

Lifestyle Tips



Issue 8-08/09

Health Benefits of Physical Activity for Adults



The fact that physical activity is good for your health is probably not new to you. But you might be able to use a “re-think” about what physical activity actually is, and how you define it. The benefits of getting active include reduced risk of heart disease, colon

and breast cancer, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and osteoporosis, plus stronger muscles and bones, improved posture, better balance and mental health. But you don’t have to don spandex and join a gym to get these benefits!

Many people confuse physical activity with exercise. Exercise is a form of physical activity that is planned, structured and done to improve at

least one aspect of physical fitness—like strength, flexibility, or endurance. On the other hand, physical activity includes all activity that is part of your daily life—such as housework, active transportation and workplace or leisure time that’s active.

While getting 60 minutes of daily exercise may be challenging, getting the 60 minutes of daily physical activity recommended in Canada’s Physical Activity Guide for Adults, is much easier. And if you do more vigorous activities like jogging, you need only 20-30 minutes a day. After three months of regular physical activity, you will notice a difference in how you feel—people often say getting started is the hardest part. Here are some tips to get yourself on the right path to better health:

- You don’t have to get 60 minutes all at once. Break up your physical activity into smaller 10-minute “chunks” throughout the day.
- Make housework fun! Dust and vacuum to your favourite music and dance along the way.
- When you’re ready to go to the checkout, do another lap around the mall or grocery store.
- Instead of sending emails at work, walk to visit the person or hand



Brought to you by ParticipACTION in collaboration with the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute.





deliver messages.

- Get out and play with your kids—play tag or catch, shoot hoops, kick the can or jump rope.
- Park at the farthest end of the parking lot at the mall.
- Walk or wheel to work or the corner store.

Whatever you do, try to choose a variety of activities. Remember that there are different types of physical activity that offer different benefits. Make sure you're getting moving in these three ways:

For endurance – continuous activities for your heart, lungs and circulatory system, such as walking or cycling for at least 10 minutes

For flexibility – gentle reaching, bending and stretching activities to keep your muscles relaxed and joints mobile, such as yoga, gardening or even putting away cans of food in the very back of the cupboard

For strength – activities done against resistance to strengthen muscles and

bones and improve posture, such as carrying groceries or laundry

Be active each day and you will be on your way to feeling better. If you would like more information, consult Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/pdf/guideEng.pdf>

