

Session 6:

Being Active: A Way of Life.

The script for this session is written as if the participant has been relatively sedentary before this time. Use your judgment to change your presentation of the session for those participants who have already been fairly active.

Objectives:

In this session, the participant will:

- Begin to graph activity.
- Discuss time as a barrier to activity.
- Learn two different ways to find the time to be active.
- Discuss lifestyle activity.
- Discuss ways to prevent injury and receive handouts on how to do some simple stretches and when to stop exercising.
- Develop an activity plan for the coming week (for most participants, this will be a weekly total of 90 minutes).

To Do Before the Session

Get materials ready:

- New Keeping Track book and last sessions book in which you've made comments.
- Pages Session 6 participant notebook, including individualized How Am I Doing? graph for activity, found at end of Session 6 participant handout.
- To record participant weight, Lifestyle Balance Update for each participant and or Group Session Update log begun at Session 1.
- If funds or donations are available, you could give a certificate for activity shoes or discount coupons (for participants who do not have and cannot afford a good pair of shoes).

Weigh the participant. Graph the weight in the participant's notebook. Record the weight on your Lifestyle Balance Update and/or Group Sessions Update Log.

Receive and review Keeping Track records. Discuss successes and difficulties in meeting the study goals. Review the last session, including home activities.

Last week we made a plan for your physical activity. **How did it go?**

Review the participant's Keeping Track records for activity. Praise any physical activity that was done, whether or not the participant reached his or her weekly goal.

Also review the participant's dietary self-monitoring and progress toward fat and/or calorie goals and weight loss.

Did you attend any of the community activity sessions?

Did you have any trouble Keeping Track of your activity? *[If "yes," review.]*

Graph participant's activity.

Every week we'll **mark your activity on this graph** *[show the participant the How Am I Doing? graph for activity]*. We'll use the graph to see your progress over time and how you are doing compared to your activity goals.

See 'How Am I Doing Graph for Activity' at end of this coach's session. Note there are two graphs, one that has a maximum of 300 minutes of activity/week and one with a maximum of 500 minutes of activity/week. Most participants will use the 300 minute activity graph but for participants who exceed 300 minutes of activity/week, the 500 minute graph is available.

Mark the participant's recorded activity from last week on the graph, or if possible, have the participant do so.

Discuss barriers to activity.

It's important that we try to **solve any problems you're having following your activity plan**. Let's take last week. Did anything get in the way of your plan for activity?

Discuss whatever problems the participant brings up and brainstorm possible solutions. Consider any additional difficulties, such as upcoming cold weather, that the participant may face in the next few weeks and make plans to cope with these. Keep the examples relevant to the present or very near future. Examples:

Problem: Children.

Solution(s): Get a baby sitter or other family member to watch them. Include the children in the activity (e.g., going for a walk).

Problem: Hot weather.

Solution(s): Exercise early or late in the day when it is cooler. Exercise indoors (e.g., walk at an indoor shopping mall).

Problem: Cold weather or rain.

Solution(s): Wear appropriate clothing. Walk at a shopping mall.

Optional participant handouts are available on cold or hot weather and are found at the end of Participant Session 5, Move Those Muscles. Give the participant only those that are relevant at this time.

Discuss time as a barrier.

One of the most common problems is lack of time. Everyone's busy these days. But you *can* find the time to be active.

Here are two different ways.

- **Set aside one block of time for planned activity every day.**
Make being active a predictable part of your daily routine, like taking a shower may be a predictable part of your morning.

Use an example that is particularly relevant to the participant's lifestyle. For example, business people may relate to an example of making a "standing appointment" for physical activity. Mothers may relate to an example of planning time to read a bedtime story every night to a child.

Your **goal for this coming week** will be to get a total of **90 minutes of activity** during the week. Think about your typical day. **When can you set aside 20 to 30 minutes to do an activity you like?** Are you a morning person? Or would you enjoy getting out for a walk during lunch? How about after dinner?
[Complete the work sheet.]

Some people can't find one big block of time to be active. Either their schedules vary a lot from day to day, or they're so busy that there isn't a 20-30 minute period that's free on most days. For some people, this might be the case during certain

seasons of the year, for example, during the fall when after-school schedules begin to get hectic for their kids.

In these situations, it's usually easier to use a different approach.

- **Be on the lookout during the day for 10 to 15 minutes of free time. Use the time to be active.** For example, you might be able to take a 10-minute break between meetings at work and go for a brisk walk. Then later, take another 10-minute walk after lunch. In the evening, take a 10-minute walk before you pick your son up from soccer practice. By the end of the day you've done 30 minutes of activity.

In a way, you really can't "plan" for these times, but you can think ahead about when to be on the lookout for them. Or seize the moment! Sometimes all the best planning in the world falls apart. There's still the "spontaneous approach." On some days you might look at the work or housekeeping you have ahead of you and realize, "I'm not going to finish all of this today, no matter what I do." So grab your shoes and JUST GO!

Can you think of any times during the day when you have 10 or 15 free minutes? *[Complete work sheet.]*

Discuss lifestyle activity.

We've been talking about the kind of activity you will be recording in your Keeping Track books, whether you do it in one block of time or at several times during the day. Another important kind of activity is called "**lifestyle activity**." It involves **making active choices throughout the day**. It's hard to record this kind of activity, so **we aren't asking you to write it down in your Keeping Track books**. But it is just as important as what you do record.

An example of an inactive choice is when you shop, park your car as close as you can to the entrance to the store. An active choice is to park your car further away and walk. Another example of an active choice is to walk up the stairs. An inactive choice would be to take the elevator. This may only take a minute or so to do, but every minute of activity has an impact on your overall health and it adds up to a "more active you."

Our parents, and especially our grandparents, didn't have a choice about being active throughout the day. They were active because they had to be. There weren't elevators in every building. They had no car or only one car for the entire family. They had no phone or only one phone and so they ran up or down the stairs to answer it. They did the

dishes and laundry by hand. It was simply their way of life. By contrast, most of us now have so many conveniences that our lives are almost guaranteed to be inactive unless we **consciously make active choices**.

What are some active choices you could make during the day? What are some inactive choices you could limit?

Add examples to the chart. Possibilities include:

- Park your car further away from work or from the entrance to a shopping mall.
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Walk down the hall to talk to a coworker instead of picking up the phone.
- Walk to a nearby store rather than driving.
- Do yard work rather than hiring someone else to do it.
- Use a rake rather than a leaf blower.
- Use a lawn mower that you push (still gas-powered) rather than a riding mower.
- Go for a 2-minute walk during TV commercials (especially food commercials!).
- Do stretching exercises while watching TV.
- Stand up while you're on the phone instead of sitting.

Turn inactive time into active time.

Many people say they have no time to take a walk but they watch several hours of television in the evening. **Try cutting your TV time in half and turn it into walking time.** Or be active while you watch TV. Ride an exercise bike, lift weights, or walk on a treadmill. Do step aerobics or strength training. *[Note: If this option interests the participant, be sure that the activity done is of sufficient intensity and duration.]*

At first, you may think of walking as work and not see it as a way to relax after a long day. But when you get used to it, you'll discover that walking is a great way to relax and unwind, and you may feel much more rested and refreshed than you would have had you spent that time on the couch in front of the TV.

Discuss ways to prevent injury and give the participant some handouts on simple stretches and when to stop exercising.

If the participant brought in a pair of shoes that he or she might use when active (this was part of the home activity from Session 5, Move Those Muscles, look at the shoes together.

- If they are appropriate, stress that the participant does **not** need to buy another pair of shoes and refer to the **handout on buying shoes** from the last session as a resource for

the future.

- If they are not appropriate, and the participant cannot afford to buy a new pair of shoes, give the participant a certificate for buying them.

Being active is usually quite safe. But in rare cases problems can arise. The best approach is prevention. Here are some handouts on keeping exercise safe. *[Refer to the Keep It Safe handouts but do not review in detail.]* The key points are:

- Build up your activity *slowly*.
- Start and end each session *slowly*. Walking at a slower pace is a fine way to warm up and cool down. If you want, you can also do some simple stretches like those on these handouts.

These handouts also tell you what to do if you get a cramp or a muscle strain or pull and when to stop exercising. So look the handouts over at home and we can discuss any questions you have at the next session.

Note: Don't review these handouts during the session. Most participants will simply be walking as their form of physical activity, so it is not necessary to emphasize stretching. Just suggest that they start and end their walk at a slower pace. For those participants who begin doing more intense activity later on, review these handouts at that time.

If a participant starts doing stretches, make sure they do not include stretching time in their 2 1/2-hour goal.

Develop an activity plan for the week.

Now let's make an activity plan for next week.

- The goal is to do a little more than last week, for a weekly total of _____. *[Fill in the blank on the worksheet. For most participants the goal will be 90 minutes of activity per week.]*

Try setting aside one block of time, or plan to use several 10-15 minute periods during the day. Include the activity sessions, and be sure to plan activities you LIKE to do. *[Complete the chart.]*

- Also, **keep track** of your physical activity every day. *[If this is Session 6, assign weight and dietary self-monitoring also.]*

Record only the time when you are **doing** the activity. (That is, don't include breaks.) And **don't record activities that last less than 10 minutes.** *[Give the participant a Keeping Track book.]*

- **Include lifestyle activity throughout the day.** You won't record this, but it is still very important. What active choices do you plan to make during the week? *[Record on the blank line.]*

Next week we'll talk about the lifestyle activity you did.

Any questions?

Collect completed Keeping Track book from last session and review and make comments in the Keeping Track book before the next session.