



PUT YOUR HEART INTO WALKING

It's easy, it's free, it's great
for your heart



**FIGHT
FOR EVERY
HEARTBEAT**
bhf.org.uk

Introduction

This booklet is suitable for anyone who wants to look after their health and be more active. It explains how walking can help you lower your risk of developing coronary heart disease (CHD) and why that's important. It has information, tips and tools to help you build walking into your day.

Walking should be enjoyable, as well as being good for your health. You don't need to buy any special equipment or clothing to start walking more! It's all about making changes you can stick with, and build on, to keep your heart healthy.

Regular physical activity like walking can help many health problems. But if you do have a health problem, check with your doctor about the amount and type of activity that is right for you.

If you have a heart condition or you are at a higher risk of CHD – for example because you have high blood pressure – you should read our booklet *Physical activity and your heart*.

You will see throughout this booklet suggestions for further tools and information that will help you – page 30 explains how you can order resources from the BHF and you can also find more advice on our website **bhf.org.uk**.

If you are reading this as a pdf on your computer, you can click on the resources and tools suggested and it will link through to the webpage. The page numbers highlighted in the booklet are also linked so that you can move quickly and easily to other relevant sections.

This guide does not replace the advice your health professionals may give you based on their knowledge of your condition.

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Why should I walk?

Your heart is a muscle and it needs physical activity to stay in good condition. Regular walking can help to give your heart the workout it needs.

Being active helps reduce your risk of developing coronary heart disease. Walking can also help reduce your risk of stroke, Type 2 diabetes, obesity and osteoporosis.

And that's not all. It can help you to:

- get a healthier body shape and appearance
- control your weight
- feel more energetic
- feel less stressed or anxious
- increase your self-confidence
- sleep more easily
- enjoy your surroundings
- meet people and make new friends
- save money



What is coronary heart disease?

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the single biggest killer in the UK. It begins when your coronary arteries – the arteries that supply your heart muscle with oxygen-rich blood – become blocked or narrowed because of a build-up of fatty deposits.

In time, your arteries may become so narrow that they cannot deliver enough oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle. This can cause **angina**. Angina is an uncomfortable feeling, tightness or pain in your chest which may spread to your arms, neck, jaw, back or stomach.

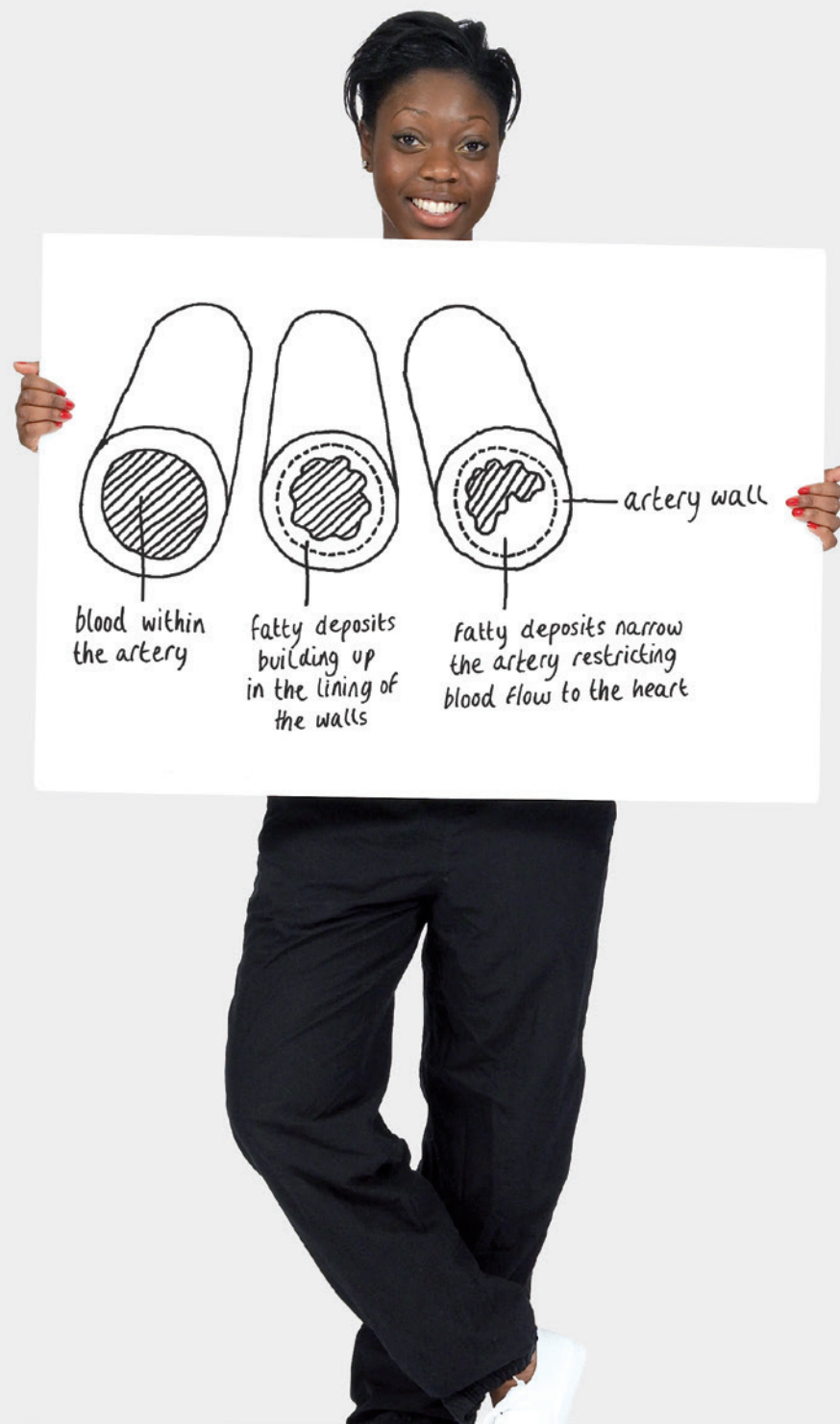
Sometimes the fatty deposits can become unstable, and a piece may break away causing a blood clot to form. If this blood clot blocks your coronary artery, part of your heart muscle will be starved of oxygen-rich blood and may become permanently damaged. This is a **heart attack**.



If you want to know more, read our booklets *Heart attack* (HIS7) and *Angina* (HIS6).



With our interactive learning tool, *Know Your Heart*, you can discover all the key facts about your heart with videos, games and quizzes. Go to bhf.org.uk/knowyourheart to find out more.





How much should I walk?

You should be active every day. Every 10 minutes counts.

Aim to build up to a total of 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity each week. Walking quickly is a good example of activity that gives your heart a good workout.

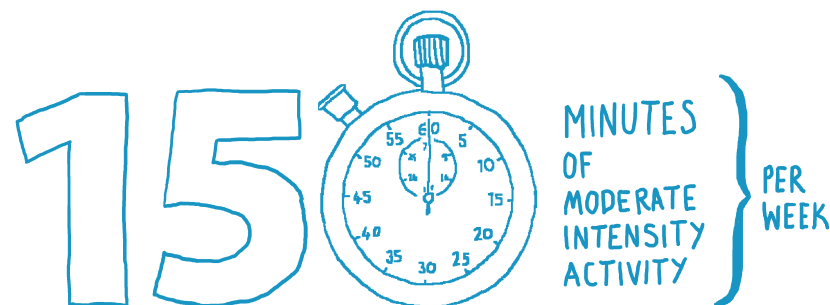
FAST FACT

What are moderate intensity aerobic activities?

Moderate intensity aerobic activities make you feel warmer, breathe harder and make your heart beat faster than usual, but you should still be able to carry on a conversation.



For information on other ways to get – and stay – active, read our booklet *Get active, stay active* (code G12).



How much do I walk already?



You might already be walking more than you realise. Think about how much brisk walking you did each day over the last week.

Try to remember what you did at different times of the day – morning, lunchtime, afternoon and evening – and how long you spent walking each time.

Use the diary opposite to write down any time you were walking for ten minutes or more.



With our online calculator, you can find out how many calories you've burned being active. Go to bhf.org.uk/calories to find out more.

Day	Brisk walking	Minutes spent brisk walking	Total minutes spent brisk walking
Example	1. WALKED KID TO SCHOOL 2. WALKED TO SHOP 3. WALKED FROM SHOP	= 16 = 11 = 11	<u>38</u>
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Weekly total			

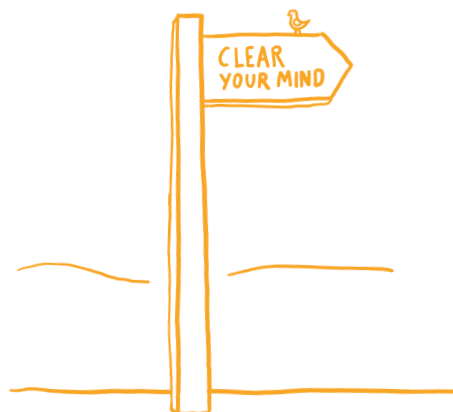
Am I walking enough?

If you're walking briskly every day and your total time is more than 150 minutes a week, well done. You're already doing a great job.

Maybe you could try walking for longer to increase and maintain your fitness? It's not just a way to get from A to B. Walking can also be a relaxing way to clear your mind, explore the city or countryside or just catch up with friends.



If you're not walking that much, don't worry. Find out how to put your heart into walking by reading on.



Make walking part of your daily routine

Your first step to being more active is the most important one. If you're not used to walking regularly, start slowly and at a level that suits you.

There are lots of ways you can start to make walking part of your daily routine.

Why not start by

- ✓ getting off the bus a stop earlier and walking the rest of your journey
- ✓ walking up the stairs instead of getting the lift
- ✓ sitting down less – take regular breaks from sitting in front of a computer or TV by getting up and moving around.



Then try to

- ✓ plan a time each day for you to walk – use a diary or calendar if it helps
- ✓ build walking into your daily commute
- ✓ walk to the shops instead of driving or getting the bus
- ✓ make walking part of your social life
- ✓ involve the whole family so you can support each other
- ✓ walk your children to school.

Once you start being more active, you'll have more energy and you'll feel more relaxed.

Go to page two for a reminder on the benefits of walking.



For more information on the wider benefits of being active, read our booklet *Get active, stay active* (code G12).

MYTH BUSTER

Being more active is good for your health now and can help protect you in the future too.

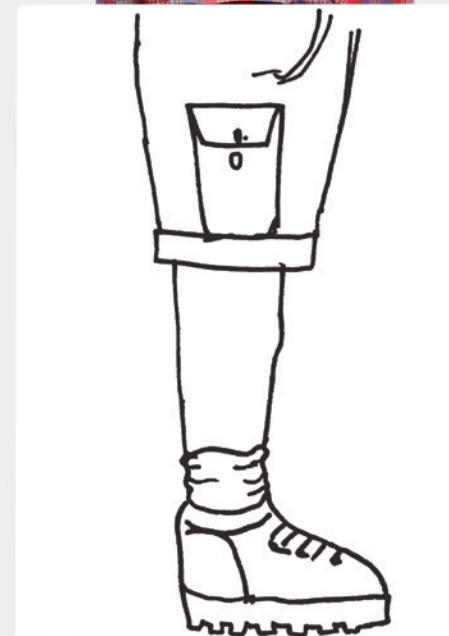
Physical activity can help you avoid or manage a range of health conditions including coronary heart disease. It can also improve the way you look and feel.



Top tips for taking care when walking

To make sure your first steps into being active are enjoyable, you need to look after yourself. Make sure you:

- 1 don't walk if you feel unwell or have a high temperature
- 2 avoid walking outdoors on your own at night
- 3 drink water before, during and after your walk – don't wait until you're thirsty
- 4 wear comfortable shoes and clothes that give you good support
- 5 start slowly and build up the pace of your walk gradually
- 6 practice using a healthy posture – head upright with your arms bent at the elbow and swinging as you walk
- 7 stop if you're in pain, feel dizzy, get tired or feel unwell
- 8 slow down gradually before you stop
- 9 do some stretching exercises after your walk to help avoid muscle stiffness the next day.





Gradually walk further and faster

Once you've got used to walking more regularly, you should build up the speed and distance that you walk.

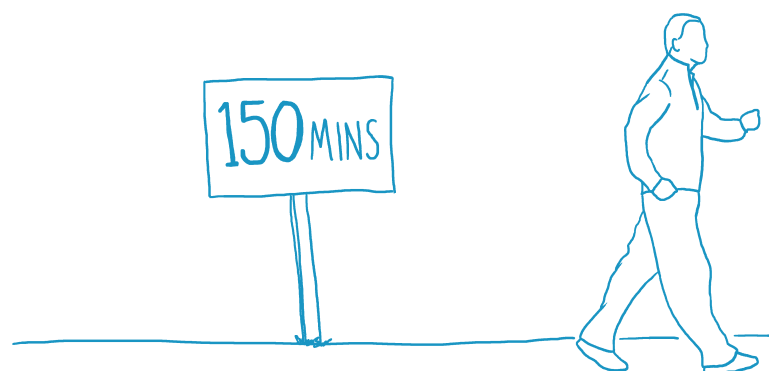
Brisk walking is a great way of being active at a moderate intensity. It will make you feel warmer, breathe harder and make your heart beat faster than usual, but you should still be able to carry on a conversation.

Why not start walking quickly for a few minutes – on top of what you already do – a couple of days a week?

Once you feel comfortable with that, gradually lengthen your walk by adding a few more minutes each time. Or maybe you could walk a few more days each week.

You should aim to build up to a total of 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity each week.

For more information on moderate intensity activity, go to page seven.



Anything else before I start?



What will make it easier to help you start walking? Do you need to find out more about your local area? Do you want to talk your plans through with a friend or your partner? Do you need to check with your doctor about what type or how much activity you can do?

Write it down so you know what you need to do

Setting goals helps you see what you're aiming for in the long-term and helps you work out the steps you'll need to take to get there. That way, you can work out where you should focus your efforts.



Go to the next page to set some goals.



Set some goals

What do you want to achieve? Setting a long-term goal will give you something to aim for. Setting some short-term goals will get you on the right track to help achieve that long-term goal.

Be SMART with your goals.

Specific

What exactly do you want to achieve? Say "I'm going to walk at lunchtime" instead of "I'm going to walk some time today".

Measurable

Put a number to it and you'll focus much better. "I'm going to walk for 10 minutes" is better than "I'm going to walk for a little while".

Achievable

Start small and easy, then you'll be more motivated to succeed. Try walking 10 minutes a day to start with.

Relevant

If your goal doesn't make sense to you, it will be much harder to reach. Don't say you'll walk five miles when you can only manage five minutes.

Timed

Give yourself a clear deadline for when you want to reach your goals, put it in your calendar and mark off the days as you get closer to the deadline.

Things to think about when setting your goals

- What are you doing already? Do you walk to the local park with your kids? Do you walk to get your daily paper?
- What small changes can you make right away?
- Be sensible. If you're not very active right now, don't set yourself a goal of walking everywhere by next month. Why not give yourself a target of getting off the bus one stop early and walking the rest of the way home two days a week? Once you've reached that goal, you can think about the next one.

Short-term goals

What will you do to build walking into your day? Think just about the next couple of weeks and write down your short-term goals.

.....

.....

Give yourself a pat on the back

How are you going to reward yourself when you achieve your short-term goals? What can you give yourself or what treat can you enjoy that won't undo all your hard work? Write it down and look forward to it.

I'll reward myself with

Long-term goals

Is there a BHF walking event coming up? Have you found a BHF World Experience you want to do? Longer term goals like these give you something to aim for. What do you want to achieve?

.....

.....





How well am I doing?



If you've reached your short-term goals, well done. It's time to set some new goals and build on your success.

What will you do to increase the amount of walking you do each day? Just think about the next couple of weeks.

Come back to this page in a couple of weeks and see what you've achieved.

If you haven't reached your goals, don't worry.

Go to page two to remind yourself of the benefits of walking. Go to page 20 and think back – were your goals too ambitious? If they were, make them more achievable and write them down.



Go to the next page for tips on getting over your barriers.



You can download more goal sheets at **bhf.org.uk/stayingactive**

What's stopping me?

If you're not reaching your goals, think about why. Try turning negatives into positives.

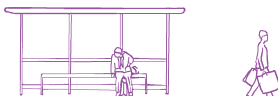
Do any of these sound familiar?

I'm too tired } 

Once you start being more active, you'll have more energy in the long term. And you'll feel more relaxed afterwards.

I'll feel lonely } 

See if you can get your friends and family together so you can all start walking.

I don't have time } 

Try and build walking into what you're already doing. You could get off the bus a stop early or park your car away from the shops. Make sure you set aside time so it becomes part of your routine.

I'm not old enough to worry about this yet } 

Being active now means you're helping to prevent health problems now and in the future too.

I can't do much where I live }



Look at the contacts section on page 28 to find out what you can do in your area – the BHF have events and activities across the country. Or find out more at your local council or leisure centre.

I work funny hours }



Find a certain time each day to walk, even if it's just for a few minutes. Try to build it into your daily routine.

I might get injured }



Start slowly and go at your own pace – there's no need to overdo it. If you're worried about injuring yourself, talk about your plans with your doctor.

I'm overweight }



Brisk walking will help you control your weight and body shape. Whatever your weight, it's never too late to start being more active and you can take it at your own pace.

MYTH BUSTER

There's always a reason not to walk.

If something is stopping you, try and work out what you can do to get over that barrier.





Ready to walk more?

If you feel ready to walk more, why not take our pedometer challenge?

One way of helping you to do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity each week is to aim to walk 10,000 steps a day. On average, people take between 3,000 and 5,000 steps a day, but this isn't enough.



Learn more about our pedometer challenge by visiting bhf.org.uk/pedometerchallenge

Come and walk with the BHF

We have a wide range of fundraising walks and hikes to suit walkers of all ages and abilities. You could take a gentle stroll in a beautiful location or tackle more challenging terrain and longer distances. Visit bhf.org.uk/events for more information.



IT WOULD TAKE APPROXIMATELY 49,800,000 STEPS TO WALK AROUND THE WORLD.

Useful information and local contacts

If you're interested in taking the next step, go to bhf.org.uk/walking for nutrition advice, schedules, walking FAQs and more. You can also find out what BHF walking events are taking place near you.

British Orienteering

www.britishorienteering.org.uk
Phone: 01629 734042

Get Walking, Keep Walking

www.getwalking.org.uk
Phone: 020 7339 8500

Let's Walk Cymru

www.sportwales.org.uk
Phone: 0845 045 0906

Nordic Walking UK

www.nordicwalking.co.uk
Phone: 0845 260 9339

Ordnance Survey

www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk
Phone: 08456 050505

For online maps and map-reading tips

Paths for all

www.pathsforall.org.uk
Phone: 01259 218 888

Ramblers

www.ramblers.org.uk
Phone: 020 7339 8500

Trail Orienteering

www.trailo.org
Phone: 01629 734042

Walking for health

www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk
Phone: 0300 060 2287

Walking Women

www.walkingwomen.com
Phone: 08456 445335

Walk Finders

For group-led walks in England

www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk/walkfinder

For group-led walks in England, Scotland and Wales

www.ramblers.org.uk
Go to button 'Walks finder'

For walks in Scotland

www.walkhighlands.co.uk/#walks

For walks in Northern Ireland

www.walkni.com/search.aspx
Phone: 028 9030 3930

For very long walks in England, Scotland and Wales

www.visitbritain.co.uk
Go to the 'See and do' section and select 'walking'.

Your local information



Visit your local council website to find the closest leisure centre to you.

Resources from the BHF

The BHF is the nation's heart charity, dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change and by providing vital information.

We produce a wide range of resources to help you and your family and friends look after your heart health – many have been mentioned throughout this booklet.

To order any of our heart health resources:

Call the BHF Orderline on 0870 600 6566

Email orderline@bhf.org.uk

Visit bhf.org.uk/publications

You can also download many of our publications from our website **bhf.org.uk**.

For information about all of our resources, ask for a copy of *Our heart health catalogue* (code G5).

Inspired to make other lifestyle changes?

Being active is only one part of keeping healthy to protect your heart. Eating well, managing stress and stopping smoking are all important too and we have resources that can help. Order or download the below booklets or visit **bhf.org.uk/prevention** for more information and advice.

- ➔ *Eating well* (code G186)
- ➔ *Get active, stay active* (code G12)
- ➔ *Cut down on salt* (code G160)
- ➔ *Coping with stress* (code G187)
- ➔ *Stop smoking* (code G118)

Our resources and services are free of charge, but we rely on donations to continue our vital work. If you'd like to make a donation, please call our donation hotline on 0300 330 3322 or visit our website at **bhf.org.uk/donate.aspx**. Or, please complete the form at the end of this booklet and send it to us at the address on the back cover.

Heart Matters

Heart Matters is our free, personalised service to help you live with a healthy heart. Join Heart Matters today to access benefits including *Heart Matters* magazine, a Helpline and an online members' area with recipes, articles and lifestyle tools. Register online at **bhf.org.uk/heartmatters** or call 0300 330 3300 (calls are charged at a similar cost to 01 or 02 numbers).



How you can help

As a charity we rely on the generosity of people like you to fund our vital work. Thousands of people with heart disease turn to us for help every year and even more will need us in the future. We want to be there for them.

There are many ways you can get involved and play a crucial role in our efforts to beat heart disease:



Become a **volunteer** and help run our shops, support local events and fundraising or even campaign for the UK's heart health – there's something for everyone.



Take part in one of our events – they're a great way for you to have fun, get fit, and save lives. Choose from cycles, runs, walks and many more.



Join our Heartstart initiative and **learn to save lives** with the skills of emergency life support. Over 3.5 million people already have.



Give to your local BHF shop – it's easy to **donate your unwanted items** to us and help us raise vital funds.



Make a one-off **donation**, set up a direct debit, give in memory or leave a gift in your Will – there's lots of ways to support us.



Shop from the heart with our **online shop** – all profits from the BHF Shop help fund our life-saving work.

For more information visit **bhf.org.uk/youcanhelp** or call 020 7554 0000.

Thank you.



Please send this form to:
British Heart Foundation
 Greater London House
 180 Hampstead Road
 London NW1 7AW
Thank you.



NOTES

We would like to keep in touch with you to let you know how your support has made a difference. By supplying your email address you agree that the BHF may use this to contact you about our work.

(Please make your cheque/postal order / CAF voucher payable to The British Heart Foundation.)

Once completed, please return the whole of this form to:
 Freepost RRZJ-LCHX-EKCR, British Heart Foundation, Greater London House, 180 Hampstead Road, London NW1 7AW.

☐ If you do **not** wish to be contacted by post, please tick this box. (MP0074)

☐ If you do **not** wish to hear from us by phone, please tick this box. (MP0075)

☐ From time to time we allow other similar organisations to contact our supporters.
If you do **not** wish to be contacted by them, please tick this box. (MP0060)

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Have your say

We would welcome your comments to help us produce the best information for you. Why not let us know what you think? Contact us via our website **bhf.org.uk/contact**

Children's resources

Do you want the kids in your family to be more active and eat healthier? Help them make some changes now by encouraging them to visit the following websites:

- **cbhf.net** a website for 7-11 year olds
- **yheart.net** and **yoobot.co.uk** websites for 12-19 year olds

We also produce free resources for parents, teachers and those who work with children to help them encourage young people to live a heart healthy lifestyle. Go to **bhf.org.uk/teachers** for more information, or call the BHF Orderline on 0870 600 6566.

Acknowledgements

The BHF would like to thank all who have given their time and support to develop this resource.



This publication has been printed on Revive 100, a recycled paper stock containing 100% recovered waste.



**British Heart
Foundation**

Coronary heart disease is the UK's single biggest killer.

For over 50 years we've pioneered research that's transformed the lives of people living with heart and circulatory conditions. Our work has been central to the discoveries of vital treatments that are changing the fight against heart disease.

But so many people still need our help.

From babies born with life-threatening heart problems to the many Mums, Dads and Grandparents who survive a heart attack and endure the daily battles of heart failure.

Join our fight for every heartbeat in the UK. Every pound raised, minute of your time and donation to our shops will help make a difference to people's lives.

**FIGHT
FOR EVERY
HEARTBEAT**

bhf.org.uk