

Energizing New Mexico: Transforming Wellness Through Movement

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Financial Disclosures

Dianne Christensen and Cassandra Vanderpool do not have any financial relationships with any commercial interests that create a conflict of interest affecting the content of this presentation regarding products or services.

Learning Objectives

After completion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Describe evidence-based programs that address current gaps in community-based **physical activity opportunities**.
- Explain the demonstrated **benefits of exercise**, including falls prevention and management of chronic conditions, and how these outcomes support healthy aging.
- Develop strategies to **apply or expand evidence-based programs within New Mexico communities** to improve older adult physical activity engagement and safety.

Physical Activity Guidelines

Adults

- **150 minutes** of moderate to vigorous **aerobic** physical activity each week
- **Muscle strengthening** activities at least **twice** per week

The recommendations are the same for adults with chronic health conditions and adults with disabilities!

Physical Activity Guidelines

% ADULTS* Reporting Participated in Enough Aerobic and Muscle Strengthening Exercises to Meet Guidelines

NHIS, 2020; BRFSS, 2023



United States

*All adults 18+

Physical Activity Guidelines

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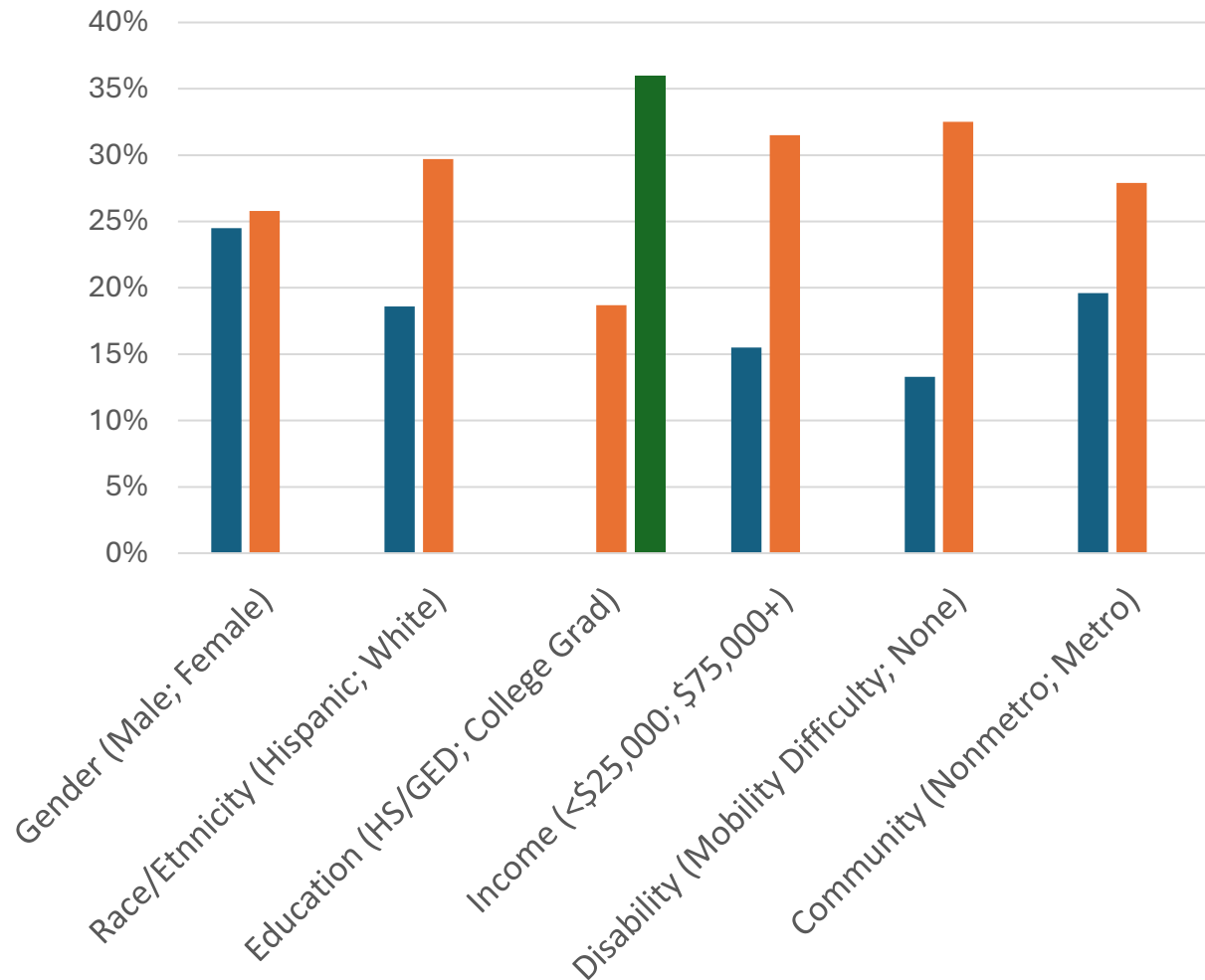
PAGA Midcourse Report, 2023

**< 15% of U.S. Older
Adults are Meeting
Recommendations!**

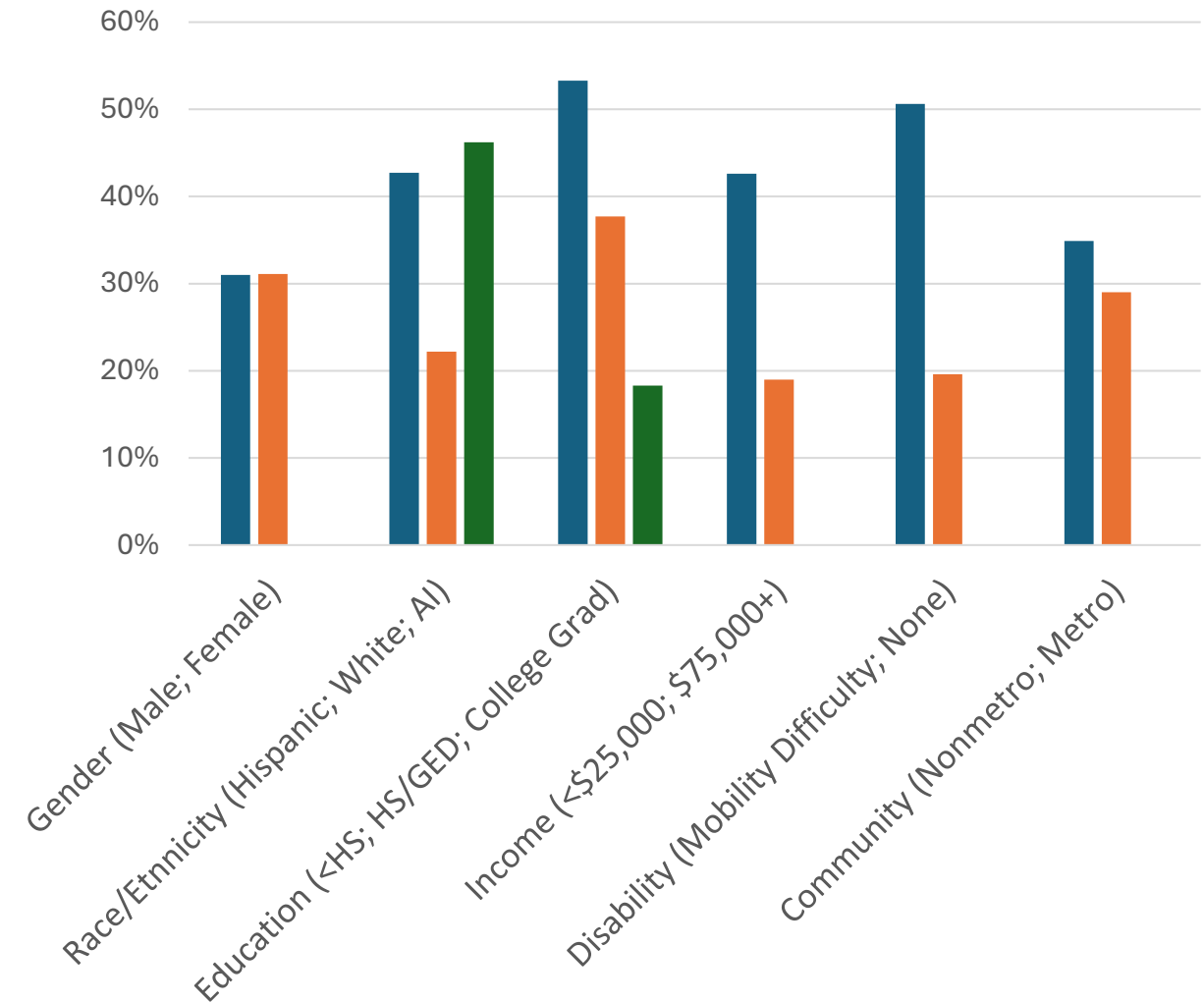
*Adults 65+

The Activity Gap: NM Adults Age 65+

Met PAG in the past 30 days: 25.2% (36th)



No PA in past 30 days: 31.1% (24th)



Walk With Ease



**Arthritis
Foundation®**



BE BOLD. Shape the Future.
New Mexico State University
aces.nmsu.edu

Program Benefits



Walk With Ease is proven to:

- **Reduce** the **pain** and **discomfort** of arthritis
- **Increase** balance, strength and walking pace
- **Build confidence** in your ability to be physically active
- **Improve overall health**

Program Objectives

- Promote **physical activity** education
- Promote education about **arthritis self-management** and **walking safely**
- Encourage participants to **continue walking/moving**



Picture courtesy of HealthySD.gov

Program Formats



Three Program Formats:

- . In-Person / Group classes
- . Self-Directed
- . Self-Directed Enhanced

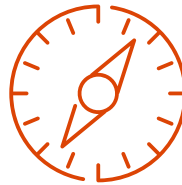
Organizational Collaborations

National Organizations

- National Recreation and Parks Association
- National Association Chronic Disease Directors
- Osteoarthritis Action Alliance
- Y of the USA

CDC Funded States

- Iowa—Iowa State University of Science and Technology
- Michigan—Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- Minnesota—Minnesota Department of Public Health and Services
- Montana—Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
- New Hampshire—New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
- Oklahoma—Oklahoma State Department of Health
- Oregon—Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division
- North Carolina—University of North Carolina at Asheville
- Utah—Utah Department of Health and Human Services
- Vermont—Vermont Department of Health
- Virginia—Virginia Department of Health
- West Virginia—West Virginia University Research Corp.



**Kansas State
University
Extension**

Your Body on Walking

Science proves that walking 150 to 300 minutes/week can transform your physical and mental health.

What are you waiting for?



WWE – Kansas State Extension

- ◆ 2020 – Grant from KS Department of Health & Environment (training for 20 agents; library of books 20/agent; 80 walking displays)
- ◆ COVID – launched WWE with virtual delivery
- ◆ 2022 – delivery of WWE through SNAP-Ed
- ◆ Kansas – primarily in-person delivery format
- ◆ SNAP-Ed Partner – SE Kansas Area Agency on Aging
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUWLI3YxuuM>

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Walk Kansas
Walk with Ease

WalkKansas.org

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Physical Activity Programs - KSRE

Walk With Ease

Arthritis Foundation program: to reduce pain, increase balance, strength and walking pace = improved overall health.
8 weeks



Walk Kansas

KSRE program: nudges participants to move more, increase fruit & vegetable amounts, improve mental wellbeing, increase productivity, enhance quality of life – have fun!
8 weeks

Stay Strong Stay Healthy

University of Missouri Extension program: build muscle, increase bone density, improve flexibility and balance, gain confidence, strength social support = enhanced quality of life and independence!!
8 weeks



Walk With Ease – Our “Why”

Helped with balance, stamina, fewer leg cramps, sleep better and able to walk much further.

Helps my overall health and to keep my leg swelling down. Energizes me!!

Total success – I have a lot more mobility!

Helps to loosed stiff joints.

Walking is critical for me to stay healthy. I can tell I have a stronger body and more leg strength.

Makes me want to continue walking and doing my strength exercises.

It's good to be around other people.

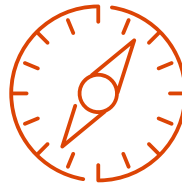
The stretching before and after walking – I never knew the importance.

My doctor will be pleased that I have a plan for walking each day.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT

"We've got to keep moving ... it makes everything easier" Marge Neely





**New Mexico
State University
Extension**



NMSU Extension Implementation

- Program delivery since 2022
- Six counties offer WWE
- Urban and rural audiences
- All three formats have been offered
- 20 cohorts
- 182 participants
- Report impacts by county, state, and nationally.



Benefits

Doable for sedentary participants and those with limitations/chronic pain.

Flexible and adaptable to a wide variety of community partners.

Self-directed can be offered in conjunction with other programming.
Increases contact numbers.

Perfect follow up program to keep participants engaged.

Low cost of materials.

Impacts

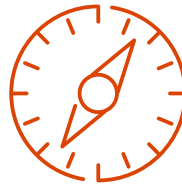
100% planned to continue walking after sessions ended.

“Understanding how exercise will help ease pain when having arthritis.”

“Meeting other people who experience the same issues I have experienced while working on increasing my walking habits. I no longer feel alone in my various stumbling blocks.”

“Since I started, I have been more motivated and had more energy.”

“The encouragement to just get out and do it. My time is valuable and the investment in myself by walking is invaluable.”



**Oregon
State University
Extension**



OSU Extension Implementation

- "Hub" for WVE in Oregon, in partnership with SNAP-Ed (36 counties)
- Program Delivery since 2012
- All three formats are offered
- 2024 Engagement Data
 - 751 Participants
 - 28 Cohorts (10 in Spanish)
 - 110+ Community Leaders & 20+ Community Organizations





Accessibility & Inclusivity:

**Making WWE
Programming Accessible
for Rural Oregonians &
People with Disabilities**





Language Access

Camine Con Gusto





Impacts

"**Loved** this class - very valuable info and physical aspects. My **[blood pressure] improved** as well as **breathing, distance in walking.**"

"I appreciate that the program was **free**, therefore **accessible to everyone**. It seems [the class] fills up quickly, therefore, the **need is great.**"

"Easy to follow... it **motivated me** to prove to myself that I could finish the program."

Conclusion

Conclusions from the *Journal of Extension* article.

- **Extension Systems** can promote public health by helping communities manage chronic conditions like arthritis.
- **Strategic partnerships** between Extension Systems and CDC-funded arthritis partners, healthcare providers, AAAs, and other community organizations can help to reach communities of all types, including underserved or hard to reach.
- As arthritis and other chronic conditions rise, expanding and promoting **Arthritis Appropriate Evidence-Based Interventions** through Extension Systems and community partners remains essential. These efforts improve individual health and help reduce the broader public health burden of chronic disease.

Why Strength Training Matters for Older Adults



IMPROVES
HEART HEALTH



REDUCES
FALLS RISK



BOOSTS FUNCTION
& INDEPENDENCE

References

Zhu, R., Zuo, J., Li, K., Lam, M. H., Wong, Y. L., Yang, L., Bai, X., Wong, M. S., Kwok, T., Zheng, Y., & Ma, Z. (2025). *Association of lower-limb strength with different fall histories or prospective falls in community-dwelling older people: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. BMC Geriatrics, 25, 83. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-025-05685-3>

American Heart Association. *Resistance Exercise Training in Individuals With and Without Cardiovascular Disease: 2023 Update*. Circulation. (2023).
<https://doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000001189>

Fragala, M. S., Cadore, E. L., Dorgo, S., Izquierdo, M., Kraemer, W. J., Peterson, M. D., & Ryan, E. D. (2019). *Resistance Training for Older Adults: Position Statement from the National Strength and Conditioning Association*. Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research, 34(10), [Article ID: JSC.00000000000003230].
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ExtensionGetFit





Timing of fitness testing and questionnaire administration varies on program type. Programs of a set length (12 weeks) will concentrate evaluation activities at the start and end of the program. Those with on-going programs will schedule evaluation activities once a year.

Senior Fitness Test

Measures 7 aspects of functional fitness (this is adapted from the Senior Fitness Test Manual)

- lower-body strength
- upper-body strength
- aerobic endurance
- lower body flexibility
- upper body flexibility
- agility and dynamic balance
- BMI

Post Questionnaire

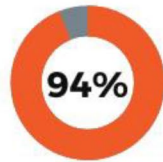
Includes questions about quality of life and an open-ended question to collect personal success stories and participant comments.

Post Questionnaire Results

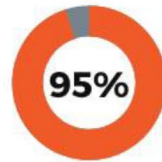
Survey respondents reported:



Improved their overall health



Felt physically stronger



Felt increased energy



Felt improved sleep



Felt decreased joint pain



Became more active because of intervention

\$ 728,404+

estimated hospitalization cost savings from fall reduction through Extension Get Fit.

Active Participation

22 Counties

have active Extension Get Fit Groups.

107 Volunteers

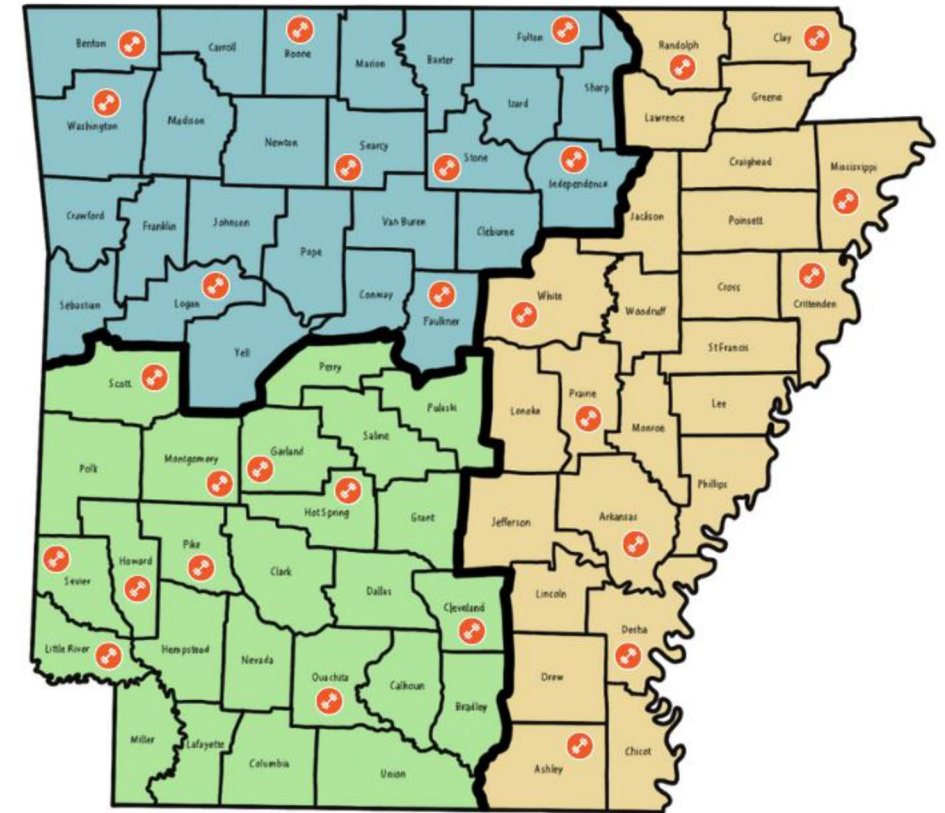
are leading Extension Get Fit clubs.

792 Members

are presently active.

39 Clubs

are presently active.



EXTENSION **GET FIT**

\$20 PER YEAR

LOCAL & COMMUNITY
BASED

SMALLER CLASSES

A SENSE OF
BELONGING

SAFE & APPROPRIATE
EXERCISES

VS

MEMBERSHIP RATE

LOCATION

CLASS SIZE

COMMUNITY

EVIDENCE-BASED

OTHER PROGRAMS

\$40 - \$70 PER MONTH

LACK OF GYM FACILITIES
OR TRANSPORTATION

CLASS SIZES CAN
VARY

LACKS GROUP SUPPORT
OR MOTIVATION

INSTRUCTOR
KNOWLEDGE WILL VARY

Side Hip Raise

HIPS / GLUTES



- Feet shoulder-width apart, toes forward, knees slightly bent
- Try to keep your torso from tilting sideways as you slowly lift and lower one leg
- Complete reps on one side before switching to other leg
- When using a mat, bend lower part of bottom leg to 90°, keep hips and knees over each other, and lift top leg 1.5-2 feet

Counties with Trained Agents

Bernalillo

Santa Fe

Valencia

McKinley

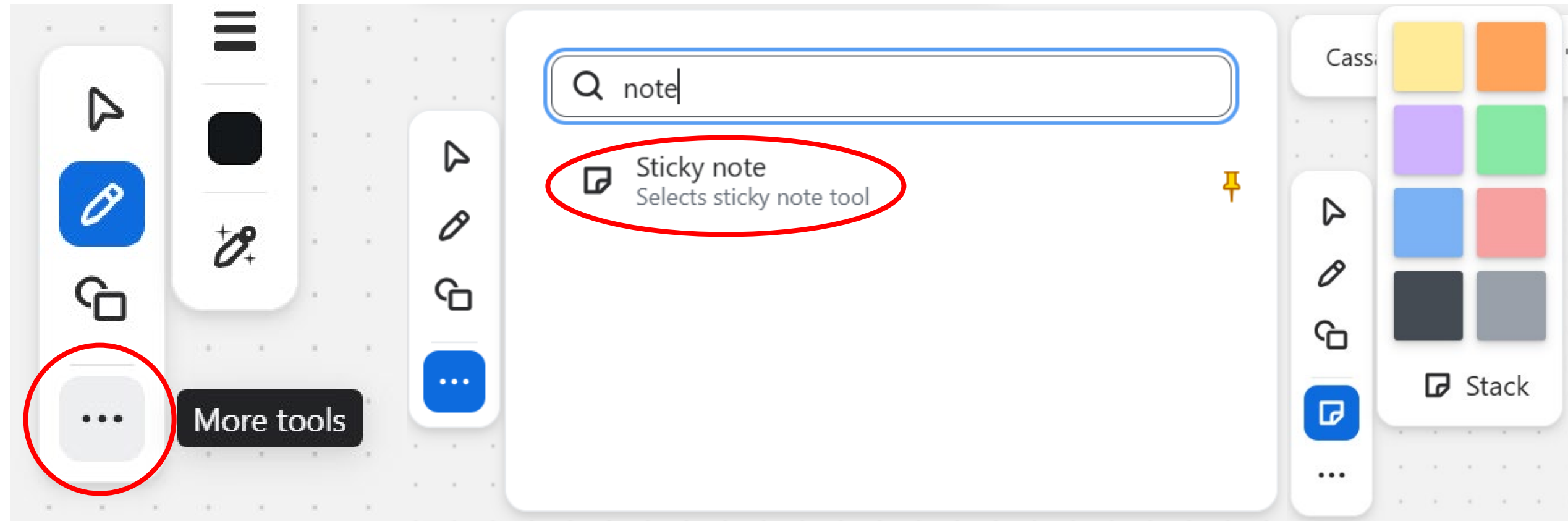
Rio Arriba

Luna

Doña Ana

Coming soon: Training in Las Cruces January 2026 AND ¡Español!

Physical Activity Across NM



Pairing Programs for Complete Fitness

Walk With Ease |  **Arthritis Foundation®**

+

ExtensionGetFit

I Want to Lead a Class! – What Next?



ATHLETICS AND FITNESS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

[Cart](#) [My Account](#)
800-446-2322
M-Th: 6am-7pm, F 6am-6pm, S-S 8am-5pm PST

[Group Fitness Instructor](#) [Indoor Cycling Instructor](#) [Personal Fitness Trainer](#) [Nutrition Coach](#) [All Courses](#) [Recertify](#) [Q](#)



Arthritis Foundation Walk With Ease

Walk With Ease is an evidence-based program that has been proven to help people with arthritis or other related conditions reduce pain, increase balance, strength and walking pace, and improve overall health. As a Walk With Ease Program Leader, you'll help arthritis pain sufferers build confidence in their ability to be physically active, and show them how they can make physical activity part of their everyday lives. You'll learn the relationship between arthritis, exercise and pain, develop and implement a personal walking plans with realistic goals, and get tips, strategies and resources for maintaining a long-term exercise routine. Participants receive an Arthritis Foundation certification, a leader's manual filled with exercise illustrations, health education information, and a 6-week walking plan.

\$89 4 CEUs

[ENROLL NOW](#)

- All leaders are **required** to have **completed** the Leader Training and have a current **CPR certification**
- Leader training is **online & self-paced**
- Contact the **Arthritis Foundation** for more information!



Training Structure

- Extension Get Fit Fundamentals Training
- “Prepare to Lead...” Trainings
 - ½ day (4 hours)
 - Routine-focused
 - Will include additional information
 - Must attend Extension Get Fit Fundamentals Training before any Prepare to Lead trainings





Volunteer Role

- Teach classes according to program guidelines
 - Promote research-based information
- Communicate with an agent as an advisor
- Assist with conducting fitness assessments, collecting evaluation data
- Provide information to the agent
 - Enrollment paperwork (for rolling enrollment)
 - Attendance records

Other Strategies for Expanding?



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