

Increasing physical activity among adults with disabilities

Doctors and other health professionals can use these steps to recommend aerobic physical activity options that match each person's specific abilities and connect him or her to resources that can help each person be physically active.



1. Know the Physical Activity Guidelines

The Physical Activity Guidelines are for everybody. www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/

Review the patient's charts before each visit.

Explain that adults of all shapes, sizes and abilities can benefit from being physically active.



Encourage at least 2½ hours a week of moderate-intensity physical activity.



2. Ask about physical activity

Remember to look beyond the disability and put the person first. Use terms such as "person with a disability" instead of "disabled" or "handicapped person".

How can you add more physical activity in your life?

What types of physical activity do you enjoy?

How much physical activity are you currently doing each week?

3. Discuss barriers to physical activity

Physical Barriers

Emotional Barriers

4. Recommend physical activity options

Describe physical activity options based on patient's abilities.

Brisk walking

Wheeling oneself in wheelchair

Swimming laps

Water aerobics

Hand-crank bicycle

5. Refer patient to resources and programs

Check-in with patient about his or her activity level at every visit.

Refer patient to resources and programs to help them begin or maintain their physical activity.

Remember to use the "teach-back" method to make sure patient understands the recommendations.

Wheelchair basketball, tennis, football, or softball

For resources: www.cdc.gov/disabilities/PA, www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns