



ADAPTING MOVEMENT

Moving My Way

RESOURCE FOR
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS



There Is More Than One Way to Move

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT TWO PEOPLE CAN BE DOING THE SAME ACTIVITY IN COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WAYS?

One person may move quickly. Another may move slowly. One person may use a chair. Another may stand. One person may make a movement bigger. Another may make it smaller. One person may make an activity more challenging. Another may simplify it. Neither person is wrong.

Sometimes we get the idea that there is only one correct way to move. We may look around a class, game, sport, or activity and assume we should move exactly like everyone else. We may even stop participating because we think we are not doing it "right." But movement is not about copying. Movement is about finding a way that works.

Whether you are a child learning a new skill, a teenager in physical education, an adult trying a new activity, or an older adult adapting to changes in your body, you always have choices.

You can:

- move faster or slower
- make movements bigger or smaller
- use more or less effort
- sit, stand, or use support
- increase the challenge
- decrease the challenge
- try a different approach

The goal is not to look like everyone else. The goal is to stay engaged and keep moving.

In fact, some of the most successful movers are not the people who do everything perfectly. They are the people who learn how to adjust when something feels too hard, too easy, too fast, too slow, or simply not right for them.



There Is More Than One Way to Move

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT TWO PEOPLE CAN BE DOING THE SAME ACTIVITY IN COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WAYS?

Think about something as ordinary as pushing a grocery cart through a store. At first glance, it might seem like everyone is doing the same thing. But if you look closely, people adapt this activity in different ways.

Some people:

- push the grocery cart with two hands
- push with one hand while holding a phone with the other hand
- walk quickly
- move slowly and carefully
- stop often
- move continuously
- stay close to the cart
- walk beside the cart
- use the cart for support and balance
- stand tall and upright
- lean forward while pushing

People also use different strategies while grocery shopping. Some start with produce, then dairy, then packaged foods and follow the same route every visit, make a detailed list and stick to it, shop section by section, move efficiently from one item to the next

Others:

- wander and browse
- follow whatever catches their attention
- stop to talk with people they know
- change direction when they remember something
- return to aisles they have already visited
- allow displays, signs, smells, or offers to influence where they go next

Some people finish quickly. Some take their time. Some enjoy the social experience. Some focus on getting the task done. None of these approaches are necessarily right or wrong. They are simply different ways of accomplishing the same goal.



There Is More Than One Way to Move

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT TWO PEOPLE CAN BE DOING THE SAME ACTIVITY IN COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WAYS?

Movement classes, sports, games, and everyday activities are no different.

People may be participating in the same activity while:

- moving at different speeds
- choosing different levels of challenge
- taking breaks at different times
- using different equipment
- following different movement options
- responding differently to their energy, comfort, confidence, or abilities that day

What matters is not whether everyone moves the same way.

What matters is whether people find a way to participate that works for them.

One participant in our InterActive for Life research described it this way:

I really like the fact that there are many different ability levels, but we all feel very comfortable coming. Some may sit in the back, which is okay. They're participating and doing what they can and feel comfortable with that. I think that level of personal comfort is important.

For Nora, the joy of movement did not come from keeping up with everyone else. It came from knowing she could participate in a way that worked for her. She did not have to move the same way as others. She did not have to prove herself. She simply had to show up and choose the options that felt right for her body that day. That freedom to adapt allowed her to participate, connect with others, and continue enjoying movement.

The ability to adapt is one of the most important movement skills we can develop throughout life.



There Is More Than One Way to Move

A CHALLENGE FOR REFLECTION

The next time you join a game, activity, class, sport, or everyday movement experience, ask yourself:

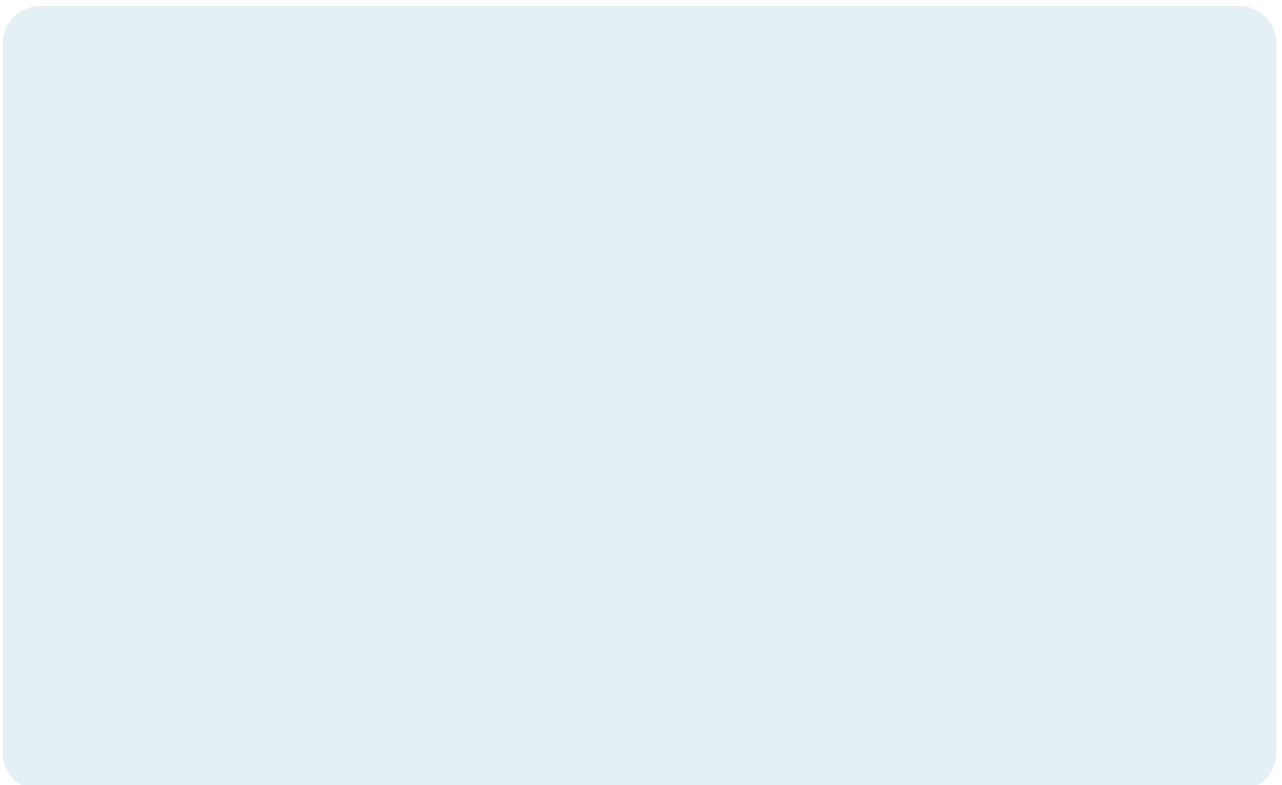
"What adjustment could help me enjoy this experience even more?"

Perhaps the answer is:

- slowing down
- speeding up
- taking a break
- using support
- adding challenge
- simplifying the movement
- changing your position
- trying a different approach

Remember:

The goal is not to move like everyone else.
The goal is to find a way that works for you.



Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE ADAPTING MOVEMENT

1 Find Three Ways

During your next activity, choose one movement and discover three different ways to do it.

- moving faster, slower, and somewhere in between
- making a movement bigger, smaller, and medium-sized
- using more effort, less effort, and moderate effort
- doing a movement seated, standing, or with support

Reflection

The movement I explored was:

The three ways I tried were:

1.

2.

3.

Which option was ...

- Most comfortable?
- Most enjoyable?
- Most challenging?

What did I discover?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE ADAPTING MOVEMENT

2 The Goldilocks Challenge

Remember the story of **Goldilocks and the Three Bears**?

One bowl of porridge was **too hot**.

One was **too cold**.

One was **just right**.

Movement can be the same way. During a game, class, sport, or activity, ask yourself: "**Is this movement too easy, too hard, or just right?**"

If it feels **too hard**, you might:

- slow down
- use support
- decrease effort
- take smaller movements
- reduce the challenge

If it feels **too easy**, you might:

- increase effort
- increase your range of motion
- add a balance challenge
- move more continuously
- increase the challenge

Goal

Become a **Movement Goldilocks** by finding the version that feels *just right* for you today. Remember, the "just right" option may change from day to day. What feels perfect today may feel too easy or too challenging tomorrow—and that's okay.



Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE ADAPTING MOVEMENT

2 The Goldilocks Challenge

Reflection

Today my movement felt:

- ☐ Too easy
- ☐ Too hard
- ☐ Just right

One adjustment I made was:

After making that adjustment, the movement felt:

What helped me find my "just right" version today?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE ADAPTING MOVEMENT

3 Change One Thing

Before starting an activity, choose one thing you will adjust.

You might change:

- your speed
- your effort
- your position
- your level of support
- the size of your movement

Challenge

Notice whether this adjustment helps you:

- enjoy the activity more
- feel more confident
- stay involved longer

Reflection

Today I changed:

What happened when I made that change?

Did it help me:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Enjoy the activity more. | ☐ Feel more comfortable |
| ☐ Feel more confident | ☐ Feel more challenged |
| ☐ Stay involved longer | |



Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE ADAPTING MOVEMENT

4

Movement Detective

During an activity, look around. How many different ways are people participating?

Can you find people who are:

- moving quickly?
- moving slowly?
- taking breaks?
- using support?
- adding challenge?
- simplifying movements?

Discovery

Count the different ways people are participating. You might discover there is no single "right" way to move.

Reflection

I noticed _____ different ways people participated.

Some examples included:

What surprised me?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE ADAPTING MOVEMENT

5 Don't Quit—Adapt

The next time a movement feels difficult, pause before stopping. Ask yourself: "What could I change?"

Maybe you could:

- move slower
- move faster
- reduce effort
- increase effort
- make the movement smaller
- make the movement larger
- use support
- try a different version

Challenge

Stay involved by changing something instead of giving up.

Reflection

The movement that felt difficult was:

Instead of stopping, I changed:

Did the adaptation help?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not yet

Something I might try next time:



Movement Choice Challenge

COMPLETE THESE SENTENCES

Today I changed:

and it helped me:

One thing I want to remember next time:



Curious for more?

- [Quick tips for physical activity facilitators](#)
- [Complete the InterActive for Life Inventory](#)



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