



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with
National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World
and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service

LEADER TRAINING GUIDE

Physical Activity and Older Adults

Objectives:

1. Participants will be able to list the national physical activity recommendations for their age group or based on their health-related limitations.
2. Participants will be able to describe the benefits of physical activity for older adults.

Major Teaching Points:

1. Being physically active is important throughout our life.
2. Older adults should try to be involved in activities that increase the heart rate and breathing for extended periods of time (aerobic activity) most days of the week.
3. Older adults should do activities that strengthen the muscles (resistance activity) at least twice a week.
4. Older adults who have problems with balance should also practice safe balancing exercises to prevent the risk of falls.
5. Older adults should follow the national recommendations appropriate to their age group and physical ability.

Suggested Materials:

- Handout #1: "Exercise and Physical Activity: Getting Fit For Life"
- Handout #2: "2007 ACSM AHA Physical Activity and Public Health Guidelines"
- Handout #3: "NIA How to Improve Your Flexibility"
- Handout #4: "NIA Examples of Strength Exercises"

Ask: Do you think that physical activity is good for your health and well being? If so, why is it?
How physically active are you? Do you think you meet the national recommendations?

Give out Handout #1: "Exercise and Physical Activity Getting Fit For Life"

Say: The benefits of regular physical activity in older adults are extensive. Regular physical activity reduces risk of:

- cardiovascular disease
- stroke
- hypertension (high blood pressure)
- type 2 diabetes
- osteoporosis



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- obesity
- colon cancer
- breast cancer
- anxiety (feeling fearful or worrisome for extended periods of time)
- depression (feeling sad or “blue” for extended periods of time)

Say: Of particular importance to older adults, there is substantial evidence that physical activity:

- reduces risk of falls and injuries from falls
- prevents or decreases functional limitations (the ability to perform activities of daily living)

Say: Physical activity is effective therapy for many chronic diseases and conditions, including:

- coronary heart disease (narrowed arteries in the heart caused by plaque and fatty buildup, “atherosclerosis”)
- hypertension (high blood pressure)
- peripheral vascular disease (narrowing or blocking of the arteries in the legs)
- type 2 diabetes
- obesity
- high cholesterol
- osteoporosis (weakened bones caused by mineral loss)
- osteoarthritis (pain in the joints caused by the wearing out of cartilage at the end of bones)
- claudication (cramps and pains in the legs)
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (narrowing of the airway caused by smoking, work or other environmental exposures, or history of other conditions that affect the lungs, e.g., emphysema)

Say: Regular physical activity, including aerobic activity and muscle-strengthening activity, is essential for healthy aging. The preventive recommendations that we will talk about today specify how much physical activity older adults get. By engaging in each recommended type of physical activity, you can reduce your risk of chronic disease, premature death, disability and limitations in your ability to do activities of daily living. The general recommendation is that older adults should meet or exceed 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. However, we must recognize that goals below this level may be necessary for older adults who have physical impairments or functional limitations.

Give out Handout #2: “2007 ACSM AHA Physical Activity and Public Health Guidelines”



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Say: Here are the basic recommendations from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the American Heart Association (AHA) for healthy adults under the age of 65:

Do moderately intense cardio 30 minutes a day, five days a week

OR

Do vigorously intense cardio 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week

AND

Do eight to 10 strength-training exercises, eight to 12 repetitions of each exercise twice a week

Moderate-intensity physical activity means working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat, yet still being able to carry on a conversation. It should be noted that to lose weight or maintain weight loss, 60 to 90 minutes of physical activity may be necessary. The 30-minute recommendation is for the average healthy adult to maintain health and reduce the risk for chronic disease.

Say: Here are the basic recommendations from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the American Heart Association (AHA) for adults over age 65, or adults 50-64 with chronic conditions, such as arthritis:

Do moderately intense aerobic exercise 30 minutes/day, five days/week OR 20 minutes/day, 3 days/week
AND

Do 8 to 10 strength-training exercises, 10-15 repetitions of each exercise twice to three times per week
AND

If you are at risk of falling, perform balance exercises

AND

Have a physical activity plan.

Say: Although the guidelines for older adults and adults with chronic conditions are similar to those for younger adults, there are a few key differences and points to consider.

Start, and get help if you need it. The general recommendation is that older adults should meet or exceed 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week; however, it is also recognized that goals below this level may be necessary for older adults who have physical impairments or functional limitations.

Functional health is an important benefit of physical activity for older adults. Physical activity contributes to the ease of doing everyday activities, such as gardening, walking or cleaning the house.

Strength training is extremely important. Strength training is important for all adults, but especially so for older adults, as it prevents loss of muscle mass and bone, and is beneficial for functional health.





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If you can exceed the minimum recommendations, do it! The minimum recommendations are just that: the minimum needed to maintain health and see fitness benefits. If you can exceed the minimum, you can improve your personal fitness, improve management of an existing disease or condition, and reduce your risk for health conditions and mortality.

Flexibility is also important. Each day you perform aerobic or strength-training activities, take an extra 10 minutes to stretch the major muscle and tendon groups, with 10-30 seconds for each stretch. Repeat each stretch three to four times. Flexibility training will promote the ease of performing everyday activities.

Give out Handout #3: “NIA How to Improve Your Flexibility”

Give out Handout #4: “NIA Examples of Strength Exercises”

Say: These 2 handouts are from the National Institute on Aging. They provide instructions and pictures for flexibility exercises you can do to stretch your muscles and strengthening exercises you can do to make your muscles stronger. Let's pick a few of these and try them. Which stretch would you like to try?

** Follow the instructions and try 1-2 stretches as a group.

Say: O.K. Which strengthening exercise would you like to try?

** Follow the instructions and try 1-2 strengthening exercises as a group.

Sources:

This lesson was created by Dr. Joel E. Williams, Physical Activity and Health Specialist, Clemson Extension and Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences at Clemson University, and Dr. Cheryl Dye, Professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences and Director of the Institute for Engaged Aging at Clemson University. The information and handouts were adapted from publications of the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Heart Association, and the National Institute on Aging.

1. M. E. Nelson, W. J. Rejeski, S. N. Blair, et al. (2007). Physical activity and public health in older adults: Recommendation from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 39(8): 1435-1445.
2. American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association. 2007 Physical Activity and Public Health Guidelines.
http://www.acsm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home_Page&TEMPLATE=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=7764#Starting_an_exercise_program_Over_65
3. National Institute on Aging. Exercise and Physical Activity: Getting Fit For Life.
<http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/exercise.htm>



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Lesson Evaluation

Title _____

Presenter _____

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below by circling the appropriate number that represents your response.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
The information was easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
The information was relevant.	1	2	3	4	5
I gained knowledge as a result of this presentation.	1	2	3	4	5

As a result of this session, I plan to... (Describe how you plan to use what you have learned.)

Please add any comments, suggestions, or other ideas on the back of this sheet.



Please return this evaluation sheet to:

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