



Evidence-Based Community Programs

Help Your Patients Take Charge

EnhanceFitness (EF)

Originally known as Lifetime Fitness, EF is an award-winning, community-based exercise program that combines cardiovascular, stretching, and balance exercises and strength training. It was developed by researchers at the University of Washington. EF participants enjoy the dynamic and interactive sessions, and health benefits have been documented across diverse communities. **Encourage your patients to sign up for the program at a location nearby.**

Who is it for?

- EF was developed to encourage older adults to exercise regularly and prevent functional decline.
- The program is now used by adults of all ages who want to improve or maintain physical function.
- EF is appropriate for a range of fitness levels, and can be tailored to people with arthritis and other conditions that limit their mobility.

How is it conducted?

- EF is conducted in hour-long sessions three times a week on an ongoing basis.
- Instructors lead small groups of 10–25 people through a series of stretches, low-impact aerobics, and strength training activities (using soft ankle and wrist weights).
- Sessions usually consist of warm-up and cool-down periods, a cardiovascular workout, strength training, and stretching. Balance exercises are included throughout.
- All activities can be adapted to participants' fitness levels and tailored to specific health conditions.
- Fitness checks are provided at the beginning of the program and every 4 months thereafter.

What are the qualifications of the instructors?

- EF instructors are required to hold a nationally recognized fitness instructor certification and have a current CPR certification.
- They also receive 12 hours of specialized training by an EF master trainer.
- Experience working with older adults is recommended.

What are the benefits?

- EF has been rigorously studied and evaluated across ethnically and socioeconomically diverse communities. Proven benefits include improvements in overall fitness, social function, physical function, and depressive symptoms.^{1, 3-4}
- No safety concerns have been reported in the literature.¹⁻⁴
- Participants report high levels of satisfaction and continued participation.
- Cost-benefit analyses show that older adults who participate in EF cost their insurers less, due primarily to fewer inpatient hospital stays.²
- EF has won several awards including the 2005 Annual Innovation in Prevention Award from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Summary of the Evidence

Author, Year	Design	Participants	Outcomes
Wallace JI, Buchner DM, Grothaus L, et al. (1998)	6-month RCT*	100 older adults	Improved physical functioning ↓ depression 85% program completion rate at 6 months
Ackermann RT, Cheadle A, Sandhu N, et al. (2003)	Retrospective matched cohort study Compared estimated healthcare costs and utilization rates of Lifetime Fitness program participants vs. controls	1,114 program participants aged 65 or older 3 randomly selected matched controls per participant	Adjusted total healthcare costs for participants were 94.1% of control costs For participants attending > 1 class per week, total adjusted follow-up costs were 79.3% of controls
Belza B, Shumway-Cook A, Phelan EA, et al. (2006)	Outcomes testing of program participants at 4 and 8 months	2,889 older adults enrolled in program	Outcomes sustained at 8 months: ↑ strength, functional mobility ↑ self-rated health
Ackermann RT, Williams B, Nguyen HQ, et al. (2008)	Retrospective cohort study Compared estimated healthcare costs and utilization rates of EF participants vs. controls Outcomes assessed at 1 and 2 years	1,188 older adult participants Matched group of controls	No difference in healthcare costs in Year 1 Year 2 outcomes: ↓ adjusted total healthcare costs for participants ↓ inpatient costs for participants

*RCT = randomized controlled trial

Selected References

- Wallace JI, Buchner DM, Grothaus L, et al. Implementation and effectiveness of a community-based health promotion program for older adults. *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences*. 1998;53(4):M301–M306.
- Ackermann RT, Cheadle A, Sandhu N, et al. Community exercise program use and changes in healthcare costs for older adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2003;25(3):232–237.
- Belza B, Shumway-Cook A, Phelan EA, et al. The effects of a community-based exercise program on function and health in older adults: the EnhanceFitness program. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*. 2006;25(4):291–306.
- Ackermann RT, Williams B, Nguyen HQ, et al. Healthcare cost differences with participation in a community-based group physical activity benefit for Medicare managed care health plan members. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*. 2008;56(8):1459–1465.

Fees and Location

EnhanceFitness is a low-cost program. Fees per session may vary by location. Check www.apta.org/Arthritis to find current locations.

For More Information

Project Enhance
www.projectenhance.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions.htm