Physical Fitness: A Tool for Healthy Aging

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Causes of Mobility Problems & Falls are Multifactorial

- Peripheral Sensory Loss
- Cognitive Impairment
- Slowed Central Processing
- Environmental Hazards
- Medications
- Physiological Losses
- Risk-taking Behavior
- Disease

Risk-taking Behavior
Reducing Risk for Disability

- Mobility problems leading to disability “most of the time” are preventable, or at least treatable through early detection and targeted interventions.
# Functional Fitness Framework

## Physical Parameters
- Muscle strength
- Aerobic endurance
- Flexibility
- Agility
- Balance

## Functions
- Walking
- Stair climbing
- Standing up from chair
- Lifting/reaching
- Bending/kneeling
- Jogging/running

## Activity Goals
- Personal care
- Shopping/errands
- Housework
- Gardening
- Sports
- Traveling
- Socializing

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**Physical impairment**  >  **Functional limitations**  >  **Disability**
## Linking Functional Limitations to Fitness Parameters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Difficult Functional Activities</th>
<th>Activity to Emphasize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting dressed (shirts)</td>
<td>Upper body flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting on shoes</td>
<td>Upper &amp; Lower Body flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying groceries</td>
<td>Upper body strength, balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking for 10 minutes</td>
<td>Aerobic endurance, lower body strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting out of a chair</td>
<td>Lower body strength, balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening doors</td>
<td>Upper body strength, balance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Assess Your Fitness Level
Senior Fitness Test

Comprised of six test items: Developed by Rikli & Jones (1999; 2001)

• Can measure a wide-range of physical abilities
• Requires little equipment
• Quick and easy to administer
• Can use volunteer helpers
• USA national norms
• Can self-administer to get an idea of fitness level
Increased Physical Activity Levels = Increased Fitness

- Adopt the mantra of “move more and more often.”
- Incorporate activity into daily life through simple behavioral changes.
- Provide tangible motivators
- Emphasize progression
Move More and More Often

✓ Park the car further away from store and walk
✓ Stairs versus elevator
✓ Walk the dog
✓ Play with grandchildren
Why is Being Physically Fit and Active Important?

- It makes life just that much easier!
- Shields us from many types of diseases
- More physically active older adults fall less!
“There are many ways to become more physically fit and active”
“Walking with nordic poles promotes stability and increased energy Expenditure”
Use Tangible Motivators

- Encourage purchase of reliable pedometer
- Incremental steps based on initial level of fitness
- Final goal of 10,000 steps or more per day!
- Physical Activity Logs
Easy Does it!

- Give yourself permission to “start slow and build up to final goal of 30 minutes per day.

- Start with 5 to 10 minutes of easy and fun activity.

- Can also be divided into smaller segments (i.e., 3 X 10 minutes)