

**“SOMEBODY NEEDS TO LIGHT
A FIRECRACKER UNDER ME!”
UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE FOR OLDER ADULTS**

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While physical activity has been shown to contribute to longevity and quality of life, the literature reports that few Americans are sufficiently active. Older adults are the least active population. Studies have examined older adults' physical activity patterns, yet few have explored why this population is inactive. The primary purpose of this study was to understand the meaning of physical activity for older adults across the Stages of Change model. A second purpose was to explore a self-determination continuum through the voices and lived experiences of older adults. A transcendental phenomenological framework illuminated the essence of the meaning of physical activity for older adults. Implications about how these meanings can guide interventions and programs for older adults are provided.