Physical Activity:
A Key to Wellness and Successful Aging
SECTION ON GERIATRICS

Health Promotion & Wellness Special Interest Group
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Wellness

A lifelong interactive process of becoming aware of and practicing healthy choices to create a more successful and balanced lifestyle.
Wellness

- Social
- Emotional
- Environmental
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Spiritual

Occupations
Benefits of Physical Activity

- Helps maintain independence
- Improves quality of life
- Improves health
- Increases energy
Physical Activity Improves Physical Function by:

- Improving balance and reducing risk of falls
- Keeping bones and muscles strong
- Improving endurance
- Helping to maintain a healthy weight
- Improving sleep
- Helping to regulate blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar
Physical Activity Improves Intellectual Function by:

• Helping maintain cognitive function (e.g. memory and concentration)
• Decreasing stress and anxiety
• Improving mood
• Reducing depression
Physical Activity Improves Social Function by:

- Increasing independence
- Creating a stimulating, and often supportive, environment
- Improving family time
- Increasing social networks and involvement
Physical Activity

- Social
- Balance
- Strengthening
- Endurance
- Stretching
Getting Started

• Check with your doctor
• Visit a physical therapist
• Start slowly
• Integrate different physical activity components into your life
• Choose activities you enjoy
• Get a buddy
How Do I Choose an Activity?

- Consider including multiple components
- Enjoyable
- Accessible
- Convenient
- Variety
Meeting Your Needs

- Considerations for group programs:
  - Class size
  - Instructor experience
  - Amount of assistance you need
  - Intensity and variety of program
Physical Activity May Include

- Walking
- Swimming or participating in a water exercise class
- Playing a sport you enjoy
Physical Activity May Include

- Lifting weights or exercising with elastic bands
- Taking a tai chi or senior yoga class
- Dancing
- Joining a local senior exercise class
What If I Have Physical Limitations?

• Choose an activity that accommodates your abilities
  – Use something sturdy for support
  – Use a cane or walker during activities
  – Exercise sitting

• Consult a physical therapist to help you choose an activity
How Do I Begin a Physical Activity Session?

Warm up for 10 minutes
How Much Time Do I Need to be Active For?

Warm-up should be followed by at least 30 minutes of effortful physical activity.
How Much Time Do I Need to be Active For?

- 30 - 60 minutes a day of endurance, strengthening, balance and flexibility activities
How Much Effort is Needed?

• Begin slowly and pace yourself.

• You should be able to carry on a conversation during the activity.
How Do I Finish a Physical Activity?

Finish your session with a 10 minute cool down and a tall glass of water.
How Many Days A Week Should I Be Active?

3
5
6
or
7
How might I expect to feel?

- When you first begin a physical activity program or advance your current activities it is normal to feel:
  - Mild muscle stiffness, burning, or fatigue that decreases in 24 hours
  - Mild increase in heart rate with continued activity, but that returns to normal in 5 minutes
Stop to Rest if You Experience

- Shortness of breath (can’t complete sentence)
- Dizziness
- Heart rate that exceeds prescribed target rate
- Onset or worsening of pain
What Does Progress Look Like?

• Minor improvement in 2-3 weeks

• Significant improvement in 2-3 months
Getting Back on Track

- Illness
- Vacation
- Injury

10% per week missed

Effort

Speed

Distance
Lifetime Goals: Maintaining Fitness Level

- Be realistic
- Be consistent
- Find a buddy
- Journal / chart progress
Thank You!