

# Lifestyle Tips



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## Getting active as a new Canadian youth

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend 60 minutes of heart-pumping daily physical activity for all children and youth.

Getting into the regular habit of being active is especially important for young people, because we know that healthy behaviours established as a child are more likely to carry over into adulthood. While very few Canadian kids are active enough to meet the guidelines, research shows that levels are even lower among youth who have recently immigrated to Canada.

With Canada being a highly multicultural country, it's important to identify the groups at risk and develop culturally-appropriate physical activity interventions, especially when targeting specific immigrant and ethnic groups.





Here are some things to keep in mind in working to get new Canadian youth more active:

**There are many ways to move -**

Physical activity can be anything that requires someone to move their body and increase their heart rate. Therefore, engaging in activities that are part of the culture, such as a specific sport or a dance, can be a great way to increase daily physical activity.

**Find a buddy -** Encourage youth to engage in physical activities with others that they are comfortable with. If taking part in a class makes you feel uncomfortable or language is a barrier, consider an activity or a group with a family member or friend who speaks the same first language.

**Keep your ear to the ground -** Research groups and classes in the community. There are many culturally diverse community centers that offer new classes, sports, and activities that are suitable for various cultures and ethnic groups. Utilize community networks (i.e., word-of-mouth, community groups, newspapers, magazines, and notice boards in centers) to find classes and activities that are targeted at new Canadian youth.

**New can be fun -** One of the benefits of living in a new country is exposure to different activities that may not have been offered in one's country of origin.

Encourage youth to cultivate a new passion for novel physical activities. As long as they are doing something they enjoy, they'll be more likely to stick with it.

**Make it part of your day -** Increasing daily physical activity can be as easy as walking or riding your bike to school or work, walking to transit stops or running errands on foot. If the extremely hot and cold Canadian weather is a deterrent, make sure you dress appropriately - it makes all the difference in being comfortable while outside.

**Just sit less -** Decreasing sedentary activities such as watching television, using the computer, or playing videogames is just as important for your health as being active. Limit sedentary activities to less than two hours a day.

**Speak up -** Youth can be amazing advocates in their own communities. If you cannot find a group or class that is culturally suitable, start your own, or speak up to someone who can start one on your behalf! Bring physical activity to the members of your community by starting a dance or fitness class, a sport group, or working with a local organization to apply for a microgrant of up to \$500 from the ParticipACTION Teen Challenge sponsored by Coca-Cola Canada to enable teen-led physical activity programs in neighbourhoods across Canada. For more information, please visit

[www.participaction.com/teenchallenge](http://www.participaction.com/teenchallenge)

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