

Coaching higher-activated patients: Physical activity

Phreesia



Use this guide to coach higher-activated patients (PAM Levels 3 and 4) on finding challenging new ways to achieve their recommended and personal fitness goals. Focus on identifying and overcoming unhealthy habits, personal triggers and unanticipated barriers to activity.

Build knowledge:

Encourage the patient to be active at or near recommended or personal goal levels.

- Ask the patient to **describe how much physical activity they get each week** and the different ways they like to be active. Discuss the amount of physical activity recommended in the U.S. Physical Activity Guidelines or by the patient's care team. How does their current level of activity compare? If they're not quite there, what can they do to step things up?
- **Discuss what constitutes a well-rounded fitness routine** (e.g., one that includes a mix of aerobic activity, strength training, stretching and balance exercises). Are there areas the patient hasn't prioritized due to disinterest, mobility concerns, fear of injury or other reasons? Identify barriers, address concerns and clear up any confusion or misconceptions.

Build skills:

Help the patient anticipate activity barriers and identify ways to get back on track.

- Encourage the patient to **pay attention to their responses to boredom or stress**. Determine whether these responses are potentially harmful (e.g., overeating, undereating, inactivity) versus health-promoting (e.g., exercising, preparing nutritious meals). How would it feel to try a health-promoting activity next time?
- Ask the patient to **identify their personal triggers for inactivity** throughout the week, such as fatigue, pain, a hectic schedule or a lack of resources. Together, brainstorm ways to tackle these triggers. For instance, you might suggest that the patient sign up for a free exercise class, look up modified versions of common exercises or find a safe place to jog outside.
- **Talk about upcoming barriers to activity**, such as travel, illness, weather, visitors, holidays or life changes. Together, make plans for how to overcome these barriers, like using the hotel gym or taking relatives ice skating.

Build confidence:

Motivate the patient to find creative new ways to optimize their fitness routine.

- **Discuss how enthusiastic the patient is** about their current fitness routine. Is exercise getting too boring or easy? Together, come up with fun and interesting ways for the patient to stay active. They may be ready to try out a different sport, find a workout buddy or start an active hobby like gardening, for example.
- Are there any factors in the patient's lifestyle that may hinder their ability to meet their activity goals, such as a lack of sleep or a diet that lacks vital nutrients? **Ask them to identify areas for improvement** before making suggestions.
- **Encourage the patient to set a fitness goal** tied to an upcoming event, such as a vacation or 10K race. How would it feel to use this event as a motivational tool to train several times per week? What is a healthy way for the patient to self-reward when they achieve this goal?

