

Talking with Your Patients about Physical Activity

Almost anyone at any age can benefit from some type of physical activity.

As part of your ongoing conversations with patients, include a discussion about exercise and physical activity. Here are a few suggestions to consider when talking about exercise.

Changes in physical activity patterns. If patients are just starting out or want to significantly increase their activity level:

- Encourage them to try all four types of exercise (endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility).
- Work together to determine the best activities for them.
- Create a safe activity plan that provides the most benefits.

Warning signs. Encourage your patients to talk with you if they experience:

- Recent new symptoms
- Dizziness or shortness of breath
- Chest pain or pressure
- Feelings that their heart is fluttering, skipping, or racing
- Blood clots
- Infection or fever with muscle aches
- Unplanned weight loss
- Foot or ankle sores that won't heal
- Joint swelling
- A bleeding or detached retina, eye surgery, or laser treatment
- A hernia
- Recent hip or back surgery

Encouraging continued progress. Many people start out enthusiastically but find it hard to stay motivated. Help patients stay safe and interested in being active with this advice:

- Start out at a comfortable level and progress slowly.
- Make physical activity part of a daily routine.
- Try different activities to keep things fun and interesting.
- Choose to be active through daily activities as well as planned exercises.



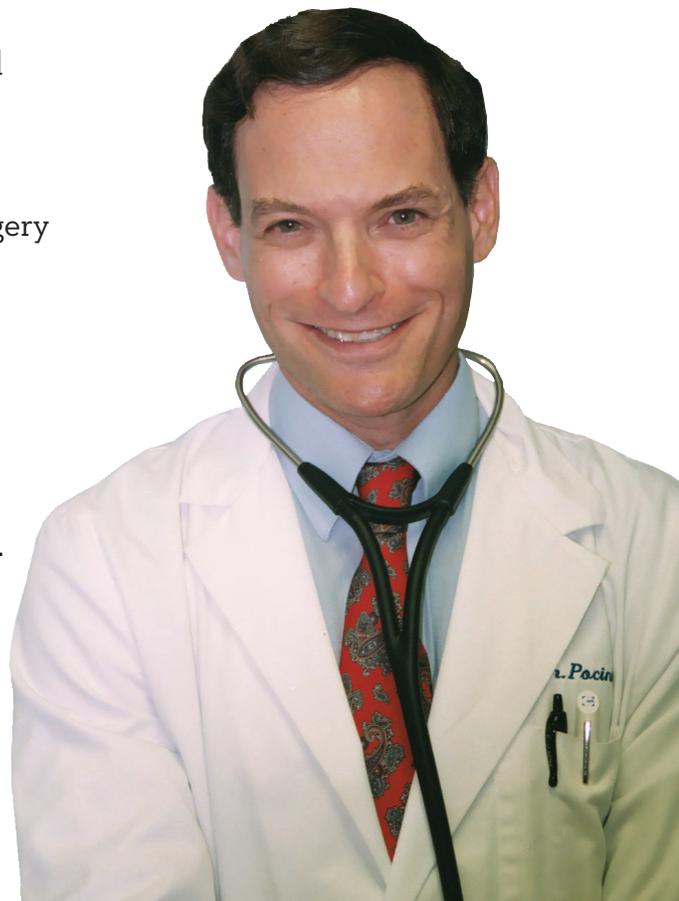
Quick Tip

Your positive, encouraging attitude will go a long way to energizing and motivating your patients to be active!

VISIT

www.nia.nih.gov/Go4Life

- Print useful tools.
- Order free exercise guides, DVDs, and posters for your waiting room.



National Institute on Aging