ON THE ROAD TO
WELLNESS
North Dakota Disability Health Project
Promoting the health and wellness of people with disabilities
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Indoor Winter Exercise Ideas

The winter months can make it difficult to get out into the community to access recreation and fitness centers. People may feel limited in the types of exercise that they can do. Being physically active is important for all people to improve their health. The benefits of exercise are even more important for people with disabilities. Exercise will help to keep the body strong. Exercise can also improve stress, reduce fatigue and even increase energy levels. People of all types, sizes, and abilities can benefit from being physically active.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published a list of Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults with Disabilities:

- Adults with disabilities, who are able to, should get at least 150 minutes (2 1/2 hours) of moderate-intensity exercise a week, or 75 minutes of aerobic activity a week.
- Adults with disabilities, who are able, should do muscle strengthening activities 2 or more days a week.
- When adults with disabilities are not able to meet the Guidelines, they should participate in regular physical activity according to their abilities, and avoid inactivity.
- Always consult your health-care provider about the amount and type of physical activity that is appropriate.

Some tips when exercising during the winter months:

- Winter cramps—Cold weather restricts blood flow to the muscles so it is important to warm up to help circulation.
- Dehydration—Cold weather makes a person feel less thirsty. Remember to drink water before working out to keep yourself from dehydrating.

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Doing fitness activities in the home can be easy, safe and rewarding. Here are some ideas:

Strength Training

Building muscle is important in good health and fitness. We might think of strength training as weight lifting, but there are many other types of strength training. You can do strength training in your own home with simple items like milk bottles filled with sand to various weights, soup cans or dumbbells.

Flexibility

Stretching and flexibility is important to reduce the chance of injury. All the major muscles in the upper body, including the shoulders, arms, back and neck, need to be stretching to remain flexible. Sitting and reaching is the most common stretch. Some other ways to stretch are rotating your shoulders forward and backward; bending and flexing at the knees, even the ankles and wrists.

Physical exercise, good nutrition and stress-management are important for all people, but it is even more critical for people with disabilities. People with disabilities can be healthy, active, and co-managers of their own health. And remember, some activity is better than none.

Sources:

- *Physical Activity Guidelines:* U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: www.hhs.gov
- *Disabilities and Conditions::* The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability: http://ncpad.org
- American Heart Association: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/GettingHealthy_UCM_001078

Additional Resources:

- *Exercise for People with Disabilities:* Getting Started on Your Fitness Plan, University of Kansas, Research and Training Center on Independent Living: http://www.rtcil.org/

The ND Disability Health Project can provide technical assistance to assist with health promotion, staff training and education, and disability awareness. Contact us at 800.233.1737 or visit our website at www.ndcpd.org/health

NDCPD Minot State University Center of Excellence

North Dakota Disability Health Project

North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities
Minot State University
500 University Ave. W.
Minot, ND 58707
1.800.233.1737
701.858.3580
www.ndcpd.org/health

Project staff :

Brent Askvig
Principal Investigator
701-858-3052
brent.askvig@minotstateu.edu

Kari Schmidt
Program Director
701-858-3048
kari.schmidt@minotstateu.edu

Brenda Munson
Project Coordinator
701-858-4477
brenda.munson@minotstateu.edu

Korie Huettl
Administrative Assistant
701-858-4154
korie.huettl@minotstateu.edu

Vision:

All people in ND have access to information and services they need to maintain good health and wellness. There are no health disparities between people with and without disabilities that are based solely on the presence of a disability.

Pay It Forward…..

Pass this information on to others who may find it helpful.

Health-related information provided in this fact sheet is for informational purposes only and should not replace advice from a medical professional. The ND Disability Health Project is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through a grant (1 u59 DD000278) to the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities at Minot State University. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the CDC.