PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: A KEY TO SUCCESSFUL AGING
What is physical activity?

• Any body movement, produced by muscles, that uses more energy than resting.¹

• This can be many things...
Types of Physical Activity

• Yard work or gardening
Types of Physical Activity

• Group exercise class
Types of Physical Activity

• Sports or games
Types of Physical Activity

- Anything that gets you moving!
- Cardiovascular or aerobic activities
- Muscle strengthening
- Balance training
What is your favorite activity?

- What do you like to do that moves your body and uses your muscles?
As We Age...

- Normal aging\(^2\)
  - Higher resting blood pressure
  - Lower muscle mass and strength
  - Decreased flexibility
  - Decreased bone mass or density
  - Increased body fat and body mass index

- **Regular physical activity can prevent or slow down these natural processes.**
Why do regular physical activity?

• Improves your:
  • Heart health
  • Lung health

• Decreases chances of getting many diseases such as:
  • high blood pressure and stroke
  • osteoporosis
  • type 2 diabetes
  • certain types of cancer and premature death

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Benefits for Heart Health

• Being physically active also helps to:
  • Lower blood pressure
  • Increase “good cholesterol” (HDL)
  • Control blood sugar levels
  • Manage stress
  • Control body weight
  • Improve memory function
  • Help you feel good about yourself!
Did you know...

• The American Heart Association reports people with heart disease who are physically fit live **FIVE** times longer than those who aren’t fit!
More Benefits

• Improves brain function\textsuperscript{4}

• Reduces anxiety and depression and enhances feelings of well-being

• Reduces risk of falls and injuries from falls in older individuals\textsuperscript{5}

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Even More Benefits!

• Improves physical function
• Maintains independent living
• Prevents functional limitations
• Group exercise provides an opportunity for social engagement
• Allows you to live healthier and longer$^5,6$
The Real Scoop...

• Only about 22% of people 65 or older engage in regular physical activity\(^7\)

• Fewer than 11% of people 85 and older engage in regular physical activity\(^7\)

We can change this!

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What should I do?

• The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans has recommendations for you!

• Adults over age 65 should try to follow these guidelines

How much?

Aerobic

• 150 minutes of moderate activity OR
• 75 minutes of vigorous activity OR
• Combination of both moderate and vigorous is ok too.

Strengthening

• 2 days per week

Balance activities

• 2-3 days per week

Flexibility

• 2 days per week

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Moderate Aerobic Exercise

- **Moderate**: noticeable increase in breathing and heart rate
  
  - **Moderate** = Level 5-6, or ‘*Somewhat Hard*’
  
  - Take a walk
  - Garden
Vigorous Aerobic Exercise

- **Vigorous**: large increase in breathing and heart rate
- **Vigorous** = Level 7-8, or ‘Hard’
  - Jog
  - Swim
  - Tennis

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BOTTOM LINE

- Basic needs for older adults:
  - At least 150 minutes/week of moderate activity
  - Try to do 30 minutes each day
  - Don’t worry...you can do 10 minutes at a time and add it up!

- For GREATER health benefits
  - 300 minutes/week of moderate activity, OR
  - 150 minutes per week of vigorous activity

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What type of activity?

• What do you like to do?
• Will you exercise with friends or alone?
• What can you easily make a regular part of your day?
Types of Activities

• Walking in the right environment is always a good idea.
• If you have difficulty standing or balancing try:
  • Swimming or water aerobics
  • Stationary bikes

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Muscle Strengthening Activities

- Do 2 or more days/week
- Work all major muscle groups (back and abdominals, legs, chest, upper back, arms).
- Have proper instruction before attempting use of weights or weight machines.
Muscle Strengthening Activities

• Types of Activities:
  • Exercises that use your body weight for resistance (push-ups, abdominal exercises, lunges, rising from a chair)
  • Using elastic bands
  • Lifting weights
  • Heavy gardening
  • Yoga
Balance Activities

• Do at least 2-3 days per week
• Good choices include:
  • Tai chi
  • The Otago Exercise Program
  • Balance classes
**Stretching for Flexibility**

- Do 2 or more days/week
- Stretch until you feel a slight pull
- Do not stretch into pain
- Hold for 30 seconds, repeat 2-3 times
- Stretch slowly with good control, not fast!
- Do NOT bounce

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Stop to rest if you experience ANY of the following:

• Shortness of breath
  • Can’t talk while moving
• Dizziness or lightheadedness
• Heart palpitations or irregular rhythm
• Heart rate that increases too rapidly for the activity level
• Onset or worsening of pain
Getting Started

- Check with your doctor
- Visit a physical therapist
- Integrate different physical activity components into your life
- Choose activities you enjoy
- Be physically active with a friend

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Getting Started

• Intensity should be light at the beginning
• Increase amount if it becomes easy or you want to *improve*\(^5\)
Don’t know where to start?

• Just do what you can!
  • Something is better than nothing

• Find activities you LIKE:
  • Walking, swimming, biking, gardening, dancing, and/or tai chi are good options

• Try a selection of activities that address aerobic, resistance, and balance training needs
Helpful Tools & Tips

• Activity logs
• Pedometer
• Exercise partner
• Mall walking
• Exercise DVD or video
Helpful Tools

• American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)
  • www.apta.org

• Move Forward PT – consumer information from APTA
  • www.moveforwardpt.com

• Fit After 50 – resources to stay fit and maintain mobility
What if I have...?

- Balance problems
- Weak legs
- Pain in my joints
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue

- An illness such as
  - Parkinson’s Disease
  - Multiple sclerosis
  - Stroke
  - Arthritis
  - Diabetes
What can I do?

- Aging adults with chronic conditions or disabilities who are not able to meet the above key guidelines, should engage in regular physical activity according to their abilities and avoid inactivity.
- Choose or modify a physical activity that accommodates your abilities
  - Use something sturdy for support
  - Use a cane or walker during activities
  - Exercise while sitting down

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Who can help me get started?

• A physical therapist will:
  • help you choose appropriate exercises and activities
  • develop an activity plan
  • help you progress as you improve
  • choose appropriate exercise equipment and tools

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Thanks for your time and attention!

Questions?
Special Thanks

*Health Promotion & Wellness Special Interest Group for development of this presentation*

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References


3. What’s the Link Between Physical Activity and Health?. American Heart Association Web Site. [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/More/CardiacRehab/Whats-the-Link-Between-Physical-Activity-and-Health_UCM_307377_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/More/CardiacRehab/Whats-the-Link-Between-Physical-Activity-and-Health_UCM_307377_Article.jsp) Updated June 22, 2015.


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References


