



Connecting Generations Through 21st-Century Games

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Ka 'Aha

Weaving Generations to
Build Healthy Communities

An Intergenerational
and Aging Program

Fun, daily activities that focus on strengthening connections between different generations help to build strong, healthy communities.

For more information about the Ka 'Aha program and other intergenerational programs, visit www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/kaaha

A few generations ago, kids jumped rope, played hopscotch, slid down slides, and did jumping-jacks. Through these games, we exercised and had fun with our friends on the school playground.

As the years passed, lifestyles changed, and we all became busy. We worked a full day and rushed off to clubs and gyms to walk on treadmills, lift weights, and exercise with machines among strangers.

Today, many now rush home after work and use computer technology to launch Wii or other game systems and exercise virtually with "avatar friends." Yes, exercising through games has evolved dramatically through the generations!

Exergaming is an activity using video games that is also a form of exercise. These physically interactive video games use controllers and graphics that aim to get your heart rate up without making you "feel the pain" of "old-style" exercising. Having fun with family and friends in the comfort of your home has helped exergames gain popularity. In fact, exergaming was one of the major trends discussed at the national Games for Health Conference in 2009.

Researchers have learned the following about exergames:

Kids who traded passive video games for the more active, interactive games became three times as active.

The exertion from playing the more active games is comparable to skipping, jogging, brisk walking, and climbing the stairs.

Exergames are not suited for everyone, but they may provide an opportunity for increasing some people's activity level.

Making exergames intergenerational

Exergames aren't just for the young. In fact, they are becoming popular in nursing homes and rehabilitation hospitals because they can bring out a competitive team spirit among the elderly. They can promote strengthened intergenerational bonds as families and friends of all ages teach and learn about the technology and spend time playing together. Consider finding a family who has exergame equipment and plan an intergenerational exergame tournament!

Tip

Exergames aren't intended to replace the sports and activities you enjoy, so keep walking, swimming, and playing your favorite active sports. Exergames are a great alternative to sedentary video games and can provide wonderful opportunities to have fun with others and get the heart pumping a little harder. If you don't have the exergame equipment, find out which friends or family members have it, and set up an Exergame Tournament.