

# Adults Need More Physical Activity

## Communities can help

**Fact sheet to support the article: Physical Inactivity Among Adults 50 Years and Older — United States, 2014. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2016; Vol 65, No 36.**

Regular physical activity is vital for healthy aging. It can help delay, prevent, or manage many costly chronic diseases faced by adults 50 years or older. Physical activity can also reduce the risk of premature death. Despite these benefits, 31 million adults age 50 or older are inactive. Adults who cannot meet *Physical Activity Guidelines* (i.e., 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week) should be as active as their abilities or conditions allow.

Getting any amount of physical activity still offers some health benefits. Some is better than none. Helping inactive people become more active is an important step towards better health. Communities that offer design enhancements and healthy lifestyle programs can create a culture that supports physical activity.

State and local officials can:

- Design communities that make it safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities to be active.
- Open and promote places in communities for adults age 50 or older to be active such as schools, parks or malls.
- Provide evidence-based community programs that help adults, including those with chronic conditions, start and continue to be physically active.
- Work with health professionals to link their adult patients to community resources for physical activity.



**\$860 billion**  
Amount  
spent by non-  
institutionalized\*  
adults 50 years or  
older on health care



**4 in 5**  
Number of most  
costly conditions  
among adults  
50+ that can be  
prevented or  
managed with  
physical activity



**28%**  
Percent of adults 50  
years or older who  
are inactive\*\*

\* Civilian non-institutionalized adults do not live in institutions such as correctional facilities, long-term care hospitals, or nursing homes and who are not on active duty in the Armed Forces.

\*\* Inactivity means not getting any physical activity beyond basic movement from daily life activities.

## Adults age 50+ need to become and stay physically active.

### 28% of adults 50+ are physically inactive.

- All adults—with or without chronic diseases—should avoid inactivity.
- In 2014, 2 in 3 adults 50+ had at least one chronic disease.
  - » Inactivity is 30% higher in those with a chronic disease.
- Among adults 50+, women, Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, and adults with lower education levels are more likely to be inactive.

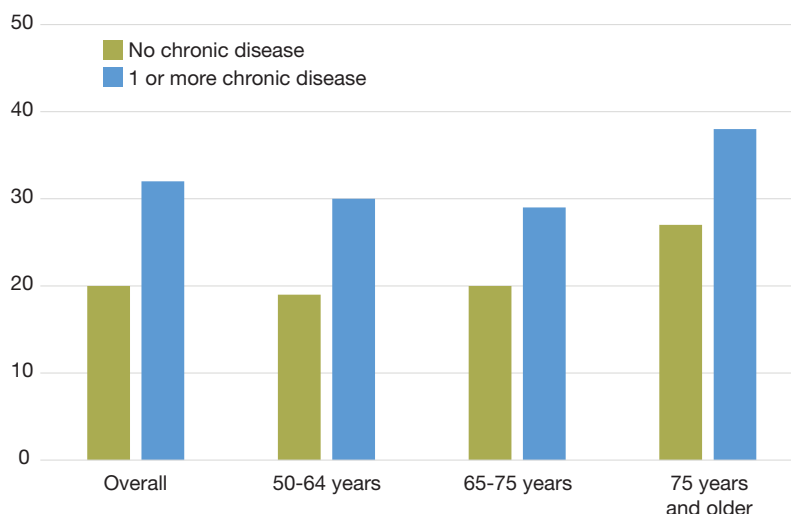
### Physical inactivity can worsen health and quality of life.

- Physical activity can reduce the risk of moderate or severe functional limitations in mid-life and older adults.
- Physical activity reduces the risk of premature death and supports positive mental health and healthy aging.

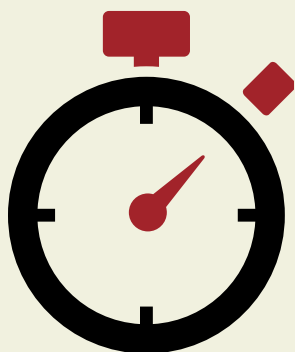
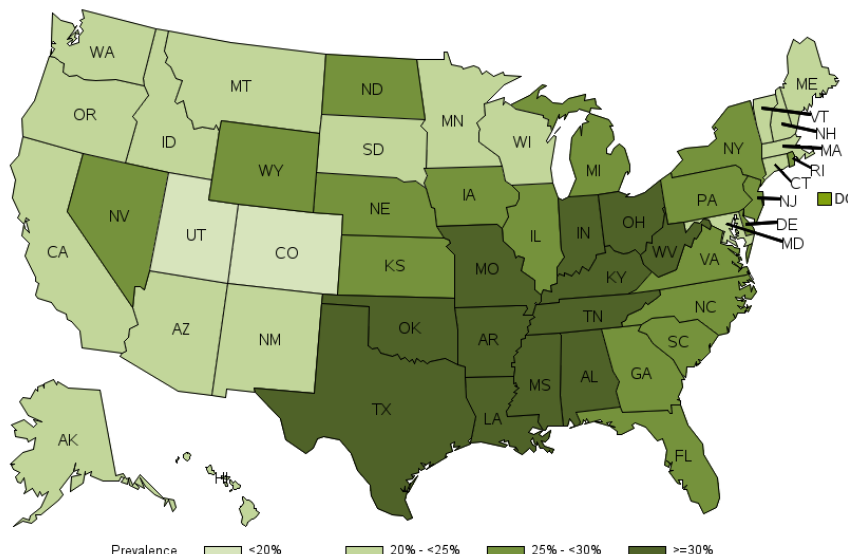
### Physical inactivity increases healthcare costs.

- Non-institutionalized adults 50 years or older spend \$860 billion annually on health care.
- 4 in 5 of the most costly chronic conditions among adults 50 years or older can be prevented or managed with physical activity.

Percentage of self-reported physical inactivity among adults 50 years and older by chronic disease status and age group, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2014



US map of prevalence of inactivity among adults aged 50 years or older



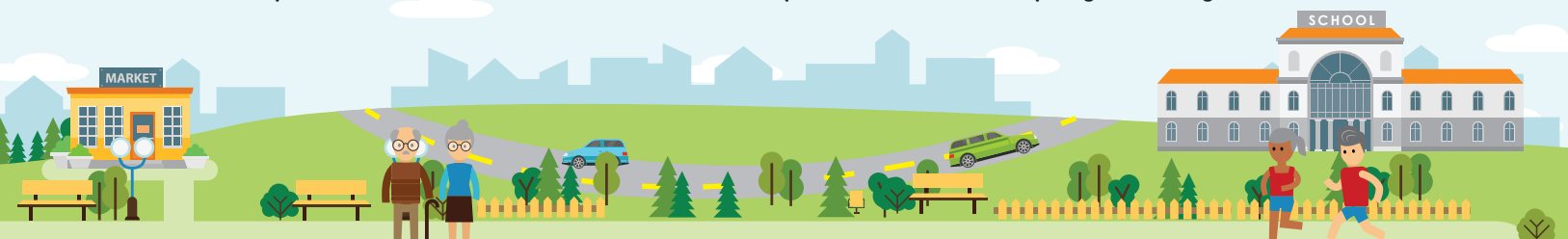
## 10 minutes at a time is fine

We know 150 minutes each week sounds like a lot of time, but it's not. That's 2 hours and 30 minutes, about the same amount of time you might spend watching a movie. The good news is that you can spread your activity out during the week, so you don't have to do it all at once. You can even break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day. It's about what works best for you, as long as you're doing physical activity at a moderate or vigorous effort for at least 10 minutes at a time. Set a goal to do 10 minutes more this week than you did last week.

# THE 3 D's: DESIGN. DEVELOP. DELIVER.

## A Prescription for Physically Active Communities

People need safe, convenient places to be physically active.



### 1 **DESIGN** communities and streets that make being physically active safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities.

Examples include: Improved street lighting; continuity and connectivity of sidewalks and streets; projects to increase safety; consideration of proximity of residential areas to stores, jobs, schools, or similar locations.



### **DEVELOP** or enhance access to places for physical activity.

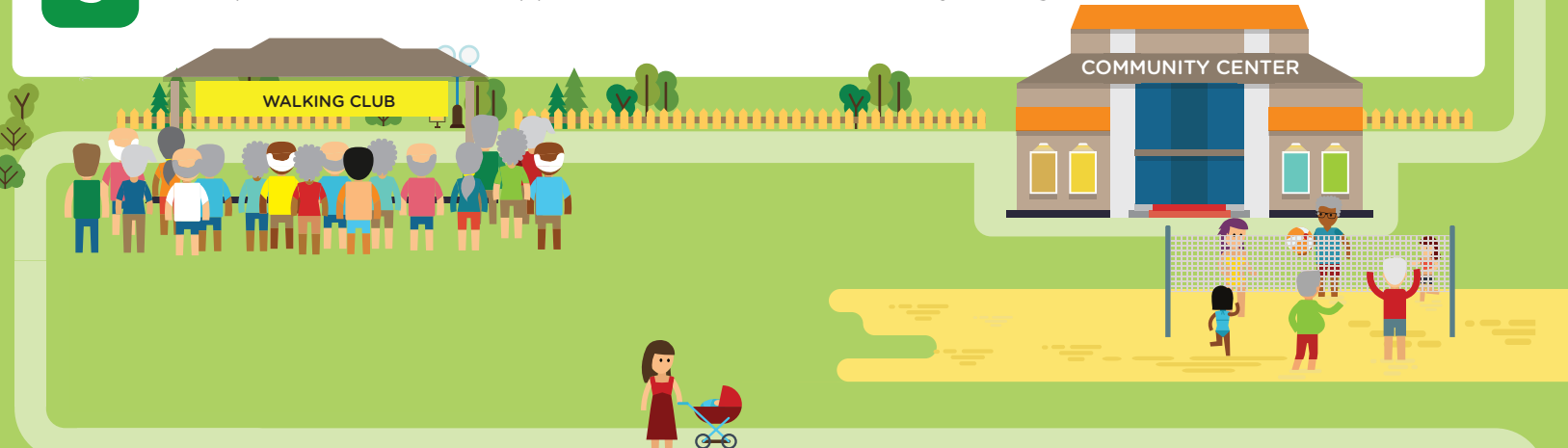
Examples include: Create walking trails; provide access to new or existing nearby facilities.

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### 3 **DELIVER** community programs that help adults be physically active.

Examples include: Social support interventions in community settings; health education classes.



## What Can Be Done?

### The Federal government is

- Providing key stakeholders with training and technical assistance to implement Step it Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities.
- Partnering with transportation organizations to develop and adopt environmental and policy supports for active transportation.
- Working with partners to develop a best-practices community planning model.
- Gathering and disseminating physical activity, walking and walkability data to help build the case for active communities.

### State and local officials can

- Design communities that make it safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities to be active.
- Open and promote places in communities for adults age 50 or older to be active such as schools, parks or malls.
- Provide evidence-based community programs that help adults, including those with chronic conditions, start and continue to be active.
- Work with health professionals to link their adult patients to community programs and resources for physical activity.

### Transportation engineers and community planning professionals can

- Locate schools, worksites, businesses, parks, recreational facilities, and other destinations within walkable distance of each other.
- Adopt community planning, land use, development, and zoning policies and plans that support physical activity for people of all ages and abilities.
- Support safe, efficient, and pedestrian-friendly public transit systems and transit-oriented development.
- Create and improve walking trails and parks.

### Community organizations can

- Provide safe and convenient access to community locations that support physical activity for all users, such as parks, malls, and senior centers.
- Offer physical activity programs that help people to be as active as their abilities or conditions allow.
- Set up walking groups, buddy systems, and other forms of social support for physical activity.
- Promote the availability of safe, convenient, and well-designed community locations and programs that promote physical activity.

### Everyone can

- Be physically active with friends, family, and work colleagues on a regular basis.
- Make walking to the store, the office, or the bus part of your daily routine.
- Try a recreational program designed for your age group or mobility level.
- Participate in local planning efforts that support safe and convenient places to be active.



Keeping Americans Healthy at Every Stage of Life

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