

What does the NCAA intend to do?



- provide a single coherent voice on the promotion of physical activity for older people
- work with older people, national and regional agencies and government to influence policy, strategy and programmes on physical activity

- raise public awareness of the benefits of physical activity for older people through educational and campaigning activities
- develop the coalition through joint work among member organisations, exchange of information and best practice.

How can you join the coalition?

Membership of the coalition is open to UK agencies and organisations with an interest in promoting physical activity among older people. Members are expected to share the NCAA core values and principles.

Membership is free. However, members are encouraged to donate a small sum annually to support the coalition's work.

The coalition is currently co-ordinated by Help the Aged.

Who are our members?

Currently, our members are:

- Age Concern England
- AGILE
- Association for Physical Education
- Asthma UK
- British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES)
- British Geriatrics Society (BGS)
- British Heart Foundation
- British Heart Foundation (BHF) National Centre for Physical Activity and Health, Loughborough University
- Bromley Adult Education College
- Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR)
- Counsel and Care
- EXTEND
- Help the Aged
- Hurtley Enterprises
- Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM)
- Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM)
- Later Life Training Ltd
- The Lifespan Trust
- The Medau Society
- National Association for Providers of Activities for Older People (NAPA)
- National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)
- Policy Research Institute on Ageing and Ethnicity (PRIAE)
- Prevention of Falls Network Europe (ProFaNE)
- Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)
- Sport England
- Wandsworth PCT

For more information please contact:

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NCAA
NATIONAL COALITION FOR ACTIVE AGEING



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Promoting physical activity for older people



What is the NCAA?

The National Coalition for Active Ageing brings together key agencies, voluntary organisations and stakeholders to act as a collective voice and to champion the promotion of physical activity among older people of all ages, interests and abilities. We wish to see:

- an increase in the number of older people taking part in accessible, affordable physical activity programmes designed to meet their need
- older people participating in decision-making relating to the planning, development and delivery of physical activity programmes
- physical activity as a component of active ageing, helping people stay healthy, active and independent well into older age.



Why is physical activity important?

There is overwhelming evidence of the importance of physical activity for the older person, including the immediate and long-term physiological, psychological and social benefits, for certain conditions directly associated with old age, but most importantly in assisting older people to maintain their independence in old age.

*British Heart Foundation,
Active for Later Life Resource 2003*

Activities that promote strength, co-ordination and balance are particularly valuable for older people to help them perform daily activities and reduce the risk of falling and of being seriously injured.

Department of Health 2004

Older people themselves confirm that taking exercise has had a big impact on their lives:

'I lost the feeling of well-being, was generally lethargic and had bouts of severe depression. Visits to my GP began to get quite frequent. I have always been a swimmer so on the days I do not walk I swim. The difference in my physical and mental health now is unbelievable.'

Edna, aged 77

'Before I had the stroke I didn't know anything about them, I just fell down on the floor and didn't know what was happening to me. Thanks to Camden Chinese Community Centre, I now do Tai Chi five days per week. I've recovered from my stroke much quicker because of all the exercise.'

Hong Tang, 73 year old

What is the recommended level of physical activity for health?

Current government guidelines suggest that all adults should accumulate at least 30 minutes of a moderately intense activity on five or more days a week. (Department of Health 2004). Thirty minutes can be divided into small chunks, such as 3 x 10 minutes, 2 x 15 minutes or, for some frailer adults, even 10 x 3 minutes. For many older adults, simply being active as often as possible at a level which does not bring discomfort or distress will bring health benefits and make them feel better.

According to findings from the 2003 Health Survey for England, 81 per cent of men and 87 per cent of women aged 55 years and over do not reach the recommended levels of physical activity.



What are the barriers to physical activities for older people?

Lack of recognition of the importance of physical activity among national agencies, inappropriate or inaccessible provision, an absence of role models, concerns for personal safety and loss of confidence mean that physical activity is not an integral part of every older person's life.