



# Launch your planning cycle for Active Aging Week 2007

**Active Aging Week events introduce adults over 50 to healthy lifestyles. By assembling a team to plan your offerings and starting your planning early, you'll increase the chances of hosting great events—and with a lot less stress, too**

Since spring has arrived and talk of vacations and gardening warms the air, autumn seems a long way away. Yet spring is the perfect time to think ahead and start planning for Active Aging Week, held in the last week of September. An annual celebration of healthy lifestyles for older adults, Active Aging Week is spearheaded by the

International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA), an association that supports professionals who develop wellness and fitness facilities and services for adults over 50. In 2007, Active Aging Week: Choose an active life will be Monday, September 24, through Monday, October 1, International Day of Older Persons.

Late September is a good time for you to present at least one Active Aging Week event for the following reasons:

- The weather usually cooperates—it's nice enough to go outdoors and cool enough for comfort.
- People are back from summer travels and ready to become involved in activities.

- Autumn events provide a good balance to the many health promotion events held in the first few months of the year.
- You have plenty of time to plan!

As a host site for Active Aging Week, you have the freedom to choose what events to offer, and how frequently, over the week and weekend. You can plan one Active Aging Week event, or 20—it's up to you. You set the time and the length. ICAA requires only that an event is free of charge, and that it features a “Yes, you can,” no-pressure attitude.

Why is Active Aging Week free? Older adults, many of whom live on fixed incomes, may consider even a small fee a barrier to trying a new activity, especially if it involves exercise. Active Aging Week exists to break down the barriers, so older adults will be introduced to the elements of a healthy lifestyle. A free event eliminates one barrier. An atmosphere of fun and acceptance eliminates others, so no one feels badly about not knowing how to do something. In fact, some events offered during Active Aging Week are demonstrations, so older adults don't have to attempt an activity, but can feel successful by simply attending.

The overriding goals of Active Aging Week are to encourage older adults who have never participated in wellness activities to try something (anything!), and to inspire people who do participate to maintain or increase their levels of activity. Last year's Active Aging Week hosts offered a variety of fun and creative events to encourage people to take part.

Activities in 2006 included ballroom dancing, exercise classes, seminars on falls prevention and arthritis, special introductory views of classes soon to be offered, nutritional lectures, and lots of variations on walking. There were gentle walks that involved families and friends, open houses in corporate fitness centers to intrigue age 50-plus employees, and outreach through newspaper and television announcements to people brand new to a location. You will find more examples of activities offered, as well as tips for planning this year's events, by reading the article “Active Aging Week 2006” in the *Journal on Active Aging*<sup>®</sup> (November-December 2006).

### Plan for a successful event

A lesson learned by past hosts is that you will have a great event with a lot less stress when you create a team. You don't

have to do everything yourself, and you likely have people who bring significant skills to planning events. Here are a number of other tips to help you in your planning.

**Make a list.** What needs to be done? The “Active Aging Week five-month plan” below gives you a list of major tasks, while the “Planning checklist” on page 38 allows you multiple subtasks specific to your location and plans. By having these lists ready, you will be able to immediately show your allies and volunteers what work needs to be done. You will also have a good idea of the skills you will need, such as people who are good at organization, or who have good marketing approaches, or who have a specialized skill, such as a dance teacher or tai chi master.

**Contact your allies within and without the organization.** There are others who can offer suggestions and expertise for activities, such as:

- dining staff
- activities and fitness directors
- nursing staff
- chaplains
- social workers

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### Active Aging Week five-month plan

Planning stages	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Contact people to plan events.					
Form vision of what your week will look like.					
Choose target audiences, activities.					
Reserve speakers, space, equipment.					
Plan marketing campaign, produce materials.					
Launch marketing program.					
Finalize work that allies, volunteers and others will perform.					
Post posters and other displays.					
Welcome your participants.					

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What about the resident/client committees and advisory boards? Introduce them to Active Aging Week and find out what they think might be a great event. Gain their support early, so they can schedule activities into their workdays. You'll also find out who will be interested in taking a more active role in planning an event.

**Organize a planning team.** A group of volunteers who plan the event(s) offers advantages. One is many hands to do the work. But perhaps even more valuable is their grassroots promotion of events among their friends and peers. Who knows better what activities and messages will appeal to older adults than older adults?

**Plan for varying levels of function and interests.** Early in the planning cycle, it's valuable to think about who the participants will be. Think about providing activities for people at different levels of functional ability. Will the event(s) be appropriate for a person with no physical activity experience who needs an aid

to walk? How about a person who is mobile and a little active, or a person who is highly active and enters competitions? Some people like to stroll, some prefer long hikes, and others enjoy the strategies of sports. Appealing to different interests is a key to encouraging participation.

**Double your efforts.** Do you participate in Older Americans Month in May or Canada's Seniors Month in June? If you offer a successful event earlier in the year, why not repeat it in September? Or make a few changes in theme to refresh the event? Did you host an event last year that received a high level of participation and great reviews? You can repeat it this year. Like watching a favorite movie, people will return to an event that they enjoyed, or that they heard others talking about.

**Plan a week that is doable and enjoyable.** In the early stages of brainstorming, the sky is the limit. Ultimately, you and your team will narrow down the week to what is manageable. By having a

good sense of who you want to participate, you'll be well on your way to choosing the number of activities that will meet the goal of celebrating an active lifestyle.

**Take advantage of resources.** ICAA provides support for you on the Active Aging Week website (see "ICAA resources" on this page). Host sites use the press releases format, free downloadable posters and certificates, and handouts. You'll find coverage of last year's event, which gives you ideas for this year, and planning guides for your efforts. Over the next few months, look for more materials to appear.

Active Aging Week succeeds in giving older adults the opportunities to try an active lifestyle when you succeed in hosting your events. Early planning is one way to ensure event success. ☺

*For more information about Active Aging Week, visit the ICAA website at [www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm](http://www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm).*

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## ICAA resources

### Active Aging Week

Professional section, Campaign support

[www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm](http://www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm)

Includes ideas for maximizing Active Aging Week, sample press release, and posters to download.

### How to solicit donations for Active Aging Week events

Cynthia Roth

*Journal on Active Aging*

March-April 2007

Ideas for how to offer "free stuff" to event participants by creating success-

ful partnerships with like-minded organizations (see pages 40-44).

### Active Aging Week 2006

*Journal on Active Aging*

November-December 2006

[www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm](http://www.icaa.cc/aaw.htm)

Summary of the events offered in 2006, along with examples of what worked well (and didn't).

### Marketing physical activity to the older adult

(file delivered on CD-ROM)

[www.icaa.cc/Education/theICAAsore.htm](http://www.icaa.cc/Education/theICAAsore.htm)

This 58-page collection of past articles explains how to communicate the message of physical activity to the older adult market. Members of ICAA or American Academy of Family Physicians can order for free; nonmembers pay US\$49.

### Client handouts

A selection of handouts is available on the Active Aging Week consumer section. ICAA members can access even more by logging in to the member's only section.

# Active Aging Week planning checklist

By starting your planning early, you have time to slow production during the summer when your planning team may be on vacation. Photocopy this checklist. Add your due dates, then add the planning items specific to your organization and events in the “Additional action items” column. The Active Aging Week five-month plan and this checklist will also be posted on the ICAA Active Aging Week website, so you can save and modify it.

Due dates	Planning actions	Additional action items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize a planning committee.</li> <li>• Form your vision for the week.</li> <li>• Establish budget.</li> <li>• Inform key people in the organization about Active Aging Week.</li> <li>• Identify target audience: Who will attend the event(s)?</li> <li>• Finalize list of potential events.</li> <li>• Invite speakers or organizations to participate.</li> <li>• Reserve rooms and check for schedule conflicts.</li> <li>• Inform managers and staff of the event activities.</li> <li>• Check on due dates to advertise the events in the organization’s newsletters and outside sources.</li> <li>• Visit ICAA website for promotional and educational materials.</li> <li>• Finalize negotiations with speakers or organizations that will present.</li> <li>• Determine marketing pieces needed.</li> <li>• Draft the flyers and notices for the website and newsletters.</li> <li>• Mail press release to local papers, television and radio stations.</li> <li>• Give notices to webmaster for posting.</li> <li>• Finalize flyers.</li> <li>• Confirm work schedules and tasks for allies, volunteers and staff who will help during the event.</li> <li>• Print ICAA Active Aging Week posters.</li> <li>• Organize the people who will hang posters and distribute flyers.</li> <li>• Confirm Active Aging Week activities with other departments.</li> <li>• Inform maintenance and housekeeping staff.</li> <li>• Send email about events.</li> <li>• Prepare talking points for exercise instructors, personal trainers and activities staff to announce the week’s activities.</li> <li>• Display the events on the bulletin board.</li> <li>• Prepare posters and signs.</li> <li>• Double-check that events information appears in newsletter.</li> <li>• Double-check room and space reservations.</li> <li>• Confirm all speakers and room arrangements.</li> <li>• Update voicemail blurbs to remind callers of events.</li> <li>• Send out a second email.</li> <li>• Check that posters and flyers are in place; hang them in dining areas, multipurpose rooms and other <i>nonfitness</i> locations.</li> <li>• Print certificates of participation from the ICAA website to distribute to participants.</li> <li>• Review week’s events with team.</li> <li>• Answer questions.</li> <li>• Prepare and duplicate feedback forms to distribute to participants.</li> <li>• Tabulate feedback forms.</li> <li>• Conduct a follow-up with the planning committee to discuss what worked well and what didn’t, to help with planning next year’s events.</li> <li>• Mail a thank-you to your volunteer staff.</li> <li>• Submit the results of your activities to ICAA.</li> </ul>	