

## **Ten Strategies for Ensuring Commitment to Active Aging**

### **Strategy #1**

*Have a written community goal statement for increasing levels of physical activity among older adults.*

### **Background**

Scientific evidence indicates that regular physical activity can bring dramatic health benefits to people of all ages and abilities, and that these benefits extend over the entire life-course. Physical activity offers one of the greatest opportunities to extend years of active, independent life, reduce disability, and improve the quality of life of older adults.

Regular physical activity reduces the risk of dying prematurely and developing diabetes, high blood pressure, and colon cancer. It reduced feelings of depression and anxiety, helps control weight, helps maintain healthy bones and muscles, and promotes psychological well-being. Despite these health advantages, one-third of adults age 50+ live sedentary lives.

Physical activity should be an integral part of daily life. It is recommended that people of all ages participate in moderate physical activity, such as walking, for a minimum of 30 minutes a day, five times per week. To meet this recommendation, physical activity can be accumulated during the day, such as walking for 10 minutes three times daily.

### **Getting Started**

An increasing number of communities are identifying goals for increasing physical activity levels among older adults in the community. Goals are written statements about what your group wants to accomplish. Your goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, and time specific. They can be long-term or short-term. Start by planning a vision of where you want to be in terms of physical activity in your community, then adding strategies and action steps to achieve your plan.

### **Internet Resources on Physical Activity and Aging**

The National Blueprint: Increasing Physical Activity Among Adults Age 50 and Older  
[www.agingblueprint.org/PDFs/Final\\_Blueprint\\_Doc.pdf](http://www.agingblueprint.org/PDFs/Final_Blueprint_Doc.pdf)

Healthy People in Healthy Communities Planning Guide  
(U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/Publications/HealthyCommunities2001/healthycom01hk.pdf>

NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging – Physical Activity Resources  
[www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=73](http://www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=73)

Active for Life  
[www.activeforlife.info](http://www.activeforlife.info)

Active Options for Aging Americans  
[www.activeoptions.org](http://www.activeoptions.org)

### **Internet Resources on Setting Goals**

University of Kansas Community Toolbox  
Analyzing Problems and Goals  
[http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/tk/en/tools\\_tk\\_3.jsp](http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/tk/en/tools_tk_3.jsp)

New York State Department of Health  
Setting Goals and Objectives  
<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/chac/goal2.htm>

### **Strategy #2**

*Establish a community coalition or community advisory group with representation from a variety of community, aging, and health sectors to promote active aging programs and opportunities for older adults.*

### **Background**

Organizations that tackle the problem of sedentary lifestyles must consider the many factors that influence older adults' lives. Therefore, organizations will need to engage multiple levels of community infrastructure and expand their level of social and environmental influence. An integrated and collaborative approach will involve individuals and organizations in health care, social services, transportation, parks and recreation, exercise and fitness, senior living facilities, community planning, and other diverse areas of professional expertise.

Some of the challenges of initiating and maintaining a community partnership, task force, or committee will be enlisting volunteers or professionals who will commit to the task long-term, keeping committee members informed and updated, keeping the group motivated, and helping team members work cooperatively for the sake of the common goals.

## **Getting Started**

Start with a list of potential individuals and organizations that could join the committee. Consider taking advantage of local partnerships that have already been established. If the goal is to use as many community resources as possible, then group membership should be open to anyone who has an interest in the group's goals. Be sure to include community citizens on the roster. Decide if the group will charge a fee for membership to cover the coalition's costs, what role each member will play, and how tasks will be assigned or distributed.

## **Internet Resources on Building Community Partnerships**

Community Partnerships for Older Adults  
<http://www.partnershipsforolderadults.org/>

Minnesota Department of Health Community Health Promotion Guide  
Building a Team  
[http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/hpkit/text/team\\_main.htm](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/hpkit/text/team_main.htm)

New York State Department of Health  
Engaging Partners  
<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/chac/partners2.htm>

University of Kansas Community Toolbox  
Create Coalitions and Partnerships  
<http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/coalitions/create/quicktips.jsp>

## **Examples of Effective Partnerships**

Greater Lafayette Coalition for Living Well After 50  
(Example of community coalition)  
<http://www.livingwellafter50.org/>

Partnership for Prevention  
From the Field: Four Communities Implement Active Aging Programs  
[http://www.prevent.org/images/stories/Files/publications/CCFAA\\_case\\_studies.pdf](http://www.prevent.org/images/stories/Files/publications/CCFAA_case_studies.pdf)

Partnering to Promote Healthy Aging: Creative Best Practice Community Partnerships  
<http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/content.asp?sectionid=31&ElementID=160>

## **Strategy #3**

*Conduct a community assessment of rates of older adult participation in community-based physical activity programs or opportunities.*

## **Background**

To reach your goals of increasing physical activity among older adults, it is necessary to know where you are starting from. A community assessment helps to identify the status of physical activity involvement among the older adult population and to lay the foundation for developing strategies for reaching your goals. This assessment will also be useful when evaluating the success of various efforts. Numerous measures could be used to access this information:

- The number and types of physical activity programs available for older adults
- Program participation rates of community physical activity programs, worksite programs
- Inventory and participation rates of older adults in fitness centers and clubs
- Health status indicators, such as morbidity and mortality data and health status data
- Resource inventories: human, organizational, institutional, material
- Inventory of outdoor resources: parks, recreation centers, walking/biking trails, etc.
- Environmental surveys outlining pedestrian walkability

## **Getting Started**

Ideally, your group will gather baseline information before taking any action steps. Make specific plans for who will gather what information from whom, and in what time-frame, before starting the analysis.

## **Internet Resources on Community Assessments**

Minnesota Department of Health Community Health Promotion Guide  
Community Assessment

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/hpkit/text/phase1.htm>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Healthy People in Healthy Communities: A Community Planning Guide Using  
Healthy People 2010

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/Publications/HealthyCommunities2001/healthycom01hk.pdf>

New York State Department of Health

Ten Steps in Community Health Assessment Development Process  
<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/chac/10steps.htm>

University of Kansas Community Toolbox  
Community Assessment  
[http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/chapter\\_1003.htm](http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/chapter_1003.htm)

National Association of County & City Health Officials  
MAPP Field Guide: A Strategic Approach to Community Health Improvement  
<http://www.uic.edu/sph/prepare/courses/ph420/resources/mappguide.pdf>

Walkable America's Walkability Checklist  
<http://www.walkableamerica.org/checklist-walkability.pdf#search=%22walkability%20assessment%22>

#### **Strategy #4**

*Assess the availability and accessibility of physical activity programs and opportunities for older adults in your community.*

#### **Background**

How many physical activity programs and opportunities are available to the 50+ population in your community? Does your community offer several programs located in one area and none in other areas? How can adults age 50+ access the programs? Is city transportation provided?

Many neighborhoods or communities are unsafe or poorly designed. Some neighborhoods have no sidewalks, and other areas are in the midst of busy thoroughfares, making it dangerous to cross the street to a nearby store. In addition, many older adults are isolated and lack transportation to community physical activity facilities and programs.

#### **Getting Started**

Create a listing of physical activity facilities, programs, and outdoor opportunities that promote an active lifestyle, such as walking paths and sidewalks. Determine which neighborhoods have plenty of opportunities, and which ones are in need of new programs. It may be helpful to start with the list of age-friendly fitness and wellness facilities located on the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) web site. ICAA also offers a checklist for communities and individuals to use to compare and rate local facilities. The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability also has an online directory of local programs available for people with disabilities and health conditions.

## **Internet Resources on Program Evaluation**

American Society on Aging

Live Well, Live Long: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention for Older Adults  
Sample Evaluation Questions, Indicators, and Data Sources for a Community-Based  
Physical Activity Program

[http://www.asaging.org/CDC/module6/phase5/phase5\\_3.cfm](http://www.asaging.org/CDC/module6/phase5/phase5_3.cfm)

Active Living Coalition for Older Adults

Research Update, March 2003

Monitoring and Evaluating Physical Activity Programs for Older Adults

[http://www.alcoa.ca/research\\_u\\_docs/2003\\_03mar\\_en\\_update.pdf#search=%22evaluating%20physical%20activity%20programs%22](http://www.alcoa.ca/research_u_docs/2003_03mar_en_update.pdf#search=%22evaluating%20physical%20activity%20programs%22)

International Council on Active Aging

Age-Friendly Facility Checklist

<http://www.icaa.cc/Membersection/Membersupport/2005checklist.pdf>

International Council on Active Aging

Age-Friendly Fitness and Wellness Facilities Locator

<http://www.icaa.cc/facilitylocator.htm>

National Center on Physical Activity and Disabilities

Listing of programs by location

<http://www.ncpad.org/programs/>

National Council on the Aging

Center for Healthy Aging

Physical Activity Programs Checklist

<http://www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=73&ElementID=334>

### **Strategy #5**

*Develop a community plan to address barriers to, and enhancements for, increasing older adults' participation in physical activity programs or opportunities.*

### **Background**

A strategic plan outlines the objectives, goals, and strategies that your community team will use to promote active aging/physical activity for older adults. A broad-based community health plan will describe in detail the feasibility of your plan, the cost to execute the plan, the impact that you envision your plan will have on the community, time-frame for completing your goals, and the people who will lead the various action items.

## **Getting Started**

For each action item identified, include a description of the action step, or what will happen; the people involved; the time-line for completing this step; the required resources; the barriers or resistance to the plan; and potential collaborators. Carefully crafted action plans add credibility to your initiative, enforce accountability, and ensure that no important tasks are overlooked. Action plans save time, energy, and resources long-term and keep everyone on task.

The University of Kansas advises taking the following steps to plan your work:

- 1) Convene a planning group to design your action plan.
- 2) Develop a plan composed of action steps that address all proposed changes
- 3) Review your plan carefully to check for completeness; make sure each action plan will help achieve your goals.
- 4) Follow through with the action steps.
- 5) Keep everyone informed.
- 6) Keep track of what and how well you have done.

## **Internet Resources on Strategic Planning**

Minnesota Department of Health Community Health Promotion Guide  
Developing a Plan of Action

[http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/hpkit/text/action\\_main.htm](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/hpkit/text/action_main.htm)

University of Kansas Community Toolbox  
Developing a Strategic Plan

[http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/chapter\\_1007.htm](http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/chapter_1007.htm)

Illinois Association of Regional Councils  
Developing a Community Strategic Plan: A Guide for Local Officials

<http://www.ncicg.org/CSPTOC.pdf#search=%22developing%20community%20strategic%20plans%22>

Montana Disability and Health Program Strategic Plan 2006-2010 (executive summary)

(Example of a strategic health plan)

<http://mtdh.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/Publications/ExecSummary.htm>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Healthy People 2010 Toolkit

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/state/toolkit/priorities.htm>

## **Strategy #6**

*Create a community resource listing of physical activity programs and opportunities appropriate for older adults.*

### **Background**

Residents may not realize all that their community has to offer in terms of physical activity options. From wellness facilities to park and recreation programs, and to walking groups, communities typically have numerous opportunities available. Community residents can benefit from having a published list of options that includes program locations, hours of operation, contact information, and a description of activities.

### **Getting Started**

A list could be organized by location as well as type of program/facility. Include in the list all opportunities, including parks, trails, golf courses, tennis facilities, running tracks, and physical activity groups.

### **Internet Resources on Creating a List of Physical Activity Opportunities**

Community Connector (Sample Listing from Franklin County, Maine)

<http://www.thecommunityconnector.org/directory/168>

Healthy People in Healthy Communities Planning Guide

(U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/Publications/HealthyCommunities2001/healthycom01hk.pdf>

NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging – Physical Activity Resources

[www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=73](http://www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=73)

Active for Life

Template for a Community Resource Guide

<http://www.activeforlife.info/resources/files/Community%20Guide%20Template%20generic-detailed.pdf>

## **Strategy #7**

*Initiate a community campaign to educate older adults about the different ways they can achieve recommended levels of physical activity.*

### **Background**

Recruiting participants for community physical activity programs can be challenging since many older adults are reluctant to join programs for numerous reasons. Recruitment typically requires using community partnerships and referral strategies to identify potential participants and effective promotion initiatives or campaigns to generate interest in the programs your community has to offer.

### **Getting Started**

Many communities publish physical activity guides that list recreation areas, fitness and health centers, faith-based exercise programs, walking paths and clubs, and other locations where older adults can join in and get active. Other promotion ideas include special-purpose walking campaigns, new program announcements at the local YMCA or senior center, and special promotions and incentives for older adults at area fitness clubs.

### **Internet Resources on Promotion, Advertising, and Recruitment**

National Council on the Aging  
Center for Healthy Aging  
Recruiting Older Adults into Your Physical Activity Programs  
<http://www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=73&ElementID=384>

Active for Life National Program Office  
Template for a Community Resource Guide  
<http://www.activeforlife.info/resources/files/Community%20Guide%20Template%20generic-detailed.pdf>

National Blueprint: Increasing Physical Activity Among Adults Age 50 and Older  
[http://www.agingblueprint.org/PDFs/Final\\_Blueprint\\_Doc.pdf](http://www.agingblueprint.org/PDFs/Final_Blueprint_Doc.pdf)

Active Options for Aging Americans  
<http://www.activeoptions.org>

NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging – Physical Activity Resources  
<http://www.healthyagingprograms.com/content.asp?sectionid=73>

### **Innovative Programs**

National Blueprint  
Blueprint Mini-Grant Programs  
(For ideas on promotion and recruitment)  
<http://www.agingblueprint.org/grant.cfm>

Best Practices in Physical Activity Programming

<http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/content.asp?sectionid=73&ElementID=144>

### **Strategy #8**

*Increase the variety of accessible and appropriate group-based physical activity programs as well as self-directed opportunities within the community for those 50+.*

### **Background**

A local coalition of various organizations, agencies, and businesses that has previously identified physical activity options in the community can brainstorm new ways to offer physical activity opportunities and programs. Communities can start walking groups, develop trails, create intergenerational projects, or a host of other options. Collaboration is key in identifying and initiating new programs for older adults.

### **Getting Started**

Learn what are groups are doing in their communities. Discover how coalition members can work together to increase the number of physical activity options.

### **Internet Resources on Physical Activity Interventions in Communities**

Center for Home Care Policy and Research

[http://www.vnsny.org/advantage/tools/Advantage\\_best.pdf](http://www.vnsny.org/advantage/tools/Advantage_best.pdf)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Exemplary State Programs on Physical Activity and Healthy Nutrition

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/publications/exemplary/pdfs/Nutrition.pdf>

Partnering to Promote Healthy Aging: Creative Best Practice Community Partnerships

<http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/content.asp?sectionid=31&ElementID=160>

Partnership for Prevention

From the Field: Four Communities Implement Active Aging Programs

[http://www.prevent.org/images/stories/Files/publications/CCFAA\\_case\\_studies.pdf](http://www.prevent.org/images/stories/Files/publications/CCFAA_case_studies.pdf)

### **Strategy #9**

*Establish physical activity programs and opportunities in multiple locations and populations throughout the community with attention to ensuring cultural appropriateness and inclusion.*

### **Background**

The older adult population is more diverse today than ever before in terms of race, culture, education, functional levels, and socioeconomic status. Some cultural groups are more physically active than others. According to an article in the International Council on Active Aging Journal on Active Aging, European Americans exercise the most, and African Americans and Latinos exercise the least. People with low levels of education and income are the least physically active. Physical activity programs that are a one-size-fits-all model will be less successful than programs specifically targeted to subgroups of the population.

### **Getting Started**

The American Society on Aging advises the following four steps:

- 1) Learn the history of the community
- 2) Engage with older adults in the community
- 3) Learn about key cultural factors and barriers
- 4) Look for strengths and resources in the community

### **Internet Resources on Addressing Cultural Sensitivity**

American Society on Aging

Creating Culturally Sensitive and Effective Health Promotion Materials

<http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module1/phase4/index.cfm>

International Council on Active Aging

Journal on Active Aging Article: Cultural Approaches to Promoting Physical Activity for Older Adults

[http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/resources/CulturalApproaches\\_PromotingPA.pdf](http://www.healthyagingprograms.org/resources/CulturalApproaches_PromotingPA.pdf)

### **Strategy #10**

*Institute community-wide planning and policies to sustain community-based physical activity programming and opportunities for older adults over time.*

### **Background**

A coalition developed to promote active aging must continue its planning efforts to use local resources for this purpose and sustain physical activity programs that are available for older adults. Commitment of various individuals and groups must be ongoing to reach the goal of increasing physical activity among adults age 50+

### **Getting Started**

The Healthy People 2010 Toolkit provides these steps:

- 1) Designate coalition partners to coordinate planned activities.
- 2) Create a work plan for monitoring progress in reaching goals.
- 3) Assign development tasks to individuals.
- 4) Establish and implement processes for input from key organizations, groups.
- 5) Develop a 5- to 10-year plan to implement, evaluate, and revise the plan.

### **Internet Resources on Policies**

Healthy People 2010 Toolkit

Managing and Sustaining the Process

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/state/toolkit/11Managing2002.pdf>

Nutrition and Physical Activity: A Policy Resource Guide

[http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/steps/publications/nutrition\\_activity\\_policy\\_guide\\_final.pdf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/steps/publications/nutrition_activity_policy_guide_final.pdf)

State Government of Victoria

Health Promotion Strategies for Community Health Services

[http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthpromotion/downloads/ebpf\\_nutrition.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthpromotion/downloads/ebpf_nutrition.pdf)

Washington State Department of Health

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Lessons Learned: Promoting Physical Activity at the Community Level

[http://www.rwjf.org/files/publications/LessonsLearned\\_PhysicalActivity\\_GRR.pdf](http://www.rwjf.org/files/publications/LessonsLearned_PhysicalActivity_GRR.pdf)