It’s Never Too Late to Start!

by Paige Denison, Director of Project Enhance: Enhance®Fitness/Enhance®Wellness at Sound Generations

Did you know May is Older Americans Month and Physical Activity Month? The benefits of regular physical activity are essential for healthy aging and especially important in stressful times. The good news: It is never too late to start!

The US Department of Health and Human Services’ Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans document the importance of physical activity in preventing, postponing or better managing chronic conditions and falls risk. Accumulating evidence demonstrates the power of regular physical activity to mitigate seven of the 10 most common chronic diseases suffered by older adults: arthritis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and stroke. The guidelines also emphasize the importance of activities that include balance training along with aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.

Evidence-Based Physical Activity Programs are an Excellent Resource

Community based organizations delivering group physical activity and fall-prevention programs are working with evidence-based program developers to address participants’ needs both while social distancing restrictions are in place, and as those restrictions begin to relax. Walk with Ease, Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less and Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention are examples of programs available via self-directed or online formats and others are in development. By working together, we can build capacity and continue to offer these proven programs, reduce stress, address falls risk, and improve health outcomes.

Additional Links for Staying Active at Home during COVID-19

Here are some other great resources to assist your participants in getting started:

- Move Your Way Activity Planner
- National Institute on Aging Go4Life Workout Videos and Resources
- National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability's Exercising at Home: Strength and Cardio videos
- Exercise is Medicine Staying Active during COVID-19

Remember: Some physical activity is better than none – how will you move today?