



# On **TARGET**

## **Disability Prevention in New York State**

Disability Prevention Program, New York State Department of Health

Issue No. 6

This issue of On Target features organizations, services and materials you might find useful in your quest for a healthier lifestyle. They are cited only as examples of what's available. The state Health Department's Disability Prevention Program does NOT endorse nor imply preferences for any of these products, services or materials. For more resources, contact your Independent Living Center or other local programs designed for people with disabilities.

## **Stay Fit for Life!**

### **Healthy Lifestyles For People With Disabilities**



Good health. Feeling great. Being independent and having control. Pursuing happiness. These are important ingredients for a healthy life.

A healthy lifestyle is its own reward. But it can be hard work. To achieve it, people must look beyond the barriers in their lives and realize that they CAN create their own opportunities for healthy, happy and active lives.

You may be thinking at this point, "That's sounds good. But how can I do that? At times, it seems impossible."

This issue of **On Target** contains practical ideas and suggestions for ways in which people with disabilities can improve their physical well-being. The samplings of programs, services and educational materials will serve as a starting point for becoming fit for life. It's always a good idea, too, to consult with your health professional before beginning any physical fitness program.

But, regular physical activity is just one piece of the healthy lifestyles puzzle. The next issue of **On Target** will explore other ways to lead a healthier life with a look at methods for improving nutritional, emotional and psychological well-being.

Regular physical activity helps you beat the chances of becoming overweight and developing health problems, such as heart disease, cancer and high blood pressure. And, people who are healthier, tend to be happier, live longer and feel they have control over their lives.

The recent U.S. Surgeon General's "Report on Physical Activity and Health" said that everyone — specifically citing people with disabilities — needs physical activity.

Why? The report gives specific examples: "Interventions to promote physical activity...have led to enhanced cardiorespiratory fitness and improved skeletal muscle

function in persons with multiple sclerosis...increased walking capacity and reduction in pain for patients with low back pain...and improvements in endurance for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease..."

Studies indicate that many people with disabilities, especially physical ones, don't exercise or pursue well-being activities, such as eating healthy or taking up an enjoyable activity or hobby. Few studies, though, show how the 43 million Americans with disabilities can improve their general well-being. How can people be encouraged to lead healthier lives? Different people have different reasons. For some it may be the exhilaration of achieving a goal, or the improved sense of well-being that comes with physical activity. For others, it could be improved self-esteem, or the camaraderie of team sports. It could be the feeling of independence and control. It may be some or all of the above.

What motivates you? If you have a physical disability and are interested in sharing your thoughts on physical activity, please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire included in this issue of **On Target** and return it, postage paid, to the New York State Health Department. Your input will be used in creating and promoting messages to be used throughout the state to promote healthy lifestyles for everyone.

### **Sports for the Blind**



Blindsport is a new electronic mailing list dealing with sports for the blind. Topics range from announcements of sports training camps; upcoming tournaments and events, and their results; discussions on how to make sports more accessible to the blind; and other related subjects. To subscribe, contact [jmeddau@cris.com](mailto:jmeddau@cris.com). and include name of this list, Blindsport.

## **'Fit For Life' Brochure to be Available**



Physical activity can be a part of everyone's life, regardless of physical limitations. A new State Health Department brochure for people with disabilities explains how to make physical fitness part of your daily routine; suggests sports and leisure activities; and discusses available adaptive equipment. The benefits of exercise for people with disabilities are highlighted. The publication will be available in early winter. For a free copy of "Fit for Life," write: Publications, NYS Department of Health, Box 2000, Albany, NY 12220.

## **Accessible Recreation**



The N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation brochure, "Opening the Outdoors to People with Disabilities," lists wheelchair accessible state campsites, educational centers, hiking trails, fishing sites, nature viewing areas on land and by water, and personal care stations. For a copy, call the regional DEC office listed in your telephone book.

## **Seat Aerobics Videos**



Licensed aerobics fitness instructor and paraplegic Daria Alinovi has developed three, no-impact, instructional aerobics videos to be done from wheelchairs and armchairs. "Just 4 Kids" is designed to increase daily energy, strengthen the heart and build muscles. "Endurance" burns off fat, elevates daily energy, works on increasing flexibility and decreasing stress. Discussed are how to monitor heart rate; safety tips; and adaptive instruction. "Body Sculpting" incorporates light hand weights and focuses on size, shape and strength of muscles. Range-of-motion stretches conclude the program for lower extremities. For prices and ordering information contact: Seat Aerobics, P.O. Box 630064, Little Neck, NY 11363-0064; 718-631-4007 (voice/fax), or <http://www.pin.net/seatarobics>.

## **'Warriors on Wheels' Improves Strength, Independence**



Do you wish you had a way to build your strength and endurance? And, ultimately, make performing daily tasks easier?

If you live in the Albany area, you may be interested in a recreational fitness program called Warriors on Wheels. It is designed for people with disabilities, especially those who use wheelchairs, and uses weight training and Nautilus equipment to help develop the stamina and muscles needed for everyday activities.

More than 140 adults and 30 children, with varying disabilities, are currently working out under the direction of Warriors on Wheels founding president, Ned Norton, a former Olympic trainer and body builder. He said dedication to the workout leads to improved independence and a sense of well-being. "The physical benefits are obvious. People have an easier time getting in and out of

wheelchairs or opening heavy doors. The psychological benefits are even more significant. There's a feeling of accomplishment, of self-confidence. The program makes people more independent," Norton said.

Tom Morin, who is paralyzed from below the mid-chest and has been a Warrior for nine years, agrees. "I have more energy and endurance. Working out keeps my blood flowing and prevents pressure sores," he said. Morin faithfully follows a three-hour, weight-training and upper body/ cardiovascular work-out each week. "It's good for stress reduction," said Morin who, since joining Warriors, has become active in wheelchair roadracing and wheelchair basketball. He said people at the club and other Warriors are friendly and supportive.

Norton started Warriors on Wheels in 1988 when he was fitness manager of the Colonie Athletic and Sports Club. (The program continues to operate from there, thanks to the health club's generosity.) Membership grew so quickly, via word-of-mouth, the media and medical referrals, that Norton incorporated Warriors on Wheels and now works as its full-time trainer and coach.

*Ned Norton assists a member in the "Warriors on Wheels" program.*

Norton said he enjoys working with individuals whose body toning "is a direct line to improving their lives."

Warriors on Wheels has garnered kudos, both locally and internationally. The President's Council on Health and Fitness and Sports recognized the group a few years ago and invited Norton and four Warrior members to the White House to meet the then council chairman, Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Norton is also proud that his program has inspired similar ones, the most recent in Tokyo, Japan. This is particularly significant, Norton said, because the traditional Japanese viewpoint is that people with disabilities should be treated as social outcasts and that their disabilities are punishment for individual or family wrongdoing.

Warriors on Wheels is the only New York State weight-training chapter of Disabled Sports USA, the national governing body in the field. Members have also won prestigious weight lifting competitions, both in able-bodied and physically challenged categories.

Norton has produced a videotape showing how people with disabilities can use regular workout equipment at health clubs, and has written a manual, "Access to Power: A Guide to Weight Training." For more information on materials or membership information and costs, contact Ned Norton at P.O. Box 5427; Albany, NY 12205. Children with spina bifida can join Warriors on Wheels for free.

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## **ASPIRE Inspires Physical Fitness**



Three New York chapters of Athletic Sports Program Involving Recreation and Exercise (ASPIRE) help children and adults with

amputations and other physical disabilities to enjoy such sports as tennis, basketball, swimming, track and field, golf and skiing. Drawing people from across the state, each chapter designs its own programs based on regional interest.

The oldest chapter is ASPIRE of New York City. It was established 10 years ago, as a result of a research project to increase aerobic capacity of amputees. (Amputees require more oxygen when they walk, run and perform other physical activities.)

ASPIRE of New York City president and Registered Nurse Paddy Rosbach, who is a below-the-knee amputee, said her chapter serves amputees and is best known for its track and field, swimming and ski trips for youngsters. ASPIRE of New York City meets the last Wednesday of each month at 6:15 p.m. at the Hospital for Special Surgery, 70th St., New York City. A support group for parents of children with amputations meets as needed. The chapter makes referrals and has educational materials available.

Amputees with medical referrals can work-out and receive physical therapy at the Joyce Center, located at 50 Maple Place, Manhasset. Offering comprehensive sports medicine, the Joyce Center is sponsored by ASPIRE of New York City, and two area businesses, Advanced Prosthetics and Orthodontics and Partridge Kreuter Belding Physical Therapy. Those interested can contact the center at 516-365-7225, or call Ms. Rosbach at 516-627-3496. Ms. Rosbach said that many ASPIRE projects are made possible by the generous fundraising efforts of the Plainsville-Old Bethpage Roadrunners Club, including its annual, 50-mile relay race that draws up to 130 teams from across the United States.

Best known for its annual wheelchair tennis tournament at Schenectady's Central Park, ASPIRE of the Capital District strives to offer sports and recreational activities to amputees and people with other physical disabilities.

"Rather than concentrating on disabilities, we encourage individuals to center their attention on their ability to participate in an active lifestyle," said executive board member William J. Sampson. Sampson's Prosthetic and Orthotic Lab, Schenectady, has actively supported the club since it was founded in 1991.

ASPIRE of the Capital District sponsors sports clinics, support groups, a loaning library, and publishes a directory of regional athletic opportunities and services, from the usual, like wheelchair basketball and tennis, cycling and track and field, to the more unusual, like sky-diving and orienteering (cross-country racing that requires participants to use compasses and maps to complete the race course). ASPIRE also maintains listings of manufacturers and distributors of various adaptive sports equipment.

ASPIRE of the Capital District also has a basketball team that is open to people of all disabilities. Many players have spina bifida, spinal cord injury and/or amputations. Call Chris White at 518-862-1519 for more information.

The chapter's sports clinics, which are held in conjunction with local sports clubs and fitness centers, have included fly fishing, walking, golf and water skiing.

Individuals who have been recently disabled, can be matched, if interested, with a person of similar disability from ASPIRE's amputee and spinal cord injury support groups, to share experiences in a peer-to-peer relationship.

For more information on ASPIRE of the Capital District or for a copy of its brochure and services directory, write: ASPIRE, Inc. (Upstate), P.O. Box 2042, Albany, NY 12220.

The Mid-Hudson ASPIRE is the newest chapter. It is for children and adult amputees and has family-centered sports activities. Adaptive jet ski training and a golf clinic are planned for Spring 1997, and self support groups are available. For more information, write Denise Milazzo, Home Route 1, Box 114, Greenwood Lake, NY 10925, or call her at 914-477-2800. This new chapter is also in the process of designing an ASPIRE information Web page for the Internet.

## **Stretching, Strengthening With Yoga**



Many people don't realize that yoga is a physical activity. In fact, it can be especially beneficial for people with disabilities. Yoga relaxes and connects the mind and body, and is also good for stretching and strengthening, according to Judy Goldberg, a physical fitness professional and competitive swimmer who is walking disabled.

"In yoga, you focus on the mind and body. You use posture, called asanas, to help with body positioning, and we do lots of breathing and relaxation techniques," explained Goldberg, whose daily routine includes yoga.

"Yoga helps you become aware of your body. For people with disabilities that can be difficult because we often disassociate ourselves from our bodies after being touched and manipulated by medical professionals. Yoga helps us find our bodies and minds again."

By using different postures, you can adapt yoga to different disabilities, said Goldberg. "People who don't have use of their legs can do yoga in a sitting position. The postures can be adapted for their upper bodies."

For those interested in yoga and its benefits, Goldberg suggests reading "Yoga Journal," a national publication, and checking its directories and listings for classes nearest you. She also suggests contacting community centers for yoga classes and working with instructors interested in using adapted postures.

## **Windham Disabled Ski Program**



At Windham Mountain, in the Catskill Mountains, the philosophy is that anyone can ski, and the resort makes it happen. Since 1983, the Windham Disabled Ski Program has provided individual skiing lessons for people, ages 5 and older, with varied disabilities, from learning disabilities to severe cerebral palsy.

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Programs include alpine skiing, snowboarding, racing, "fun 'n games", as well as consulting services and instructor training and certification.

Assisted by 125 trained and certified skiing volunteers, 375 people last season participated in the Windham program, which is a nationwide model training center for instructors in adaptive skiing in the Eastern United States. The program is funded and governed by the Educational Foundation of the Eastern Professional Ski Instructors Association (EPSIA-EF).

Several other ski resorts currently working with the Educational Foundation to set up adaptive skiing programs, are: Greek Peak at Gore Mountain; Hunter Mountain in Hunter, NY; Kissing Bridge, VT; Holiday Valley, Massanutten, VA; Snow, VT; and Peak 'n Peek, Stowe. Whiteface Mountain, Hole in the Woods Gang (NY), and Little Switzerland, WI have also expressed interest.

For ski lesson information and costs, and more information on the program, call 518-734-5070 after Nov. 1.

## HHH's Classic Run



Each spring for 14 years, Helen Hayes Hospital in West Haverstraw has sponsored the Classic Run, a day of races for runners and wheelers of all physical abilities. It is considered the first race of its kind in the country because the main races do not segregate on ability. Up to 1,000 racers participate annually.

Racers with disabilities can also participate in the "Disabled Ambulatory Competitors and Walkers' 10K Start" and the "10K Wheelers Start." For more information, contact Helen Hayes Hospital's public relations department at 914-947-3000.

*On Target* is also available on audio cassette. For a copy, contact Mary Burt, Editor, Bureau of Community Relations, New York State Department of Health, 1084 Corning Tower, Albany, NY 12237; (518) 474-5370.



## State of New York George E. Pataki, Governor

Department of Health  
Department of Motor Vehicles  
Department of Social Services  
Education Department  
Division for Youth  
Office of the Advocate for the Disabled

Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services  
Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled  
Council on Children and Families  
Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

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# HEALTH AND WELLNESS

## WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?

Health and wellness is a state of physical, mental and social well-being. For some people with disabilities, the opportunities to achieve health and wellness may be more limited than for people without disabilities.

The New York State Department of Health is interested in promoting health and wellness for all persons, regardless of whether there is a disability. In order to do that, we need to learn to what extent persons with disabilities engage in activities that promote health and wellness, and what barriers to participation exist. We'd also like to know how you get health information and what kinds of health related information is important to you.

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions and mail this questionnaire, postage paid, to the New York State Health Department. Providing your name and address is completely optional. However, if you would like to continue to assist the Health Department in developing its health and wellness initiatives, include your name and address at the end. This questionnaire is **only** for persons with disabilities. If you do not have a disability, please share it with someone who does.

Fold completed questionnaire on dotted fold lines, tape closed (do not staple), and mail.

Thank you.

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip code of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your disability: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Education:

- less than 12 years
- 12 years
- 13-15 years
- 16 years
- more than 16 years

1. The following are ways to distribute information on health and wellness issues. Which **three** do you feel are the **best** ways to reach persons with disabilities?

- Independent Living Centers
- Newspaper advertisement
- Radio advertisement
- Television advertisement
- Magazines advertisement
- Health care providers
- Brochures/Posters
- Rehab centers
- Schools
- Internet
- Support group
- Vocational & Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)
- Local social services districts
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Review the following list of health topics. **For each topic**, indicate if your information needs are being met, if you would like to obtain more information and, finally, if it is important to you.

	Info needs met	I'd like more
Cancer prevention/screening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIV prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preventing secondary conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to quit smoking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol use/abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stress reduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Osteoporosis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diabetes control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to choose a managed care plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to negotiate the managed care system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to have a healthy baby &/or pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining flexibility/range of motion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weight control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exercise/fitness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Do you pay attention to health and wellness messages if they don't include statements about disabilities?

Yes  No

4. Do you regularly (3 times a week) participate in activities that:

increase or maintain your strength?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
increase or maintain your flexibility and range of motion?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
increase your heart rate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
promote relaxation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
reduce stress or anxiety?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

5. What are the **three most important** reasons you began these regular activities?
- Friend/family member
  - Perception of health benefit
  - Opportunity to socialize
  - Lower blood pressure/cholesterol
  - Reduce stress and tension
  - Increase independence
  - Enjoyment
  - Increase self-esteem
  - Weight loss/maintenance
  - Improved appearance
  - Overall feeling of health, well-being
  - Increased strength/tone/flexibility
  - Improved coordination
  - Do not participate in any
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Fold Here

6. Which are **three things** keep you from being more active?
- Cost
  - Time
  - Energy
  - Transportation
  - Environmental barriers
  - Lack of adaptive equipment
  - Not important to me
  - Need personal assistance
  - Lack of family/friend support
  - Lack of information on what is available

7. Below are a list of activities that can increase wellness and reduce stress. These are often considered recreational activities. Please indicate **three activities** in which you most often participate.
- Gardening
  - Crafting
  - Tennis
  - Table tennis
  - Stretching
  - Yoga
  - Meditation
  - Fishing
  - Skiing
  - Music
  - Swimming
  - Dancing
  - Team wheelchair sports
  - Rowing
  - Weight training
  - Aerobics
  - Running
  - Wheeling for exercise
  - Walking for exercise
  - Other

8. What do you think are the **three best ways** to get others with disabilities to begin participation in healthy recreation?
- Educate persons with disabilities about options for recreation
  - Educate persons with disabilities about the health benefits of recreation
  - Educate persons with disabilities about benefits other than health
  - Increase opportunities for recreation for persons with disabilities within communities
  - Educate health care providers to recommend recreation for persons with disabilities
  - Provide peer-to-peer mentor opportunities
  - Increase accessible health clubs
  - Train knowledgeable and sensitive health club staff
  - Educate persons without disabilities about the abilities of persons with disabilities
  - Educate persons without disabilities about the need for recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities

9. If you would like to continue to help the Department of Health develop wellness initiatives for persons with disabilities, please provide your name and address, and phone number below:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ASSIST US!**

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