



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

Small Steps to Big Losses

Objectives

1. Participants will be able to describe the national recommendations for weight loss.
2. Participants will be able to list at least two small steps they can take toward losing weight.

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.
6. For good health, it is important to eat a variety of foods from each food group every day. It is important to eat whole grains, a variety of fruits and vegetables, as well as lean meats and low-fat dairy foods.
7. Older adults should use the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid to make food choices appropriate to their age group and physical activity level.
8. On the path to a healthy lifestyle, older adults should take small steps, one at a time. Changing small things can lead to big results.

Suggested Materials

- Handout 1: "2007 ACSM AHA Physical Activity and Public Health Guidelines"
 - http://www.acsm.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home_Page&TEMPLATE=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=7764
- Handout 2: "Exercise and Physical Activity Getting Fit For Life"
 - <http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/exercise.htm>
- Handout 3: "Your Personal Path to Health: Steps to a Healthier You!"
 - <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/MyPyramid/print%20materials/MyPyramidBrochurebyIFIC.pdf>



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National Recommendations for Weight Control

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has reviewed the most recent research on weight loss and provides an update to their 1983 position stand¹. Following is a summary of current ACSM recommendations:

1. Consult with a physician or other licensed health care provider before engaging in a weight loss program.
2. Adults with body mass index greater than 25 should consider losing weight.
3. Reduce energy intake by 500 - 1,000 calories per day and reduce fat intake to less than 30% of total calories.
4. Include exercise as part of a weight loss program; overweight and obese adults should progress to a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week (equivalent to 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) then, when possible, progress to more than 200 minutes of moderate physical activity per week (equivalent to 40-60 minutes a day, 5 days a week).
5. The use of dietary supplements and other weight loss enhancing agents should only be used under the guidance of a physician or other licensed health care provider.

Moderate physical activities include brisk walking, yard work, house work, and various types of sports and recreational activities that increase your breathing and heart rate. Fortunately, research has shown that you do not have to participate in physical activity each day all at once. In other words, you can squeeze in 10-15 minutes of at least moderate physical activity several times throughout the day. This is especially encouraging for adults with busy schedules or those who do not like to be physically active for longer periods of time.

Strength Training

Adding strength training exercises has clear advantages as well. Strength training can help to increase fat free mass (muscle) or reduce muscle loss associated with aging. Muscles are not only important for activities of daily living, they are also a metabolically active (they burn calories) tissue (body fat is not metabolically active). Essentially, the more muscle you have the more calories you can burn – kind of like the way V-8 engines use more gasoline than 4-cylinder engines. For more physical activity tips refer to the FCL lesson *“Physical Activity and Older Adults.”*



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Behavioral Elements

There is also evidence that adding behavioral principles to weight loss programs also improves long-term outcomes. Incorporating problem solving, social support, goal setting, stimulus control, and other behavior-related skills improves the effectiveness of weight loss attempts. It is beyond the scope of this lesson to provide behavioral training; that can be obtained by participating in an organized weight loss group or by supervision of a health professional trained in health behavior principles. Regardless, you can get the benefits yourself by simply setting small achievable goals, using your families or friends for support, and staying away from those things that tempt you.

National Weight Control Registry

The National Weight Control Registry was established in 1993 to document the characteristics and behaviors of adults who are successful at long-term weight loss management. Weight loss of registry members ranges from 30 to 300 pounds and losses ranging from 1 to 66 years (average of 66 pounds kept off for 5.5 years) (www.nwcr.ws/Research/default.htm). Most report following a low calorie, low fat diet and high levels of physical activity (although activity levels vary greatly): 98% modified their diet, 94% increased their activity levels (mostly by walking)². Here are a few more details: 62% report that they watch less than 10 hours of television each week, 75% weigh themselves at least once a week, 78% report eating breakfast everyday, and 90% report that they are physically active about 1 hour per day).

Disclaimer

Keep in mind that these research findings are true for most but not all individual adults. Some adults may have to participate in more minutes per week to lose weight and higher levels than the minimum recommendation to maintain weight loss. Also, some individuals may require pharmaceutical therapy (drugs, medicine) prescribed by a health care provider or surgery to lose or maintain weight loss.

A Few Tips...

- Weight gained over time takes time to lose
 - It won't happen overnight! Temporary weight loss methods may cause large decreases in weight over short periods – however, those who follow lifestyle change approaches can expect 1-2 pound per week losses as reasonable expectations.



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- Reduce how much you eat and increase how much physical activity you do
 - Do both a little bit at a time – severe diet restrictions and doing too much physical activity to start with are often reasons why adults give up early on.
 - If you are currently not active, add a little activity to begin with by adding short walks throughout the day.
 - Begin changing your diet slowly simply by not drinking one soda or other sweetened beverage per day or not allowing yourself that afternoon sweet or fatty snack. Just cutting 100 calories each day can pare off up to ten pounds a year.
- Cut back on how much television you watch and get outside! This is a good idea in the summer when the days are longer.
- Monitor your weight. Be sure to use the same scale!
- Drink more water. A good idea throughout the day. Replacing tea or soft drinks with water at meals helps reduce calories. Adults also need more water during the summer and as they increase their activity levels.
- Stick to it!

Sources

This lesson was created by Dr. Joel E. Williams, Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences at Clemson University, and Dr. Katherine L. Cason, Professor in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition and State Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) Director at Clemson University. The information and handouts were adapted from publications of the American College of Sports Medicine, the National Weight Control Registry, the US Department of Health and Human Services Small Step web site: <http://www.smallstep.gov/>, and USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

1. Jakicic JM, Clark K, Coleman E, Donnelly JE, Foreyt J, Lemanson E, Volek J, Volpe SL. (2001). Appropriate intervention strategies for weight loss and prevention of weight regain for adults: American College of Sports Medicine Position Stand. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 33(12):2145-2156.
2. Catenacci VA, Ogden LG, Stuht J, Phelan S, Wing RR, Hill JO, Wyatt HR. (2008). Physical activity patterns in the National Weight Control Registry. *Obesity*, 16(1): 153-161.



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