

# 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

- Have the following materials available to share with participants:
  - S03 A Guide to Using Your Pedometer
  - S05 How Do I Get Started with Increasing My Physical Activity
  - P38 Be Active Your Way
  - NCP video – Physical Activity: A little goes a long way
- The following materials may also be helpful for facilitator review when planning the session or for participants to review independently, after session:
  - P04 Why Warm-Up, Cool Down and Stretch?
  - P02 Benefits of Physical Activity
  - P12 Making a Good Fit
  - P30 Sample Stretches
  - P26 Physical Activity Pyramid
  - Be Physically Active Healthy Living Message
  - 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.
- Your role is to facilitate discussion without lecturing.

## **Session Outline** (60 minutes)

- Check-in (5 minutes)
- Discussion Topics (40 minutes)
- 5-Minute MOVE! (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. Affirm all who completed, reassure those who didn't that they can do it this week – group can help them problem solve if they wish.

### **DISCUSSION TOPICS** (40 minutes)

#### **Introduction**

- Welcome everyone to the session; note how their continued attendance bodes well for weight loss success.
- Briefly point to Group Guidelines as a reminder.
- Describe the purpose of today's class. State today's objectives and discussion topics. Invite participants to discuss their homework, Daily Food and Physical Activity Diaries, progress, and goals since the last class.
- Facilitate group problem-solving for any barriers.

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

- Ask participants to share their definition of physical activity. Use content from the [Be Physically Active](#) Healthy Living message to facilitate a conversation about physical activity.
- If possible, show white board video [Physical Activity: A little goes a long way from prevention.va.gov](#).
- 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.
- Ask participants what they think some of the benefits of physical activity are. Ask participants to share one benefit he or she has experienced.

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

- Ask participants to share their ideas about how they could increase their physical activity. Use handout [S05 How Do I Get Started with Increasing My Physical Activity](#) to add to ideas they offer and for reference as needed.
- Ask participants to explain the importance of warming up before and cooling down after physical activity.
- 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.
- You may want to point them to [P04 Why Warm-Up, Cool Down and Stretch?](#), for additional review later.

## **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. If pedometers are provided by your facility, determine and follow facility 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 can be 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. Recommend periodically (e.g., at least 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 both express concerns and 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 lower, like 0 or 1. Then ask what it would take to move the number up just a bit.

### **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER** (10 minutes)

#### **Session recap:**

- Ask participants what their “takeaways” are from today's session. 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.

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

- Suggest to the Veterans: “If you aren’t already active, this is a great opportunity to choose to start!” Ask the Veterans if they are willing to set a goal of being active for at least 10 minutes per day for the next week. Explain that this equals 70 minutes for the week, which is halfway to their weekly amount of recommended physical activity!
- 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.
- Ask, “What was most helpful today? What could have been better?”
- Provide information necessary for attending the next session (date/time/location, etc.).

**Topic for next week:**

Take Charge of Your Weight