

**Title of Intervention:** The Strong-for-Life Program;

**Intervention Strategies:** Individual Education, Campaigns and Promotions, Supportive Relationships

**Purpose of the Intervention:** To improve the health of older adults with disabilities through an in-home resistance training program

**Population:** Older adults with disabilities

**Setting:** Home-based

**Partners:** Community agencies, professionals, senior centers and senior housing sites

**Intervention Description:**

- Individual Education: In this 6 month intervention, participants were given a 35-minute exercise video with 11 routines and exercise training by physical therapist during a first home visit. Color-coded elastic bands were provided for resistance. Individualized goal setting was used to tailor program to different ability levels.
- Supportive Relationships: Counseling was provided during home visits by a physical therapist to enhance participants' attitudes about physical activity. A motivational videotape addressed misconceptions about physical activity in older adults and provided role models for physical activity. Participants signed a behavioral contract. Follow-up phone calls by the physical therapist provided progress monitoring. Participants could also call the physical therapist with questions and concerns.
- Campaigns and Promotions: Reinforcement included simple incentives (e.g., dollar bill for filling-out logs, a program logo sticker, program logo magnet).

**Theory:** Not mentioned

**Resources Required:**

- Staff/Volunteers: physical therapists
- Training: physical therapists were trained in behavioral counseling
- Technology: video, video equipment
- Space: room to exercise
- Budget: not mentioned
- Intervention: exercise video, motivational video, elastic exercise bands, behavioral contract, phone
- Evaluation: exercise tracking calendars, dynamometer, questionnaires

**Evaluation:**

- Design: randomized control trial
- Methods and Measures:
  - Calendars to record self-reported exercise data including date, color of elastic band used and perceived exertion rating for each session were returned via mail every 2 weeks
  - Muscle strength was measured via a hand-held dynamometer
  - Balance was assessed via 3 measures: functional reach-reaching forward without moving the feet; unilateral stance protocol; and tandem gait.
  - Functional mobility was measured via an "up & go" test
  - Profile of Mood States Short Form-30 measured mood.
  - Disability status measured via Sickness Impact Profile 68.
  - Assessed change in performance across multiple dimensions by asking participants to choose statements about how they felt and overall health status.

**Outcomes:**

- Short Term Impact: High rates of exercise adherence were achieved. Participants achieved statistically significant lower extremity improvements, improvement in tandem gait and a reduction in physical and overall disability.
- Long Term Impact: Not mentioned

**Maintenance:** Not mentioned

**Lessons Learned:** Home-based resistance exercise programs designed for older adults with disabilities have promise as an effective public health strategy and are relatively low in cost.

**Citation(s):**

Jette, A. M., M. Lachman, et al. (1999). "Exercise--it's never too late: the strong-for-life program." *Am J Public Health* 89(1): 66-72.