



Building Capacity to Deliver Physical Activity Programs, Services and Environments for Women 55–70

When delivering physical activity or sport initiatives for women 55-70 it is important that organizations have the capacity to adapt, modify or develop programs, services and environments that respond to the needs and concerns of women 55-70. Knowledgeable and informed staff will develop initiatives that are safe, beneficial and appropriate.

Assess Your Organizational Capacity

Use the *Building Your Case: Physical Activity and Women 55–70* fact sheet to determine what you want to do, your rationale for doing it and whether it fits with your organizational mandate. Once you have established the fit, assess your current capacity to implement your proposed initiatives. If you need to build capacity in any area, here are some ideas that can help you.

Education

A number of groups can help provide the education needed to build capacity in issues such as chronic disease, cultural issues, social problems, gerontology, physical activity and sport.

- **Universities, colleges and high schools** – offer both full-credit (curriculum-based) and short-term (weekend/evening) courses. These groups will also develop education sessions (usually for a small fee) specifically for groups.
- **Organizations and associations** – health-related organizations can educate about certain chronic conditions, including activities to encourage for maximum results. Cultural associations can educate about customs, sensitivities and modifications that can maximize participation. Social service organizations can provide information on social issues and how to structure subsidies, transportation support and outreach services to best meet the needs of vulnerable groups.
- **Conferences and seminars** – local opportunities are often found in newspapers or on-line in community bulletins. Provincial/territorial/federal government departments and organizations often host annual events so check their websites regularly or ask to be added to their mailing lists so you don't miss any opportunities.
- **Partners** – groups in your community or across the country may have already built capacity in this area. Connect with them to learn about what worked, what did not and the kind of training/education opportunities they provided.

Training

- **Health professionals** – physiotherapists, chiropractors, doctors, nurses and others have specialized training in numerous health issues. Request their assistance to train staff about conditions, surgeries (pre and post options) safe modifications/adaptations, etc. Developing this relationship can also increase referrals to your programs and services.
- **Formal physical activity training programs** specifically targeted to older adults are offered through local, provincial, national and international organizations. Plan to contact them to see what they offer

Helpful Resources

- **Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS)** Physical Activity and Women 55-70 Resources www.caaws.ca/women55plus/index.cfm
- **The Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA)** www.ccaa-outreach.com/resources.php
- **Active Living Coalition for Older Adults** www.alcoa.ca/e/index.htm
- **Alberta Centre for Active Living** <http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/category.cgi?c=1;s=4>
- **World Health Organization Age Friendly Cities Guide** www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf
- **Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide** http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/pubs/age_friendly_rural/pdf/AFRRRC_en.pdf

Next Steps

1. Develop your business case to determine what you plan to do.
2. Assess the current organizational and staff capacity you have available to implement your plan.
3. Develop a strategy to build capacity where you need it.



May 2008

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) Tel: **613-562-5667**

For more information on the *CAAWS Women 55–70 and Physical Activity* project please contact caaws@caaws.ca or visit the website at: www.caaws.ca/women55plus/index.cfm

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Involving Multi-sectoral Partners to Increase Physical Activity for Women 55–70

Getting more women 55–70 physically active in a community is the collective responsibility of all partners. Creating the widest network will have the greatest impact because partnerships allow groups to do more together for the people in their community. Through partnering you have access to more resources, varied expertise and diverse networks to communicate and promote initiatives.

Who are Your Partners?

Access Partners

Access partners can give you access to groups or individual women 55–70. Through these partners you are able to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity and related opportunities available in your community.

Examples of access partners: retired worker associations (e.g. teachers associations); workplaces; women's organizations; flu shot clinics; pharmacies; grocery stores; health professionals (e.g. doctors, physiotherapists); women's centres and women's shelters; adult learning centres; community associations; church groups; etc.)

Support Partners

Support partners provide support for groups and organizations that deliver physical activity programs or services. Working with support partners can allow you to capitalize on their expertise or good will and do more with these additional resources.

Examples of support partners:

- **Businesses** – financial or in-kind support through donating merchandise, providing staff or sponsorship.
- **Schools, churches, offices, military bases, malls, etc.** – access to gyms, fitness facilities, halls, places to walk, etc.
- **Libraries** – pedometer lending programs
- **Provincial/territorial/federal governments and foundations** – community grants for physical activity and sport development.
- **Organizations** – education or training around different health conditions (osteoporosis, arthritis, depression, etc.) or social issues (low income, cultural issues, etc.).
- **Health professionals** – referrals for physical activity (e.g. doctors, public health) and training on safe techniques or adaptations (e.g. physiotherapists, chiropractors)
- **Media** – TV, radio and print communication access to promote and educate

Program Partners

Program partners deliver physical activity programs or services. Working with program partners allows you to offer a greater variety of physical activity and sport options for women 55–70.

Examples of program partners:

- **Organizations and associations** – deliver and manage physical activity programs, events or services for their members, clients and the general public (e.g. heart and stroke, churches, cultural associations, YMCAs, seniors centres, etc.)
- **Workplaces** – many workplaces have on-site facilities and offer programs
- **Municipal/regional recreation departments** – deliver physical activity/sport programs and manage facilities
- **Municipal/regional public health departments** – deliver physical activity programs
- **Private fitness clubs** – access for members to physical activity programs, fitness facilities, private trainers, etc. (e.g. Florida Fitness, Curves, etc.)

- **Sport clubs and leagues** – deliver sport opportunities to their members
- **Provincial/territorial/national government departments and not-for-profit organizations** – deliver programs and provide valuable resources

Working with Partners

Partnering with others takes time and is not always easy so plan to be flexible and open to new ideas.

Steps to get you started:

1. Develop your draft business case.
2. Brainstorm on who your partners should be- access, support and program partners. You should have partners from each group. It is also important to include women 55–70 as partners.
3. Meet with each partner individually to share your business case, why you think their involvement is important and what you see as their role. This personal effort will be appreciated.
4. Once you have confirmed your partners, include their involvement in your business case, set up a partners meeting to share the overall plan and begin implementation.

Successful Partnering Tips

- Communicate and involve partners regularly so they feel engaged
- Recognize and thank them often for their contributions
- Be on the look out for new partners and encourage existing partners to do the same
- Partner with women 55–70 on all aspects of your initiatives, including meetings with potential partners to help make your case



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Being physically active means different things for different people. Some people like to walk or belly dance while others play soccer or run marathons. Being active is important but the goal is to be active enough to achieve health benefits? By investing in a variety of different physical activities, women 55–70 have the opportunity to ‘bank’ their health benefits as they age.

Physical activities are broken into three main categories: endurance; strengthening and flexibility. It is important that all people, and in particular women 55–70, incorporate activities from all three categories to maximize health benefits.

Endurance Activities

Endurance activities get your heart pumping and are often called cardiovascular or aerobic activities. These activities strengthen your muscles, heart and lungs and also burn the greatest amount of calories, helping with weight loss or weight maintenance.

Canada’s Physical Activity Guide recommends that adults start by doing 60 minutes of light endurance activities, then build up to doing 30–60 minutes of moderate or 20–30 minutes of vigorous physical activity 4–7 days a week.

When doing vigorous activities the heart should be working at 75% maximum capacity, for moderate it is 65% and for light it is 56%. To calculate maximum heart rate, the following formula is used: $220 - \text{your age} \div 6 = \text{maximum 10 second heart rate}$. Based on this formula, a 60 year old woman would have a maximum 10 second heart rate of 27 ($220 - 60 \div 6$). To determine heart rate the pulse should be taken for a count of 10 seconds. Measuring this regularly allows for modification as it will indicate if the heart is working too hard or not hard enough to achieve health benefits.

Examples of endurance activities include: walking, swimming, cycling, yard work, dancing or tennis – anything that gets your heart pumping.

Strengthening Activities

Strengthening activities help muscles and bones stay strong. As people grow older, their muscle fibers shrink in number and in size, contributing to a decrease in strength, balance, and coordination. Strength training can substantially slow and even reverse, declines in muscle mass, bone density, and strength. Strength training lowers the risk of developing osteoporosis and fractures and helps alleviate arthritis symptoms by strengthening the muscles, tendons, and ligaments that surround joints.

Canada’s Physical Activity Guide recommends that adults participate in strengthening activities for 20 to 30 minutes, 2 to 4 times a week.

This kind of training can be done using free weights, machines or exercising in water. To ensure good overall strength, it is important to do a combination of activities that work the muscles in the arms, mid-section, and legs.

Most women understand the importance of cardiovascular activities such as walking or swimming but strength training will be something new for many and might be seen as something ‘men’ do. Be sure to communicate the benefits of strength training and provide extra instruction to make these women feel comfortable.

Examples of strengthening activities include: lifting and carrying groceries; climbing stairs; abdominal exercises; push-ups; and weight/strength-training routines – anything that gives you resistance.



Flexibility Activities

Flexibility activities help you to move easier, keeping your muscles relaxed and increasing the range of motion in joints. Flexibility is important because it improves muscle balance and posture and reduces the chance of injury and muscle soreness.

Canada’s Physical Activity Guide recommends that adults participate in flexibility activities for 20 to 30 minutes, 2 to 4 times a week.

For women 55–70, stretching is very important as muscles are not as flexible as when they were younger and need extra stretching to be loosened up.

Examples of flexibility activities include: yoga, pilates, gardening, vacuuming, stretching exercises, T’ai Chi, bowling and curling – anything that involves gentle reaching, bending, and stretching of all the muscle groups.

Next Steps – Communicating Physical Activity Measures

- Communicate to women 55–70 the importance of participating in all three categories of physical activity – endurance, strength and flexibility.
- Assess the current physical activity patterns of women 55–70 to ensure they are involved in activities from all three categories. If they are not provide information on what they should add to achieve maximum health benefits
- Educate women 55–70 on how endurance, strength training and flexibility activities can help them prevent, prepare and/or recover from surgery, injury or illness.
- Promote using a pedometer or physical activity log as a way to track daily progress and motivate women to move more.
- Instead of focusing on weight or inches as measures, focus on being able, feeling great, or sleeping better.
- Explain the physical activity process and that hurting at the beginning is normal.

Tools

Canada’s Physical Activity Guide

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/index.html>

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