



Let's Get Active!

Planning Effective Communication Strategies

2008 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MONITOR: FACTS & FIGURES



Attitudes Toward Physical Activity

The Theory of Planned Behaviour suggests that attitudes toward physical activity (in collaboration with other factors) are determinants of physical activity adoption and maintenance.¹ The 2008 Physical Activity Monitor explored the attitudes held by Canadians about physical activity. Most Canadians hold positive attitudes toward physical activity:

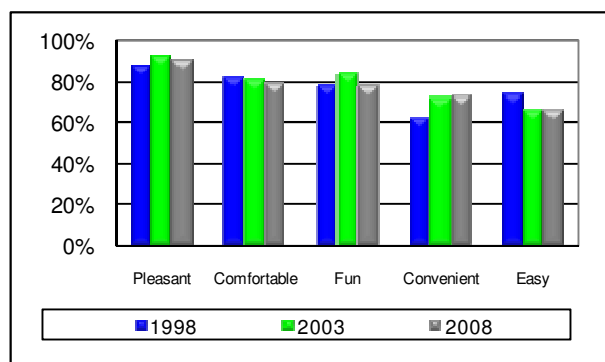
- 91% of Canadians believe physical activity is pleasant;
- 80% feel physical activity is comfortable;
- 79% believe physical activity is fun;
- 74% feel physical activity is convenient; and
- 67% deem physical activity to be easy.

Those who feel that physical activity is inconvenient report the main reasons why they hold this attitude include lack of time or work commitments (60%), family commitments (14%), lack of willpower or discipline (8%), neighbourhood restrictions (7%), health or mobility limitations (6%), and cost (4%).

Trends over time

Attitudes held by Canadians were also assessed in 1998 and 2003. The proportion of Canadians who feel that physical activity is fun increased from 1998 to 2003, but in 2008 has declined back to

FIGURE 1
Trends in positive attitudes toward physical activity, 1998 - 2008, overall



Physical Activity Monitors 1998, 2003 & 2008, CFLRI

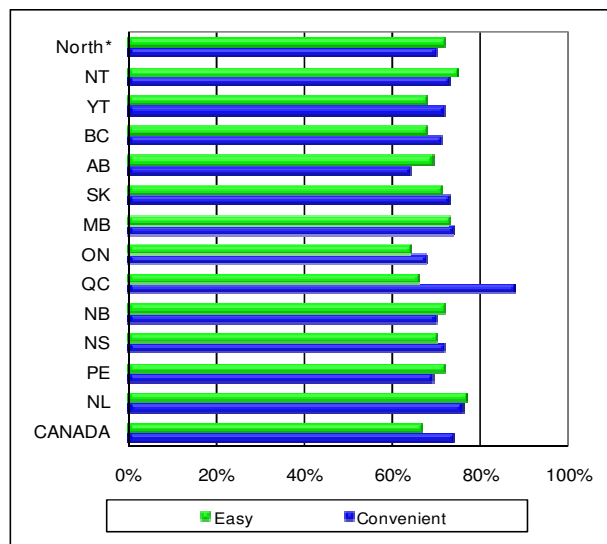
1998 levels. Otherwise, no other attitudes have changed from 2003 to 2008; compared to 1998, more Canadians in 2008 find physical activity to be pleasant and convenient, but fewer find physical activity to be easy.

Sex differences noted in 1998 and 2003 (i.e., in 1998 and 2003, men were more likely to find physical activity easy; in 1998, men were more likely to say physical activity is convenient) do not appear in 2008. Generally, the age, socio-demographic, and activity level relationships noted are similar across time periods.

Region

Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador are more likely than the Canadian average to feel that physical activity is easy and comfortable. Those who live in Northwest Territories are more likely to report that physical activity is fun and easy. Ontarians and Albertans are less likely than average to feel that physical activity is convenient, while residents of Quebec are more likely to report this.

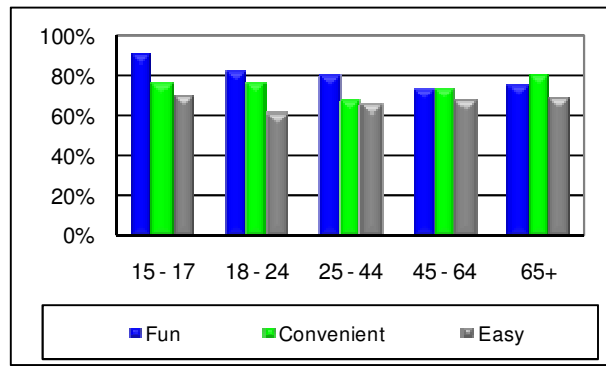
FIGURE 2
Selected positive attitudes toward physical activity, by region



Physical Activity Monitor 2008, CFLRI

FIGURE 3

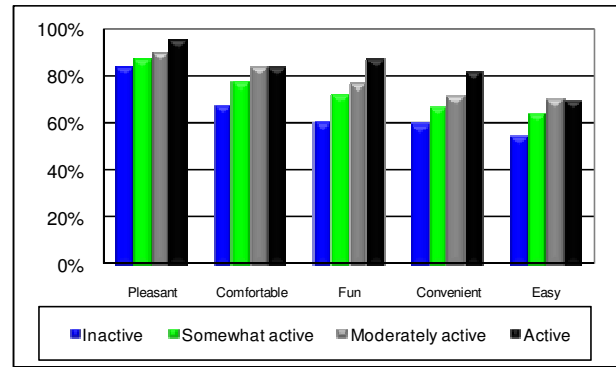
Selected positive attitudes toward physical activity, by age



Physical Activity Monitor 2008, CFLRI

FIGURE 4

Positive attitudes toward physical activity, by activity level



Physical Activity Monitor 2008, CFLRI

Age and sex

Overall, men and women have similar attitudes toward physical activity. Generally, young Canadians are more likely to find physical activity fun. Men and women aged 25 to 44 years are less likely to feel physical activity is convenient.

Among those who report physical activity is inconvenient, women are more likely than men to report that physical activity is inconvenient due to family commitments. This reason is also more likely to be reported by 25 to 44 year-olds. Older adults (that is, those aged 65 years or older) are more likely to report health or mobility reasons for feeling that physical activity is inconvenient, but are less likely to report a lack of time.

Socio-economic and demographic characteristics

Canadians with less than high school education are less likely than those who have attended university to find physical activity convenient, but more likely to find physical activity painful. Those

whose annual household income is \$100,000 or higher are more likely than those in some lower income brackets to report that physical activity is comfortable. Retired Canadians are more likely than average to find physical activity convenient and less likely to find it difficult, while those who are unemployed (including those who may be ill or disabled) are less likely than the national average to find physical activity comfortable.

Physical activity and sport participation

Generally, the likelihood of reporting that physical activity is boring, unpleasant, difficult, uncomfortable, and inconvenient is higher among more sedentary Canadians. Those who do not participate in sport are more likely than participants to feel that physical activity is boring, unpleasant, and inconvenient.

References

1. Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In J. Kuhl & J. Beckman (Eds.), *Action-control: From cognition to behavior* (pp. 11-39). Heidelberg: Springer.

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