

Published on *SeniorNavigator* (<https://seniornavigator.org>)

Recreation: A Great Way to Be Active

Physical Activity and Exercise

You've heard that physical activity and exercise are important for your health, but going to the gym and lifting weights may not be your idea of fun. You can get the same benefits by regularly doing recreation activities that you enjoy!

ANY increase in physical activity can help prevent medical problems and make you feel better.

According to the Surgeon General's report, just 30 minutes of moderate activity added up over an entire day can help prevent disease.

- fly a kite
- plant a garden
- dance to your favorite song
- go swimming
- walk your dog
- do anything that's fun & active

It's good for you! Plan for fun activity everyday and enjoy the benefits. This article will guide you through steps to plan for more recreation in your life.

Why recreation? Do things that are fun for you and you will not have to worry about motivation.

By increasing your physical activity, you can get through the day and still have time and energy

Action Step 1 Check two reasons why you want to participate in recreational activities.

be around people and socialize

enjoy nature

reduce stress and relax

feel a sense of achievement

be more physically active

be creative

have fun and play

another reason that's important to you

What recreation activities would fit my needs? I want to...

Be around people

give a party, sing in a choir, join an exercise class, join a club, get a pen pal, play on a sports team, attend worship services

Enjoy nature

garden, cook out, picnic, collect rocks, watch birds, hike/backpack, go to a park

Reduce stress and feel more relaxed

take a yoga class, go swimming, draw a picture, go fishing, work in a garden

Feel a sense of achievement

care for a pet, volunteer, work on a collection, learn self defense, grow house plants, complete an art project, learn a new skill, take a computer class

Be more physically active

fly a kite, play tennis, play miniature golf, walk at the mall, bike ride, work out with an exercise video, join an exercise class, lift weights, ski

Be creative

do craft projects, go dancing, take photographs, play an instrument, take an art class

Have fun and play

Choose any activity that you enjoy or think you might enjoy!

Things to remember

- Don't limit yourself to programs just for people with disabilities, unless that is your choice.
- Consider the same recreation activities that are available to everyone.
- Explore your options and don't rule out an activity because of accessibility. Adaptive recreation equipment may allow you to participate in the recreation activity of your choice.
- Talk to staff, often they can make changes to an activity or location so you can participate.
- Have a family member or friend join you.

Action Step 2: List one recreation activity you want to start doing:

(Think about the reasons you checked in Action Step 1)

Where Can I Go? Here's a list of places that may offer recreational activities in your community:

- City or county recreation department
- YMCA or YWCA
- Community college or university
- Churches, synagogue, temple
- 4H Club
- Boys or Girls Club
- Boy or Girl Scouts
- Service and social club
- Chamber of Commerce
- Fitness club
- Bowling alley
- Local library
- Historic site
- State park
- Shopping mall
- Fishing pond
- Arts, crafts and hobby shop
- Dance studio
- Museum or art gallery
- Volunteer service organizations (Rotary Club, Kiwanis)
- Local park

- Golf course
- Movie theater
- Horseback riding stable
- Martial arts school
- Skating rink
- Garden
- Home or neighborhood

What activities can I do at home?

- garden
- care for a pet
- grow houseplants
- do an exercise video
- listen to music
- dance
- learn to use the internet
- write to a pen pal
- invite friends
- make craft items
- play games
- cook
- read

Things to remember: A good place to start:

- Ask friends or other people in your neighborhood where they go for recreation.
- Use this website to find places that offer recreation activities in your community. Do a quick search using the keyword "recreation" and your zip code.
- Call your local library or Chamber of Commerce. They will also have information on recreation facilities and programs in your community.

Remember, the Americans with Disabilities Act ensures that people with disabilities have the right to participate in the same recreation activities as everyone else.

Action Step 3: Think about the recreation activity you chose in Action Step 2. List some places where you can do that recreation activity in your community.

Types of questions to ask when you contact places that offer recreation activities in your community:

1. Where are you located?
2. What recreation opportunities or special events do you offer?
3. How much does it cost to participate in your programs?
4. What are the times and dates of your programs?
5. How do you register?
6. Are your facilities and programs accessible to people with disabilities?
7. What accommodations do you offer persons with disabilities?
8. Do you have any recreation programs that are just for people with disabilities?
9. Do you have any adaptive equipment that people with disabilities can use?
10. How do you apply for financial assistance, if needed?

What is stopping me? Common Barriers and Possible Solutions

Lack of money

Search for activities that are free of charge

Ask about tuition assistance

Budget your money for something special you want to do

Lack of time

Schedule time for recreation

Choose something you can do at home

Choose activities that do not take much time or a lot of planning

Not enough friends

Choose group recreation activities where you can make new friends

Take a class or join a club

Volunteer

Don't know how to do that activity

Take a class to learn how to do the activity of your choice

Ask recreation staff for assistance

No way to get there

Consider public transportation such as a bus, van or cab
Search for agencies that may offer transportation
Ask a friend if you can do something for them in exchange for a ride

Not sure if I can do that activity

You don't know until you try do that activity
Consider using adaptive equipment or modifying the activity
Ask your instructor or activity leader to help you brainstorm ways to adapt the activity so you can participate

Think about using Adaptive Recreation Equipment

Adaptive recreation equipment allows some people with disabilities to more fully participate in the recreational activities of their choice. Examples of adaptive equipment include:

- motorized fishing reel
- handle grip for a bowling ball
- hand pedaled bike
- all terrain wheelchair
- card holder
- extended handle for garden tools
- adapt your own tennis racket by wrapping foam rubber and masking tape around the handle for easier grip

Action Step 4 Is there anything stopping you from doing the recreation activity you chose in Action Step 2?

Ask friends or family to help you think of solutions.

List your barrier _____ List possible solutions

Recreation Plan of Action

What do I want out of my recreation?
(LIST YOUR ANSWERS FROM ACTION STEP 1)

What recreation activity do I want to do?

(LIST YOUR ANSWER FROM ACTION STEP 2)

Where can I go to do this recreational activity?

(LIST YOUR ANSWER FROM ACTION STEP 3)

How will I deal with any barriers that might get in my way of participating in this recreational activity?

(LIST YOUR SOLUTIONS FROM ACTION STEP 4)

People who will support me:

Other things I need to do, think about or decide:

What if the activity I choose does not work out?

- This guide may be a starting point for you. You may need to look for more information or other resources to get started
- Do the action steps in this guide again to help you come up with ways to overcome these barriers or find a new activity that meets your needs
- Include your family and friends in your planning and problem solving
- Find others to try activities with you
- Each time you try a new activity, even if it doesn't work out, you will develop strategies for future success
- Think of what you can do, not just what you can't
- If at first you do not succeed, try and try again

Tips for staying active

- Keep goals realistic and achievable

- Start small
- Find a variety of activities that you enjoy doing
- You may find that you are more motivated if you participate with a friend
- Recreate on a regular basisYou schedule time for lunch, schedule time to recreate
- Don't limit yourself, you deserve it
- If it does not work out . . .try another activity!

Article Source

North Carolina Office on Disability and Health

Source URL

https://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/other-resources/NCODH_Rec...

Last Reviewed

Monday, December 28, 2020