

## Being Active: Teaching Guide

**Objectives:** To find ways to become more active in everyday life.  
To understand that being active is part of being healthy.  
Improving health does not have to involve pain and lots of time.  
For optimum health, it is necessary to be active and have a healthy diet.

**Ice Breaker:** Ask participants to think back to when they were children. Ask them to remember one of their **favorite** physical activities and ask why they chose to do that activity? Have each participant share with the class. (Ex. riding bikes - had bike paths near their home, played basketball-had basketball courts in neighborhood, swimming-lived near a city pool or lake, etc.)

Share with participants: ***"As adults we often think of these things as exercise compared to the adolescent years when this was looked at as just being a kid. With this lesson we hope that you will find that kid inside of you, on a regular basis."***

### WHAT IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

Ask participants: ***"Explain in your own words what it means to exercise and please give examples."*** Ask if they do any of these things?

Physical activity is any movement that uses energy (burns calories). The key word here is movement. That can mean walking, dancing, dusting, sweeping, washing a car, cooking, doing laundry, **exercising**, etc.

Exercise usually describes a physical activity that is structured and planned and strengthens lungs, heart and muscles.

### EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Ask the participants: ***"What kinds of things do you do on a regular basis (daily or weekly) that require you to be active?"*** These are every day activities, ex. clean the house, walk to a store or friends house, etc. (You can list these on newsprint or wipe board for reference later).

### WHO SHOULD BE ACTIVE?

Ask participants: ***"Who should be active?"*** Answer: **Everyone** - Note\* Some individuals may have health conditions that restrict the amount of activity they are able/allowed to do.

**Children need to be more active.** Children are less fit today than they were a generation ago. More children are becoming overweight. Children are less active due to modern conveniences, television and computers. Children who have poor eating habits and are not active will have a greater chance of becoming inactive adults with poor eating habits.

***Get your children moving! - Parents/adults need to be good role models for the children.***

**Senior citizens need to be active.** Their loss of strength and stamina is due in part to reduced physical activity. Staying active will help seniors maintain the ability to live independently, reduce their risk of falling, increase their stamina, reduce risk of heart disease and improve their overall feeling of well being. It is always a good idea for seniors to speak with their physician before increasing their level of activity. Start slowly and gently. It is especially important to warm up before and cool down after exercising.

## **COMPARING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WITH EXERCISE**

### **WHY BE ACTIVE?**

Share with participants why being active is good for their health:

***"How is being active or doing traditional types of exercising good for our health?"***

Cardiovascular – Strengthens heart and lungs, etc.

Muscular – Builds muscle, helps prevent injury, improves posture, provides endurance

Metabolism – Stimulating metabolism is part of the weight loss plan

Bone – Increases bone mass, especially important for women.

Immune system – Along with eating well, regular activity stimulates immune response.

Other reasons include:

Helps you relax and sleep better.

Gives you more energy.

May help reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

### **STRUCTURED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (EXERCISE)**

There are 3 kinds of exercises that when used together gives you flexibility, heart fitness, and build firm muscles.

STRETCHING -will make your body flexible.

AEROBIC - large muscles of legs and arms move to make your heart and lungs work harder. (Ex. walking, swimming, dancing, mowing the lawn, etc.)

STRENGTH BUILDING - maintain or strengthen muscles to reduce injuries and stamina.

### **GO BACK TO COMMENTS PARTICIPANTS MADE ABOUT TYPES OF EVERYDAY THINGS THEY DO.**

**Using information you just covered, ask participants to see how each activity they listed fits into the above categories.**

Example - Dusting/sweeping can provide mild *cardiovascular* work with constant movement. *Flexibility* can be gained with reaching for high or far away areas.

Try to have them list at least 5 common/everyday activities and then have them figure out what type of health improvements can be gained.

## EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Ask participants: ***"What types of activities can be done indoors and/or outdoors year round?"***

You should remain active year-round. Winter should not be a reason to stop being active, so what types of things can we do during the different seasons? Think of everyday activities. During the fall, walking (traditional) and climbing stairs (everyday activity) are ways to be active. Ask participants to come up with other ideas of physical activities for each season.

### See handout: **"WALK Your Way To Good Health"**

The recommendation is to do regular and moderate-intensity activity, about 30 minutes, most days of the week. The 30 minutes can be all at once or three short periods of activity 10 minutes each.

## HOW TO MAINTAIN AN INCREASED LEVEL OF ACTIVITY?

Ask participants: ***"What kinds of things can you do to schedule more activity into your busy day?"***

- Set aside a special time during the day to be active.
- Find ways to be more active in your everyday routine. Park farther away and walk, take stairs instead of elevator, don't use the television remote-get up to change channels on television, etc.
- Combine activities - run in place, do stretches, etc. while watching your favorite television show.
- Make a weekly chart or calendar and write down when and how to be more active.
- See if your community offers free physical activity programs. (Check with the Park District.)

## HOW WILL YOU STAY MOTIVATED?

- Build more activity into your day SLOWLY. Set reasonable goals so you can be successful.
- Keep an activity log or make a contract with yourself. **See handout: "Keep Track of Your Moves"**
- Find a friend who can be active with you.
- Set a new goal every month.
- EXPECT SETBACKS! Illnesses or scheduling problems may interrupt your activity. Don't be discouraged. Resume your activity at a lower level and build up to where you were.
- Reduce exercise boredom- try new activities whenever possible, listen to music/radio while being active, etc.
- Be flexible - Don't let cold or rainy weather stop you from being active -walk in a mall, walk to music inside your house, etc.
- REWARD YOURSELF FOR A JOB WELL DONE!



Next have clients look up the number of calories in foods they eat. The cardboard food models put out by the National Dairy Council have food labels on the backs of the models. There you can find the number of calories for each food.

Now compare how much physical activity you would have to do in order to burn that number of calories for each particular food you eat.

**Remember:** Calories are burned even when you are not active. Our body burns calories just by doing the things it needs to do to keep us alive: sleeping, breathing, pumping blood, digesting food, etc.

### **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEING ACTIVE**

- Check with your doctor before increasing your amount of physical activity.
- Wear appropriate clothes.
- Stretching may be necessary before you begin certain physical activities.
- Start out slowly.
- Drink lots of fluids.
- Have a healthy diet.
- Get plenty of rest.

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES:**

- Have participants plan activities, or make a schedule for a week or month, etc.
- Have participants get into groups and brainstorm why they are not more active. Have participants come up with solutions that will allow more time for activity.
- Have participants list resources that can help them continue to become healthier.
- Take your participants for a walk. Demonstrate a slow-paced walk and review safety rules.

**REMEMBER,** not everyone will approach their new goal of increasing the amount of activity in their daily lives the same way. Some individuals may want to keep an activity journal to track their amount of activity during the week, month or year. Others may want to keep an activity schedule to stay on track everyday. Others may want to be more flexible in scheduling activity into their daily routine. For many people, the best method for increasing their activity level will be to add activity to what they have already scheduled. The best advice may be to TURN OFF the television and move.

## **For Instructor Use Only - DO NOT DUPLICATE**



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