



**AWARENESS OF THE BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**



Beliefs about the benefits of physical activity

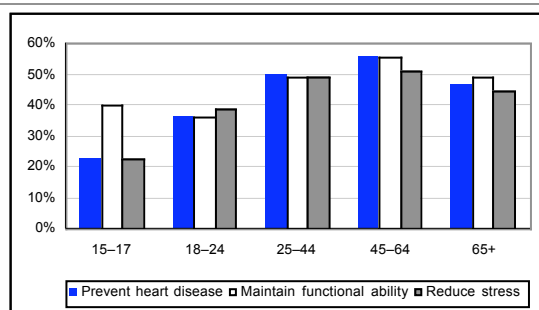
Canadian adults generally hold very positive beliefs about the benefits of physical activity. In fact, 49% of adults *very strongly* agree that physical activity helps people to maintain their ability to do everyday tasks as they age, 48% *very strongly* agree that physical activity helps to prevent heart disease, and 46% state that they *very strongly* believe that it helps to reduce stress.

Population Groups Women are more likely than men to report that they hold very strong beliefs that physical activity helps people maintain functional ability, helps prevent heart disease, and helps reduce stress. Adults aged 45–64 are more likely than younger and older adults to hold very strong beliefs about physical activity helping to prevent heart disease and reduce stress. Individuals with higher levels of education are more likely than those with lower levels to hold very strong beliefs about the benefits of activity for reducing stress.

Trends Canadians are less likely to hold very strong beliefs about the benefits of physical activity for preventing heart disease, maintaining functional ability with age, and reducing stress, than they were five years ago.

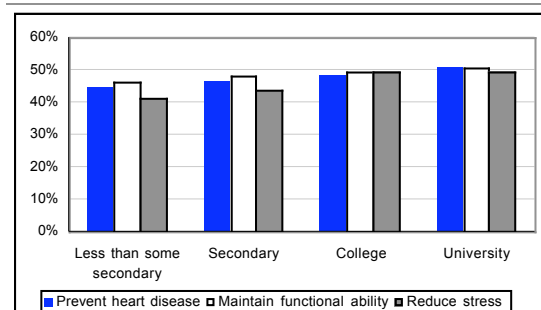
Implications There has been a sharp decrease in the strength of beliefs about the benefits of physical activity for health and stress reduction compared to 1998 and 2002. What could contribute to this marked change? It may be a result of the increased prevalence of overweight and obesity and greater attention paid to the increased risk associated with these health risk factors. Physical activity helps to maintain a healthy weight and may mitigate risks associated with overweight to some extent.¹ The health benefits of physical activity, particularly its role in maintaining a healthy weight should be promoted. Otherwise, there is a chance that Canadians may focus solely on calorie reduction as a means of weight control, without building an overall healthy lifestyle pattern to sustain a healthy weight.

BELIEFS ABOUT HEALTH BENEFITS
% agreeing very strongly by age



2003 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

BELIEFS ABOUT HEALTH BENEFITS
% agreeing very strongly by education



2003 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

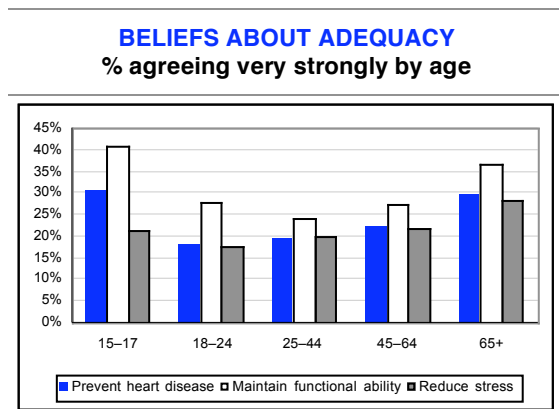
Beliefs about adequacy of personal physical activity levels

Although the majority of Canadians are aware of the benefits of physical activity (see previous topic entitled “Beliefs about the benefits of physical activity”), Canadians do not feel as strongly that they, themselves, are active enough to achieve these benefits. Approximately one in five Canadian adults *very strongly* agrees that they are active enough to prevent heart disease (22%) and reduce stress (21%). Roughly one-quarter (28%) very strongly believe that they are active enough to maintain their functional ability to perform routine tasks as they age.

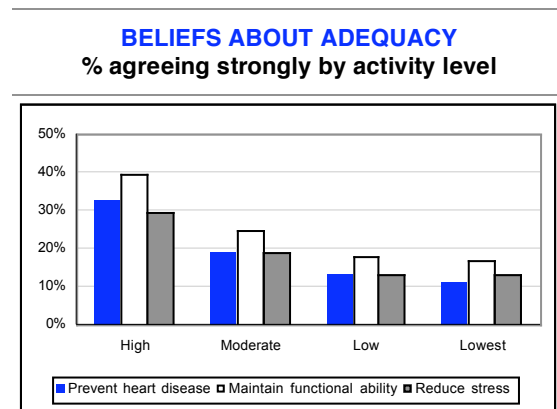
Population Groups Men are more likely than women to *very strongly* agree that they are active enough to prevent heart disease. Older adults (65+ years) are more likely than those 18–64 years to state that they very strongly agree that they do enough physical activity to prevent heart disease, maintain functional ability with age and reduce stress. Those who are active are more than twice as likely as those who are inactive to report that they very strongly agree that they are active enough for all health benefits.

Trends Compared to 1998, Canadians are just as likely in 2003 to report that they are active enough to achieve all health benefits. Generally, the relationships among population groups that appeared in 1998 have remained stable in 2003.

Implications Despite the fact that the majority of Canadians are aware of the benefits of physical activity, relatively few very strongly believe that they are active enough to take advantage of these benefits. Given that daily physical activity is so clearly related to very strong perceptions that one is achieving the health benefits, information on the amount of physical activity needed for health benefits and how to be more active may help those who do not currently maintain a high level of activity on a daily basis. It would be useful to link information on how to be more active with information on: where to get further information on how to be more active; on where to find advice; and sources of information for local level opportunities.



2003 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI



2003 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

¹ Blair, S.N., Brodney, S. (1999). Effects of physical inactivity and obesity on morbidity and mortality: current evidence and research issues. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 31(11S), S646-62.

Beliefs about the benefits of physical activity

2003 Physical Activity Monitor

	% Canadians agreeing very strongly that physical activity helps to...		
	Prevent heart disease	Maintain the ability to do everyday tasks in older age	Reduce stress
<i>TOTAL, ADULTS (15+)</i>	48%	49%	46%
women	51	53	54
men	46	45	39
15–17	23	40	23
women	–	–	–
men	–	44	–
18–24	36	36	38
women	39	35	45
men	34	38	32
25–44	50	49	49
women	53	54	57
men	46	44	41
45–64	56	55	51
women	60	61	60
men	51	50	42
65+	46	49	44
women	47	54	50
men	46	42	36
<i>REGION</i>			
East	42	45	42
Newfoundland	44	39	43
Prince Edward Island	40	42	45
Nova Scotia	38	45	44
New Brunswick	47	49	39
Quebec	67	58	58
Ontario	43	45	42
West	41	47	44
Manitoba	45	44	43
Saskatchewan	46	45	44
Alberta	38	43	43
British Columbia	41	51	45
North	51	50	52
Yukon	51	52	55
Northwest Territories	43	43	44
Nunavut	–	–	–

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Beliefs about the benefits of physical activity (cont'd)

2003 Physical Activity Monitor

	% Canadians agreeing very strongly that physical activity helps to...		
	Prevent heart disease	Maintain the ability to do everyday tasks in older age	Reduce stress
<i>COMMUNITY SIZE</i>			
Over 1 million	47%	49%	47%
500,000–1 million	47	48	45
250,000–499,999	41	46	39
100,000–249,999	47	47	46
50,000–99,999	53	52	49
30,000–49,999	52	50	48
10,000–29,999	52	50	50
5,000–9,999	48	49	47
1,000–4,999	50	50	47
<1,000	55	49	51
<i>ACTIVITY LEVEL</i>			
High	48	50	47
Moderate	49	50	49
Lower	48	48	47
Lowest	48	45	41
<i>EDUCATION LEVEL</i>			
Less than secondary	44	46	41
Secondary	46	48	44
College	48	49	49
University	51	51	49
<i>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</i>			
< \$20,000	47	48	50
\$20,000–29,999	48	48	45
\$30,000–39,999	48	51	48
\$40,000–59,999	48	49	49
\$60,000–79,999	50	53	47
\$80,000–99,999	50	52	45
≥ \$100,000	49	48	44
<i>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</i>			
Full-time worker	49	50	47
Part-time worker	48	50	49
Unemployed	46	41	44
Homemaker	56	56	58
Student	37	39	35
Retired	50	50	46
<i>FAMILY COMPOSITION</i>			
Living with a partner	52	52	49
Widowed, divorced, separated	48	52	51
Never married	38	41	39

Beliefs about the adequacy of physical activity

2003 Physical Activity Monitor

	% Canadians agreeing very strongly that they <u>do</u> enough physical activity to...		
	Prevent heart disease	Maintain their ability to do everyday tasks as they age	Reduce stress
<i>TOTAL, ADULTS (15+)</i>	22%	28%	21%
women	21	28	21
men	24	28	22
15–17	31	41	21
women	–	–	–
men	40	53	–
18–24	18	28	18
women	14	24	15
men	23	32	21
25–44	20	24	20
women	18	24	19
men	21	24	20
45–64	22	27	22
women	22	29	23
men	22	25	21
65+	30	36	28
women	29	39	29
men	30	33	27
<i>REGION</i>			
East	21	28	21
Newfoundland	21	26	23
Prince Edward Island	24	28	23
Nova Scotia	19	28	20
New Brunswick	25	30	20
Quebec	25	29	23
Ontario	23	29	23
West	20	27	20
Manitoba	25	26	23
Saskatchewan	18	27	–
Alberta	16	23	17
British Columbia	21	29	21
North	30	43	33
Yukon	23	33	26
Northwest Territories	20	30	23
Nunavut	–	–	–

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Beliefs about the adequacy of physical activity (cont'd)

2003 Physical Activity Monitor

	% Canadians agreeing very strongly that they <u>do</u> enough physical activity to...		
	Prevent heart disease	Maintain their ability to do everyday tasks as they age	Reduce stress
<i>COMMUNITY SIZE</i>			
Over 1 million	21%	28%	20%
500,000–1 million	22	26	20
250,000–499,999	22	28	23
100,000–249,999	21	27	19
50,000–99,999	25	30	26
30,000–49,999	26	29	24
10,000–29,999	23	32	22
5,000–9,999	17	25	19
1,000–4,999	25	30	22
<1,000	25	31	26
<i>ACTIVITY LEVEL</i>			
High	33	39	30
Moderate	19	25	19
Lower	13	18	13
Lowest	11	17	13
<i>EDUCATION LEVEL</i>			
Less than secondary	27	35	25
Secondary	21	26	19
College	22	27	22
University	21	27	21
<i>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</i>			
< \$20,000	25	32	24
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\$30,000–39,999	21	25	20
\$40,000–59,999	19	26	21
\$60,000–79,999	20	24	18
\$80,000–99,999	21	28	19
≥ \$100,000	24	29	23
<i>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</i>			
Full-time worker	21	25	20
Part-time worker	21	29	19
Unemployed	17	23	17
Homemaker	20	31	21
Student	24	32	20
Retired	29	35	29
<i>FAMILY COMPOSITION</i>			
Living with a partner	21	27	21
Widowed, divorced, separated	26	32	25
Never married	23	30	20