

# Behavioral and Social Approaches to Increase Physical Activity: Social Support Interventions in Community Settings

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## Task Force Finding

### Intervention Definition

These interventions focus on changing physical activity behavior through building, strengthening, and maintaining social networks that provide supportive relationships for behavior change, specifically physical activity. This change can be achieved either by creating new social networks or by working within pre-existing networks in a social setting outside the family, such as the workplace. Interventions typically involved setting up a “buddy” system, making “contracts” with others to complete specified levels of physical activity, or setting up walking or other groups to provide friendship and support.

### Task Force Finding (February 2001)\*

These programs are strongly recommended because of their effectiveness in increasing physical activity (specifically the time spent exercising and frequency of exercise) and improving physical fitness among adults. Other positive effects include increases in muscular strength and flexibility and decreases in adiposity. No harms were reported, and no qualifying economic information was identified from the literature.

\*From the following publication:

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Recommendations to increase physical activity in communities. *Am J Prev Med* 2002;22 (4S):67-72.

### Publications

Kahn EB, Ramsey LT, Brownson R, et al. The effectiveness of interventions to increase physical activity: a systematic review. *Am J Prev Med* 2002;22(4S):73-107.

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Recommendations to increase physical activity in communities. *Am J Prev Med* 2002;22 (4S):67-72.

CDC. [Increasing physical activity. A report on recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5018a1.htm) [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5018a1.htm]. *MMWR* 2001;50 (RR-18):1-16.

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Physical activity. In: Zaza S, Briss PA, Harris KW, eds. *The Guide to Community Preventive Services: What Works to Promote Health?* Atlanta (GA): Oxford University Press;2005:80-113 (Out of Print).

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### Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions on this page are those of the Community Preventive Services Task Force and do not necessarily represent those of CDC. Task Force evidence-based recommendations are not mandates for compliance or spending. Instead, they provide information and options for decision makers and stakeholders to consider when determining which programs, services, and policies best meet the needs, preferences, available resources, and constraints of their constituents.

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