

## Let's Move More

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### Description:

Although we know the importance of physical activity in our overall health and well-being, many of us fall shy of meeting the weekly recommendations. In this lesson, we will discuss the benefits of physical activity and provide examples of simple (and safe) ways to increase your level of activity.

### Objectives:

Participants will be able to identify important definitions related to physical activity  
Participants will learn about the benefits of physical activity  
Participants will learn about the recommended levels of physical activity  
Participants will be able to identify some practical ways to become more active

### Lesson Directions:

Review the lesson and handouts; print and distribute copies of the handouts, if possible. Practice and demonstrate a few of the stretching exercises included at the end of the lesson plan (if comfortable).

### Handouts:

Move Your Way Fact Sheet for Older Adults

- Document can be found and printed at:  
[https://health.gov/themes/custom/healthgov/src/microsite\\_resources/myw\\_microsite/pdf/PAG\\_MYW\\_OlderAdults\\_FS.pdf](https://health.gov/themes/custom/healthgov/src/microsite_resources/myw_microsite/pdf/PAG_MYW_OlderAdults_FS.pdf)

Sample of Weekly Physical Activity Schedule

- Document can be found and printed at:  
[https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/pa\\_examples.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/pa_examples.pdf)

### Resources:

1. [https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older\\_adults/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults/index.htm)
2. <https://www.kendalathome.org/blog/5-stretches-for-older-adults>
3. <https://food.unl.edu/physical-activity-older-adults>
4. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/browse-by-audience/view-all-audiences/adults/older-adults>

5. [https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/posthandout\\_session8.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/posthandout_session8.pdf)
6. <http://www.parcph.org/documents/stretchingpacket.pdf>

## Physical Activity Defined

Physical activity is defined as any movement of the body that requires energy expenditure. Although often used interchangeably with exercise the two are not the same. Exercise is a *type* of physical activity that is planned and done to increase a person's level of physical fitness.

## Types of Physical Activity

***Aerobic Activities:*** activities in which the body's large muscles move in a rhythmic manner for a prolonged period of time. Examples include brisk walking, jogging, and swimming.

***Muscle-Strengthening Activities:*** activities that increase skeletal muscle strength, power, endurance, and mass. Examples include carrying heavy loads (such as groceries), heavy gardening, and using resistance bands.

***Bone-Strengthening Activities:*** activities that cause impact or pressure on the bones; promotes bone growth and strength. Examples include running, jumping rope, and lifting weights.

***Balance Activities:*** activities that help improve one's ability to resist internal or external forces on the body that can cause falls while moving or stationary. Examples of such activities include walking heel-to-toe, standing on one leg walking backward.

***Flexibility Activities:*** activities that improve the ability of joints to move through the full range of motion. Examples of such activities include stretching, bending to tie shoe laces, or moving arms in a circular motion.

## Benefits of Physical Activity

Getting physical activity regularly is essential to healthy aging. Some important benefits include:

- Improved quality of life
- Reduced anxiety
- Slowed or reduced weight gain
- Improved sleep
- Improved bone health
- Improved balance

## Recommended Levels of Physical Activity

Most movement counts as physical activity, so aim to move more and sit less throughout the day. If seeking substantial health benefits, try to do at least 150 minutes (or 2 ½ hours) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week.

- Include slower speed or lower intensity activities at the beginning and end of your physical activity routine to warm up and cool down your body; you should also include balance and flexibility activities.
- Incorporate strength building activities into your routine at least 2 times per week.
- If you are planning to become more physically active than you are currently, please check with your doctor before you start.

## Getting Active: Simple Stretching Exercises

1. Shoulder stretch: Raise your arms over your head with elbows straight; interlock your fingers (if possible). Try to keep your back and neck straight.
2. Mid-back stretch: Extend your arms in front of you and keep your elbows straight; interlock your fingers (if possible). Gently pull forward, separating your shoulder blades.
3. Chest stretch: Extend your arms behind you with elbows straight; interlock your fingers (if possible). Gently lift your elbows upward.
4. Side bends: Extend one arm up overhead and gently lean to the opposite side. Repeat with the other arm.
5. Trunk rotation: Sit in a chair and slowly rotate your trunk (middle) and shoulders to one side, using your arms to help you rotate. Repeat in opposite direction.
6. Hamstrings: Sit in a chair and extend one leg forward, with the back of your heel resting on the ground. Try to keep your knee straight and gently lean forward to your toes. Repeat on other leg.
7. Calf and ankle stretch: Hold onto a chair or countertop. Place one ankle behind the body with knee straight and the foot flat on the floor. Put the other leg slightly forward and bent. Lean forward to feel the stretch. Repeat on the other side.