

Get Fit for Life

Session Overview

This session introduces the concepts of lifestyle and planned physical activity, how to find enjoyable ways to be physically active, and how to overcome barriers.

OBJECTIVES FOR SESSION

1. Understand the difference between lifestyle and planned physical activity
2. Discuss ways to be physically active and find enjoyable activities
3. Understand how to overcome barriers to physical activity

SESSION PREPARATION

- Have the following materials available to share with participants:
 - P01 Barriers to Physical Activity
 - P23 Activities to Fit Your Lifestyle
 - P24 Types of Physical Activity
- The following materials may also be helpful for facilitator review when planning the session or for participants to review independently, after session
 - P29 Planned Physical Activity
 - P38 Be Active Your Way
- Facilitate the session so that most of the talking comes from the participants and less from the leader.
- 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 the CPRS Vital Signs package.
- Collect Daily Food and Physical Activity Diaries.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (*40 minutes*)

Introduction

- Welcome everyone to the session and congratulate them on sticking to it. Can note that people who attend all sessions tend to lose more weight.
- Reference Group Guidelines only if new people present or need arises.
- 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 Diary, progress, and goals since the last class.
- Facilitate problem-solving for any barriers, with an emphasis on asking permission before offering advice (i.e., "May I make a suggestion?").

Discussion #1: What is the difference between lifestyle and planned physical activity?

- Use handout P24 Types of Physical Activity as needed, to facilitate this discussion.
- Write "Physical Activity" on a board and make two columns. Ask participants to give examples of physical activities. Without explanation, record the examples provided on the board and separate planned and lifestyle activities into two columns. Ask participants the difference between the columns and discuss why both planned and lifestyle activities are important when developing a physical activity plan. The purpose of this discussion is to differentiate between planned and lifestyle activity and to promote both.
- Refer to handout P23 Activities to Fit Your Lifestyle and ask participants to share what they think are lifestyle physical activities they have or can incorporate into their day or week. One of the MOVE! program goals is to help them become more active in their daily routine in ways that can be counted (planned activity) as well as in ways that they may not realize they can count (unplanned).

5-Minute MOVE! (5 minutes)

Incorporating physical activity into the session reinforces the healthy lifestyle message and provides opportunity to demonstrate some simple but effective exercises.

Ask participants if they would like to join you in doing the following warm-up and flexibility exercise:

Invite participants to stand up and march in place for 2–3 minutes. If they cannot stand, invite them to lift their knees while seated, as if marching.

Then, after 2–3 minutes, invite them to perform the following:

Hamstrings:

Sit in chair and extend one leg forward. Keep the knee straight with the toes pointed up. Gently lean forward toward your toes. Take a deep breath in and let it out slowly. You should feel a stretch in the hamstrings and calves. Reduce or discontinue the stretch if it increases leg pain. Repeat the exercise on other leg.



Discussion #2: How can I be more physically active and enjoy it?

- Ask the question: “What activities do you currently enjoy doing?” (If none, may need to ask about past enjoyable activities or activities they think they might like to do but have not tried yet.) You may want to mention that handout [P34 Step Conversions for Physical Activity](#) is available online or in their handout booklets, and can help with increasing physical activity through enjoyable activities, and explain how the conversion chart works. Remind participants that these converted steps can be added to their pedometer step tracking if they are using a pedometer.
- Ask participants to share fun activities that they enjoy. Consider adding in some unconventional activities that participants may not offer (e.g., hiking, dancing, gardening). You may want to mention that handout [P06 Exercise Can Be Fun](#), can be reviewed independently.
- Remind participants that those who are active in ways that they enjoy are more likely to stick with a regular physical activity routine and reach their goals.

Discussion #3: How do I handle barriers?

- Ask the question: “If being active is so good for us, why is it that many of us are not as active as we could be?” Share information from [P01 Barriers to Physical Activity](#), if needed, as participants offer responses to the question above. Ask participants to brainstorm how to overcome the barriers identified.
- Ask participants if they have developed a physical activity habit. Do they schedule time for physical activity on a regular basis? Why might they want to do so or are they ready to do so now?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER (10 minutes)

Session recap:

- Ask participants what they recall about the Physical Activity Guidelines discussed in session #3; you may want to suggest that they review [P38 Be Active Your Way](#), independently, if desired.

Goals and action planning for the next week:

- If Veterans are not achieving 150 minutes/week of physical activity, ask if they are ready to start!
- Remind Veterans to look for times during their day when they can insert just 10 extra minutes of activity.
- If they are already achieving 150 minutes/week, ask them to consider a new, higher goal. If there are questions about a recommended goal, you may want to share that the Physical Activity Guidelines recommend 300 minutes per week of moderate intensity activity to manage weight.
- Remind them that physical activity should feel challenging. If it’s getting too easy, they should find ways to increase intensity by adding more time, or increasing speed or weight.
- Ask, “What was most helpful today? What could have been better?”

Homework for next week:

- Thank participants for continuing to log in their Daily Food and Physical Activity Diary and ask them to continue to bring the diary and their pedometer to every session.
- Provide information necessary for attending the next session (date/time/location, etc.).

Topic for next week:

[Manage Stress and Handle Hunger](#)