

Age-friendly facilities: 99 questions to assess your center



**To determine whether your facility
accommodates and appeals to mature exercisers,
use this comprehensive survey to assess your
organization and physical plant**

The International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) and the North Carolina Office on Disability and Health (NCODH) bring you this comprehensive checklist to help you evaluate how usable, safe and inviting your facility is for older adults.

As you tour your facility, please answer the following questions with a **Yes** or **No**. If you aren't sure about something, note this item in the space provided for comments, which follows each section. You may also want to comment on other things you notice on your walk-through. **NB:** this resource is intended to help you assess and improve your facility's age-friendliness. A **Yes** answer does not guarantee you have adequately addressed a particular issue.

Checklist for health and wellness facilities

Facility: _____ **Observer:** _____ **Date:** _____

I. Programming

Making a start

1. Does the facility offer a free orientation class or session to help older members or residents become familiar with their surroundings?
2. Are there introductory classes specifically designed and marketed to the new, aging member?
3. Do staff ask mature members or residents about their goals, create a plan to help them reach these goals, and show them this plan?

Comments:

Meeting the needs of older adults

4. Does the facility offer programs designed to meet the needs of those with a variety of chronic health conditions? i.e. osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, balance abnormalities, muscular weakness
5. Do classes have different levels of intensity, duration and size?
6. Is there an extensive screening and assessment process? i.e. balance, functional abilities, osteoporosis
7. Do staff ask mature members or residents about their health history? Which movements cause them pain, fatigue or other symptoms? Which activities or exercises are feasible for them?
8. Does the facility offer free, ongoing staff assistance and training for older members or residents with their program?
9. Are members or residents asked if they need accommodations (interpreters, assistance with transferring, orientation to the facility)? If yes, how is this done?

10. Will staff work hand-in-hand with physicians if a mature client has a health issue?

Comments:

Supporting lifestyle change

11. Does the facility offer any type of ongoing educational program? i.e. newsletter, website, seminars, bulletin board, newspaper or magazine

12. Do qualified staff members offer counseling on the following topics:

- a. Nutrition?
- b. Behavioral modification?
- c. Pain management?
- d. Stress management?

13. Are social functions and programming included in the programming agenda?

Comments:

II. Equipment

General

14. Is the equipment area uncluttered?

15. Is the equipment well maintained?

16. Are the aisles wide enough (36" wide) for someone in a wheelchair or with a companion to negotiate? Is there room for someone with a mobility aid to turn around?

17. Are routes free of permanent obstructions? Temporary obstructions?

18. Is the more accessible or age-friendly equipment located at the end of the aisles? Does signage direct people to this equipment?

19. Do staff know where this equipment is located? Are they familiar with its operation?

20. Are staff available to move/rearrange equipment if necessary?

21. Does the facility offer an elevated stretching area or stations?

Comments:

Equipment options

- 22. Does the facility have an upper arm ergometer?
- 23. Does the facility have a piece of multistation equipment accessible to someone using a wheelchair?
- 24. Does the center have any equipment with a swing away seat, allowing everyone to use the same equipment?
- 25. Does the facility offer different types of free weights, including a variety of weights less than 5 lbs.?
- 26. Does the center have cuff weights for those with limited grips?

Comments:

Age-friendly features

- 27. Does the facility's cardiovascular equipment (treadmills, upright and recumbent bikes, ellipticals, etc.) have the following age-friendly features?

Treadmills

- a. Commercial grade?
- b. Display panel that's easy to read, change and understand?
- c. Slow starting speed, ideally 0.5 mph, and low mph setting?
- d. Shock-absorbing deck?
- e. Emergency lanyard with belt clip?
- f. Low deck threshold?
- g. Low motor housing/casing?
- h. Long handrails?
- i. Minimal pre-programmed workouts?

Recumbent bikes/steppers

- a. Commercial grade?
- b. Easy entry and exit?
- c. Easy-to-set control panel?
- d. Wide, comfortable seat, with armrest?
- e. Minimal pre-programmed workouts?
- f. Display panel that's easy to read, change and understand?
- g. Seat and arm adjustments that are easy to access and adjust?

- h. Keypad within easy reach?
- i. Long handrails?
- j. Wide, comfortable footrest?
- k. Low impact?

Elliptical machines

- a. Commercial grade?
- b. Display panel that's easy to read, change and understand?
- c. Easy entry and exit?
- d. Easy-to-set control panel?
- e. Wide, comfortable footrest?
- f. Minimal pre-programmed workouts?
- g. Arm adjustments that are easy to access and adjust?
- h. Keypad within easy reach?
- i. Low impact?

28. Does the facility's strength building equipment (free weights or weight machines) have the following age-friendly features?

- a. Nonintimidating in appearance and function?
- b. User-friendly, simple, easy and safe to operate?
- c. Ideally, low impact?
- d. Easily entered and exited by individuals with a variety of functional abilities and disabilities, especially if seats and benches are not removable?
- e. Easy to determine where to sit and where to place hands and feet?
- f. Wider seats and benches for people who need a little extra surface to maintain balance?
- g. Adjustments that allow individuals of various body size and those with functional limitations to be in the proper position while exercising to prevent compromising the joints?
- h. Easily adjustable hand, seat and pad positions?
- i. Ability to change resistance from a seated position?
- j. Low starting resistance, less than 5 lbs.?
- k. Ideally, increase resistance in 1-lb. or other small increments?
- l. Instructional placards with simple diagrams of people using the equipment, easy-to-read text and font and correct usage information?

Comments:

III. Staffing & customer service

Staffing

29. Are staff members polite, friendly and caring? Do they enjoy serving older people?

- 30. Do staff greet members or residents *professionally* every time they enter the premises or a class?
- 31. Do staff have senior fitness certification by a nationally recognized organization to work with people who have various health issues that may arise with age? i.e. osteoporosis, hypertension, arthritis
- 32. Do staff receive training in providing services to members or residents with functional limitations, chronic health conditions or disabilities?
- 33. Is the staff knowledgeable about the impact medication can have on exercise ability?
- 34. Does the center have on-site or is it affiliated with a doctor, nurse or physical therapist?

Comments:

Customer service

- 35. Are the facility hours and program times flexible?
- 36. Does the facility offer free, trial memberships?
- 37. Can people with health issues receive a free, trial visit to assess the degree to which the facility meets their needs?
- 38. Will the facility prorate membership fees, based on how much of the center is accessible to an individual?
- 39. Does the facility make provisions for seasonal residents and/or people on extended vacations?
- 40. Are adequate guest privileges easily available at the facility?
- 41. Are assisted listening devices available?
- 42. Are membership contracts and marketing materials available in large print?
- 43. Are materials available in other formats (audio, Braille)?
- 44. Does the organization belong to a professional fitness association that specializes in older adult fitness?

Comments:

IV. Facility

Atmosphere

- 45. Is the facility's atmosphere comfortable for older adults?
- 46. Is the music acceptable and set at a reasonable level?
- 47. Does the center have a *meet and greet* area for new mature members or residents to congregate and socialize?

Comments:

Inside the facility

- 48. Is the center clean, well lit and well kept?
- 49. Does the facility have power door openers at exterior and interior entrances?
- 50. Are the interior and exterior doors heavy and/or difficult to open (requiring more than 5 lbs. of force)?
- 51. Can the doors be opened without hardware that requires grasping, pinching or twisting?
- 52. Does the facility have the following age-friendly features:
 - a. Nonslip flooring?
 - b. Rugs or carpeting permanently affixed to the floor?
 - c. Minimal/low-step entrances?
 - d. Rocker light switches?
 - e. Levered door handles?
 - f. Crank-operated windows?
 - g. Nonslip treads on stairs?
 - h. Wide doorways?
 - i. Handrails throughout the center?
- 53. Is there enough seating available within the center?

- 54. Can the customer service/reception area accommodate someone using a mobility aid or service animal (i.e. guide dog)?
- 55. Is the rope in any stantions at 27” or less for detectability by a cane or a service animal?
- 56. Are all areas of the facility accessible to wheelchairs?
- 57. Is there elevator access to the upper floors?
- 58. Are elevator doors at least 36” wide when fully opened? Do they remain open a minimum of 5 seconds?
- 59. Are the emergency buttons grouped at the bottom of the panel 35” or less from the floor?
- 60. Does the elevator provide audible tones when moving up or down?

Comments:

Signage

- 61. Are signs visible, easy to understand and mounted at 60” above the floor to the center of the sign?
- 62. Do signs use raised characters, sized between 5/8”–2” high, with high contrast (light characters on dark background or dark characters on light background) and nonglare finish?
- 63. Are signs posted directing people to accessible entrances and accessible bathrooms? Is there Brailled text for the same information?
- 64. Are calendars and announcements posted at a reasonable height for someone using a wheelchair or someone of small stature?
- 65. Are there images of mature adults on posters? Do these images accurately represent the mature member or resident?

Comments:

Changing areas & restrooms

- 66. Are the locker rooms and restrooms clean and monitored by staff?
- 67. Is there a tactile sign identifying the restroom?

- 68. Is there an accessible toilet stall?
- 69. Are stall doors equipped with handles that can be operated with a closed fist?
- 70. Are the soap and towel dispensers, hair dryers, and at least one wall mirror reachable from a seated position?
- 71. Is a sink accessible, with at least 29" clearance underneath with insulated pipes?
- 72. Can faucets be operated with one closed fist?
- 73. Is there a 36" wide path to all fixtures?
- 74. Is at least one shower stall accessible? If yes, does it have grab bars?
- 75. Does the accessible stall have a shower curtain or door?
- 76. Does at least one shower stall have an L-shaped seat attached to the wall and positioned to allow the user to reach the shower controls?
- 77. Do fixtures have controls that are operable with one hand without tight grasping, pinching or twisting, and with reasonable force (no greater than 5 lbs)?
- 78. Are benches or seats of sufficient width and sturdiness (24" wide, 48" long and 17" above the floor)?
- 79. Is there enough seating available in the locker rooms?

Comments:

Swimming pool & sauna

- 80. Does the facility have a warm pool?
- 81. Is there an unobstructed route at least 36" wide to and around the pool?
- 82. Is there at least 1 accessible means of water entry/exit to each pool (lift, zero depth entry, sloped entry/ramp, transfer wall)? Are there 2 in pools larger than 300 ft./30 yds.?
- 83. Can an individual operate the lift without assistance?
- 84. Are staff members trained in the use of the lift? In wheelchair transfer techniques?

85. Can the whirlpool/hot tub area accommodate people with mobility aids?

Comments:

V. Parking & path of travel

Access to the building

86. Is the center easy to get to by public transit?

87. Does the organization offer transportation services to and from the facility?

88. Is the parking lot well lit?

89. Does the facility provide accessible parking? If yes, are these spaces labeled with appropriate signage?

90. Are the accessible spaces closest to the building's accessible entrance? Do people exit their vehicles on a level surface?

91. Does the facility have a ramp or curb cut to the sidewalk? Is this area kept clear?

92. Does the path of travel to the center meet the following standards:

- a. Level and smooth?
- b. Safe and easy to navigate?
- c. Well lit?
- d. Close to the entrance?
- e. Free of permanent obstructions?
- f. Free of temporary obstructions?
- g. Accessible to people with mobility aids, i.e. walker, wheelchair, scooters?

Comments:

VI. Emergency preparedness

Training & procedures

93. Is the staff properly trained to identify the warning signs of fatigue or distress, and to handle emergencies that may arise? (If yes, what do they do in case of an emergency?)

- 94. Do staff members have CPR and first aid training?
- 95. Does the facility have visual emergency signals in restrooms, meeting rooms, hallways, lobbies and other common areas?
- 96. Do strobe fire alarms provide visual and audible signals?
- 97. Are evacuation maps posted in restrooms, meeting rooms, hallways, lobbies and other common use areas? Are they of adequate size, height and contrast?
- 98. Are fire extinguishers stored at a reasonable height for someone in a wheelchair or of small stature?
- 99. Do emergency procedures require staff to *visually* check *all* facility areas to ensure all members or residents are aware of an emergency announcement?

Comments:

What did you find?

What are you **presently doing** to make your center more responsive to older adults?

What **barriers to participation** did you identify using this survey?

What **immediate improvements** can you make to increase your facility's age-friendliness?

What **future, permanent improvements** can you make to increase your center's age-friendliness?

Sample plan of action

Using the information gathered during the facility tour and from the training session, develop a plan of action for your facility.

Desired change	Necessary steps and resources	Person(s) responsible	Timeline	Indicators of success
Immediate: Weight room layout	Walk thru, use of ODH guide	Personal fitness trainers Wellness Coordinator	Within 2 months	Meets ADA recommendations
Taping rugs and carpets	Facility walk thru, tape	Assistant Director	Within 1 month	No falls, incidents
Shower curtain in locker rooms	Purchase & install curtain	Assistant Director	Within 1 month	
Insulating pipes in locker rooms	Maintenance staff	Assistant Director	Within 1 month	
Mid-range: Staff training on emergency procedures	Identify trainer, select staff, schedule training, incorporate into policies	Executive Director Staff Development	Within 3 months	
Long-term: Installation of power door	Review RS Means text, budget for item, order, install	Executive director	Within 1 year	Positive response from all members, delivery people, no accidents/incident reports
Purchase of multi-station equipment	Review of NCODH guide and resources, budget	Supervisor of weight room, ED.	Within 1 year	
Ongoing: Evaluation of signage (calendars, bulletin boards, etc)	Review of guidelines, prioritize signs, budget	Assistant director		
Staff training	Needs assessment, identify trainers	Executive director, staff development		

Chart provided by the North Carolina Office on Disability and Health.



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