

BE ACTIVE . . .



"Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Through Physical Activity"



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You Can Do It!

Most people are aware of the health benefits of exercise and believe that participation in some kind of regular physical activity is important. However, getting started on a fitness program can be daunting to many people who are confused about how, when, and what they should be doing.

Exercising for Aerobic Fitness

The basic recommendation is this: every U.S. adult should accumulate 30 minutes or more of aerobic exercise on most days of the week. Aerobic activities are those that use large muscle groups and increase your breathing and your heart rate.



It doesn't matter if you bike, swim, roller blade, or row. The options are endless so choose something that you will enjoy and is convenient for you to do. For most people, walking fits the bill; it can be done year round and requires nothing more extravagant than a good pair of walking shoes.

Build up Gradually

If you currently do not engage in exercise regularly, begin by doing ten minutes of aerobic activity on at least four days each week during your first two weeks. In the third week, increase your daily activity to a total of 15 minutes. Each week, continue adding 5 minutes to your daily sessions so that by week six you're achieving your goal of 30 minutes per day on most days. Remember, you do not have

to complete the entire 30 minutes of physical activity in one session; a morning 15 minute walk and an evening 15 minute walk can be counted together as meeting your daily quota.



Finding the Right Pace

One way to set the right pace is to imagine a scale from 1 to 10; a "1" is equivalent to sitting in a chair listening to soft music and a "10" is moving as fast as you possibly can. When you are starting a fitness program, aim for a "5" on the scale. At this intensity you should be able to talk while doing your specific physical activity.

Tips for Sticking with your Fitness Goal

- Find a physical activity buddy. Social support improves maintenance, so recruit a friend, spouse or neighbor to join you.
- Try a new route. Think of walking or biking as a mini-adventure; explore another part of your neighborhood. Drive to a park so that you can take a walk in a completely different environment. Swimmers can go to a different pool or swim in a lake.

- Try a new activity. It might be time to take up line-dancing, snowshoeing, try a group exercise class, or learn to swim. Variety is a sure way to keep you motivated.



ACES (All Children Exercise Simultaneously)

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports month and what better way to celebrate than by taking part in ACES day (All Children Exercise Simultaneously). The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports is proud to once again sponsor this event which will take place on **May 7, 2003** and marks its 15th anniversary.

Maine's 2002 event was a great success with over 17,000 participants from 77 schools, 1 daycare, and 1 YWCA participating (up from 65 schools and one daycare in 2001).

Help make 2003 an even greater success. Get involved with your schools, YMCA/YWCA's and daycares. Information can be found on our website at www.mainephysicalactivity.org/ACES/ACES.htm; or contact us at 207-622-7566, ext. 230 or by email at gcpfs@mcd.org.

For more information about the Maine Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, check out our web page at www.mainephysicalactivity.org; email us at gcpfs@mcd.org, or call us at 207-622-7566, ext. 220 or 230.



News Flash



The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports will conduct its annual "**Legislative Fitness Fair**" in the State House under the rotunda on **February 13, 2003, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** LFF '03 will feature several fitness stations including cholesterol screening, body composition, blood pressure measurement, static strength, flexibility, cardiovascular fitness, posture, and diabetic risk factors. Prizes will be available to those

who complete a prescribed number of stations. Experts will be on hand to discuss and interpret each person's results. Nutritious refreshments will be served!

The purpose of LFF is to draw public attention to the need for exercise and proper nutrition. All are welcome. Please ask your legislator to attend. LFF is co-sponsored by the Maine Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MAHPERD).

Even Babies Need Exercise

Parents are starting to catch on to the idea that everyone needs exercise, even babies and toddlers.

One mother says she likes to encourage her son of 18 months to move around as much as possible. "Before we started coming to the playground every day, he would be whiney and clinging after breakfast. But now, even just 10 or 15 minutes of him walking around makes him calmer and more likely to take a nap."

That's exactly what the authors of Active Start, the first set of exercise suggestions for babies, which were put out by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), want to hear more parents saying.

The earlier babies, toddlers, and preschool children are active, the better the likelihood of healthy development in later life. Regular exercise causes the kind of development that is important for health. Infancy and the toddler years are the time that the brain is developing connections to the muscles. Children who do not get enough exercise may miss out on the chance to make the strong kinds of brain-muscle connections that make physical activity easier and more fun.

For babies, exercise is great for a healthy weight, not just now, but as they grow up. If kids enjoy exercise as babies, they will be more active as adults.

In a two-year study of overweight 8- to 12-year-old kids, increased activity and less television viewing resulted in a healthy weight loss.* The study also

showed that children who are more physically active are less likely to have weight problems.

The NASPE's Active Start guidelines are divided into two groups of activity levels--one for babies and one for toddlers.

Here are some suggestions for babies:

- ⊙ Babies should be in places that encourage physical activity and don't keep them from moving for a long time.
- ⊙ Parents and caretakers can help by realizing how important physical activity is and encourage children to be more active.

For toddlers, the NASPE says skills such as running, jumping, throwing, and kicking are influenced by the environment they grow up in. For example, a child who does not have access to stairs may be delayed in stair climbing and a child who is discouraged from bouncing and chasing balls may fall behind in hand-eye coordination.

Here are some of the suggestions for toddlers:

- ⊙ Toddlers should spend about 30 minutes each day being physically active. Preschoolers need at least 60 minutes.
- ⊙ Both toddlers and preschoolers should not be confined for more than 60 minutes at a time in car seats or strollers, except when sleeping.

* Study published in the August 1999 issue of *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*.

New Survey Conducted on Attitude about PA/PE

Recent studies by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show the number of overweight children has more than doubled in the last three decades; 5.3 million, or 12.5% of Americans between 6 and 17 are overweight. The CDC estimates sick care costs associated with overweight such as diabetes and heart disease at \$100 billion a year, about 8% of the national health care budget.

The lack of physical activity among Americans of all ages is so critical, it is considered to be a major health risk factor. Physical inactivity is a risk factor for many conditions including obesity/overweight, stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, various cancers, diabetes, depression, and others.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) wanted to explore with adults and teens their **attitudes** about physical activity and physical education. Following is a sampling of the results.

- ♣ Almost nine-in-ten (88%) of all adults feel that being physically fit will help them improve their job performance because it gives them more energy, greater mental alertness, reduces stress, and allows for better time management.
- ♣ Those adults who don't think they are getting enough physical activity most often says it's because of: their job (23%), not having enough time (18%), health problems (12%), or lack of interest or motivation (12%).
- ♣ On average, American adults watch 2.2 hours of television per day.
- ♣ Three-quarters (76%) of adults with children in the household (aged 6-17) feel that their children are getting enough daily physical activity to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- ♣ The majority of adults (85%) with children ages 6-17, have a positive perception about their child's physical education classes.
- ♣ Nearly three-fourths (73%) of American adults who have children aged 6-17 believe that physical

education will assist the development of learning capabilities in other subject areas, such as math, reading, or science.

- ♣ The majority of parents feel that television (42%) and computers or video games (41%) are the largest barriers to their children's physical activity. Lack of interest or motivation (29%), too much homework (28%), and lack of access to safe facilities (21%) follow closely behind.
- ♣ The majority of parents (84%) with children aged 6-17 feel that participation in a sport or physical activity positively affects their child's self esteem.
- ♣ An overwhelming majority (85%) of all adults with children aged 6-17 believe that participation in sports or physical activities minimizes their child's ability to get into trouble.
- ♣ Slightly more than half (59%) of teens participate in an organized team or sports club after school.
- ♣ When asked to name the person that would **best** help them be more active, a majority of teens selected: friends (56%), followed by parents (18%) and professional athletes (11%).
- ♣ A large majority (85%) of all American teens are of the belief that their participation in sports or physical activity will help them stay out of trouble.
- ♣ Most teens feel they spend the majority of their "downtime" in an average day on a personal computer (Internet browsing, chat rooms, games, or school research - 1.9 hours) and/or doing homework (1.9 hours). They feel the least amount of time is spent playing video games (1.0 hours) per day.

This survey was conducted by Opinion Research Corporation International of Princeton, NJ, for the National Association for Sport and Physical Education. For more information check out www.aahperd.org/NASPE/template.cfm?template+pressPe.html.

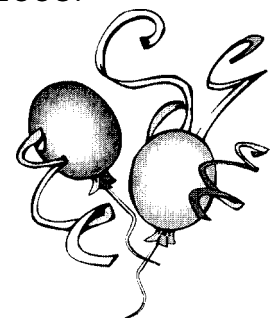
Contest for Communities

Contest for Communities is an annual celebration to recognize communities, workplaces, organizations, and individuals that are working to improve physical activity in their respective areas.

On **May 15, 2003**, we will gather at the State House Hall of Flags to present awards and recognize nominees for their contribution in keeping Maine active. Nominations are accepted in the following categories: youth, adult, special populations, community organizations, healthy workplace, and lifetime achievement.

Won't you nominate an individual or organization in your community who is a role model for all of Maine? The criteria and selection process can be found on the Maine Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports website at www.mainephysicalactivity.org or from Diane Campbell at 622-7566, ext. 230, or dianec@mcd.org.

Deadline for submission is **March 29, 2003**.



New Healthy Weight Awareness Campaign

There is an obesity epidemic in Maine and across the nation. Over half of Maine adults are obese or overweight, and nationally the obesity rate for children has increased by 100% in just the last 20 years. On October 22nd the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program, in collaboration with the Maine Nutrition Network, kicked off its "Enough is Enough" campaign with a press conference at the State House in Augusta. This "Healthy Weight Awareness Campaign" is a multi-faceted social marketing campaign that focuses on increasing awareness among Maine's citizens. The primary focus of the campaign is on parents of children and the importance of making healthy choices around physical activity and nutrition.

Behavioral and environmental factors are large contributors to the overweight and obesity trend and

they also provide the greatest opportunity for actions and interventions designed for prevention and treatment. The campaign messages related to food consumption place an emphasis on moderation and balanced diet.

The good news about overweight and obesity is that they are preventable! The overall goal of this campaign is to reduce the risk of obesity and overweight among Maine adults and children. Providing useful information to parents and families will allow them to make better informed choices to be healthy and active.

If you would like more information regarding the Healthy Weight Awareness Campaign, please contact either Debbie Wigand or Keith Whalen with the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program at 287-5388.

New Staff at MCVHP

The Maine Cardiovascular Health Program (MCVHP) would like to introduce you to two new staff members: Keith Whalen, Public Health Educator III (287-4298), and Peg Nation, Cardiovascular Health Specialist (287-7099). Keith will be focusing on physical activity and nutrition in his work and Peg will be focusing on the CVH risk factors of blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as heart disease and stroke.

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