

Nutrition educators identify barriers to physical activity and propose strategies to overcome them

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Throughout its fifty years of publication, the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior (JNEB)* has recognized the importance of physical activity as a key behavior helpful to achieving a healthy lifestyle. The November/December issue's theme of physical activity highlights recent research on designing, delivering, and measuring physical activity programs for different audiences.

"Challenges to beginning or increasing physical activity vary between populations but understanding the barriers to change is important when creating successful programs," said JNEB Editor-in-Chief, Karen Chapman Novakofski. "I hope this issue of JNEB, along with sources available on the JNEB website, will aid [nutrition](#) educators worldwide."

Studies that illustrate the complexity of the barriers to achieving healthy levels of physical activity include an intervention with nurses working in high-stress environments with unpredictable schedules and who found it difficult to improve both eating habits and level of physical activity at the same time. Latino parents perceived maintaining a [healthy lifestyle](#) requires enormous effort and had few resources to manage that change. Hispanic families in the Midwest report cultural barriers to increasing physical activity as well as lack of access to organized sports or fitness facilities. Low-income adults misinterpreted many physical activity terms and concepts leading to lack of participation. And while preschoolers are increasing their motor skills, an accurate assessment

tool is needed to identify children not meeting crucial milestones.

Four articles in this issue look at populations that are physically active but lack proper [nutrition education](#). Parents of youth sports participants balance competing priorities when selecting the ideal post-game snack, and college students are in an environment that is conducive to physical activity yet are challenged to reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and increase fruit and vegetable intake. College athletes, while physically active, are benefitting from a training program that includes nutrition students, and special operations soldiers have increased satisfaction with meal options formulated to increase performance and improved nutrition labeling to make informed choices.

In addition to research articles, this issue includes two GEMs (Great Educational Materials) also focused on physical activity. In the first, college athletes, while highly active, have demanding schedules, low nutrition knowledge, and limited cooking skills, learn about an educational intervention that successfully addresses those challenges. Second, the Choose Health curriculum engages youth in play versus talking about the benefits of physical activity.

Finally, all the New Resources for Nutrition Educators provide tools for leading physical activity, from a walking curriculum, an online resource companion to USDA's MyPlate, an activity book for fourth-grade children, and a healthy-eating, active-living curriculum designed for limited resource adult learners.

A diverse group of international authors contributed to this themed issue presenting a global perspective on [physical activity](#) research.

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