

EnhanceFitness (EF)

What is it?

- Developed at the University of Washington, EF—formerly Lifetime Fitness—is an exercise program that combines cardiovascular and balance exercises, strength training, and stretching to prevent functional decline in older adults.
- Classes are dynamic and interactive. In hour-long sessions conducted three times a week, EF instructors lead small groups through a series of stretches, low-impact aerobics, and strength training activities (using soft ankle and wrist weights).
- All activities can be adapted to participants' fitness levels and tailored to be arthritis appropriate. Participants are encouraged to provide peer support.
- Fitness checks are provided at the beginning of the program and every 4 months thereafter. All exercise equipment is provided by the facility.
- EF instructors are required to hold a nationally recognized fitness instructor certification. They also receive 12 hours of specialized training by an EF master trainer.

Who is it for?

- EF is designed for older adults who want to improve or maintain physical function.
- It is geared toward the general community, as well as people with chronic health conditions such as arthritis.

What are the benefits?

- EF has undergone rigorous program evaluation and clinical study totaling thousands of participants. Proven benefits include improvements in overall fitness, social function, physical function, and depression. These effects have been documented across ethnically and socioeconomically diverse communities.
- Participants report high levels of satisfaction with the program and adherence is strong. Over 99% of participants say they would recommend EF to a friend.
- Cost-benefit analyses have found that older adults who participate in EF cost their insurers less, due primarily to fewer in-patient hospital stays.
- EF has been recognized as a ground-breaking program in preventive health. It has won several local, national, and international awards including the 2005 Annual Innovation in Prevention Award from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For More Information

- Project Enhance
www.projectenhance.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions/physical_activity.htm

Contact

References

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