PLANNING THE LESSON

1. Familiarize yourself with the materials provided. Use the publication MF-2136, *Feeling Great! Exercise for All* as background material, or it may be used as an additional handout.

2. There will not be time to discuss all of the positive health benefits to an active lifestyle. This lesson will touch on some of the better-known benefits.


4. Finish the lesson by discussing motivation and goal-setting. See the articles, *Incorporate Exercise into Your Daily Life* and *Motivation* on pages 1 and 5 of *Feeling Great! Exercise for All*. You may want to distribute 3 x 5 cards and have participants list ways to incorporate more activity into their lives. Encourage them to place the card in a prominent place at home as a reminder to increase physical activity.

5. Copy and distribute the evaluation instrument on the last page of this teaching guide. Collect the evaluations and send them to the county agent.

LESSON IDEAS

Begin the lesson by catching the attention of the audience. You may want to use one of the ideas below or one you feel will create interest.

- **Describe the problems** associated with a sedentary lifestyle. (See the section on the next page, “Problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle.”)
- **Use testimonials** of those who exercise regularly. Look for comments that show how physical activity improves health. (i.e., feel better, “I can control my weight,” more energy...)
- **Use the Exercise I.Q. test** inside to help people better understand the importance of regular physical activity.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Describe chronic diseases that can result from a sedentary lifestyle.
- Explain health benefits of regular activity.
- Identify activities that will improve one’s health.
- Set goals that encourage regular activity.

By Michael Bradshaw, Associate Professor, School of Family Studies and Human Services

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
Problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle
How are we doing in Kansas? For many of us: not so well! The U.S. Centers for Disease Control reports that Kansas had the sixth highest percentage of adults who reported no leisure-time physical activity. In other words, 38 percent of Kansans reported having no leisure-time physical activity, as compared to the rest of the nation with 27.7 percent reporting no leisure-time physical activity. The ranking is troubling in that a sedentary lifestyle is linked to many chronic diseases. Consider some of the diseases associated with a sedentary lifestyle.

Obesity: About three in 10 people in the United States are obese.

Cardiovascular disease: The most common cause of death in Kansas, accounting for 42 percent of all deaths.

Diabetes: Diabetes is the underlying cause of 600 deaths each year and a contributing cause of another 1,000. It has been estimated that 126,000 Kansans have diabetes mellitus, yet half do not know that they have diabetes.

Blood pressure: One in five people in the nation has high blood pressure (hypertension).

Osteoporosis: One in four women over age 60 and nearly half of all people over 75 have osteoporosis.

Cholesterol: About 20 percent of American adults have high cholesterol. The higher the levels of blood cholesterol, the greater the risk of heart disease.

Arthritis: The Kansas Arthritis Foundation reports that more than 400,000 Kansans have at least one form of arthritis. Arthritis has no cure, but activity can help reduce its physical, mental, and social tolls.

Now consider the health benefits that come to those who make time for regular physical activity. We will define “regular exercise” as physical activity performed for at least 30 minutes a day, and four days a week. The 30 minutes may also be broken up into two or three shorter daily activity periods.

Supplemental material
(If time permits you may also want to teach this section.)

Many serious health problems are directly related to personal habits or behaviors: smoking, alcohol or drug misuse, sedentary work and recreation patterns, poor eating habits, excessive exposure to stress, and failure to use safety devices. Studies show that if people at risk could be persuaded to improve their eating habits, quit smoking, be more active, and control blood pressure — Kansans could substantially reduce seven of the 10 leading causes of death in the state.

We know that physical activity reduces anxiety and depression. Studies also have shown that regular physical activity positively influences state of mind and general feelings of well-being. It improves attitudes, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships of older adults. Other studies show that individuals who stay active are less apt to contract certain types of cancer.
1. Be wary of exercise devices/programs that promise total fitness “in just three minutes a day.”

2. Even when they are relaxing, people who exercise regularly burn more calories than inactive people.

3. To achieve health benefits, physical activity needs to be strenuous.

4. Weight-lifting or resistance training has no health benefit.

5. Sit-ups and ab crunches are the best way to burn fat off the stomach.

6. Cross-training is the best route to overall fitness.

7. It’s best to buy exercise equipment that comes with a “money-back guarantee.”

8. No exercise device can help “spot reduce.”

9. Before-and-after claims in ads for exercise devices may be misleading.

Answers to Exercise IQ

1. **TRUE.** Real fitness requires regular activity, sensible eating, and a healthy lifestyle. Exercise need not be grueling, but there are no “three-minute-a-day” shortcuts to better flexibility, improved muscular strength, enhanced physical endurance, improved cardiovascular or respiratory efficiency, or weight loss.

2. **TRUE.** Everyone burns calories while exercising. But one of the great benefits of an active lifestyle is that it can boost metabolism even when the body is at rest.

3. **FALSE.** An activity does not need to be strenuous to provide health benefits. Any physical activity will produce health benefits – even activities as simple as walking or stretching.

4. **FALSE.** Strength training is not just for the “body beautiful” types. Lean muscle burns more calories than fat. Sensible weight training helps maintain muscle tone and endurance.

5. **FALSE.** The most common cause of a “beer belly” is fat – not weak muscles. Sit-ups may help tone the abs, but only a sensible diet combined with regular exercise can turn a “beer belly” into a “six-pack stomach.”

6. **TRUE.** Cross-training – a regular program combining different types of activity – is the best route to fitness. A combination of favorite activities – walking, swimming, biking, and dancing – can help shape the body while avoiding the boredom and burnout of one kind of exercise.

7. **TRUE.** But get the facts first. Not all guarantees are the same. How long does the guarantee last? If you order by mail, how much will it cost to return? Who pays for repairs?

8. **TRUE.** No exercise device can burn fat off a particular part of the body. The reason: Everything you eat has calories, and everything you do uses calories. Weight depends on the number of calories you eat and use each day. Increasing your daily physical activity will burn extra calories.

9. **TRUE.** Before-and-after pictures can be eye-catching, but they may not always tell the whole story. Regular exercise is an important ingredient in moving from plump to “pumped,” but diet plays a key part, too.
## PROGRAM EVALUATION

County ___________ Date _______

Circle answers to questions I through III:

I. How do I rate this program in general? Excellent Good Fair Poor

II. As a result of this program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I gained knowledge</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will incorporate more activity into my lifestyle</td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. As a result of this program, do you have an understanding of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The causes of chronic disease affecting older Kansans?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The health benefits of regular exercise?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amounts of exercise needed to reduce the risk of chronic disease?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Additional comments/suggestions:

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

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