

HEALTHY AGING IN PARKS



EVIDENCE-BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

NRPA's initiative to improve and maintain the health and wellbeing of older adults by increasing opportunities for physical activity through parks and recreation.



Physical Activity, Chronic Diseases & Parks and Recreation

Regular physical activity is essential for healthy aging, and provides substantial benefits to the mental, social and physical wellbeing of older adults. Older Adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity, aerobic activity such as walking, biking or swimming each week.

Four out of five (70 million) older adults 50 years and older in America suffer from one or more chronic conditions such as arthritis, diabetes and heart disease. However, the availability of evidence-based physical activity interventions at local park and recreation agencies that allow older adults to socialize and engage in physical activity is one important way to help them manage their conditions, maintain functional independence, and remain vital contributors to their communities.

NRPA, through support from the CDC, is partnering with local park and recreation agencies across the United States to increase the availability and reach of evidence-based physical activity programs such as Walk With Ease, Active Living Every Day, and Fit & Strong!. These programs are suitable for people with or without chronic conditions.

To date, 152 local park and recreation agencies across 45 states and American Samoa have implemented these physical activity programs in their communities. Program instructors enjoy offering the classes and participants have benefitted tremendously.

NRPA'S HEALTHY AGING IN PARKS PROGRAM DETAILS

	Program Recommendation Continuum	Program Overview	Expected Outcomes	Program Components	Target Audience	Program Duration	Mode of Delivery and Class Sizes	Participant Requirements	Instructor Certification	Implementation Costs	Tools and Available Resources
Walk With Ease	Able to walk or stand for 10 minutes with no lower-extremity limitations.	Multi-component, low-impact walking program to teach people how to safely and comfortably incorporate physical activity into their everyday lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increased strength, balance, walking pace, physical ability •Decreased perceived stress, pain and fatigue •Reductions in physical disability 	Health education, stretching and strengthening exercises, 10-40 minutes of walking.	People with arthritis and other chronic conditions; all others interested in a walking program.	6-week program; 60 minutes classes 3x/week.	Up to 20 participants per instructor or participant self-directed classes. Larger class sizes require an additional instructor. Online tools available to participants.	Participant booklet- \$4.76 per participant. Must be able to stand or walk for a minimum of 10 minutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online Training: 3-4 hours •Cost: \$89 (includes instructor manual) •CPR certification required •First Aid certification a plus •No recertification required 	No licensing fee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Walk With Ease Class Zero video •Best Practices Guide •Marketing toolkit •Technical assistance •Fidelity Checklist
Active Living Every Day	Sedentary adult in need of motivation.	A behavior-change program that teaches sedentary people the skills necessary to overcome barriers to physical activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increased physical activity and aerobic fitness •Improved blood pressure, blood lipid levels •Reduced body fat 	Classroom-based group discussions focused on providing information, skills, and a step-by-step process for creating an active lifestyle. Physical activity is done outside of the class.	Sedentary people with or without chronic diseases interested in becoming physically active.	12-week program; 60 minutes classes 1x/week.	Up to 20 participants per instructor. Larger class sizes require an additional instructor. Online tools available to participants.	Participant workbook- \$40 per participant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Online training: 4-6 hours •Cost: \$392 (includes copy of instructor manual and participant booklet) •No recertification required 	No licensing fee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Best Practices Guide •Marketing toolkit •Technical assistance •Implementation guidelines •Fidelity Checklist
Fit & Strong!	Wants to be physically active but has lower-extremity limitations and/or mobility challenges.	Multi-component physical activity and behavior-change program that teaches sedentary adults with joint pain and stiffness how to engage in safe and effective exercise and provides motivational tools for physical activity maintenance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved long-term engagement in physical activity • Improved lower-extremity muscle strength • Reduced joint pain and stiffness • Improved aerobic capacity and mobility • Improved anxiety and depression 	60 minutes of flexibility/balance, low-impact aerobics, and strengthening exercises followed by 30 minutes of health education to create and maintain a healthy lifestyle.	People with arthritis and other chronic conditions with challenged mobility.	8 or 12-week program; 90 minutes 3x/week for 8 weeks or 90 minutes 2x/week for 12 weeks.	Up to 20 participants per instructor. Larger class sizes require an additional instructor.	Participant manual- \$35 per participant; ankle cuff weights, floor mats and resistance bands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •*Online training: 8 hours •*Cost: \$400 (includes copy of instructor and participant manual) •CPR certification a plus •Fitness instructor OR experience leading other evidence-based programs required *Subject to Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No Licensing fee •Equipment (if not available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Marketing toolkit •Technical assistance •Implementation guide •Fidelity checklist



Partner and Participant Feedback

“The Walk With Ease Program has had an impactful benefit to the community of Spearfish. We have been able to make a real connection with community members, in turn helping them learn and grow to a greater extent.”

- Spearfish Recreation and Aquatics Center, SD

“Walking has increased my mobility. I can walk to the corner store and do things for myself and this way I’m not an unnecessary burden to my family and friends.”

- 79 year old Walk With Ease participant, AZ

For questions about how you can become a delivery partner and adopt an evidence-based physical activity program in your community, contact [Leshia Spencer-Brown](mailto:Leshia.Spencer-Brown@nrpa.org) at Leshia.Spencer-Brown@nrpa.org