



EveryBODY Needs to Move

EDUCATION FOCUS GROUP

2017-2018



WHY IS MOVEMENT IMPORTANT?

There are many health benefits to staying active, your body is made to move. Movement lowers your blood pressure, increases your stamina, increases your circulation, helps memory, increases your muscle and bone strength, helps with balance and weight control, lowers your resting heart rate, increases flexibility, improves mental function and lowers your blood sugar.

There are more than health benefits. Movement can be social creating interaction with family and friends. It can be intergenerational...all ages and any skill level.

Movement can happen at any time. Lack of time is not an excuse. Establish your daily routine, whether it is before work, during a short break or lunch break, or your daily household routine. Anytime the opportunity arises you should move.

Where can I move? Most communities offer many locations such as: a local gym, churches, YMCA, senior centers, parks and recreation facilities. You can even move in your own home, at the kitchen sink.

Physical activity should be a part of everyone's daily life, a regular permanent habit. It is important to your mental and physical health. Physical activities that get your body moving include gardening, walking the dog, taking the stairs, raking leaves, dancing, swimming, or riding a bicycle.

Exercise is a form of physical activity that is planned, structured, and repetitive. Weight training, aerobics and tai chi are all types of exercise. It is recommended to achieve 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most or all days of the week. Every day is best, but doing anything is better than doing nothing at all.

There are many ways to be active every day. Find something you enjoy doing and include it in your daily life.

Your shoes are an important part of your physical activity. If your feet hurt or are uncomfortable, you are not going to want to move. Think of your shoes as safety equipment for your feet. Select shoes that are made for the type of physical activity you will be doing. Wear shoes with flat, nonskid soles, good heel support, room for your toes, and a cushioned arch support.

Now, let's get moving...

There are four types of exercise: endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility; all are equally important to your daily physical activity.

ENDURANCE

There are activities that increase your heart rate and breathing and can improve the health of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system. Physical activities that build endurance include:

- Brisk walking
- Yard work
- Dancing
- Jogging
- Swimming
- Riding a bicycle
- Climbing stairs
- Playing tennis

STRENGTH

Muscle strength is important for everyday physical activity. Using weights to improve your muscle strength can include lifting weights or using resistance. Muscle strength is progressive over time and you should gradually increase the amount of weight you use to build strength.

BALANCE

Lower body strength exercises can improve your balance. Activities to improve your balance include:

Standing on one foot
Heel to toe walking
Tai chi

Exercise makes a difference in both physical and emotional well-being. We need to have the right mixture of physical activities including balance, stretching, and strengthening exercises. Flexibility and leg strength are especially important for our balance. The most important joint to keep strong and flexible is our ankle. It has to be able to function on uneven surfaces to keep us from falling. Inactivity can cause many problems for us as we age. The less we move the less we can move, but medical research shows that everyone can grow stronger through increased activity.

Check with your local county Extension office to see if a “Matter of Balance Class” is offered in your area. (Source 1)

FLEXIBILITY

Stretching helps your body stay flexible and limber. You can increase flexibility through:

Shoulder and upper arm stretches
Calf stretches
Yoga

YOGA

No matter your fitness level, yoga is for everyone from the very young to seniors. Yoga is a system of physical postures, breathing techniques and meditation. Yoga can be adapted to suit anyone's needs. The aim is to work with your body not against it. It is an effective and gentle way to improve strength and flexibility.

Chair yoga includes breath work to manage stress, coping, and pain; being calmer and more relaxed leads to a greater feeling of happiness and well being. Yoga has been shown to improve overall health, prevent and sometimes reverse disease when practice as a lifestyle. Yoga stretches will rejuvenate you.

Grab a chair, a simple straight back variety, like a kitchen chair and let's get started...

(Source 2 and 3)

GENTLE YOGA

This is a program offered at YMCAs⁴ designed for the beginner as well as those with injuries. The class emphasizes stretching, coordination of breath and movement and attention to body alignment.

TAI CHI

The practice of tai chi is a non-impact exercise. The basic principles incorporate the health of body, mind, and spirit. The practice teaches us to relax and go with the flow, much the way water naturally flows in nature. The movements are slow, smooth, and balanced.

People of all ages and most physical conditions can practice tai chi . The basic principles can apply and be beneficial to nearly everyone, whether standing or sitting. It is good for people with limited mobility. You can look for a class or get a book from the library (see page 8). You can practice as long as you choose or for just a few minutes a day. Medical research has found tai chi to be a moderate aerobic exercise with many benefits: enhance immune functions, lowers blood pressure, alleviates stress responses, enhance the body's natural healing powers, increase breathing capacity, help ensure full range mobility far into old age, reduce asthma and allergy reactions and reduce arthritis pain. You will soon feel a sense of relaxation and calmness after you get started with tai chi .

As always, consult with your physician as tai chi may reduce your blood pressure and may require medications to be adjusted.

(Source: 4 and 5)



BICYCLING

Bicycling is an aerobic or cardiovascular activity. It is a low impact activity with many benefits including affording better sleep, feeling less stress, being more engaged, lowering your BMI, improving your mood and releasing endorphins to your brain, helping you to think more clearly. Bicycling tones your legs and is easier on your joints than running and it helps to strengthen your heart; you may even lose weight.

A leisurely bicycle ride, less than 10 mph burns 281 calories, 563 calories at a moderate pace of 12-13 mph. Bicycling for 40-60 minutes a day will burn 400-500 calories enabling you to lose 1 pound per week.

Outdoor riding helps to pass time with changing scenery. You can ride on flat roads, hills, off-road, or on a track. You can bicycle indoors as well, on a stationary bicycle, allowing you riding time even in bad weather. If you are uncomfortable on a bicycle, the stability of a stationary bike may be better suited for you. Indoor bicycling classes are intensive workouts, allowing you to control your pace and resistance.

Always wear a helmet when bicycling, even on short rides!

Happy cycling...

(Sources: 7, 8 and 9)



SILVER SNEAKERS



Silver Sneakers is a fitness program provided at no cost by more than 60 health plans nationwide. Specialized Silver Sneakers classes focus on improving strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination. The classes are taught by certified instructors. There are many classes to choose from. Silver Sneakers Classic offers exercises designed to increase muscle strength, range of movement and activities for daily living. This class can be adapted depending on fitness level and abilities. Other classes include: Silver Sneakers Circuit, Cardiofit, Yoga, Splash and Stability. Silver Sneakers FLEX Program takes classes to other venues, including recreation centers, retirement communities, pools, and parks.

Members of Silver Sneakers are a community with the common goal of improving their health. Members celebrate, support, and motivate each other. There are more than 13,000 participating locations across the country. Classes range from Tai Chi to Boot Camp to Latin Dance to Yoga. By joining the program you will experience greater independence and a healthier life.

(Source: 10)

Walking improves the health of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system. It helps keep you healthy, improves your fitness, and increases your endurance for daily

WALKING



chores. Walking aids in preventing diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and other ailments. Walking also reduces bad cholesterol, lowers your blood pressure, helps control weight, and can increase your muscle, joint, and bone strength.

To encourage a walking program you might make a list of benefits you hope to achieve by walking. Create a list that counters your reasons not to walk. For instance “too busy” can be countered with “I’m making time to walk.” “Too tired” can be countered with “I’ll feel re-energized after my walk.” You get the idea! Place this positive list where you’ll see it daily.

(walking-continued)

Get a check-up with your doctor. Buy a pair of walking shoes. Wear comfortable clothing. You've got this!

Start slow with ten minute walks, three times a day. Do this routine until you are able to talk and walk for thirty minutes, comfortably. Have a walking buddy to encourage, inspire, and keep you on course.

Stay safe. Be aware of your surroundings, staying in well-lit areas. Do store-walking in bad weather. Wear a step counter. A simple pedometer or a electronic health tracking device. Take your phone with you!

Walking will improve your posture, balance, strength, and muscle flexibility, as well as reduce boredom, decrease risk of injuries, improve mood swings, and generally give you a better outlook on life.

(Sources: 11, 12, 13)



Now, take a deep breath, exhale slowly, give yourself a pat on the back, you have done a great job. After exercising or being physically active you will begin to feel stronger and more energetic.

Make physical activity a priority. Being active is the most important thing you do for yourself to maintain and improve your health.

You need to move. It's up to you! Our bodies were made to move. Decide what moves you and get moving today!

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Booklet Sponsored by:

Indiana Extension Homemakers Association

Education Focus Group

2016-2017

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