

Let's Live a Little: Physical Activity for Fun and Fitness

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Introduction

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nine out of 10 adults over age 65 have at least one chronic health condition, and many of those conditions are related to not getting enough physical activity. Additionally, they estimate that if 10 percent of adults began a regular walking program, \$5.6 billion in heart disease costs would be saved yearly.

No matter what your age, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Physical activity can prevent many of the health problems that appear to come with age. It helps your muscles grow stronger so you can keep doing your day-to-day activities without becoming dependent on others.

While many people grew up believing that when they get old they have to slow down and are unable to do what they once did, research shows that some have taken that idea much too far. The good news is that it is not so difficult for most people to maintain or recover their functional ability and live an active, independent lifestyle. Older adults can feel good and do the things they want to do with less pain and more energy. And it can be fun!

Educational Goals

After this program, participants will be able to:

- give examples of why physical activity is important,
- understand that daily physical activity can improve quality of life regardless of age,
- describe types of activities to include in a complete program of physical activity, and



- plan a personal physical activity program that includes activities they find enjoyable.

Intended Audience

- All adults, but particularly those 50 and older.
- Caregivers and family members of older adults.
- Staff members of assisted living facilities, long-term care facilities, etc.

Suggested Program Preparation

- Review this leader's guide and the related fact sheet. If desired, review the website resources listed in these materials.
- Gather copies (or make photocopies) of the *Let's Live a Little* fact sheet (MF3090) and participant survey for each audience member.
- Have pens or pencils available.



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- Find and select a few examples of flexibility, strengthening, and cardiovascular activities to reinforce the lesson. Gather needed supplies, such as resistance bands, music CD and CD player, paper plates, and weights (purchased or homemade, such as milk jugs filled with water, canned food, etc.). Consult the Helpful Websites section for various exercise examples.

Allow 45 minutes to an hour for the lesson. If possible, answer audience questions as they arise rather than holding questions to the end of the program.

Suggestions for Presenting the Lesson

1. Begin by posing a question to your audience to capture their attention and get them thinking about the topic at hand. Possible questions include: “Did you know it is estimated that if just 10 percent of adults began a regular walking program, \$5.6 billion in heart disease costs would be saved yearly?” “Are you aware that just a few minutes of physical activity daily can help your muscles grow stronger so you can maintain daily activities without becoming dependent on others?”
2. Review the basic information from the fact sheet with participants. One way to do the review is by conducting a true/false quiz. Ask leading true/false questions based on statements you find in the fact sheet and leader’s guide. Let participants decide whether the statement is true or false. After they have had a chance to share their thoughts, tell them the correct answer and share with them the information on which you based the question.
3. Using the chart “What Physical Activities Should I Do?” in the fact sheet, lead a discussion about the different types of physical activities, their respective advantages, and how often to do each type, including examples of each.
Or, if possible, lead participants in a series of exercises, including samples of each of the three types of activities that should be included in a complete program of physical activity. Let participants experience how easy and enjoyable physical activity can be even for those who have difficulty walking. See the Suggested Teaching Activities section for more ideas.
4. Mention the importance of warm-ups and cool-downs, as noted in the fact sheet.

5. Share a short summary of what was taught, reminding participants that advancing age is no excuse and that they can improve functional ability and health by building physical activity into each and every day.
6. Instruct participants to complete the Participant Survey and return it to you.
7. Mail completed surveys to: Barbara Ames, Wildcat Extension District, 410 Peter Pan Road, Independence, KS, 67301.

Suggested Teaching Activities

Group Physical Activity

- **Refer to the chart titled “What Physical Activities Should I do?” on page 4 of the fact sheet.** Using this guide, lead the group through some examples of each of the three types of physical activity. As each type of activity is performed, use information provided in the chart to share about the advantages of doing the activity, optional examples of ways to accomplish the activity, and how often this type of activity should be done. This activity is most enjoyable with music playing in the background. Consult the Helpful Websites section for where to find various exercise examples.
- **Before beginning**, caution participants against doing any activity that causes discomfort or any activity their doctor has cautioned them against because of a prior condition or injury.
- **To begin**, participants should be seated approximately two arm’s-lengths apart in sturdy, straight chairs with their feet flat on the floor about 10 to 12 inches apart. Give each person any props needed for the activities, such as a resistance band or small weight.

Lead the group through some examples of the following:

- **Flexibility Activities** — Lead the group through a few minutes of stretching activities which move joints through their full range of motion. Soothing music works well as a background.
- **Strengthening Activities** — Lead the group through a few minutes of activities done against resistance, such as using resistance bands or small weights. Soothing music works well as a background.

- **Cardiovascular Activities** — Lead the group through a series of simple movements that work most of their muscle groups and increase their heart rate a bit. An example of a chair-based cardiovascular activity is the Paper Plate Aerobic Activity included in this section. Peppy music is best used for this activity.

Paper Plate Aerobic Activity

- Do this activity seated and accompanied by peppy music such as “Kansas City” or “In the Mood.” Participants should be seated approximately two arm’s-lengths apart in sturdy, straight chairs. Instruct them to sit forward on their chairs with their feet flat on the floor about 10 to 12 inches apart for balance.
- **To begin** — Give each person a paper plate and talk them through the following movements so they will know what to expect. Encourage them not to worry if they can’t do every movement exactly as you do. The idea is for each one to do what they can and have fun. Next, lead the group through the movements along with the beat of the music.
- **Sequence of Moves**
 - Hold paper plate in front with both hands. Tap toes about 8 beats.
 - Rotate plate side to side, one hand over the other, 4 to 8 times.
 - Pull plate to chest then push back forward, 4 to 8 times. (Can lean body all the way forward for more intensity, keeping back straight.)
 - Raise plate over your head then lower it back down, 4 to 8 times.
 - With plate over your head, lean left, then lean right, 4 to 8 times. (Can do some over the head and down combined with some to the chest and out for several beats.)
 - Raise plate up and then put down on top of head (as if putting on a hat). Repeat 4 to 8 times.
 - Put plate behind head, then bring forward and back again. Repeat 4 to 8 times.
 - Take plate in left hand and put on head then out to side, 4 to 8 times.
 - Take plate in right hand and put on head then out to side, 4 to 8 times.
 - Take plate in both hands in front then pull in to left shoulder and out then pull in to right shoulder and out 4 to 8 times.

- Move plate to left hip and out front, then move to right hip and out front, 4 to 8 times.
- Use 8 counts to slowly move plate to the floor with both hands.
- Sit up and put right foot on plate and tap 8 counts.
- Use foot to push plate to the right and back to front, 4 to 8 times.
- Then push forward and back, 4 to 8 times.
- Put left foot on plate and push to left and back, then forward and back, 4 to 8 times each.
- Put plate between feet and hold onto sides of chair with hands.
- Lean back and, keeping knees bent, lift plate up and down slowly 4 times.
- Reach down with both hands and grasp plate.
- With both hands, lift plate above your head and down several times.
- Move plate to chest and out several times.
- Take plate in left hand and wave bye and then right hand and wave to end.

This series of moves can be varied to fit the length of the music and the whim of the leader. Encourage participants to keep backs straight and tummies tucked during the activity, but the main thing is to get everyone active and have fun with it.

Ideas for Community Activities

- Present this program to established community groups such as social clubs, service organizations, or church groups.
- Encourage friends to form an ongoing exercise group that meets several times a week. Do a variety of physical activities based on the abilities of the group. It could include various types of chair activities, walking in different places, using exercise videos, biking, or other activities.
- Place the fact sheet or related information at locations frequented by senior adults.
- Place a display at community health fairs or county health clinics.

Helpful Websites

National Institute on Aging — <http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/topics/exercise> — Free resources with exercise ideas such as the following two books, which are free to download or order in print: *Workout to Go* and *Exercise & Physical Activity: Your Everyday Guide from the National Institute on Aging*.

Walk Kansas — <http://www.walkkansas.org/> — On the top left of the home page, click on “Steps to Fitness!” to find a host of instructional videos which include information about using resistance bands and weights as well as the basics of walking and cooling down. Or click on “Instant Recess” to view several 10-minute musical activity breaks.

National Institute on Aging — <http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/exercise-and-physical-activity-getting-fit-life> — Free download titled *Exercise and Physical Activity: Getting Fit for Life*.

American College of Sports Medicine — <http://www.acsm.org/docs/current-comments/resistancetrainingandtheoa.pdf> — Resource on Resistance Training and the Older Adult.

National Institute on Aging — <http://go4life.nia.nih.gov/> — Go4Life campaign to encourage exercise and physical activity.

American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons — <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00380> — Information on seniors and exercise.

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Let's Live A Little: Physical Activity for Fun and Fitness Participant Survey

We appreciate your opinions! Please help us make our programs better by taking about 5 minutes to answer the following questions. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may skip answering one or more questions if you wish. The information that you share will be held in the strictest confidence. We will summarize it in reports, in order to evaluate our program. We greatly value your participation. Thank you!

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. As a result of this program, I improved my knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. As a result of this program, I plan to practice new skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. As a result of this program, I am more aware of physical activity recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. As a result of this program, I feel more motivated to follow physical activity recommendations.					
5. As a result of this program, I learned that I should do strengthening exercises at least twice a week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. As a result of this program, I have also learned:					
7. I plan to take action and/or change something in my life (at home, at play or at work).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. If agree, please describe the actions or changes planned:

9. Additional Comments:

10. A K-State representative may contact me later to talk about this program (We are asking for your contact information so that we may follow up with you about what you learned from this program):

Yes: No:

11. If yes, my contact information is below (e.g., name, address, city, state, zip code, phone, and email):

Demographics

12. I am an adult:

- 18 to 29 Years 30 to 39 Years 40 to 49 Years
 50 to 59 Years 60 to 69 Years 70+ Years

13. I am a youth:

- 0 to 4 Years 5 to 11 Years 12 to 17 Years

14. My gender:

- Male Female Prefer not to respond

15. My race:

- American Indian or Alaska Native Asian Black or African American
 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander White Prefer not to respond

16. My ethnicity:

- Hispanic / Latino Non-Hispanic/ Non-Latino Prefer not to respond

17. For office use only: Coded identification number-

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