

Physical activity:

A solution to keeping Canada moving forward

Physical activity provides a wide range of economic, physical, environmental, social and mental health benefits. With only **49% of adults** and **39% of children and youth** in Canada meeting recommended physical activity guidelines, implementing effective policies and interventions at the national scale is needed to get people moving more and fully realize the positive impacts physical activity could have on Canada now and in the future.



The benefits of physical activity



Increased levels of physical activity are good for the economy.

- Sport, physical activity and recreation contribute **\$37.2 billion** annually to Canada's gross domestic product (GDP), covering recreation, amusement, sport and retail sectors.ⁱ
- In 2022, **260,000 jobs** were provided by the physical activity, sport and recreation sector.ⁱ



Physical activity is an effective tool to support mental health and prevent cognitive issues.

- Meeting Canada's physical activity recommendations is linked to decreased levels of anxiety and depression,ⁱⁱ a lowered risk of dementia and improved cognition,ⁱⁱⁱ as well as **better overall quality of life**.^{iv}
- There is approximately a **28% to 32% lower risk of depression and dementia** for adults who participate in daily physical activity.^v



An active population can reduce public healthcare costs and chronic disease in Canada.

- A **10% increase** in physical activity could reduce chronic disease cases and save Canada **\$629 million** per year.ⁱ
- Each year, physical inactivity and the resulting medical conditions account for **\$3.9 billion** of annual healthcare expenditures.ⁱ
- Decreasing the physical inactivity rate among adults by just **10%** can result in **more than a 17% reduction** in costs related to treating or managing depression (**from \$409 million to \$338 million**).ⁱ



Physical activity can contribute to Canada's response to climate change.

- Public transit users walk an additional **8 to 33 minutes** per day^{vi} and public transit in Canada reduces annual greenhouse gas emissions by **4.7 million tonnes** annually.^{vii}
- If only **1% of people living in Canada** switched from cars to active transportation (e.g., walking, wheeling, cycling), it could save **\$564 million** annually by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.ⁱ



Active communities are connected communities.

- **76% of people** in Canada feel welcomed and included through sport, physical activity and recreation activities.ⁱ
- Physical activity can be a **connector** among members of similar cultural or ethnic groups and a great way for newcomers to integrate into their new communities.



Why it's the right time for Canada to invest in physical activity

Canada supports the World Health Organization's goal to reduce physical inactivity worldwide by **15% by 2030**, and there has never been more evidence in support of investing in physical activity and making it a national priority.



of people living in Canada agree that physical activity is an **urgent issue**.^{viii}



of adults in Canada feel that federal, provincial and territorial governments should **increase funding** for physical activity, sport and recreation.ⁱ



On a global scale, insufficient physical activity stands as the **4th leading risk factor for premature death and mortality**, underscoring the critical need for lifestyle changes worldwide.^{ix}

Keeping Canada moving forward

Physical inactivity is a pervasive public health issue that must be urgently recognized as a national priority. There are few areas in public health like physical activity where the evidence on required action is so convincing, cost effective and practical to get Canadians moving and keep Canada moving forward.

ParticipACTION is a national non-profit charitable organization that envisions a Canada where physical activity is a vital part of everyday life for everyone. As Canada's leading physical activity organization, ParticipACTION works with its partners, which include organizations in the sport, physical activity and recreation sectors, alongside government and corporate sponsors, to help people move more where they live, learn, work and play. ParticipACTION is generously supported by the Government of Canada.

Learn how ParticipACTION has been moving people in Canada for over 50 years at [ParticipACTION.com](https://participaction.com).

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