



Changing the Canadian Landscape...one step at a time

Results of the Physical Activity Monitor 2007

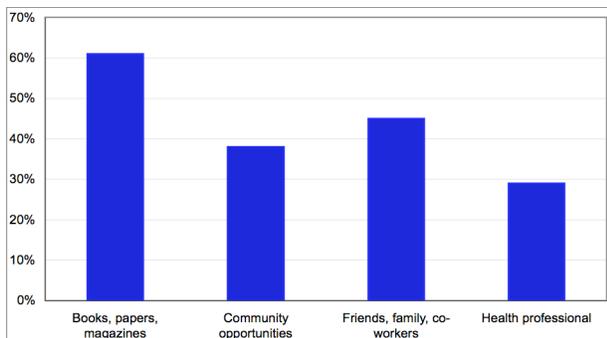
Attempts to become more active

The Transtheoretical Model, which describes intentional behavioural change, outlines a number of states through which an individual may progress in initiating a new activity. Early stages include pre-contemplation and contemplation, for which information about the value of physical activity, health and well being is key. This is followed by the action stage, a period characterized by the trial of the proposed behaviour. The 2007 Physical Activity Monitor examines the occurrence of trialling behaviours among Canadians. The likelihood of undertaking a number of behaviours in the past 12 months is illustrated in Figure 1.

Canadians indicate that they have sought out information and advice with a view to becoming more active by:

- * Reading articles specifically about physical activity in books, newspapers, or magazines (61%),
- * Seeking advice from friends, family, or co-workers (45%),
- * Seeking out information about opportunities in their community such as trails (38%), or
- * Seeking advice from a health professional (29%).

FIGURE 1: 'SEEKING INFORMATION' BEHAVIOURS, OVERALL



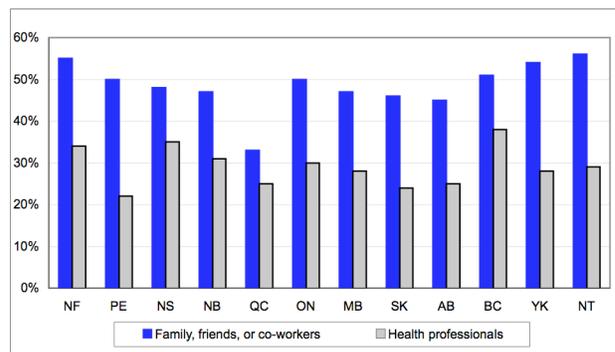
2007 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Further, the majority of Canadian adults indicate that they have initiated action towards increasing their physical activity by:

- * Making active choices in their usual routine, like walking to work or taking the stairs (70%), or
- * Observing a class or trying some kind of physical activity (54%).

Region Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories are more likely than the national average to seek information from family, friends, or co-workers, whereas residents of Quebec are less likely to report this. Residents of Prince Edward Island are less likely than the average, while residents of British Columbia are more likely, to seek advice from health care professionals. Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador are more likely than the average, while residents of Manitoba are less likely, to seek information about local opportunities in their communities. Those living in the Northwest Territories are more likely to say that they have taken action by incorporating active choices into their daily routines.

FIGURE 2: 'SEEKING INFORMATION' BEHAVIOURS, BY PROVINCE

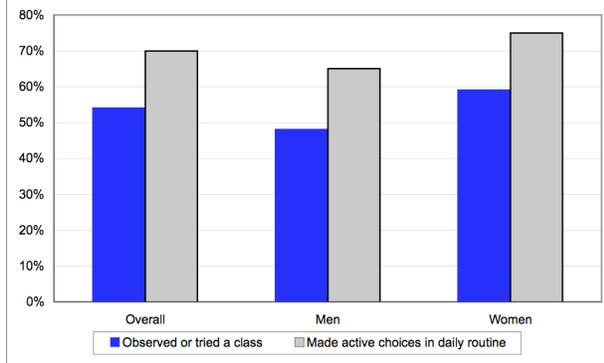


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Age and sex Women are more likely than men to report making active choices in their daily routine, including reading articles about physical activity, observing a class or trying some kind of physical activity, and seeking advice from family, friends, co-workers, or health care professionals, with a view to becoming more active.

FIGURE 3: 'INITIATING ACTION' BEHAVIOURS, BY SEX



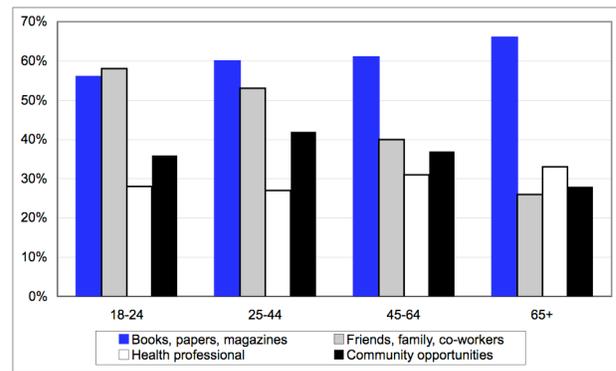
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The likelihood of initiating first step behaviours, including making active choices in their daily routine, observing a class or trying some kind of physical activity, seeking information about opportunities in one's community, and seeking advice from family, friends, or co-workers, generally decreases among successively older age groups.

When looking at age and gender combined, the differences described above generally persist, with some exceptions:

- * Older men and women (65 years and older) are equally likely to report making changes in their routines to incorporate active choices.
- * For those reading articles on physical activity, gender differences only appear among young adults (aged 18 to 24) and middle-aged adults (aged 45 to 64).
- * Gender differences for trying something new appear specifically among 25 to 64 year olds, but not among those younger and older.
- * Age-related differences in seeking community information hold true for women but not for men.

FIGURE 4: 'SEEKING INFORMATION' BEHAVIOURS, BY AGE

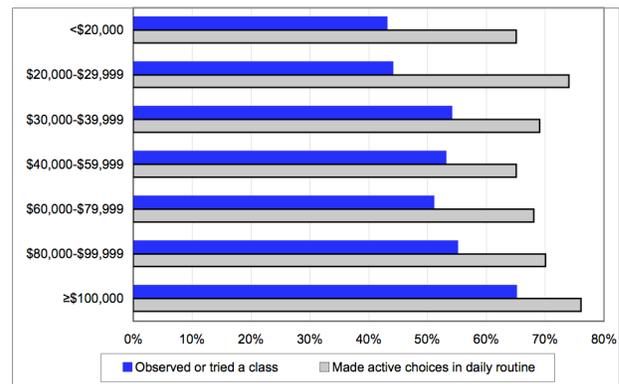


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Socio-economic and demographic characteristics

The likelihood of initiating these 'first step' behaviours (with the exception of seeking information from health care professionals) is generally higher among those with higher levels of education and household income.

FIGURE 5: 'INITIATING ACTION' BEHAVIOURS BY INCOME



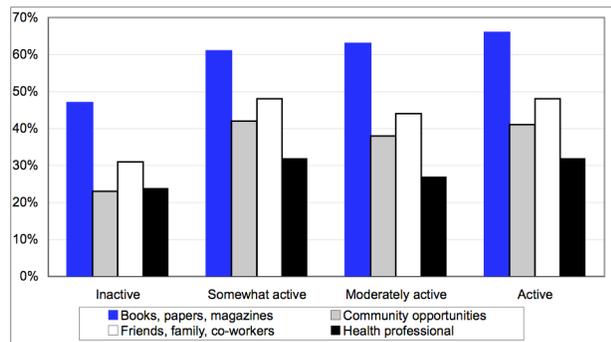
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Retired individuals are more likely than full-time workers and those who are unemployed to report having read articles on physical activity, yet retired adults are generally less likely to report seeking advice from friends, family, or co-workers, observing or trying a class or new activity, or incorporating active choices into their daily lives. Students and homemakers are generally most likely to report having incorporated active choices into their daily lives. Unemployed Canadians are more likely than full-time employees to report having sought information from a health care professional about increasing physical activity.

Canadians who have never been married are most likely to report observing or trying a class or new activity, incorporating active choices into their daily lives, and seeking advice from friends, family, or co-workers. Widowed, divorced, or separated Canadians are more likely than those who are married to seek information on physical activity from a health care professional. No other differences were observed.

Activity Level With the exception of seeking information from health care professionals, sedentary Canadians are less likely than active Canadians to report initiating all of the first step behaviours.

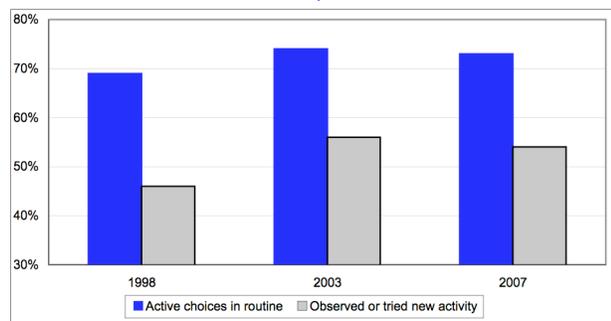
FIGURE 6: 'SEEKING INFORMATION' BEHAVIOURS BY ACTIVITY LEVEL



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Trends Compared to 1998 and 2003, Canadians are more likely in 2007 to report reading articles regarding physical activity, seeking advice from family, friends, or co-workers, observing a class or trying a new kind of physical activity, and making active choices in daily routines. The likelihood of seeking out information about community opportunities, however, decreased in 2003 and remains stable in 2007.

FIGURE 7: TRENDS IN 'INITIATING ACTION' BEHAVIOURS, 1998 TO 2007



1998, 2003 and 2007 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

Gender differences have persisted over all three time periods for all factors, with the exception of seeking information about community opportunities; while women were more likely to report seeking this information in 1998 and 2003, this is no longer the case. Relationships with age (lower likelihood of first step behaviours with increasing age) have persisted across the three survey periods for seeking advice from family, friends, or co-workers, and for observing or trying a class or new physical activity.

Annual household income, level of education, and marital and employment status associations have generally remained stable over time for most factors. There are, however, a few notable exceptions:

- * Annual household income associations with the likelihood of reading articles were not apparent in 1998 but appeared in 2003 and persist in 2007.
- * The education, household income, marital status, and employment status associations with seeking information about community opportunities have diminished or, in some cases, disappeared over time.

Summary

There are few differences among population groups in the likelihood of seeking advice from a health professional with a view to becoming more active, and minimal differences when it comes to seeking out information regarding opportunities in the community to be active. Other first step behaviours, however, are more likely to be taken by women, younger Canadians, and those with higher levels of attained education and annual household income. Sedentary Canadians are also less likely to report having taken any of these first steps toward a more active lifestyle.

Recommendations for Action

Intention has been found to be a significant determinant of behaviour¹ and leads to taking first steps toward trying something new. To promote more active lifestyles, consider:

- * Creating messaging that is targeted toward those who are less active or who are less likely to initiate first steps: women, older Canadians,

and those with lower income and education levels.

- * Educational campaigns aimed at increasing intention and first steps to becoming more active. These campaigns should identify barriers to adopting an active lifestyle and present strategies targeted to specific groups to overcome these (e.g., planning physical activities into lunch time at work for parents in busy families).^{1-2,3}
- * Distributing and promoting Canada's Physical Activity Guide, since both prompted and unprompted recall of the Guide has been shown to be associated with initiating first steps, as the support materials provide examples of trying to increase physical activity targeted to various audiences.⁴
- * Cueing behaviour that can be incorporated into everyday life⁵ such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator, getting off the bus at an earlier stop and walking the rest of the way, or parking further away from a building. This may be particularly relevant to those in lower socio-economic groups who are generally less likely to have tried incorporating active choices into their daily routine.
- * Advertising the availability of recreation facilities, programs, and local opportunities to nearby residents, particularly opportunities for both men and women, and for older residents.⁶
- * Offering introductory classes and open houses targeted to women, older adults, and other specific segments of the population so that they can try a variety of activities in an inviting environment, in order to find one that suits their interests.
- * Providing information on how to become more active and the availability of local opportunities. Municipal recreation professionals could be proactive in providing this information.

References

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