

ACTIVE MORELAND FACT SHEET: OLDER ADULTS



This Fact Sheet provides some background information and suggestions to support clubs and activity providers to successfully reach older adults. With an aging population, it is increasingly important that physical activity participation is considered an essential part of everyday life and reaches levels that allow people to enjoy good health and quality of life well into their older years.

How to reach older adults:

- Older adults are likely to prefer to receive information face to face or on printed materials and tend to receive advice from others such as family, neighbours or community elders
- Older adults are likely to respond to messages that are uncomplicated, free of jargon, relevant to their lifestyle, needs and aspirations
- Spend time talking with older people. Older people tend to be concerned about getting older, their health status and feeling safe and listened to
- Older people may respond to messages that focus on gaining or boosting energy levels and staying active and connected
- Be positive and encouraging and share the benefits early
- Highlight family and friends enjoying fun social interactions 'Bring a friend', 'together we do better'

Key motivating factors for participation:

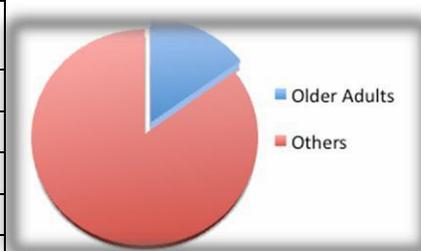
- Availability of older adults social and exercise programs that gradually increase the levels of physical activity. I.e. aqua-therapy, walking groups
- Provision of guided or supervised physical activity programs where participants receive advice, support and companionship
- Gaining control and improving their health
- Reducing risk of falls by improving strength and balance
- Opportunity to socialise and enjoy oneself with family and friends
- Welcoming, accessible and aesthetically appealing environments i.e. well designed and landscaped, walking paths with seating and shade
- Focus on fun and being active rather than competition and winning

Older Adults

Older adults as a population group generally refers to people who are aged 65 years and above. There is a wide variability in health status, function and well being at any age.¹ This group commonly includes active retirees, individuals still in the workplace, as well as frail aged. Older adults may have a disability, be disadvantaged or have no support. They may also have a varied cultural background and come from a low-income family. In 2011 there were 22,049 older adults living in the City of Moreland. This represents 15% of the total Moreland population.²

The implications for the physical activity for an ageing Moreland population are significant. The National Strategy for Ageing Australians identifies the need to optimize the independence and self provision amongst older Australians, promote positive attitudes, lifestyles and access to community support in order to enable healthy ageing and delivery of world class care as required.²

Age Group	2011	%2011 pop	2021	%2021 pop	2031	%2031 pop
65-69yrs	4,822	3.1	5,874	3.1	7,172	3.4
70-74yrs	5,047	3.3	4,988	2.6	6,032	2.9
75-79yrs	4,960	3.2	4,166	2.2	4,915	2.4
80-84yrs	4,280	2.8	3,878	2.0	3,998	1.9
85+yrs	3,533	2.3	4,103	2.1	3,901	1.9



¹ Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing Recommendations on Physical Activity for health for older Australians 2009

² National Physical Activity Recommendations for older Australians 2006

“Older people should do some form of physical activity, no matter what their age, weight, health problems or abilities”

“Different people benefit from physical activity in different ways. Being physically active can be effective in reducing the risk of disease for a healthy older person as well as limiting the progression of a condition for a person who already had a disease.”³

Participation in regular physical activity has a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits for older adults including physical, functional, psychological and social benefits and contributes to disease prevention.

Physical Activity aids in health prevention because it is known to maintain or improve physical function and independent living, quality of life and reduce depression: build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints, reducing the risks of injuries from falls; and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes and some cancers. The concept of movement to maintain flexibility is particularly related to older people and age related conditions such as arthritis.

Likely barriers faced by older adults

There are a number of likely participation barriers faced by older adults. Whilst barriers vary for different people, some common barriers reported are:

- Susceptibility to falls may limit confidence and willingness to undertake physical activity
- Availability/Accessibility/Scheduling - Physical activity programs not being provided at suitable times or venues i.e. not at night
- Cultural expectations about the involvement of women in physical activity
- Lack of motivation or interest
- Lack of confidence or self assurance about ability, fitness, being able to remember
- Perception by older people that it is ‘too late’
- Unappealing physical environments
- Lack of support from family or peers
- Structure of the programs: competitive vs social

While older adults may experience barriers, it is important to understand that older people will often have more than one disadvantage. When these disadvantages are combined, the barriers that exist for an older person are extreme. For instance, an older adult, with low income, born overseas from non-english speaking country, and if they have a disability or ailing health will more than likely experience greater barriers to participation

What you can do...

- Focus on gaining or boosting energy levels will help participants feel more youthful and in control of their health and wellbeing. Marketing should show them how they will achieve these things and use realistic models
- Older people who have stopped physical activity or who are starting a new physical activity should start at a level that is easily manageable and gradually build up the recommended amount, type and frequency of activity. Encourage people to check with their doctor to ensure there is no reason they should not participate in physical activity
- Older people should be active everyday in as many ways as possible, doing a range of physical activities that incorporate fitness, strength, balance and flexibility
- Promote the message that it is never too late to benefit from being physically active. ‘It’s never too late’, ‘you’re never too old to give it a go’
- Emphasise how older adults can preserve independence by maintaining their health

Active Moreland

Active Moreland is an initiative aimed at ‘making it easy for more people to be more active more often’.

Active Moreland is a multi-pronged approach to increasing levels by targeting people, opportunities, places and partnerships to provide welcoming and inclusive services and programs that will contribute to making Moreland a more active community.

³ Victorian Government, Well for life: improving nutrition and physical activity for older people 2010

⁴ CCAA research 2 action conference: motivating older adults to be physically active.