

# Be Active to Tip the Balance

## Session Overview

This session provides an overview of physical activity, starting a physical activity program, keeping track of your progress, and using a pedometer.

## Objectives for Session

1. Understand physical activity and the Physical Activity Guidelines
2. Identify important points to consider when being active, including gear, location, safety, warm-up, cool-down, and hydration
3. Learn how to use a pedometer or odometer

## Session Preparation

- Prepare the following materials:
  - S03 A Guide to Using Your Pedometer
  - S05 How Do I Get Started with Increasing My Physical Activity
  - P02 Benefits of Physical Activity
  - P04 Why Warm-Up, Cool Down and Stretch?
  - P12 Making a Good Fit
  - P30 Sample Stretches
  - P26 Physical Activity Pyramid
  - P38 Be Active Your Way
  - “Be Physically Active” Healthy Living Message
  - NCP video – Physical Activity: A little goes a long way
  - Link to Physical Activity Guidelines ([www.health.gov/paguidelines](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines))
- Remember to focus on strengths, and foster active participation from group.
- As coach, your role is to facilitate discussion without lecturing.

## Session Outline (60-minute class)

- Check-in (5 minutes)
- Discussion Topics (40 minutes)

- 5-Minute MOVE!<sup>®</sup> (5 minutes)
- Putting It All Together (10 minutes)

### **Check-in (5 minutes)**

- Facilitate weigh-ins; enter weight into CPRS Vital Signs package.
- Collect Daily Food and Physical Activity Diaries.

### **Discussion Topics (40 minutes)**

#### **Introduction**

- Welcome everyone to the session.
- Review Ground Rules.
- Describe the purpose of today's class. State today's objectives and discussion topics. Encourage participants to attend all 16 sessions, since folks who do more sessions lose more weight.
- Invite participants to discuss their homework, Daily Food and Physical Activity Diaries, progress, and goals since the last class.
- Facilitate problem-solving for any barriers.

#### **Discussion #1: What is physical activity?**

- Ask participants to share their definition of physical activity. Use the "Be Physically Active" Healthy Living Message to facilitate a conversation about physical activity.
- Share a summary and link to Web site for the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans and refer to P38 Be Active Your Way for more details.
- Use handout P02 Benefits of Physical Activity to start a discussion about the benefits of physical activity. Ask each participant to share one benefit he or she has experienced.

#### **Discussion #2: What is the best way to prepare for physical activity?**

- Use MOVE!<sup>®</sup> handout P04 Why Warm-Up, Cool Down and Stretch? to explain the importance of warming up before and cooling down after physical activity.
- Ask the group what they know about how to prepare your body before being active. Try to get them to identify the following:
  - Proper clothing, shoes, and other safety needs.
  - Warming up and cooling down help prevent muscle soreness and injury.
  - Stretching is a good way to cool-down.
  - Warm-up and cool down could also include simply walking at a low intensity level for 5-10 minutes before increasing the pace to moderate intensity.
- Add any that they don't mention.

### **Discussion #3: How do I use a pedometer?**

- Ask if anyone has used a pedometer before, and offer a sentence or two about what a pedometer is for those who don't know.
- Discuss with participants the advantages of using a pedometer, and what brands may be the best to purchase. If pedometers are provided by your facility, determine and follow Prosthetics guidelines to obtain them. If not, list a few local stores where the Veteran can purchase one of these pedometers. Use MOVE!® handout S03 A Guide to Using Your Pedometer to demonstrate correct use of the pedometer. Answer any questions.
- Point out that being sedentary is not beneficial for their health, and that any amount of movement is better than none. Discuss how to establish a baseline number of steps; explain how the pedometer can be used to help set and monitor step and activity goals. Remind participants to set SMART goals.
- Offer option of logging activity by time (minutes per day) or distance if a pedometer is not available or not preferred by the participant.
- Ask participants to start logging steps in their Daily Food and Physical Activity Diary.
- Remember the following:
  - A pedometer is a great motivator to help meet a physical activity goal. Assist the Veteran in establishing his/her baseline and then set a goal to increase physical activity by a certain number of steps per day. Then recommend periodically (e.g., monthly) reviewing progress and considering increasing their goal. Emphasize that setting realistic goals can minimize frustration and lead to success.
  - Walking is an easy, inexpensive physical activity that you can do almost anywhere.
  - Consider pooling the number of steps completed by a group of Veterans and mapping how far the group has walked. For many participants, this will be very rewarding, and everyone's steps will contribute.

### **5-Minute MOVE!® (5 minutes)**

- Invite participants to walk around the room 3 times (or down the hall and back) and estimate how many steps they took while walking.
- Have participants repeat the 3 walking laps around the room and note how many steps are recorded by counting to themselves.

## **Discussion #4: How do I keep track?**

- Discuss how logging physical activity and calorie intake is the single most important thing you can do to change your eating and physical activity behaviors. Ask participants how they feel about logging their food and activity and allow the group time to come up with solutions to any difficulties discussed. Ask participants how confident they are that they can keep up with logging (0-10 scale). Ask them why the number is not higher. Then ask what would it take to move the number higher.

## **Putting It All Together (10 minutes)**

### **Session recap:**

- Remind participants that for health benefits, they should aim to be active at least 150 minutes per week at a moderate intensity level, or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity. Provide a weekly example of how to include physical activity throughout the week (e.g., 30 minutes, 5 days/week; 25 minutes, 6 days/week).
- For maximum health benefits, be active as much as possible. Point out that the activity can be completed in episodes as short as 10 minutes, if that is more realistic.
- The goal is to achieve 150 minutes per week and progress toward 300. Mention that in order to manage weight, working up to 300 minutes/week, or 5 hours, is best.
- Ask, “What was most helpful today? What could have been better?”

### **Goals and action planning for the next week:**

- Announce to the Veterans: “If you aren’t already active, now is your time to start!” Ask the Veterans to set a goal of being active for at least 10 minutes per day for the next week. That equals 70 minutes for the week, which is halfway to their weekly physical activity goal!
- Remind them to cool down with a nice stretch!

### **Homework for next week:**

- Remind participants to continue logging in their Daily Food and Physical Activity Diary and to bring the diary and their pedometer, if they elect to purchase one, to every session.
- Provide information necessary for attending the next session (date/time/location, etc.).

### **Topic for next week:**

Take Charge of Your Weight