



**AWARENESS OF THE BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**



Awareness of physical activity information

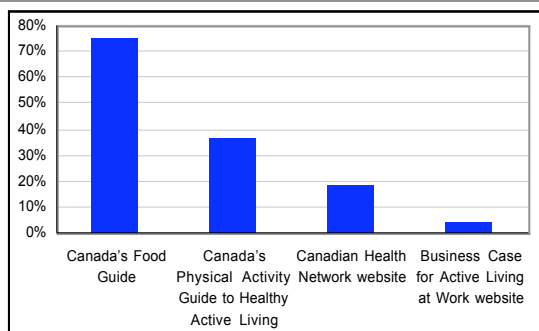
When prompted, most Canadian employers are aware of some guidelines for healthy living. Three out of every four workplace respondents are aware of Canada's Food Guide for Healthy Eating,ⁱ whereas roughly half that amount (36%) are aware of Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living.ⁱⁱ Only 18% of companies know of the Canadian Health Network website,ⁱⁱⁱ and, a mere 4% are aware of the Business Case for Active Living at Work website.^{iv}

Region Companies in Ontario are less likely than those in Atlantic and Western Canada to report awareness of Canada's Food Guide. Companies in Atlantic Canada are more likely to be aware of Canada's Physical Activity Guide than those in the Quebec, Ontario, and the West. There are no regional differences among companies concerning awareness of the Canadian Health Network or the Business Case for Active Living at Work websites.

Workplace characteristics With the exception of smaller companies (20–49 employees), larger companies are more likely to be aware of Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living. The largest companies (1,000+ employees) are roughly twice as likely as smaller companies to be aware of the Canadian Health Network and the Business Case for Active Living at Work websites. Companies with a greater proportion of female employees ($\geq 50\%$) are more likely than those with relatively fewer women to report awareness of the Canadian Health Network website.

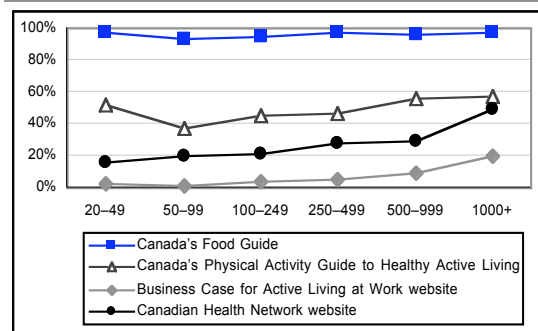
Implications Awareness levels of *physical activity* resources are generally moderate-to-low in Canadian workplaces. Indeed, even when prompted, awareness of Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living was lower among workplace respondents than among Canadians more generally.^{Error! Bookmark not defined.} Increased awareness and marketing of currently available Canadian resources (which have been designed to help workplaces plan and implement successful workplace physical activity programs) may be an important step in increasing physical activity opportunities at work and ultimately helping Canadian workers become more active.

AWARENESS OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION overall, 2003



2003 Opportunities for Physical Activity at Work Survey, CFLRI

AWARENESS OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION by company size, 2003



2003 Opportunities for Physical Activity at Work Survey, CFLRI

Perceived economic benefits of physical activity

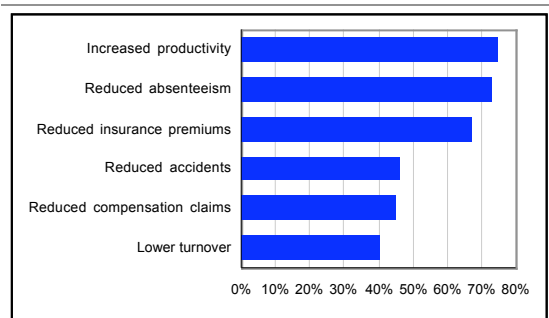
Roughly three-quarters of Canadian companies consider increased productivity and reduced absenteeism to be key benefits of a physical activity program. Other reported benefits of a physical activity program include reduced health care costs and insurance premiums (67%), followed by a reduced number of accidents (46%), reduced workers' compensation claims (45%), and lower turnover rates, or its role as an incentive to recruitment (40%). Few companies (6%) consider physical activity program as a benefit of fulfilling collective agreement responsibilities.

Region Workplaces in the Atlantic are more likely than those in Quebec to report reduced workers' compensation claims as a benefit.

Workplace characteristics Larger companies are more likely to believe that reduced accidents and reduced workers' compensation claims are key than are smaller companies. Workplaces with a predominately female workforce ($\geq 50\%$) are more likely than those with relatively fewer women to consider increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, and lower turnover as key benefits of a physical activity program. Companies that employ relatively more professionals ($\geq 50\%$) are more likely than those with relatively fewer professionals to report increased productivity and lower turnover as benefits. Those with fewer labour positions ($< 50\%$) are more likely to cite reduced absenteeism and reduced insurance premiums, whereas those companies with relatively fewer clerical positions are more likely than others to cite fulfilling collective agreement responsibilities as a benefit.

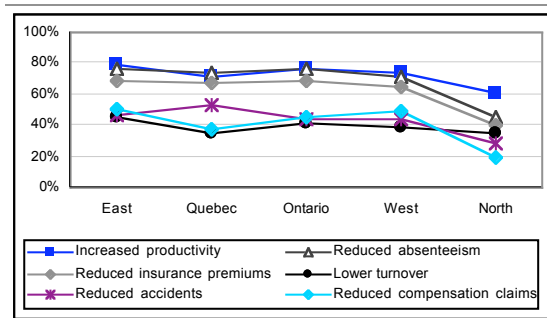
Implications The economic benefits of physical activity and wellness programs in the workplace have been documented in both Canada and the United States.^{iv} However, overall, these types of benefits are not cited nearly as often as human resource related benefits, or employee-driven benefits (see topic entitled, "Perceived human resource benefits"). Clearly, from the data, employers are already aware of the positive social benefits that such programs can have for improved employee relations.

PERCEIVED ECONOMIC BENEFITS
overall, 2003



2003 Opportunities for Physical Activity at Work Survey, CFLRI

PERCEIVED ECONOMIC BENEFITS
by region, 2003



2003 Opportunities for Physical Activity at Work Survey, CFLRI

Perceived human resource benefits of physical activity

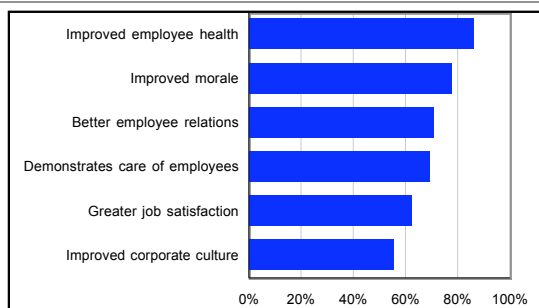
The majority of companies cite human resource related benefits as outcomes of a physical activity program at work: 86% of companies report improved employee health and wellness; 78% cite improved morale; 71% report better employee relations; 69% feel it demonstrates that they care about their employees; followed by 62% who state greater job satisfaction among employees; and 55% report improved corporate culture.

Region Companies in Ontario are more likely than those in the Atlantic and West to report improved corporate culture as a key benefit of having a physical activity program.

Workplace characteristics Larger companies are more likely to report improved corporate culture and demonstrated care of employees as key benefits, than are those with fewer employees. Companies located in a suburban environment are less likely than others to report that these programs contribute to greater job satisfaction. Companies with a larger proportion of female employees in their workforce ($\geq 50\%$) are more likely to report greater job satisfaction, better employee relations, improved morale, and demonstrated care for employees as benefits than those with relatively fewer female employees. Companies that employ more professionals are more likely than those with fewer professionals to cite job satisfaction, better employee relations, improved morale and improved corporate culture as key benefits.

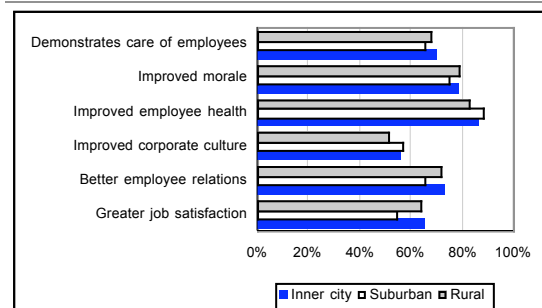
Implications Generally speaking, benefits related to human resources tend to be cited more frequently than economic-related benefits (see topic entitled, “Perceived economic benefits”). This is an interesting finding, as it may tie into the reason why so few companies evaluate their physical activity programs using an economic measure (see topic entitled, “Evaluation methods—economic-oriented measures”). Perhaps companies believe that benefits with a more human resource focus, are qualitative in nature, and more difficult to measure. This warrants further investigation.

**PERCEIVED HUMAN RESOURCE BENEFITS
overall, 2003**



2003 Opportunities for Physical Activity at Work Survey, CFLRI

**PERCEIVED HUMAN RESOURCE BENEFITS
by location, 2003**



2003 Opportunities for Physical Activity at Work Survey, CFLRI

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- ⁱ Health Canada. (Accessed March 2004). Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. [On-line]. Available: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food_guide_rainbow_e.html.
- ⁱⁱ Health Canada and the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (2004). Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/paguide/index.html>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Health Canada. (Accessed March 2004). The Canadian Health Network. [On-line] Available: <http://www.canadian-health-network.ca/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1038611684536&pagename=CHN-RCS/Page/HomePageTemplate&c=Page&lang=En>
- ^{iv} Health Canada and Canadian Council for Health and Active Living at Work. (Accessed March 2004). Business Case for Active Living at Work. [On-line]. Available: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/fitness/work/introduction_e.html.