Pioneering Organizations Who Offer Enhance®Fitness: What Works

Learn about adopting, implementing, and maintaining EnhanceFitness classes in your community.

“I’m learning that I can do so much more now than what I used to...I’m doing more in class, I’m doing more at home, and I’m doing more in my shop. I’m just doing more of everything.”
- EnhanceFitness participant

Our Research

EnhanceFitness is a scientifically proven physical activity program helping older adults at all levels of fitness become more active and empowered to sustain independent lives. Classes, led by certified instructors, are one hour long, three times per week, and include cardiovascular, strength, flexibility and balance exercises. EnhanceFitness is offered by various community organizations, including YMCAs.

We were interested in learning what works for pioneers of EnhanceFitness in YMCA-affiliated sites. We conducted 52 phone interviews with EnhanceFitness instructors, participants, and program staff located throughout the United States.

To improve the uptake of EnhanceFitness:

- Promote EnhanceFitness to community organizations serving older adults.
- Secure support across organizational levels, such as the CEO, marketing department, and other staff.
- Offer the program in geographical areas where there is an unmet need for physical activity programs for older adults.
- Recruit and nurture program champions—those individuals who like to promote the program both within and outside the organization.
- Capitalize on partnership opportunities. Accept invitations to partner with community-based organizations to offer EnhanceFitness.
- Provide EnhanceFitness instructors with support, including substitutes, assistance with large classes, and refresher courses.
- Offer both beginner and intermediate levels of EnhanceFitness to reach older adults with various levels of function.
TAKE ACTION

If your organization wants to offer EnhanceFitness:

- Secure a license to offer EnhanceFitness—see http://projectenhance.org for info.
- Get staff trained to offer EnhanceFitness.
- Personalize and distribute EnhanceFitness marketing materials.

If you want to participate in EnhanceFitness:

- Contact a YMCA or community/senior center near you to find out if they offer EnhanceFitness. A list of classes can be found at http://projectenhance.org.
- If EnhanceFitness is in your community, grab a friend or neighbor and enroll together.
- If EnhanceFitness is not in your community, ask your local YMCA or community/senior center to start a class.

"I’ve had people who can’t lift their hands above their heads...They can now wash themselves and they can climb the stairs. Yes, it works in very real and personal ways."

- EnhanceFitness instructor

"I really felt that I could make a difference in people’s lives by offering this class and giving the opportunity to exercise, to become more mobile...”

- EnhanceFitness staff member

Our Vision

EnhanceFitness classes in more places so greater numbers of midlife and older adults can participate and maintain their independence.

HPRC is a research center at the University of Washington School of Public Health. HPRC conducts community-based research that promotes the health and well-being of middle-aged and older adults.

http://depts.washington.edu/hprc

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