at all times.

From today, people in England are able to:

- spend time outdoors, including exercise, with one person who is not in your household as long as you stay 2 metres apart
- exercise more than once a day
- go for a picnic, to sunbathe or relax and read a book
- spend time at sports courts, including outdoor tennis, basketball courts and golf courses
- go fishing on their own, with their household, or with one other person while adhering to social distancing rules
- drive to outdoor open spaces irrespective of distance. You can travel to outdoor open spaces, in a private vehicle, alone or with members of your own household
- travel to beaches and beauty spots. But you should check first if facilities, such as car parks, are open to receive visitors
- travel to the countryside – but continue to follow the Countryside Code by respecting the local community and protecting the natural environment
- go swimming in either lakes or the sea as part of daily exercise provided that social distancing guidelines are observed – advice against using public indoor and outdoor pools remains in place.

This new provision enabling increased outdoor activity does not allow people to:

- go on holiday
- visit and stay overnight at a holiday home or second home
- visit the homes of friends and family, unless it's to help a vulnerable person, for medical reasons, or to take a child to another household with whom parental responsibilities are shared
- gather with more than one member of another household for recreational reasons e.g. to play group sports
- swim in a public pool
- use a playground or outdoor gym
- exercise in an indoor fitness studio, gym, swimming pool, or other indoor leisure centres or facilities
- visit a private or ticketed attraction

Read the full [Safer public places guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-public-places-urban-centres-and-green-spaces).

[Access to green spaces guidance \(https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-guidance-on-access-to-green-spaces\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-guidance-on-access-to-green-spaces) can be read online and has been updated on Wednesday 13 May.

Business like pubs, clubs, restaurants, and theatres will also remain closed.

Owners and operators of public spaces will need to consider the impact of any new measures on people with disabilities and other affected groups and ensure clear information is made available to all users on how they can continue to access public places in a safe way.

The Safer public places guidance also encourages owners and operators of public places to increase cleaning at touch points such as handrails and gates, and to ensure there are facilities available for people to maintain good hygiene.

Suggestions include replacing hand dryers with paper towels, minimising use of portable toilets and increasing rubbish collections in public places.

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