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## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

There are countless benefits to being physically active including a reduced likelihood of developing a disease, living longer, having more energy and decreasing stress.

But it can still be difficult to motivate yourself to exercise and keep fit, especially in the winter months.



This year, the Government of Canada released guidelines for physical activity. It is suggested that adults complete 2.5 hours of moderate to vigorous exercise per week and children and youth should be active for one hour per day.

Moderate activity should make your heart beat fast and make it harder to breathe. Vigorous activity is when you can't say more than few words without needing to stop and catch your breath. Examples

of moderate activity include walking quickly, skating and bike riding. Examples of vigorous activity include running, basketball, soccer and cross-country skiing.

Mixed in with these activities, the guidelines recommend muscle-strengthening activities including doing push-ups and sit-ups, lifting weights, climbing stairs and digging in the garden. If just reading that list makes you tired and overwhelmed, don't worry. Exercise can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be.

Here are some tips to help you get active:

\*Source: Public Health Agency of Canada

- Choose a variety of physical activities you enjoy. Try different activities until you find the ones that feel right for you. Build them into your daily routine.
- Set a goal and make a plan — pick a time, pick a place and get active. Book a date with a friend to keep on track. Challenging yourself and your activity partner will help you both meet your goals.
- Spread your sessions of moderate to vigorous aerobic activity throughout the week. Do at least 10 minutes of physical activity at a time.

### HERE'S A TIP:

Think about physical fitness the same way you would about saving money: every little bit helps!

# TIPS FOR GETTING FIT

- Limit the time you spend watching TV or sitting in front of a computer during leisure time.
- Building physical activity into your daily routine can help you increase your activity levels. For example, walk to work or carry your groceries. Be creative, be active!
- If you have kids, check if the exercise facilities you are considering have childcare options.

As you may have noticed, the amount of exercise recommended for youth and children is even higher than adults. And getting kids off the couch can be even more difficult.

Here are some tips to give kids to get them moving: \*Source: Public Health Agency of Canada

- Walk, run or bike instead of getting a ride – to school, the mall, your friend's house.
- Find something you enjoy – run, jump, swim, skateboard, snowboard, ski, skate, toboggan.
- Take yoga, hip-hop, or aerobics classes.
- Try indoor rock climbing, play soccer, ride a bike.
- Take the dog for a walk.
- Dance to your favourite music.
- Rake the leaves, shovel snow, carry the groceries home.
- Join a team at your school.



Have you ever considered how much physical activity you actually perform every week? For many of us, the answer is very little.

Between work, child care and home responsibilities, there isn't a lot of time for ourselves, let alone time to exercise – which is the last thing many people want to do after a long day.

Although it isn't easy to change your lifestyle, taking a little time to be active now could save you years of illness in the future. One of the biggest hurdles individuals face is believing that being active means transforming from a couch potato to an Olympic athlete overnight. In fact, even the most athletic people started out slowly.

First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign recommends small and easily attainable fitness steps for a busy individual such as parking in a far spot while shopping, walking around the living room while there is a commercial on TV and getting the whole family to walk around the block after dinner. Slowly increasing your fitness and making exercise part of your routine means that you are less likely to quit after a sudden burst of motivation or become frustrated when you don't see results right away.

Think about physical fitness the same way you would about saving money: every little bit helps!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada



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