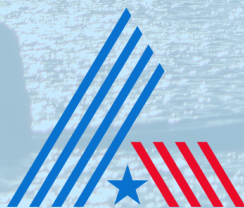


2023

ACTIVE LIVING PLAN

FOR ABILENE, TEXAS

#ACTIVELIVINGABI



PUBLIC HEALTH

CITY OF ABILENE TEXAS

SPECIAL THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the input of the Slice of Life Coalition (SLC) members and other local community partners that contributed information, time, and expertise in the gathering of data to develop Abilene's Active Living Plan.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR PARTNERS FROM THE FOLLOWING SECTORS:

- Community Recreation, Fitness, and Parks
- Business and Industry
- Education
- Public Health
- Military
- Mass Media
- Sports and Fitness
- Transportation, Land Use, and Community Design
- Faith-Based Settings
- Health Care

WHAT IS ACTIVE LIVING?



Redbud Park, Abilene, TX | 2020

Active living makes physical activity a part of your daily life. A person can do this by parking further away from an entrance, taking the stairs instead of an elevator, or by standing in a virtual meeting.

Adding physical activity into day-to-day activities improves your health and mood.



HOW WAS THE PLAN DEVELOPED?

The Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District met with folks that represent each area of our town to develop the Active Living Plan. Following the National Physical Active Plan (NPAP) process they focused on addressing physical activity in the following 11 sectors: Community, Business and Industry, Parks and Recreation, Education, Faith-Based Settings, Public Health, Mass Media, Military, Healthcare, Sports and Fitness, and Transportation and Built Environment.



Lake Fort Phantom, Abilene, TX | 2020

Under each sector, suggested plans and actions are listed. These can be implemented to increase active living in Abilene.

WHY DOES ABILENE NEED AN ACTIVE LIVING PLAN?

Taylor County has an adult obesity rate of 35%. Obesity has been shown to cause chronic health issues like heart disease and diabetes. It can make daily activities more challenging and can even lead to an earlier death. Physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of obesity and we want everyone in our community to be as healthy as possible. But it's hard to achieve a goal if you don't have a plan. **This Active Living Plan reflects the community of Abilene and discusses how each sector and each individual can take a few steps towards improving their health and overall wellbeing.**

Health Benefits of Physical Activity for Adults

IMMEDIATE
A single bout of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity provides immediate benefits for your health.

LONG-TERM
Regular physical activity provides important health benefits for chronic disease prevention.

Sleep
Improves sleep quality

Less Anxiety
Reduces feelings of anxiety

Blood Pressure
Reduces blood pressure

Brain Health
Reduces risks of developing dementia (including Alzheimer's disease) and reduces risk of depression

Heart Health
Lowers risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes

Cancer Prevention
Lowers risk of eight cancers: bladder, breast, colon, endometrium, esophagus, kidney, lung, and stomach

Healthy Weight
Reduces risk of weight gain

Bone Strength
Improves bone health

Balance and Coordination
Reduces risks of falls

Emerging research suggests physical activity may also help boost immune function.
Nisaman, "The Compelling Link," 201-277.
Jones, "Exercise, Immunity, and Illness," 317-344.

Source: Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition
To learn more, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/health-benefits-of-physical-activity-for-adults.html>

August 2020

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAYLOR COUNTY HEALTH STATISTICS

[**CLICK HERE**](#)

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COMMUNITY

The community as a whole has the ability to increase or decrease active living within Abilene, Texas. Each individual can set a goal to add a little more activity every day while challenging others to do the same. When everyone implements a few small changes they can build into huge momentum that'll increase the overall health and well-being of our community.

PLAN #1

Individual community members should utilize local active living resources to adopt an active lifestyle; participating in at least one local active living event, class, or challenge and increasing overall physical activity in their day to day lives.

PLAN #2

Share your active living journey and invite others to participate with you.

ACTION 1:

Join a sports team, club, or gym or utilize virtual options to attend free fitness classes.

ACTION 2:

Participate in "It's Time Texas" community challenge.

ACTION 3:

Attend active living classes in the community such as Bingocize or Create Better Health.

ACTION 4:

Participate in a fun run, Turkey Trot, or other annual active living event.

ACTION 5:

Adopt one new active habit every 3-4 months such as parking further from the entrance of your grocery store, adding 5 minutes to your walk with your dog, or taking the stairs at work.

ACTION 1:

Share your progress with others through conversations and social media.

ACTION 2:

Encourage others where you live, work, play, and worship to attend events, join teams, and add small physical activities to their daily lives.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Businesses reap the benefits of an active workforce as active employees are healthier, happier, and more productive. Technology such as automation and computers have decreased physical activity in the workplace but employers can make an effort to reintroduce opportunities for physical activity through incentive programs, challenges, and discounts.

PLAN #1

Businesses across the community should develop and participate in competitions to encourage active lifestyles.

ACTION 1:

Promote the free statewide health challenge called "It's Time Texas." Visit itstimetexas.org to sign your organization up for these challenges.

ACTION 2:

Utilize fitness trackers and apps to create and implement challenges within your business.

PLAN #2

Businesses should offer incentives to employees that promote an active lifestyle.

ACTION 1:

Collaborate with local gyms to offer discounted rates for employees.

ACTION 2:

Add music and educational posters in your stairwells to encourage usage.

ACTION 3:

Offer physical activity breaks during meetings and morning huddles.

ACTION 4:

Allow staff paid time to go to the gym or to go for a walk.

MASS MEDIA

Media has the ability to share information with entire communities. This mass information sharing increases knowledge and raises awareness. Media campaigns related to physical activity can improve attitudes and beliefs related to being active and can promote behavioral changes.

PLAN #1

Media outlets should establish, share, and promote unified multi-media campaigns encouraging active living.

ACTION 1:

Develop and share unified messages and branding to promote active living with hashtags like #activelivingabi.

ACTION 2:

Feature accessible strategies to incorporate active living into daily life such as taking the stairs instead of an elevator or parking further away from an entrance.

ACTION 3:

Showcase active living programs and challenges that are being completed by other sectors.

PLAN #2

Local media outlets should host and/or promote large community wide active living events.

ACTION 1:

Host and promote annual active living events like Spring into Wellness.

ACTION 2:

Highlight recurring active living events such as the annual Turkey Trot, Special Olympics, and various community health fairs.

EDUCATION

Educational settings have a unique opportunity to influence active living, especially for children and young people. Children pre-K-12 often have time carved out of their day for physical activity but as they age this time decreases and by college, these opportunities are usually gone. Promoting physical activity in all educational settings will be key to developing and maintaining an active lifestyle.

PLAN #1

Local school districts and higher education settings should develop and promote active transportation options.

ACTION 1:

Local higher education settings such as Abilene Christian University, McMurry University, and Hardin Simmons University will identify walking and biking routes available on campus. They will educate students and staff on these routes.

ACTION 2:

Abilene and Wylie ISDs will identify and promote safe routes to/from various schools.

PLAN #2

Local child care facilities, school districts and higher education settings should find innovative ways to incorporate physical activity in daily schedules.

ACTION 1:

Early child care centers will utilize resources like [Go NAPSACC](#) and Texas Healthy Building Blocks to increase physical activity opportunities for preschool children.

ACTION 2:

Local school districts and higher education settings will provide active breaks before, during, and/or after instruction periods.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District (ATCPHD) has a critical role in educating the community on the benefits of active living. Being active can improve overall health as it's also been shown to reduce the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, cancers, and depression.

PLAN #1

The Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District (ATCPHD) should provide education and resources on the benefits of active living.

ACTION 1:

ATCPHD will continue to update and promote Rebuild Health at abirebuildhealth.org.

ACTION 2:

Teach classes in the community related to active living such as Bingocize and Create Better Health.

ACTION 3:

Utilize multi-channel marketing to increase awareness of physical activity benefits.

ACTION 4:

Create interactive physical signs and displays throughout the community.

PLAN #2

The Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District should promote active living through community wide programs and challenges.

ACTION 1:

Promote the free statewide health challenge called "It's Time Texas".

ACTION 2:

Partner with Parks and Recreation to distribute walking trails and parks guides.

ACTION 3:

Partner with local medical professionals to prescribe physical activity.

ACTION 4:

Provide technical assistance for other sectors to implement physical activity programs such as Texas Healthy Building Blocks and Go NAPSACC.

HEALTH CARE

It is well established that regular physical activity prevents disease and increases health, wellness, and quality of life. Healthcare professionals sharing this information with their patients, caregivers, and the community lends credibility to active living.

PLAN #1

Healthcare organizations should promote active living during patient and caregiver interactions and community events.

ACTION 1:

Partner with public health to prescribe physical activity to patients.

ACTION 2:

Refer patients, caregivers, and other members of the community to active living classes such as Bingocize and Create Better Health.

ACTION 3:

Participate and promote the “It’s Time Texas” community challenge.

PLAN #2

Healthcare organizations should promote active living by participating and promoting community level events.

ACTION 1:

Collaborate with mass media to distribute shared health messaging.

ACTION 2:

Participate and promote the “It’s Time Texas” community challenge.

FAITH-BASED

Local faith-based settings offer a place of worship but they also provide the community with social service resources, support, programming, education, and guidance. Utilizing faith-based settings to promote active lifestyles will reach community members of all ages and walks of life.

PLAN #1

Utilizing their established relationships with attendees, local faith-based settings should promote and provide learning opportunities related to an active lifestyle.

ACTION 1:

Invite local health experts, such as the Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District, to speak to members about active living before and after services and at special events.

PLAN #2

Local faith-based organizations should provide increased opportunities for physical activity.

ACTION 1:

Encourage pre and post service open gym and playground access.

ACTION 2:

Plan and promote physical activities and programs offered internally and by external partners such as softball leagues, yoga, and Bingocize.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The City of Abilene's parks and recreation department provides safe spaces for the community to be physically active. These include designated parks, playgrounds, trails, splash pads, exercise equipment, indoor community centers, physical activity programming, sports fields, and more.

PLAN

The City of Abilene's parks and recreation department should increase community awareness and utilization of their many physical activity programs and resources.

ACTION 1:

Utilize multi-channel marketing to increase awareness of parks and recreation programs and resources.

ACTION 2:

Develop interactive activities such as #parkchallenge, scavenger hunts, and geocache that can be shared on social media.

ACTION 3:

Post and provide walking trail and park guides that depict stroller-friendly activities and park amenities.

SPORTS AND FITNESS

Sports and fitness are easily recognized as core elements of an active lifestyle. Abilene boasts a wide variety of sports leagues, sporting clubs, gyms, and fitness centers that target community members of all ages. Additionally, smart devices now allow local community members to access free virtual fitness programming from the comfort of their homes.

PLAN

Local sports and fitness organizations should increase the community's awareness of their programming.

ACTION 1:

Utilize a multi-channel media approach to share upcoming classes and events.

ACTION 2:

Participate and promote involvement in "It's Time Texas."

ACTION 3:

Promote virtual fitness activities and events for those unable to access traditional sports and fitness programming.

TRANSPORTATION AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Communities with access to parks, trails, sidewalks, and other safe routes and safe spaces find it easier to adopt an active lifestyle. Community design should take physical activity and active transportation into consideration when changes are being implemented.

PLAN

Continue to assess opportunities to increase safe routes and spaces for all areas of Abilene when creating and implementing the City of Abilene's master plan.

ACTION 1:

Continue to gather and address community feedback on current and future active living needs within the built environment.

ACTION 2:

Continue to create and promote safe active transportation routes, connecting sidewalks and bike trails to everyday destinations.

MILITARY

Fitness and active living are core components of readiness for service members. Opportunities for fitness are provided locally through activities and programs offered on Dyess Air Force Base. Increasing awareness of these offerings and increasing the military's involvement in off-base physical activities will improve overall awareness and participation in an active lifestyle.

PLAN #1

Dyess Air Force Base should continue to offer and promote opportunities for active living among those with base access.

ACTION 1:

Highlight on base walking trails, parks, and outdoor recreation activities during newcomer's briefings.

ACTION 2:

Continue to offer incentive programs related to active living accomplishments.

PLAN #2

Dyess Air Force Base, local veteran service organizations (VSOs), and other interested stakeholders should partner to develop and promote joint- active living activities off base.

ACTION 1:

Utilize existing local and virtual programs to promote active living for military and veterans such as Team RWB and VA Whole Health.

ACTION 2:

Develop and promote a Dyess-Abilene partnership event in the community that promotes active living for all such as a march, run, or ruck event.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

[Click here to learn more about physical activity from WHO.](#)

REBUILD HEALTH

[Click here to learn more about physical activity from our website, Rebuild Health.](#)

ABILENE-TAYLOR COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

**850 NORTH 6TH STREET
ABILENE, TEXAS 79601**

(325) 692-5600

The Abilene 2023 Active Living Plan was funded through a grant by the Texas Healthy Communities Program at the Texas Department of State and Health Services, with the goal to design and implement changes in the community and adopt priority health practices to reduce risk factors for chronic disease.