

# AIM-HI Practice Manual



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# Introduction

Family physicians and clinicians play a vital role in encouraging patients to lead healthy lives through physical activity, healthy eating, and emotional well-being — that is, through **fitness**. Your practice has taken a major step toward improving your patients' fitness by participating in AIM-HI. The AIM-HI approach focuses on facilitating a conversation between you and your patients. Our goal is not to provide you with just a stack of handouts and patient educational materials; rather, we hope to improve your ability to engage in a patient-centered conversation about fitness.

**Fitness includes three interconnected domains: physical activity, healthy eating and emotional well-being.**

Throughout the AIM-HI materials, you will see that we intentionally present fitness in a central role as “the treatment of choice” for general prevention and management of chronic conditions. AIM-HI was developed by family physicians for family physicians and the family medicine office environment. In part, this approach was adapted from Am I Hungry?, a multidimensional program developed by AAFP family physician, Michelle May, M.D. AIM-HI will help you integrate a fitness focus in your practice through implementation of the following critical steps:

- STEP 1** Raise awareness among clinicians and office staff regarding their own personal physical activity, nutrition, and emotional well-being; and encourage everyone to make changes for the better. This is covered in **“Fostering a Healthy Office.”**
- STEP 2** Create an office environment that is conducive to including AIM-HI concepts in everyday office routines. This is covered in **“Integrating Fitness into Your Practice.”**
- STEP 3** Use AIM-HI tools and resources to help your patients improve their fitness. This is covered in **“Working with Patients.”**
- STEP 4** Improve clinician and staff knowledge of the central role of physical activity, nutrition, and emotional well-being in health. This is covered in **“Foundations For Fitness.”**

The AIM-HI approach relies on three critical tools that all practices are encouraged to adopt:

1. **AIM-HI Fitness Inventory** — a brief survey for patients to complete that assesses their attitudes, interest, readiness to change behavior(s), and behaviors or patterns regarding physical activity, nutrition, and well-being; done annually at check-in.
2. **Fitness Prescription** — a contract between the patient and clinician that uses simple, measurable, mutually “agreed upon” goals that are assessed periodically.
3. **Food & Activity Journal** — a week-long journal that patients can use to track their physical activity and nutrition to be assessed at the next visit.

These tools and “how to use them” are described in this manual. Additionally, you will find a number of supplementary educational tools and handouts that you can use to stimulate dialogue within your practice and with patients and the appendices. Feel free to expand on the AIM-HI concepts and materials to suit your practice and patient populations.

AIM-HI material should be considered a progressive guide. Begin using these materials sequentially, as presented in this manual. The goal is to maximize awareness and integration of AIM-HI steps at the practice level before you adopt these strategies at the patient level.

The term “clinician” refers to physicians, nurse practitioners, residents and medical students — those that assess and treat patients.