

Moving Forward

Strategic Plan 2015 – 2023

Updated: April 2018



It's time to move forward

For almost 50 years, ParticipACTION has been synonymous with physical activity in Canada. In 1971, our job—with the help of the 60-year-old Swede—was to let people know we have a problem. By the 90s, we were known for providing easy tips to keep fit and have fun with Hal and Joanne, and since 2007 we have been part of a complex debate about the inactivity crisis. These days, everyone knows they need to be active, but not everyone knows what ParticipACTION does.

- ➔ It's time to move forward.
- ➔ It's time to build a new vision—how will we innovate to lead?
- ➔ It's time to make ourselves more relevant—how can we help re-engineer physical activity back into Canadians' busy lives?
- ➔ It's time to reinvent our funding model—in today's marketplace, how do we secure funds to do the work we need to do?

This is not a process we take lightly. ParticipACTION is known for making decisions based on solid evidence, and our strategic planning process is no exception. To arrive at this comprehensive plan, we conducted an environmental scan, reviewed current research and market trends, consulted our national advisory groups, our staff and Board of Directors and focus tested our ideas with key government and corporate leaders.

We have been effective in changing minds about what it means to be active in this country, and now we need to focus on changing behaviour.

It's never too early or too late to get started

Canadians of all ages are not moving their bodies enough to get the benefits of regular exercise, which include reduced risk of diseases like type 2 diabetes and some cancers, better scores in reading and math, better fitness, more fun, healthy body weight, self-confidence, new skills and better mental health.

Only thirty-nine per cent of children and youth get the recommended 60 minutes of heart-pumping activity they need every day, and only 16% of adults get the recommended 150 minutes per week. According to the World Health Organization, approximately 3.2 million people die each year because they are not active enough.

Further, research shows that sitting too much is bad for you, even if you're active enough the rest of the time. Approximately 29% of kids 3- to - 17 years of age meet the screen time recommendations (13% of preschoolers, 33% of 5- to 9-year-olds, and 53% of 10- to 17-year-olds), with 5- to 11-year-olds engaging in 1.9 hours and 12-17-year-olds in 3.8 hours in screen-based sedentary activities. Perhaps this shouldn't come as much of a surprise, because parents are their children's most important lifestyle role models, and Canadian adults are sedentary for 9.6 hours a day and spend approximately 25 hours per week on screens.

Research from the Conference Board of Canada shows that even a modest increase in Canadians' movement would reduce the incidence of debilitating chronic diseases. Plus, getting just 10 per cent of Canadian adults to sit less and move more would reduce Canada's health-care costs by \$2.6 billion and inject \$7.5 billion into the Canadian economy by the year 2040.

Our bodies' natural desires to move are being suppressed by the ever-present lure of screen-based leisure pursuits, our love affair with the car, our "information age" sedentary jobs and our constant quest for convenience. The "developed" world has engineered opportunities for spontaneous movement, such as playing outdoors or getting places on foot, out of our lifestyles. We have to focus on helping Canadians to sit less and move more in their daily lives.

Even small increases in physical activity can produce measurable health benefits. And it's never too early or too late to get started.

The world around us right now

Active people live longer and live better, so it's no wonder that ParticipACTION is no longer the only voice advocating for Canadians to move more. Government agencies, not-for-profits and corporate Canada are all building their own platforms, programs and social responsibility initiatives tied to physical activity and sport.

An analysis of the cluttered physical activity landscape reveals:

- There are few solutions focused on those who want to get started.
- Rarely do solutions address both sitting less and moving more.
- Many initiatives focus on telling people what to do, not helping them to do it.

And, within the broader health and wellness landscape, there are significant trends emerging:

- The Aging Population – by 2031, 1 in 4 Canadians will be over 65, and seniors are increasingly looking to adopt healthier lifestyles in order to prevent chronic diseases and have a better quality of life.
- The Empowered Patient – unprecedented access to health information means patients are more informed and assertive about how they manage their own health and how they interact with the healthcare system.
- The Quantified Self – a movement to use technology to track and monitor aspects of a person's daily life, including physical activity.

What we take with us, moving forward

You can call them key insights, or you can call them hard truths. Our in-depth evidence-gathering process led to 10 key findings that underpinned the evolution of ParticipACTION's mandate:

- 1** We need to create greater relevance to Canadians because it's unclear to them what we offer—we need a unique value proposition.
- 2** We are not a disruptive force and we need a clear new theory of change.
- 3** Our social impact is defined at a macro level, making it difficult to know what impact is attributable to us.
- 4** We do too much—we raise awareness, build sector capacity, run a variety of national initiatives and inspire and support people to move more—and we could be more effective if we were focused.
- 5** The issue is more relevant today given aging trends, rise in chronic disease, obesity and our culture of convenience.
- 6** There's a big opportunity for thought leadership and ParticipACTION is well positioned to fulfil this role.
- 7** There's a big opportunity to develop proprietary initiatives that differentiates us in the marketplace.
- 8** Despite the challenges around relevance, we are still working with strong brand equity that can be leveraged.
- 9** We have a strong track record with the 10,000 organizations in our partner network.
- 10** The conversation around sedentary behaviour is beginning to take hold and there is a big opportunity to declare entrance into this territory.

Where we are headed, moving forward

Our vision remains: A Canada where physical activity is a vital part of everyday life.

Our mandate evolves: As Canada's premier physical activity brand, ParticipACTION helps Canadians sit less and move more through innovative engagement initiatives and thought leadership.

In order to help re-engineer physical activity back into Canadians' busy lives and secure funds to do the work we need to do, we need to evolve our business model. We have a long history for public-service campaigns that raise awareness about the need to move more. The current strategic priority goes well beyond raising awareness to enabling and measuring behaviour change. And the behaviours we are focused on changing are not just movement behaviours, but sedentary behaviours.

Rather than focusing on reaching the parents of school-aged children, as we have in the past, we are expanding our reach to include generally inactive Canadians of all ages who want help getting started. In children and youth, we will focus on building competency and providing opportunities to be active, so kids can gather the skills and confidence required to be active for life. And in adults—who are our children's most important role models—we will focus on helping the generally inactive move from nothing, or very little activity, to something more. And, rather than investing in building capacity in the physical activity, recreation and sport sector to deliver programs and supports, we will focus on coordinating sector involvement in various innovative initiatives and aligning organizations through thought leadership activities.

Our values: ParticipACTION's own values are, in essence, the organization's identity—an expression of its principles, beliefs and philosophy. These values will be used to support our vision, shape our culture, guide decisions and dictate priorities. We hold them true and rely on them to guide us as individuals, and as a collective. These express the glue that holds us together through time.

Passion

Having contagious enthusiasm for our mission, knowing that being active is part of who we are as people and as a team.

Collaboration

Bringing together like-minded people and organizations to advance common goals and achieve more than the sum of our parts.

Empowerment

Encouraging employees to take initiative, take chances, lead and make decisions in a positive and supportive environment.

Innovation

Pursuing new, creative ideas that have the potential to improve the health and wellness of Canada.

Excellence

Taking pride in surpassing expectations, always learning and producing high-quality work.

Fun

Striking a healthy balance between work and play.

How we will operate, moving forward

ParticipACTION will bring its strategic direction to life by focusing on engagement initiatives and thought leadership.

These activities will leverage the significant equity in the ParticipACTION brand as an iconic representation of physical activity in Canada; hence, the lion's share of our engagement initiatives and thought leadership activities will also be structured to build our brand at the same time. And, where our engagement initiatives overlap with our thought leadership activities and also build our brand is our "sweet spot."

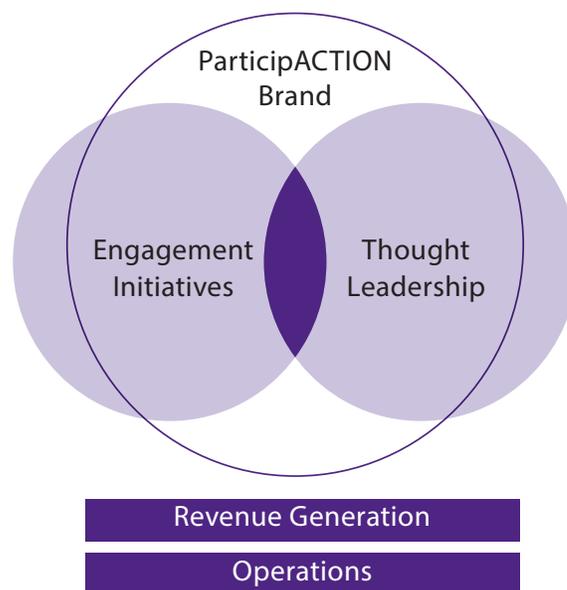
We will invest in developing or partnering on activities that only serve one or two key areas of focus, but ideally we will do most of our work in the "sweet spot" where all key areas of focus overlap.

Revenue Generation and Operations support all areas of our business.

When implementing our strategic direction, we will be guided by the following principles:

- That physical activity, by definition, includes sport and all types of movement done at home, at work, school, at play and in the community.

- A continued commitment to partnerships and collaboration.
- Leveraging existing national, provincial/territorial and local programs and initiatives to deliver against our objectives.
- Being respectful of others' mandates and jurisdictions.
- Testing activities and initiatives on a regional basis, with plans to scale up to a national scope.



Who we will impact, moving forward

As our mandate evolves, so too must the audiences we target. Rather than just focusing on a certain demographic of the population, we will focus on reaching people of all ages who exhibit specific attitudes, opinions and lifestyle patterns. Specifically, ParticipACTION will speak to two defined publics:

Canadians of all ages:

- Children and youth who require skills and competencies to get the right start on the path to an active life.
- Adults and older adults who want help getting started – they may have thought about getting started or getting healthier, but lack initiative or can't see the first step. This includes parents, who are the most important role models for their children.
- Generally inactive individuals, who may not be able to move from nothing to being active enough to meet physical activity recommendations, but who can move from nothing to something, or a little more.

Organizations who share our mission:

- This is broadly defined as the sport, physical activity and recreation sector—those whose mandate is centred on or connected to physical activity advancement and sedentary behaviour reduction.
- These include government, non-government and private-sector organizations.

What we will focus on, moving forward

ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

ParticipACTION will engage Canadians through measurable, relevant and compelling initiatives that support and encourage them to sit less and move more where they live, work or play.

Moving forward, we will develop and launch proprietary ParticipACTION-branded behaviour-change initiatives that anchor our new direction. The proprietary initiatives will be robust, supportive programs that harness the power of incentives to nudge Canadians to get started. The programs will use a social marketing approach that applies elements of traditional marketing in order to encourage behavior changes that benefit the participants' health and wellness. As we know, providing education alone does not necessarily result in a change in behaviour, so we are drawing upon the learnings of behavioural economics. Our approach addresses the barriers to behaviour change and makes it convenient, easy, and socially desirable. We will not focus on competing with other organizations delivering programs on the ground, but rather create platforms that other organizations can connect to or leverage to improve their own offerings.

Behaviour change is a complex process, and behaviour change may not always be the immediate goal of all initiatives. In order to ensure that all

Canadians are equipped to be active for life, some programs will address priorities to change attitudes or public opinion, and some will focus on building physical literacy, certain skills or competencies required for behaviour change to ultimately take place. A key facet of our new direction is that any use of public-service campaigns will be directed at driving participation in engagement initiatives, rather than promoting awareness of the broader physical inactivity issue.

We will also work with partners to develop new initiatives that support specific populations and/or areas of focus.

Moving forward, we will:

- Develop and implement core/flagship proprietary digital and community based behaviour change initiatives.
- Pursue opportunities to develop and implement initiatives and activities that support specific populations and/or areas of focus.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

As a thought leader, ParticipACTION is the informed opinion leader and the go-to source in the Canadian field of physical activity and sport participation. ParticipACTION is a noted authority and delivers answers to the big questions on the minds of our target audiences.

To bridge the gap between existing and emerging research and what's happening on the ground across Canada, ParticipACTION will synthesize, disseminate, exchange and apply knowledge about physical activity, sport participation and sedentary behaviour to the sport, recreation and physical activity sector and the general public.

Thought leadership activities include the development of ParticipACTION Report Cards on Physical Activity, position statements, white papers, partnering on research studies, being a source for commentary and expertise and aligning the sector on issues.

Moving forward, we will:

- Develop and disseminate evidence-based knowledge products.
- Be the go-to source for the most relevant, up-to-date information on physical activity, sport participation and sedentary behaviour.
- Provide issue representation and act as a spokesperson to media and other stakeholders.
- Align the sector on key issues of importance, including advocating for policies and supports that facilitate sitting less and moving more.

BRAND

One of our strongest assets driving our engagement initiatives and thought leadership activities is our brand. ParticipACTION's long history as the go-to source for all things physical activity in Canada helps cut through the clutter in today's 1000-channel universe. ParticipACTION is the number-one physical activity brand in Canada, and Canadians recognize us for "providing resources and easy ways for Canadians to be active," and "helping overcome barriers to physical activity."

It is essential to cultivate and preserve the equity in ParticipACTION's iconic Canadian brand, so that it can continue to be used to fuel Canada's physical activity movement. A healthy, strong ParticipACTION brand requires high profile and presence across all initiatives and activities the organization undertakes.

This means that, wherever possible, engagement initiatives, thought leadership activities and corporate communications will be branded ParticipACTION and be consistent with our brand character—bold, ambitious, optimistic, compelling, and real—and our brand values—evidence, action, creativity and fun.

Moving forward, we will:

- Ensure a consistent voice and brand identity across all initiatives and activities.
- Develop national public education campaigns that shift attitudes and perceptions, and motivate and empower Canadians to change their behaviour.
- Develop core corporate communications that provide relevant and meaningful information to Canadians and stakeholders that are attributable to ParticipACTION.

REVENUE GENERATION

ParticipACTION must secure partnerships and multiple streams of revenue in order to build and maintain the unique Canadian asset that is the ParticipACTION brand, and to implement annual and longer term plans.

We will always strive first to support ParticipACTION's proprietary behaviour-change initiatives, and second, the development of other (new and existing) initiatives that support physical activity and sport.

Moving forward, we will:

- Secure public funding through federal and provincial/territorial governments.
- Secure private-sector sponsorships, in-kind donations and marketing partnerships.
- Secure funding through private, public and corporate foundations.
- Explore and develop mechanisms for self-generating revenue including program sales, licensing agreements, and fundraising.

OPERATIONS

ParticipACTION remains committed to making evidence-based decisions and operating with the highest standards of good governance, efficiency and professionalism.

We will be results-oriented, guided by a continuous improvement philosophy, and approach our work with a client-service focus.

Moving forward, we will:

- Implement effective governance processes with our internal (Board of Directors, Employees) and external (Advisory Groups, Committees, Funders) stakeholders.
- Implement internal processes and systems that support and reinforce the organizational values.
- Ensure sound evidence is used to inform decisions.

Where we are going, and how we will know when we get there

Ultimately, ParticipACTION wants to see all Canadians sitting less and moving more, but practically speaking, we cannot reach and support each and every person to do so.

And, because behaviour change is complex, it is impossible to attribute population-level change to one or even several factors—we know, absolutely, that ParticipACTION will be part of the solution, but we will never be the only solution. It will take many facets of society, working together, to shift the behaviour of a nation.

That said, it's important to clarify what impact we can expect to have—and what part of the solution we can measure. ParticipACTION's conceptual framework, shown below, helps illustrate where we want to go, how we plan to get there, and how we intend to

measure it. This framework is informed by the socio-ecological model, the results chain model, and the theory of planned behavior.

The inner circle represents what ParticipACTION has direct control over—all of our initiatives and activities, our operations and our revenue generation. In a direct way, we can increase individuals' awareness of and participation in physical activity and sport through our engagement initiatives and thought leadership activities.

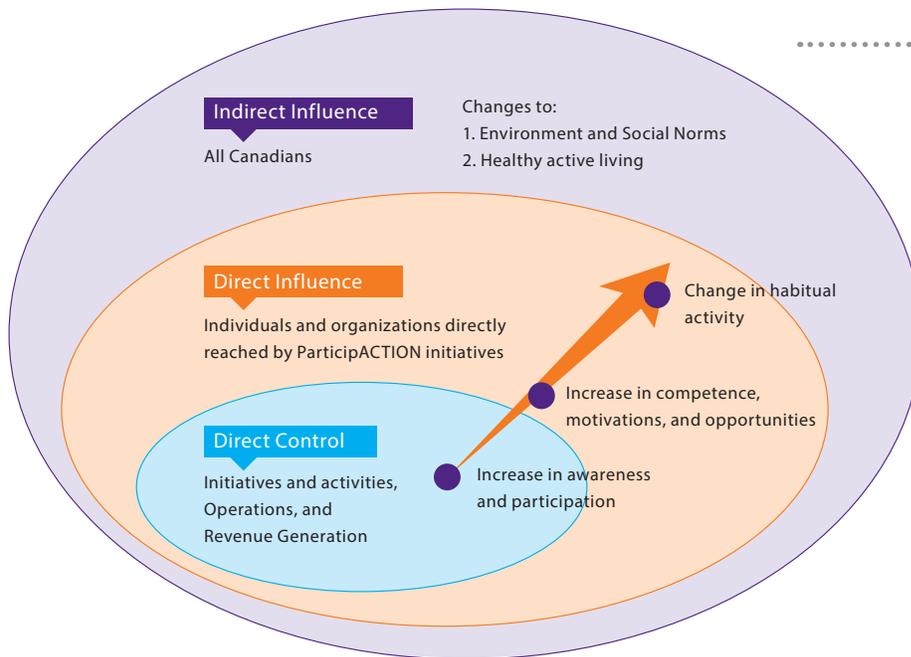


Figure 1:
Conceptual framework

The middle circle represents what ParticipACTION has direct influence over—the individuals and organizations directly reached by ParticipACTION engagement initiatives and thought leadership activities. In an indirect way, we can increase individuals' competence, motivations and opportunities to be physically active, which can lead to a change in their habitual activity. If we can increase awareness and participation, this contributes to increasing their ability or desire to sit less or move more, which contributes to increasing their activity or reducing their sedentary behaviour. That said, behaviour is complicated, and there are many other factors that contribute to someone's ability or desire to be active, and their overall physical activity levels, beyond whether or not they participate in our initiatives and activities. That's why behaviour change at the individual level is something ParticipACTION can directly influence, but not control.

The outer circle represents what ParticipACTION has indirect influence over—which can be thought of as the broader community of Canadians. If we can directly influence people to sit less and move more, this will, indirectly, help

impact social norms and population-wide behaviours. While we will never be able to measure our specific influence on the broader community, following are the ultimate outcomes we are contributing to in the longer term:

Environment and social norms:

- A shift in social norms towards sitting less and moving more.
- Environments are more supportive and accessible to enable Canadians to sit less and move more.

Active healthy living:

- An increase in the proportion of Canadians meeting current national integrated movement guidelines.

Our targets

ParticipACTION’s overall goal is to contribute to an increase in physical activity and a decrease in sedentary behaviour among Canadians of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

This overall goal is in line with recommendations set forth by the Conference Board of Canada’s Report on the Economic Impact of Reducing Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour, which examines the cumulative impact over 25 years of 10% of the population sitting less and moving more. It is also in line with The Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases from the World Health Organization which recommend for a 10% reduction in physical inactivity.

What’s really important is to remember that being inactive is not the same as being sedentary. Physical activity and sedentary behaviour should be thought of as two separate and distinct lifestyle behaviours, which are each associated with a wide range of health risks, and benefits. An individual might be a regular runner, for instance, but also sit for long hours at a desk job each day—he or she would be considered physically active and sedentary. It’s important to think about how much you move, but also, how much you sit.

The following figure, Figure 2, represents the four possible combinations of lifestyle behaviours:

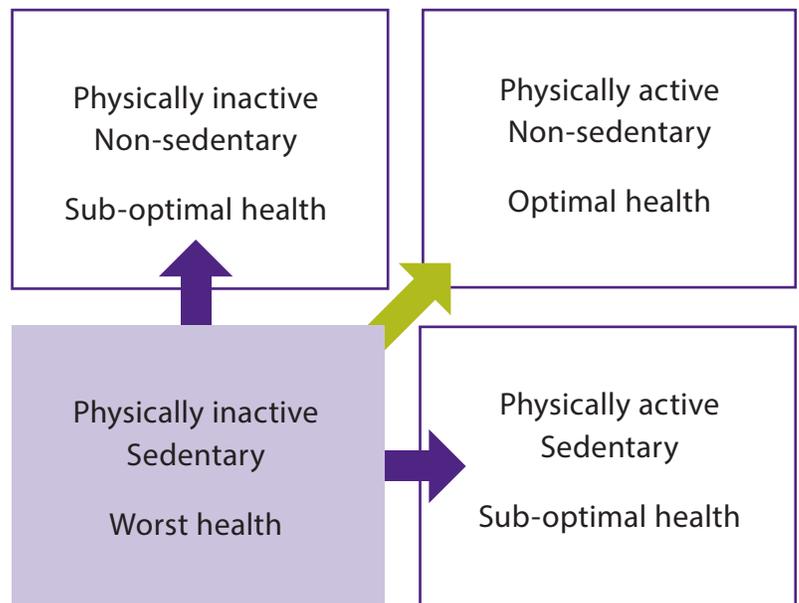


Figure 2:
Possible lifestyle behaviour patterns



ParticipACTION's primary focus will be on moving people out of the worst health scenario (physically inactive and sedentary), to any other behavioural pattern, as represented by the arrows.

We will help Canadians move towards positive and sustainable changes in their habitual levels of physical activity and/or sedentary behaviour, moving from worst health to sub-optimal health and eventually to optimal health. It is less realistic that people are going to move from "physically inactive/sedentary" to "physically active/non-sedentary" without first spending time adjusting to other lifestyle behaviour patterns.

Our behaviour goals and corresponding targets over the term of this strategic plan are:

- Contribute to an increase in participation of daily physical activity among Canadians.



move from 18% to 25.5% of Canadian adults who are physically active.



move from 35% to 42.5% of Canadian children and youth who are physically active.



move from 62% to 69.5% of Canadian children 3- to -4 years old who are physically active.

- Contribute to a reduction in time spent engaging in daily sedentary behaviours among Canadians.



decrease sedentary time from 9.6 hours per day to 8.6 hours per day for adults.



decrease recreation screen time from 3.1 hours per day to 2.8 hours per day in children and youth.



maintain recreation screen time of 1.9 hours per day in children 3- to -4 years old.

Our competence, motivations and opportunities goals and corresponding targets over the term of this strategic plan are:

- To increase Canadians' competence and motivations to increase habitual physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour.
 -  move from 74% to 79% of Canadians who are confident they could accumulate 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity on most days of the week.
 -  move from 76% to 81% of Canadians who have goals to increase physical activity in the next six months.
 -  move from 59% to 64% of Canadians who have goals to decrease their sedentary behaviour.
 -  move from 72% to 77% of Canadians who agree the potential benefits of increasing physical activity exceed the potential negatives.
 -  move from 74% to 79% of Canadians who report they enjoy being physically active.
- To improve opportunities (physical and social environments) to ensure that all Canadians have access to safe and enabling environments and to diverse opportunities to be physically active in their daily lives.
 -  move from 79% to 84% of Canadians who agree they often see other people walking in their neighbourhood.
- To be the leading brand and go-to source of physical activity, sport participation and sedentary behaviour information in Canada.
 -  move from 27% to 32% of Canadians who feel ParticipACTION is relevant to their own and/or family's wellbeing.
 -  move from 32% to 40% of general population who identify ParticipACTION as the #1 physical activity brand in Canada.
 -  Maintain 88% endorsement of ParticipACTION as being successful in advancing and communicating knowledge on the issues associated with physical activity and sedentary behaviour among Canadians.

Our awareness and participation goals will be measured annually, specific to the initiatives and activities we implement. Each initiative and activity will have its own targets.

What is required to move forward

As we evolve, our organization's needs will evolve as well. It comes as a surprise to many that ParticipACTION is comprised of a small team of fewer than 30 people.

We will always want to be a small, nimble, effective and efficient organization. However, to effectively implement our evolved mandate, we need to expand our capacity in two key areas: Knowledge/Thought Leadership and Business Development.

And, we need the ability to scale our staffing to reflect the scope and number of engagement initiatives we undertake,

increasing marketing and/or project management staff to accommodate the need for more capacity.

The number of people we can influence, directly and indirectly, and the scope of our initiatives will vary with the amount of resources we have to support our work. At a minimum, ParticipACTION requires \$10 million in yearly revenues. To have the desired impact outlined in this strategic plan, we require an eventual target of between \$15 to \$20 million in revenues annually.

Doing is believing

When it comes to getting active, doing is believing. Once people become healthier and more active, they realize all the benefits—sleeping better, feeling better, making friends, maintaining a healthy body weight—and this provides intrinsic motivation to do more.

In order to make physical activity a more desirable, accessible and vital part of everyday life in Canada, we need to give people opportunities to move more, and support them to do it. Effective, evidence-based

engagement initiatives, combined with thought leadership, will allow us to help Canadians sit less and move more. Eventually, being active will just be part of what it means to be Canadian.

We are proud of where we have been.
We are proud of how we got here.
We are excited to move forward.

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www.participACTION.com

