

Helping Older Adults Search for Health Information Online

A Toolkit for Trainers

from the National Institute on Aging



Frequently Asked Questions about the Toolkit for Trainers

Questions or comments about the Toolkit? Contact the National Institute on Aging at (301) 496-1752 or e-mail daileys@nia.nih.gov

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1 What is the Toolkit for Trainers?

Developed by the National Institute on Aging, the *Toolkit for Trainers* is a set of free training materials and resources that trainers can use to help older adults learn to find reliable online health information on their own.

2 What's included in the training materials?

The toolkit includes nine modules that trainers can use with beginning and intermediate levels. Each module includes:

- A lesson plan and introduction for the trainer
- Student handouts containing practice exercises, definitions of terms, dialogues, and screen shots of web pages visited during each lesson

There is also a glossary of 37 basic computer and Internet terms.

3 Who is the target audience for the toolkit training?

The target audience for the training are adults 60 and older who want the kind of health information that can be found on the Internet, but who don't have adequate web skills.

4 What will older adults learn by taking this training?

Students will learn ways to recognize, prevent, and treat diseases and conditions that occur with age and build their Internet skills at the same time.

5 Do students have to know how to use the Internet to take the toolkit training?

No. The training is for older adults who are new to the Internet, as well as for those who are more experienced.

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6 What equipment is needed to teach toolkit lessons?

To teach the lessons in the toolkit, you will need a classroom equipped with a computer for each student and a computer projector for the trainer. The computers must have Internet access. Broadband connection is preferable, although a dial-up connection can work.

You will also need a 3-ring binder to store toolkit materials. Students should have a binder or folder to store handouts.

7 How long does the training take?

The lessons in the nine modules average about 90 minutes to 2 hours each, so the entire course could be delivered in nine class sessions. However, trainers can customize the training to their students' needs and use as many or as few of the modules as necessary.

Also, there are optional stopping points indicated within the lessons if trainers wish to shorten a lesson or stretch it out over two class periods.

8 Do I have to be a computer expert to use this toolkit?

Not necessarily. Of course, you should have some technical experience and be an experienced Internet user, since the toolkit lessons focus on the Internet. It also helps to have some teaching or training experience.

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9 How was the toolkit developed?

The toolkit was developed by the National Institute on Aging based on cognitive aging research. It was field tested with instructors and older students in actual classrooms.

10 What training approach is used?

This training uses two websites from the National Institutes of Health as models for the lessons: NIHSeniorHealth.gov, a senior-friendly website tailored especially for older adults; and MedlinePlus.gov, a consumer-oriented website from the National Library of Medicine offering extensive health information on over 700 diseases and conditions. Other government health websites are visited briefly.

11 Why focus on these two websites?

Using a senior-friendly website like NIHSeniorHealth to teach older adults how to find health information is an easy and logical way for them to learn Internet skills. The chance to apply these skills to a more typically configured website such as MedlinePlus (which NIHSeniorHealth is linked to) will help them gain confidence navigating sites throughout the Internet.

In addition, these websites were developed by the National Institutes of Health, the world's largest biomedical research institution. Using them as classroom models will give older adults access to the most authoritative and up-to-date information that medical research can offer.

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12 What's covered in the training?

Module 1 covers basic web skills and is for beginners with no Internet experience.

Modules 2 – 4 use NIHSeniorHealth.gov as a model and are intended for beginning students with some Internet experience.

Module 5 uses the *Exercise for Older Adults* topic on NIHSeniorHealth to help students consider starting a safe and effective exercise program. It is for intermediate students and for beginners with some Internet experience.

Modules 6 – 8 use MedlinePlus.gov as a model and are intended for intermediate students.

Module 9 helps students learn how to recognize reliable health information online.

13 Is the training senior friendly?

Yes. The lesson plans incorporate teaching practices that are tailored to the learning needs of the older student. Lesson plans allow trainers to proceed in a slow, step-by-step fashion and to provide students with plenty of hands-on practice and follow-up activities. These techniques make it easier for students to understand and recall what is taught.

14 How can I find out more about training techniques that work with older adults in a computer class?

Watch the short video *Introducing the Toolkit*. You can also read *Quick Tips for a Senior Friendly Computer Classroom*. Both are available on the NIHSeniorHealth page where you found these FAQs (www.nihseniorhealth.gov/toolkit). Finally, in the introduction to each module there is a short section entitled *Reaching the Older Student*, which provides helpful tips.

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15 How can I get the toolkit? Is there a cost?

You can download some or all of the elements in the toolkit free of charge from the NIHSeniorHealth website at www.nihseniorhealth.gov/toolkit.

16 How can I alert students and others to the toolkit training?

Download the *Student Recruitment Flyer* and use it to inform prospective students about the course. You can use the *Trainer Information Flyer* to alert trainers to the toolkit. You can also e-mail trainers the toolkit page (www.nihseniorhealth.gov/toolkit).

17 If I have questions about the toolkit, who can I contact?

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