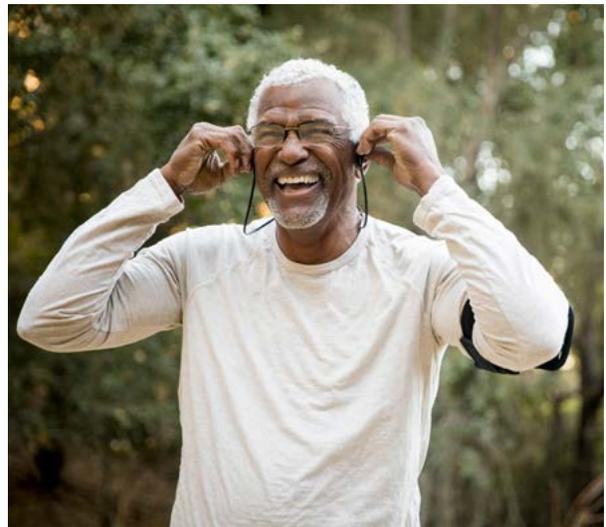


Exercise is Medicine[®] Month 2020 Toolkit



Exercise
is Medicine[®]

AMERICAN COLLEGE
of SPORTS MEDICINE[®]

About Exercise is Medicine®

The Problem

Physical inactivity is a fast-growing public health problem and contributes to a variety of chronic diseases and health complications, including obesity, diabetes and cancer. In addition to improving a patient's overall health, increasing physical activity has proven effective in the treatment and prevention of chronic diseases. Even with all the benefits of physical activity, in the United States and many other countries, levels of inactivity are alarming. We are facing what is now referred to as an "inactivity epidemic," with tremendous costs.

- Nearly half of U.S. adults (46%) do not meet the recommendations for aerobic physical activity, and nearly one-third (30%) report doing less than 10 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week.
- In a study of older adolescents and adults in the U.S., participants spent almost eight hours a day in sedentary behaviors, while as much as 36% of adults engaged in no leisure-time physical activity at all.
- Globally, physical inactivity costs health care systems \$54 billion, productivity losses of \$14 billion and \$13.4 million disability adjusted life years.
- 40% of U.S. primary care doctors and 36% of U.S. medical students do not meet 2008 federal physical activity guidelines. Physically inactive doctors are less likely to provide exercise counseling to patients and provide less credible role models for the adoption of healthy behaviors. Not surprisingly, only 34% of U.S. adults report having received exercise counseling at their last medical visit.

The Benefits

Many research studies have shown the benefits of regular physical activity. The 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans show that 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity physical activity is required to achieve these health benefits. It also states that inactive individuals can achieve substantial health gains by increasing their activity even if they do not reach the target range.

Here are a few benefits of regular physical activity.

- Higher levels of leisure-time physical activity are associated with a reduced risk of developing 13 cancers, including esophageal adenocarcinoma, liver, lung, kidney, gastric cardia, endometrial, myeloid leukemia, myeloma, colon, head and neck, rectal, bladder and breast.
- Physical activity also helps maintain immune function, which may help to lower infection risk, lessen symptoms and speed recovery from various illnesses.
- Resistance training improves chemotherapy completion rates in breast cancer patients receiving therapy.
- Strong evidence suggests that physical activity can reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, as well as improve cognition.
- Physical activity or fitness reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) with a magnitude of risk reduction comparable to that of not smoking.
- Physical activity can lower the risk of stroke by 34%.
- Physical activity can lower the risk of developing type II diabetes by 58% and by 71% for people >60 years old.
- Physical activity can be twice as effective in treating type II diabetes as the standard insulin prescription and can save \$2,275 per person per year when compared to the cost of standard drug treatment.
- Physical activity can decrease depression as effectively as Prozac or behavioral therapy.

- Adults with better muscle strength have a 20% lower risk of mortality (33% lower risk of cancer specific mortality) than adults with low muscle strength.
- A low level of fitness is a bigger risk factor for mortality than mild-moderate obesity. It is better to be fit and overweight than unfit with a lower percentage of body fat.
- Regular physical activity has been shown to lead to higher SAT scores for adolescents.
- Research has shown positive associations between physical activity participation and on-task behavior in elementary school students.

Co-Benefits of Physical Activity and Exercise

- Improvement of individual health and quality of life.
- Economic savings through reduced health care costs (and, for active transport, saving on auto expenses).
- Reduced environmental impact through active transport.
- Increased work productivity, reduced absenteeism; worker cooperation, attitude, etc.
- Higher academic achievement among students.
- Improved cognitive function in children, youth, adults and older adults.

A Solution to the Greatest Public Health Problem of the 21st Century

Exercise is Medicine® (EIM), a global health initiative managed by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), aims to encourage health care providers to include exercise when designing treatment plans for patients. EIM is committed to the belief that exercise and physical activity are integral to the prevention and treatment of chronic disease and should be regularly assessed as part of medical care. Along with the National Physical Activity Plan, EIM strives to make physical activity a “vital sign” that is routinely assessed at every patient interaction with a health care provider.

A Critical Call to Action

EIM calls individuals and partner organizations to support and advocate for physical activity as essential for global health and wellbeing. Policymakers are called to change policy to support physical activity as a vital sign for health. Health care providers and fitness professionals are called to integrate exercise into every patient and client interaction. Communities, workplaces and schools are called to promote physical activity as an essential part of health and well-being.

As we grapple with the consequences of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, now, more than ever, we must communicate the importance of physical activity. Regular exercise provides positive benefits to the immune system and can also reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression during a very stressful time. Exercise is Medicine encourages you to celebrate EIM Month and creatively inspire your network of friends, family and colleagues to begin or maintain their physical activity routine.

Exercise is Medicine® Month Background Information

Rx for Health: A Daily Dose of Exercise! May is Exercise is Medicine Month

Health advocates and public officials around the world have embraced the importance of physical activity, with growing movements on six continents and EIM National Centers in 37 countries. With alarming increases in chronic diseases and consternation over health care costs in the U.S., many see the EIM initiative as part of the solution. The recent worldwide COVID-19 pandemic reinforces the critical need to support physical activity as a vital sign for health.

Each May, communities throughout the U.S. hold activities that promote physical activity and exercise—shown to help prevent and treat more than 40 chronic diseases—as part of everyone’s health care plan. Since 2010, EIM Month has been proclaimed by mayors, governors, Congress and the President. Individuals and organizations of all kinds, from youth groups to universities, churches, fitness centers, corporations and hospitals, hold events aimed at keeping people active and healthy. This year, those events can be virtual or home-based.

“Regular physical activity remains an important strategy for staying healthy,” said Robert E. Sallis, M.D., FACSM, past president of ACSM whose presidential initiative bred EIM. “Now is the time to start or renew an exercise program and invest in your life-long health,”

Get Involved! May is Exercise is Medicine® Month

This May marks the 12th annual Exercise is Medicine® (EIM) Month. Given current gym and community center closures as well as social distancing guidelines, EIM Month may look different at your facility, health system, campus or institution this year. That’s ok. What’s most important is reminding and encouraging people to be active while following current government guidelines. Consider using these Exercise is Medicine resources to promote maintaining an active routine during this period of isolation and stress. Don’t forget to share your EIM Month stories with us! If you post about your activities on social media, be sure to tag Exercise is Medicine on Facebook (link to facebook.com/ACSMEIM/) and Twitter (link to twitter.com/EIMnews), or share your activities with us by email at eim@acsm.org.

Here are a few simple ways for you to participate in EIM Month:

- Individuals
 - [Follow these tips](#) to stay active during COVID-19
 - [Share our COVID-19 and exercise resources](#) through your social media accounts
 - Follow EIM on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) and share new resources with your network
 - [Sign up](#) to receive monthly EIM updates and new resources
- Health Care Providers
 - Share resources from EIM’s [COVID-19 and Exercise](#) webpage to help patients or clients stay active during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
 - Listen to recent episodes of [The Sports Medicine Checkup podcast](#) by ACSM for discussions on the COVID-19 pandemic and work-life balance strategies to prevent physician burnout
 - Use the [EIM Rx Form](#) to prescribe physical activity to your patients
 - Share EIM’s [Rx for Health Series](#) handouts with patients to support your physical activity recommendations
 - Review the [Health Care Providers’ Action Guide](#) to ensure you prescribe physical activity in the right dosage

- Health Fitness Professionals
 - Expand your expertise by becoming an [EIM Credentialed professional](#)
 - Check out our [Exercise Professionals' Action Guide](#) for tips to implement EIM in your business or facility
 - [Access resources](#) to support your clients in a virtual/online environment during the COVID-19 pandemic
- University / College Faculty
 - [Join our free EIM On Campus program](#) and access tools to promote physical activity as a vital sign of health on your campus
 - Already registered for EIM On Campus? Share [EIM COVID-19 and exercise resources](#) with your advisory team and students

References:

[EIM Fact Sheet](#)

1. Diehl, K., Mayer, M., Mayer, F., Gorig, T., Bock, C., Herr, R. M., & Schneider, S. (2015). Physical activity counseling by primary care physicians: attitudes, knowledge, implementation, and perceived success. *Journal of physical activity & health*, 12(2).
2. Lobelo F, Young D, Sallis B, et al. Routine assessment and promotion of physical activity in healthcare settings: A scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2018 May 1; 137:e495–e522. doi: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000000559.