ALED is a series of group classes designed to help people learn strategies for becoming and staying physically active. The program was developed by researchers at The Cooper Institute, a nonprofit preventive medicine research and education organization. ALED can increase physical activity levels, improve cardiovascular fitness, and reduce stress and depressive symptoms. 

**Encourage your patients to sign up for the program at a location nearby.**

**Who is it for?**
- ALED is designed for sedentary adults who want to increase their physical activity levels.
- It has been studied for people with arthritis and other chronic diseases.
- ALED is appropriate for older adults.

**How is it conducted?**
- ALED meets for hour-long weekly sessions in groups of up to 20 people. Most ALED programs last 12 weeks; some organizations offer 20-week programs.
- ALED participants learn behavioral skills to help overcome barriers to exercise and develop a plan for incorporating physical activity into their daily lives. In group discussions, they explore topics such as setting goals, creating an action plan, and managing their time.
- Participants use what they learn in the group discussions and educational materials to make personal decisions about the type, frequency, intensity, and amount of physical activity suitable for them.
- Participants do their exercises on their own, outside the group setting. Online tools and resources are available for them to track their progress.

**What are the qualifications of the instructors?**
- There is one facilitator per workshop.
- ALED facilitators are required to complete online preparatory courses and a 2-day Web-based or in-person training. They must also pass a competency exam.

**What are the benefits?**
- Evidence suggests that ALED can be as effective as a structured exercise program in increasing physical activity levels, reducing body mass index (BMI), and improving cardiovascular fitness. Participants also report feeling less depressed and less stressed.\(^{1-3}\)
- In preliminary research, ALED participants with arthritis report increased physical activity and physical function after completing the course, with no safety concerns.\(^{2-4}\)
- No safety concerns have been reported in the literature.\(^{1-5}\)
- People with arthritis identified the social support of the group setting and the opportunity to engage in low-impact activities in a step-by-step fashion as important features of ALED.\(^5\)
Summary of the Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author, Year</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilcox S, Dowda M, Leviton LC, et al. (2008)</td>
<td>4-year pre-post quasi-experimental design Evaluation of 6-month telephone-based Active Choices and 20-week ALED</td>
<td>2,503 Active Choices participants 3,388 ALED participants Ethnically and economically diverse sample representing range of conditions among older adults</td>
<td>Outcomes for both programs: ↑ moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, total physical activity ↑ satisfaction with body appearance and function ↓ body mass index ↓ depression, stress over time with ALED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baruth M, Wilcox S. (2011)</td>
<td>4-year pre-post quasi-experimental design to evaluate Active Choices and 20-week ALED Analysis of physical activity outcomes to examine differences in participants with and without arthritis</td>
<td>2,503 Active Choices participants 3,388 ALED participants; 619 completed at least one functional fitness test</td>
<td>Improvements in physical activity and related outcomes for both programs in patients with and without arthritis Outcomes for ALED only: ↓ depression ↓ perceived stress No adverse effects reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcox S, Dowda M, Wegley S, et al. (2009)</td>
<td>pre-post quasi-experimental design to evaluate Active Choices and 12- or 20-week ALED Analysis of outcomes at 12 weeks, 20 weeks, and 6 months post-completion</td>
<td>368 Active Choices participants 2,151 ALED participants All participants were aged 50 or older and sedentary or underactive</td>
<td>Improvements sustained at 6 months for Active Choices and 12-week ALED: ↑ physical activity ↑ satisfaction with physical function ↓ BMI For 20-week ALED, improvements declined at 6 months but remained above baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callahan L, Cleveland R, Shreffler R, et al. (2014)</td>
<td>RCT of 20-week ALED and using wait list control group Followup with ALED group at 6 and 12 months</td>
<td>354 adults with arthritis</td>
<td>Outcomes at 20 weeks: ↑ physical activity and aerobic endurance No change in pain, fatigue, stiffness Outcomes at 6 and 12 months: Improved physical activity maintained ↓ stiffness No exacerbation of disease symptoms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected References


Fees and Location
ALED is a low-cost program. Fees per session may vary by location. Check [www.apta.org/Arthritis](http://www.apta.org/Arthritis) to find current locations.

For More Information
**Active Living Partners**
[www.activeliving.info](http://www.activeliving.info)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
[www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions.htm)