

Lifestyle Coach Facilitation Guide: Post-Core

Stepping Up to Physical Activity

Content Overview

This session revisits ways to incorporate lifestyle activities into one's daily routine. Lifestyle activity refers to any physical activity that is part of a normal daily schedule. Ways to add lifestyle activity to a daily routine include taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and parking farther away from a destination and walking the rest of the way. Participants learn ways to increase the speed, duration, and variation of their walking routine. This session also discusses using a pedometer and improving flexibility and balance.

Lifestyle Coach Preparation Checklist

Materials

- Post-core handouts:
 - Lifestyle Activity
 - Step Up Your Walking
 - Using a Pedometer
 - Foster Flexibility
 - Safety Guidelines for Stretching
 - Simple Stretching Exercises
 - Better Balance
 - Simple Balance Exercises

- "Food and Activity Trackers"

- "Lifestyle Coach's Log"

- Balance scale

Post-Core: Stepping Up to Physical Activity

Key messages to reinforce

- Learning to recognize opportunities for lifestyle activity during the day is a helpful strategy for losing or maintaining weight.
- Continue to add lifestyle activity every day of the month.
- Consider using a pedometer to measure how active you are throughout the day. The average American walks 1 ½ - 2 miles per day. Set a goal of 10,000 steps each day.
- Having good flexibility may help you alleviate stiffness, prevent injuries, and maintain good range of motion in the joints.
- Having good balance is one of the best ways to protect against falls.

After the session

At the completion of this session, do the following:

- Use the “Notes and Homework Page” for notes and follow-up tasks.
- Distribute “Food and Activity Trackers” (4) for the following month.

Lifestyle Activity

Present: During the last century, Americans have started using computers and watching TV more frequently. As a result, over time we have become less physically active.

Consider this description of one person's morning:

*I wake up in the morning to the sound of an **electric** alarm clock. I then go into the kitchen to pour a cup of coffee, which has been brewed **by a machine**. After breakfast, I brush my teeth with an **electric** toothbrush. Before leaving for work, I turn on the TV with a **remote control** to watch the morning news. Then I get into my car and **push a button** to activate the electric garage door opener. I put the **automatic** transmission into drive and pull away. Power steering, power brakes, and power windows all make my drive to work **easier**.*

*When I arrive at work, I drive around the parking lot until I find a spot near the front door. I enter the building and take the **elevator** to the second floor. I finally walk through the **automatic** doors which open into my office. I sit down and start my work day at the **computer**.*

Ask: Can anyone give any other examples of how technology and labor-saving devices have made their lives less physically active?

You can see how easy it is for us to remain inactive during a normal day. However, learning to find ways during the day to be active will help you to continue to lose weight and prevent you from gaining weight back.



Lifestyle Activity

Lifestyle activity refers to any physical activity you do as part of your normal daily routine. For example, walking up stairs at home or at work is a regular part of your day, but still can help you to burn extra calories.

Ask: Can anyone tell us about some lifestyle activities that they have added to their routine since starting this program?

During the next month, in addition to your regular physical activity routine, try to take advantage of natural cues around you to add a little more lifestyle activity to your day. **Continue adding new lifestyle activities all month.**

Ask: What types of lifestyle activities do you plan to add to your routine?

- Take the stairs instead of elevators and escalators (or at least walk up the escalator).
- Use bike paths (walk or bicycle) instead of driving to work or errands.
- When you must drive, park a little further from your destination and walk the rest of the way.
- Take physical activity breaks during the day. Get up, walk around, and enjoy the break!
- Reduce use of energy-saving machines. For example, wash your car by hand.
- When you ride a bus, walk to the next stop before boarding (or get off a stop early).
- Try new activities, such as dancing, gardening, or bowling.



Step Up Your Walking

Walking is one of the safest and simplest forms of physical activity. Now that you have been physically active for some time, you may be at a point where you want to increase how fast or how long you are walking.

To ensure success, follow these six steps:

- 1. Warm up:** Begin walking slowly. Increase your speed after two to four minutes, once you feel that your muscles have begun to warm up and loosen. As a precaution – take a longer warm-up if you don't feel you're ready to go full speed.
- 2. Include light stretching:** Studies show that light stretching of leg muscles used in walking may improve performance and reduce the risk of injury. Try some light stretches after your warm-up.
- 3. Step it up gradually:** Increase your distance and pace over time. Aim for longer walks after you get comfortable with the routine. Set a new time or distance goal at the beginning of each week to keep it challenging.
- 4. Mix it up:** Changing pace, direction, scenery, and distance a couple of days each week keeps your walking routine fresh and interesting. Don't feel that you're locked into a specific time or distance. Allow yourself "easy" days when you feel like backing off a little, but try to walk on most days.
- 5. Use a relaxed walking technique:** The less you think about your style, the better. Just focus on staying comfortable and in control. If your shoulders are tight, arms are flailing, or back tires quickly, you're probably walking too fast.
- 6. Work in extra steps throughout the day:** Every little bit counts, so look for different times during the day where you can take a walk instead of sending an email, take a walk instead of waiting in the car for an appointment or while the kids are playing sports, or take the long way to the water cooler.



Using a Pedometer

Present: The average American takes 3,000 to 4,000 steps per day – that is approximately 1 ½ to 2 miles! Think about what a difference you could make by adding even more steps – by taking 10,000 steps each day you could build up to just about five miles.

Ask: Does anyone currently use a pedometer? Can you tell us about your routine?

Consider using a **pedometer** to measure how active you are throughout the day. Using a pedometer can add fun and a new challenge to your activity plans.

Using a pedometer is easy:

2,000 steps = 1 mile

- ✓ Put the pedometer on first thing in the morning; remember to reset it every day.
- ✓ Clip the pedometer to your clothes at your waist.
- ✓ Make sure the pedometer is secure, straight, and does not move around a lot.
- ✓ Write down in your “Food and Activity Tracker” the number of steps you take each day.

Other helpful hints:

- ✓ Do not get the pedometer wet. Keep it under your coat if you are walking in wet weather.
- ✓ If you are having trouble keeping the pedometer clipped to your waist, consider clipping it to your hip, back, or the top of your sock. Keep in mind that these readings may not be as accurate, but at least you will have an idea of how many steps you are taking.



Foster Flexibility

Present: Throughout this lifestyle intervention, we have talked about the health and fitness benefits of regular physical activity. Another important part of regular physical activity is **flexibility**.

What is flexibility?

- Flexibility refers to a joint's ability to move through its full range of motion.
- We use flexibility in everyday activities, such as bending to tie our shoes, reaching in the pantry for an ingredient, or twisting around to see who is calling our name.

Why is flexibility important?

- Flexibility is an important component of fitness that is often ignored. Flexibility is not just for people practicing ballet, gymnastics, or martial arts; rather, it is an important part of fitness for everyone regardless of age, gender, goals, or experience.
- Poor flexibility of the lower back and hamstrings (back of the upper leg) has been shown to contribute to low back pain.
- Having good flexibility may help to reduce stiffness, prevent injuries, and maintain good range of motion in the joints.

How can I improve (or maintain) my flexibility?

- The best way to maintain flexibility is to stretch regularly, at least once a day.
- Perform basic stretches using the upper and lower body.



Safety Guidelines for Stretching

Remember these guidelines while performing stretching exercises:

- ✓ Do a short warm-up *before* stretching. A warm-up loosens the muscles to prevent injuries.
- ✓ Wear comfortable clothing, nothing which limits movement.
- ✓ Move slowly until you feel the muscle stretch. A safe stretch is gentle and relaxing.
- ✓ Hold the stretch steady for 10 to 30 seconds. **Do NOT bounce.** Bouncing can lead to torn muscles.
- ✓ Relax. Then repeat two to three times.
- ✓ Be careful to stretch both sides of your body – **stay in balance.**
- ✓ Stretch within your own limits. Don't compete.
- ✓ Never stretch if you have pain before you begin.
- ✓ If a particular stretch causes pain, stop doing it.
- ✓ Breathe slowly and naturally. **Do NOT hold your breath.**
- ✓ **Always stay in control.** Jerky, unstable movements can lead to injury. Don't let gravity be the boss!

Listen to your Body!



Simple Stretching Exercises

Here are some basic stretching exercises most people can do. Use a chair to sit on or to assist you during each stretch.

- **Overhead stretch (shoulders):** Extend your arms overhead with elbows straight; interlock your fingers if possible. Keep your back and neck straight.
- **Mid-back stretch:** Extend your arms in front of you with elbows straight; interlock your fingers if possible. Gently pull forward, separating your shoulder blades.
- **Chest stretch:** Extend your arms behind you with elbows straight; interlock your fingers if possible. Gently lift your elbows upward.
- **Side bends:** Extend one arm up overhead and gently lean to the opposite side. Repeat with the other arm.
- **Trunk (middle) rotation:** Sit in a chair and gently rotate your middle and shoulders to one side, using your arms to help you rotate. Repeat in opposite direction. You should feel a stretch in your **middle**.
- **Hamstrings:** Sit in a chair and extend one leg forward, with the back of your heel resting on the ground. Keep your knee straight and gently lean forward to your toes. Repeat on other leg.
- **Calf stretch (ankle and calf):** Hold onto a chair or countertop. Place one ankle behind the body with knee straight and the foot flat on the floor. Put the other leg slightly forward and bend. Lean forward to feel the stretch. Repeat on the other side.

Source: National Center on Physical Activity and Disability



Better Balance

What is balance?

- Balance is the ability to control and maintain your body's position as it moves. Your brain, muscles, and bones work together to keep you steady and to keep you from falling.
- You use balance in everyday activities, such as rising from a chair, going up or down stairs, getting out of a car, or walking.

Why is balance important?

- Balance training helps the muscles work together and it strengthens the body's ability to correct itself when balance is lost. This is helpful when you are doing activities, like walking or bike riding, as well as in all your daily activities (getting in and out of cars, carrying groceries, playing with children).
- Having good balance is also one of the best ways to **prevent yourself from falling**.

Can I improve (or maintain) my balance?

- Balance is a skill that almost everyone can preserve throughout life. If you have become a little "unbalanced," it is possible to improve your balance. In addition to normal aging, your balance can be affected by injury, illness, nervous system disease, and medications.
- If you have concerns about your balance, **please consult your health care provider before trying any exercises**.



Simple Balance Exercises

Present: First and foremost, stay safe. If you know that you have balance problems, then you should consult a professional for guidance on how you should practice balancing. When preparing for balance exercises, wear loose, comfortable clothing and shoes with good support. Make sure you perform balance exercises on firm, hard surfaces (such as a wood floor).

Here are some basic balance exercises most people can do:

- ✓ Start with proper posture, which you can practice anywhere, anytime.
- ✓ Walk. It is a good form of physical activity and it helps you maintain your balance.
- ✓ Stand in a doorway or near a table or chair (so you can steady yourself at any time). Try **standing on one leg** for 30 seconds. You could even do this while washing dishes or brushing your teeth, as long as you have the counter to hold onto (or grab if you start to lose your balance). You can modify this exercise by:
 - **Standing hip raise:** Lift one knee forward so that it is parallel to the hip and bent at a ninety degree angle
 - **Standing knee bend:** Bend the knee backwards, so that the shin is parallel to the floor
 - **Standing kick:** Keeping the leg straight, lift one leg out in front of you, with the foot in a “kick” position
 - **Standing side kick:** Keeping the leg straight, lift the leg out to the side
 - **Tandem standing:** Place one foot directly in front of the other, touching heel to toe
- ✓ Practice **side-stepping or braiding** (walking sideways crossing one leg over the other) at the kitchen counter. Start by holding onto the counter and progress to letting go as your balance improves.

