

Make Active Habits Stick

K-STATE
Research and Extension
Family and Consumer Sciences

Leader's Guide

2024 Annual Lesson Series



Introduction

Exercise is sometimes referred to as a “miracle drug,” and some physicians have even been known to write “exercise prescriptions.” The physical and mental health benefits of physical activity are astounding. These benefits range from having more energy, a better outlook on life, and getting better sleep to preventing and managing many types of chronic disease, such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, stroke, osteoporosis, and up to eight types of cancer.

Often, inactivity is more to blame than age when older people lose the ability to do things on their own. Lack of physical activity also can lead to more visits to the doctor, more hospitalizations, and more use of medicines for a variety of illnesses.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has even calculated a price tag for inactivity. With heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and other noncommunicable diseases that inactivity contributes to, WHO estimates it costs \$27 billion annually. So, the next time you embark on a brisk walk, think of all the ways doing this regularly is good for your physical and mental health, as well as your bank account.

While you and others are likely aware of all of these benefits, having this knowledge alone may not be enough to get you moving. Why is that?

This lesson will address the basics of physical activity needs: How much? What kind? How often? Next, the lesson addresses common barriers, those things that seem to get in the way of getting regular activity, and offers ways to navigate these. It concludes with how to utilize social and other types of support to make active habits stick.

Educational Goals

As a result of participating in this educational program, the learner will be able to:

- Determine their “why” as a motivator to prioritize physical activity.
- Identify immediate and long-term benefits from physical activity that are intrinsic motivators.
- Understand common barriers to getting regular activity and how to manage these.

- Develop an action plan to incorporate active habits into their daily schedule.
- Increase their confidence to deal with setbacks and adapt to life changes so that active habits can be sustained.

Intended Audiences

Adult groups of any age; adults with specific interest in chronic disease prevention and control; worksite wellness audiences; Family Community Education (FCE) groups and other community organizations; diabetes and other chronic disease focused support groups. This is a nice companion to a series of programs on chronic disease prevention as physical inactivity is linked to almost all chronic conditions.

Before the Lesson

Prepare by taking these steps:

1. Read the Making Active Habits Stick Fact Sheet (MF3622) and Leader's Guide (MF3623). Familiarize yourself with the content and terms contained in both.
2. Study the linked resources discussing and supporting the themes of the lesson.
3. Consider how the program will be delivered to particular audiences and adjust to their needs and activity levels.
4. Prepare ahead by writing down your "why," activities you view as a "gift," and potential barriers to physical activity.
5. Create an action plan that is appropriate to the activity levels of your audience. Be prepared to share this with your audience as an example. Refer to Action Plan for Healthy Living Fact Sheet (MF3053). (See link in Resources.)

Leading the Lesson

Introduce the topic:

The Make Active Habits Stick fact sheet is designed and written to serve as a script or outline for this lesson. The introductions in this leader's guide and the fact sheet provide a brief overview of

the contents and help set the stage for this lesson.

Talk about immediate benefits of physical activity — Ask participants what benefits they might get immediately from a brisk walk, a game of tennis or pickleball, or a bike ride? (Possible answers: stress relief, more energy, clear your mind, refocus, model health habits for friends and family, etc.)

Emphasize: Physical activity is good self-care, and self-care is NOT selfish. In American society, the idea that you should take care of everyone else's needs before your own is so ingrained that people often feel guilty when doing things for themselves. You will be able to give more to others if you have taken some time for yourself, and you can start embracing this benefit today!

Activity – Find your right “why”

The right “why” to be active is the motivator that makes you genuinely want to prioritize physical activity. It comes from within; it's internal. Here are a few ways to move towards intrinsic motivation.

Think about the types of activities you truly enjoy. (Have audience share some of these.) These are the activities you should focus on, things you look forward to.

Now, pay attention to immediate benefits that correspond with these activities or changes you have made to be more active. Do you feel less sluggish? More focused? Less stiff? These impacts tend to be more meaningful because you can see immediate return on your investment.

Identify the things you value most in your life and think about how sitting less and/or moving more can contribute to those values. (Example: “I value being a productive employee. I know that taking a daily walk with my dog helps me feel less stressed and more focused at work.” Another: “I value time with my grandchildren. I know that stretching, doing some strengthening exercises and walking will help me be more active with them.”)

Ask audience members to think about these questions to connect these pieces together. Ask them to write down their answers:

1. What is a role or value that is meaningful to you?
2. To be successful in this role, I need to feel _____?
3. The type of activity that makes me feel best is _____?
4. How do you define exercise? What does regular exercise mean?

Ask: When you hear the word “exercise,” what comes to mind? (Allow time for sharing.) For many people, “exercise” brings to mind images of people who are super fit and trim, and they spend hours/day running and lifting weights at a gym. But for most people, this type of routine is not practical or feasible, so erase these images and broaden your perspective to think about physical activity (or exercise) in a new way. Let’s talk about some exercise “myths.”

Myth #1: Exercise has to be vigorous to be beneficial for my health. The current recommendations emphasize moderate activity. (Refer to the fact sheet for Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans and summarize these.) What is moderate activity? Anything that will get your heart pumping and where you can still carry on a conversation, but not sing.

Myth #2: In order for exercise to be beneficial, I have to work out for a long time. You can break up physical activity throughout your day. Short 5- to 10-minute sessions, multiple times a day, are just as good as 30 minutes or more, consecutively. Be creative and find ways to fit activity into your schedule.

Myth #3: I have to go to a gym or fitness center to exercise. While public exercise facilities have a lot to offer, they are by no means a necessity. You can find many ways to be physically active at home and in your community with little or no special equipment.

As you think about a physical activity plan, the most important thing is to find activities you enjoy. If it feels like a chore to you, then explore other ways

to move your body. The right way is one you will sustain, regardless of how, when, and where you’re fitting it in. Finding these enjoyable activities is the key to making physical activity feel like a “gift” instead of a “chore.”

(You have discussed two of the barriers mentioned in the fact sheet – *Lack of motivation and lack of facilities/equipment*. If you have time, talk about *too tired to exercise* and *lack of time*.)

Support to make active habits stick

Refer to the fact sheet and highlight points under “Social Support.” Talk about how this group of individuals could provide social support for one another.

Planning for setbacks: This is an important message, to know that setbacks will happen and there will be times when physical activities need to pause. Discuss some of these situations. (Illness, injury, schedule changes, holidays, family situations, work changes, etc.) Key message: Give yourself grace and refocus on your “why” to be active. An Action Plan is a very useful tool to use in this situation and any time you want to make a change. Complete the Action Plan Activity.

Activity: Make an Action Plan (Refer to MF3053 *Action Plan for Healthy Living Fact Sheet*.) Here is an example of an action plan:

This week I will walk (what) for 15 minutes/ twice a day (how much) during morning and after breaks at work (when) at least 3 days per week (how many). How confident are you? 9 (0 = not at all confident; 10 = total confidence)

Share your action plan with the audience as an example and invite them to create their own action plan. This is an opportunity to invite those who are willing to share their personal action plans. Be sure confidence levels are at a 7 or higher. If confidence levels are lower than 7, rework the action plan to boost confidence.

Next, talk about how an action plan can become a habit, something that is part of their lifestyle. Refer

to the fact sheet to discuss how tiny habits connected to things you already do can help you achieve a more active lifestyle.

Summarize the lesson by talking about how active living and an active lifestyle will change throughout your life and as you age. Your “why” for being active may also change and adapt. Have fun creating tiny habits of physical activity throughout your day. Enjoy the benefits of stress relief, increased energy, better sleep, and all that an overall healthier lifestyle can bring. Move more and sit less!

Activity: Evaluation

Please distribute this evaluation and ask participants to complete and return it to their local Extension Office.

Authors:

Sharolyn Flaming Jackson, *Family and Consumer Sciences Specialist, Northeast Region, K-State Research and Extension*

Ashley Svaty, *Family and Consumer Sciences Specialist, Northwest Region, K-State Research and Extension*

Resources:

Action Plan for Healthy Living, Fact Sheet.
ksre-learn.com/MF3053

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans:
health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/physical-activity-guidelines

Physical Activity Intervention Research Laboratory, Kansas State University:
hhs.k-state.edu/kines/research/pair/

Exercise or Physical Activity.
www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/exercise.htm

How Much Physical Activity Do Adults Need?
www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/index.htm

WHO highlights high cost of physical inactivity in first-ever global report, www.who.int/news/item/19-10-2022-who-highlights-high-cost-of-physical-inactivity-in-first-ever-global-report

Physical Activity and Your Heart,
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart/physical-activity/types

Real-life Benefits of Exercise and Physical Activity,
www.nia.nih.gov/health/real-life-benefits-exercise-and-physical-activity

Four Types of Exercise Can Improve Your Health and Physical Ability, www.nia.nih.gov/health/four-types-exercise-can-improve-your-health-and-physical-ability

K-STATE

Research and Extension

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

*Publications from Kansas State University are available at:
www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu*

Date shown is that of publication or last revision. Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Sharolyn Flaming Jackson and Ashley Svaty, *Make Active Habits Stick, Leader's Guide*, Kansas State University, July 2023.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of K-State Research and Extension, Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts.

Evaluation

Make Active Habits Stick

Please take a moment to respond to the questions below.

Date and location of presentation: _____

My county of residence: _____

Gender: Female Male Non-binary Other Prefer not to answer

Ethnicity: American Indian/Native American Bi-racial White Asian
 Hispanic or Latino Black/African American Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 Other Prefer not to respond

Age: 18-29 years 30-59 years 60-75 years
 76+ years Prefer not to answer

1. Because of this program I increased my knowledge of creating active habits.

Not At All		Somewhat		Very
1	2	3	4	5

2. Because of this program I increased my confidence in my ability to create active habits.

Not At All		Somewhat		Very
1	2	3	4	5

3. Because of this program I now have a plan to incorporate active habits in my daily schedule.

Not At All		Somewhat		Very
1	2	3	4	5

4. Because of this program, I am confident in my ability to acknowledge and prepare for physical activity barriers.

Not At All		Somewhat		Very
1	2	3	4	5

5. Please list 2 active habits you plan to incorporate throughout your day.

6. Please share any additional comments or suggestions.