

Fitness for Meetings: A Showcase for the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*

Incorporating physical activity into meetings and classes can be done easily and successfully. You can lead activities yourself or invite a fitness professional, if available, to provide more advanced instruction. Remember, the overall goals are to be safe and to have fun. By planning ahead and following these basic principles of the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, you can have energetic, enthusiastic, and engaged participants!

- **Any activity is better than no activity.** Many factors affect the activities you can do during training: room layout, participants' abilities, and the weather, for example. Just stay committed to incorporating as much physical activity as possible in any situation.
- **Ten minute 'sparks' of physical activity help energize the brain and the body.** Short intervals of activity can provide both mental and physical benefits. Try to incorporate 5–10 active minutes into every 60–90 minutes of teaching.
- **Simple muscle-strengthening activities can be done in any setting.** Pumping arms and knees higher while walking can help to build strength, as does using the stairs. Resistance bands are an easy, inexpensive way to pump up arm and leg muscles.
- **Stretching helps keep minds flexible, while reducing tension and tiredness.** Hours of sitting in chairs are exhausting, both mentally and physically. Gentle stretches—without bouncing—of the neck, arms, and legs can quickly relieve an energy slump.
- **Balancing activities is important for everyone, especially as we age.** Simple, effective balance activities can be done while holding onto the back of a chair. Ask attendees to balance on tippy toes or on one foot, then the other.
- **Fun is an essential part of physical activity.** Children and adults are more likely to do the activities they really enjoy. Laughter is not only great medicine, but it can also help open participants' minds to new ideas and their own creativity.

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More Resources

If you need more ideas for specific physical activities for group meetings, conferences, and classes, check with your local or state health department, university, or extension office. Here are several online examples of what they may have to offer.

www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/NEW/resources/Factoids/Fact1_PhysicalActivityBreaks.pdf

www.health.gov/paguidelines/resources

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