

Croquet for Wellness

A Health Professional's Guide to a Low-Impact, High-Benefit Sport

Stay Active • Stay Social • Stay Sharp

Introduction

This white paper is designed to help health professionals understand the wellness benefits of croquet.

Though often unfamiliar or misunderstood, croquet is a remarkably effective activity for promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Far from being just a nostalgic garden pastime, croquet is a growing sport—played socially and competitively across the world—that aligns closely with the goals of rehabilitation, preventative care, and social prescribing.

With structured clubs, low barriers to entry, and proven results in NHS-linked wellness programs, croquet is a valuable tool for any health practitioner seeking accessible and sustainable options to keep patients active, engaged, and connected.

Why Croquet Deserves Your Attention

Croquet may not be the first sport that comes to mind when thinking about physical activity or mental health support—but it should be. It combines **gentle physical movement**, **strategic thinking**, and **meaningful social connection**, all in a welcoming and accessible format.

Key Wellness Benefits:

- **✓ Low-Impact Exercise**
Gentle on joints, making it ideal for older adults and those recovering from injury or managing chronic conditions.
- **✓ Mental Stimulation**
Strategic gameplay encourages problem-solving, memory, and focus—beneficial for cognitive resilience and mood.
- **✓ Social Engagement**
Group-based, inclusive, and welcoming environments combat isolation and foster confidence.
- **✓ Accessible to All**
Croquet can be adapted for nearly any level of mobility or experience. No expensive equipment needed—just flat-soled shoes.
- **✓ Sustainable and Affordable**
Local clubs typically offer low-cost memberships and free trial sessions. It's easy to try and stick with.



Croquet England

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Understanding Croquet

Croquet is a sport played on a grass lawn where players use a mallet to strike balls through a set sequence of hoops. It's easy to learn but offers deep strategic depth, making it enjoyable from the very first session and increasingly engaging with experience.

Croquet at a Glance:




- Played in singles or doubles
- Games last around 45–90 minutes
- One game involves walking 1–2 miles at a steady pace
- Suitable for both recreational and competitive settings
- Popular among all age groups—played internationally
- Played competitively in local clubs through to world championships

Real-World Impact: The NHS and Croquet

Case Study: Pendle & Craven Croquet Club

In partnership with NHS Social Prescribers, the Pendle & Craven Croquet Club ran a six-week “Croquet for Wellbeing” initiative for individuals facing isolation, mental health challenges, or physical inactivity.

Results:

-  76% reported improved mental and emotional well-being
-  Participant numbers doubled original expectations
-  According to James Smith, Lead Social Prescriber, ‘Croquet for Wellbeing’ is the most successful project that he and his team have ever been involved in.

The programme helped participants build new social connections, re-engage with outdoor activity, and in some cases, overcome barriers like long-term anxiety or physical deconditioning. Several attendees continued playing and became club members.

“Croquet is simply the conduit for all the good things to happen.”

— Ian Longstaff, Project Leader

For more details: <https://online.flippingbook.com/view/706618469/36/>



A Physiotherapist's Perspective

Diana Wilson, a practicing physiotherapist, had to retire from tennis due to fused ankles. Like many of her patients, she needed a new activity that combined movement, mental challenge, and competition—without high impact. She found all three in croquet.

“What motivates me is the love of the game, the strategy, and being part of a team,” she shares.

Diana now plays competitively, enjoying both the health benefits and the social bonds she's built through the sport.

For further details see Diana's website:

<https://www.physio-on-the-river.co.uk/sports/croquet-a-surprising-way-to-exercise-both-body-mind/>

Why Health Professionals Should Recommend Croquet

For Rehabilitation & Recovery

Croquet supports a gradual return to activity with minimal risk of injury. Movements like walking, gentle bending, and swinging a mallet are low-impact yet effective for mobility and coordination.

For Mental Health & Social Prescribing

Croquet checks all five of the NHS's **Five Steps to Mental Wellbeing**:

1. **Connect** – group play fosters social bonds
2. **Be active** – steady physical movement outdoors
3. **Keep learning** – skills and strategy development
4. **Give to others** – community clubs welcome volunteers
5. **Be mindful** – encourages focus and present-moment attention

For Older Adults and Long-Term Health

Croquet is a **lifelong sport**. It's non-contact, mixed-gender, and highly adaptable for balance issues, fatigue, or cognitive impairment—making it ideal for patients aged 50+.



How to Get Involved

Local Clubs Make It Easy

Most croquet clubs welcome new players and offer:

- Free introductory sessions
- Loaned equipment (mallets, balls)
- Friendly mentors for coaching
- Roll-up games (drop-in social play)

Find a Club Near You:

👉 www.croquetengland.org.uk/where-to-play

Final Thoughts

Croquet is not what people think it is. It's more than a summer game—it's a **versatile, inclusive, and effective wellness tool**. It encourages activity, social connection, and mental sharpness—all at a low physical cost.

If you're a physiotherapist, GP, or social prescriber looking to expand your toolkit with an activity that works across multiple dimensions of well-being, **croquet deserves a place on your radar**.

Contact & Resources

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Web: www.croquetengland.org.uk

Where to find a club: <https://www.croquetengland.org.uk/where-to-play/>



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