

NEWSLETTER

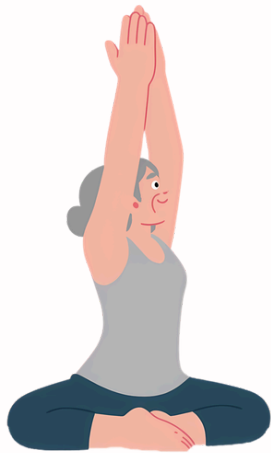
PPG QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER NO. 10

SPRING 2026

1 - Grow Chiswell

Green

2 - Hay Fever



3 - All in a Day's

Work

4 - Balance

Training

5 - Balance

Training (Cont.)

6 - Chatter &

Natter Table



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Grow Chiswell Green Community Garden

Midway surgery is proud to be affiliated with Grow Chiswell Green community garden. It has long been recognised that gardening helps to lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress and Midway Surgery is happy to encourage patients to join the gardening team or just spend time appreciating the garden itself.

Indisputably community gardening reduces isolation and improves social well-being, with the addition benefit of exposure to sunlight boosting Vitamin D which is vital for bone health and immune function.

Midway staff definitely appreciate taking a few moments away from their desks relaxing in the tranquil community space provided.



The archway was recently gifted to the garden on behalf of Midway Surgery's Patient Participation Group (PPG).

If you are interested in joining the surgery PPG please enquire at reception or for the Grow Chiswell Green gardening team please use the link below.

<https://www.growchiswellgreen.org/>

Hay fever season is here!

Hay fever (seasonal allergic rhinitis) is very common and affects up to 1 in 5 people in the UK. Symptoms may include sneezing, a runny or blocked nose, itchy/watery red eyes, breathlessness, headaches, blocked sinuses and throat irritation.

In line with NHS England guidance, GP practices do not routinely prescribe treatments that are available to buy over the counter for self-care conditions, including mild to moderate hay fever.

Most people can successfully manage their symptoms using treatments available from pharmacies, supermarkets, or online retailers.



Top Tips:

- Check pollen forecasts and limit outdoor exposure when levels are high
- Keep windows closed at home and in the car during high pollen days
- Avoid smoking or smoky environments
- Do not dry clothes outdoors
- Shower and change clothes after being outdoors
- Wash your hair before going to bed
- Wear sunglasses to help protect your eyes from pollen
- Apply a small amount of petroleum jelly around the nostrils to trap pollen

You may not know the exact type of pollen however you can map this by when your symptoms start. Please find a pollen calendar here:

<https://www.allergyuk.org/birch-pollen-and-allergies/#lg=1&slide=0>

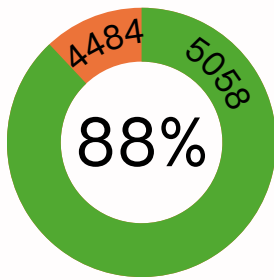
Please contact the practice if:

- You have tried appropriate over-the-counter treatments without improvement
- Your symptoms are severe or significantly affecting your daily life despite over the counter medications
- You have asthma that is worsening due to allergies e.g. wheezing, breathlessness
- Pregnant or Breastfeeding
- Children <2yrs
- Symptoms suggest another condition (e.g. sinus infection) Your pharmacist can also advise if further medical review may be needed.

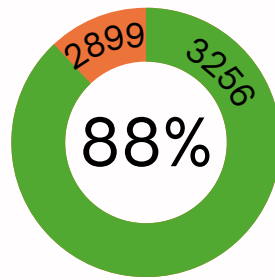
All in a Day's Work

Here are some statistics for the work we do, these figures are from 1st April 2026 to 30th April 2026.

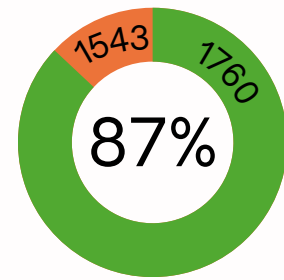
- Available Appointments
- Booked Appointments



Total Usage

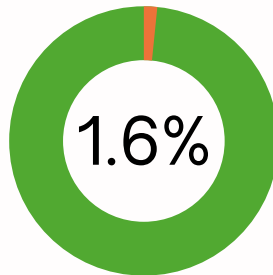


Face To Face



Telephone

- Booked Appointments: 4669
- Did not arrive: 77



New Registrations

84



Have you heard?

Between February and April 2026, there were 238 missed appointments, equal to approximately 2,380 minutes or 39 hours and 40 minutes of lost clinical time. DNAs reduce appointment availability, increase waiting times, and mean other patients may miss the chance to be seen sooner. Please cancel any appointment you no longer need as early as possible.



Month	Number of DNA Appointments
February 2026	77
March 2026	84
April 2026	77
Total	238

Balance Training

by Dr. Sam Lad



Why Balance Training Matters at Every Age

Most of us spend a lot of time thinking about our heart health or our weight, but there is one aspect of fitness that often gets overlooked until something goes wrong: balance. The good news is that it is never too early, or too late, to start working on it.

What happens to our bodies as we age?

From around our mid-30s onwards, we gradually lose muscle mass, a process known as sarcopenia. Between the ages of 30 and 60, the average adult loses roughly 250g of muscle every year, and after 70, that loss accelerates further.

Alongside muscle loss, our balance, joint stability, reflexes, and the body's sense of where it is in space (called proprioception) all naturally decline. The result? A significantly higher risk of falls. Falls are one of the leading causes of injury, loss of independence, and admission to hospital in older adults, with around 1 in 3 people over 65 falling at least once a year.

But here is the key message: falls are largely preventable, and the earlier we act, the better.

Why middle age is the perfect time to start

Many people assume balance training is something to think about in old age. In fact, evidence from Public Health England specifically highlights midlife as a critical window to begin strength and balance activity, precisely because it builds reserves that protect us later.

UK Government guidance recommends that all adults include muscle-strengthening activity on at least 2 days a week, and that those at risk of falls add balance exercises twice a week as well.

Think of it as investing in your future mobility, just as you might invest in a pension.

Balance Training

What actually works?

Research strongly supports combining balance training with strength work, with exercise programmes of this type reducing fall rates by approximately 30 to 40%.

Here are some of the most effective and enjoyable options:

- **Tai Chi:** Perhaps the best-studied activity for fall prevention. A large systematic review of 24 randomised controlled trials found that regular Tai Chi reduced the risk of falls in older adults by around 24%, and improved balance on multiple measures. It is gentle, sociable, and suitable for almost all fitness levels.
- **Yoga:** builds leg strength, core stability, flexibility, and body awareness, all of which contribute directly to better balance and reduced fall risk. It also helps with posture and mindfulness – it's a great way to relieve stress. I have recently taken up regular yoga myself and can personally vouch for how quickly you notice improvements in stability and strength, even from just one or two sessions a week.
- **Strength training:** Simple resistance exercises targeting the legs and hips, such as squats, sit-to-stand from a chair, and resistance band work, are particularly effective. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy recommends at least two sessions per week for meaningful benefit.
- **Walking and balance-specific exercises:** Even activities such as heel-to-toe walking, doing single-leg standing while brushing your teeth for example (with a hand near a wall for safety), and deliberate stepping practice have good evidence behind them. Pilates and dance classes also offer similar benefits.

A simple message

You do not need to run a marathon or join a gym. Start small: a weekly yoga or Tai Chi class, some squats while the kettle boils, a short walk with your balance in mind. These small, consistent habits, built gradually over time, can make a profound difference to your strength, confidence, and independence in later life.

Of course, not all of these options will be suitable for everyone—they're simply suggestions to consider. Do remember to prioritise your balance and posture.

Happy stretching!

Chatter & Natter Table



The 'Chatter & Natter table' is a wonderful way of encouraging people of all ages to talk to others.

During the day and time above, the table will be hosted by a friendly volunteer.

No agenda, no pressure - just relaxed chats.

Do come along - you would be very welcome!

Consider joining our PPG Can you help us?

From the Chair of the PPG

The Midway PPG (patients participation group) is now well into its second year. It has been an interesting experience for all of us on the committee, and hopefully helpful to the practice. We only meet 3 monthly so it is not a huge commitment. What we now need is more diversity within our group. We would particularly value input from younger patients, especially if you can help us move forward with social media. Can you help us? There is information available about PPGs on the [Midway website](#) or if you'd like to talk to one of us, please complete the [form](#) which is also on the site and we'll get back to you.

Join Here