



SECTION E: BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION



Introduction

For the purpose of this report, barriers are perceived hindrances or impediments that prevent a given behaviour, in this case, being active. Two categories of barriers are explored in this section: perceived barriers related to the local environment and physical activity opportunities in the community, and barriers specific to the individual.

A previous section in this report explored the relationship of the physical environment and neighbourhood characteristics associated with physical activity and sport. In particular, it examined supportive design features such as high population densities, the availability of sidewalks, bike lanes, parks, and trails, and proximity to facilities and opportunities. In this section, we explore respondents' perceptions of the presence of potential barriers to participation in physical activity or sport as they relate to access to facilities including: convenience of hours and scheduling of programming, suitability of programming, getting to these facilities, and maintenance or safety issues. In addition to these types of physical environment and programming barriers, personal or individual-level barriers can reduce the likelihood that people will participate in physical activity or sport. The individual barriers to participating in physical activity or sport explored in this section include: the individual's feelings of lack of skill and abilities, lack of information, economic costs of participation, or the lack of social support.

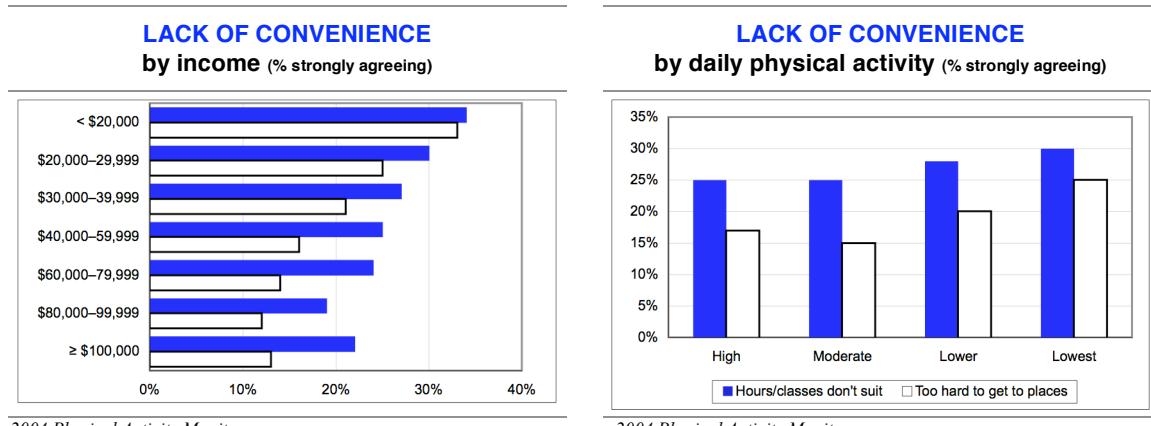
Indicators presented in this section explore the extent to which adults agree that their perception of potential barriers prevents or limits their participation in physical activity and sport, as measured by a series of scale questions. This section will also compare those who report that they participate in sport either as a player or in some other manner to the general population when exploring these topics. Levels of agreement with these indicators are also examined in relation to demographic information such as province, age, sex, household income, education, community size, marital status, physical activity level, and by type of sports participation. The definition of the type of sports is detailed in Section A of this report and includes a competition component. Topics in the first part of the section involve the respondent's perceptions of barriers as they relate to their own activity. Topics in the latter part of the section include parents' perceptions of how barriers relate to their children's activity patterns.

Adults' barriers to becoming more active—convenience

Nearly two in ten Canadian adults *strongly agree* that it is too hard for them to get to places where they can be physically active. Adults living in Manitoba are more likely whereas residents of Saskatchewan are less likely than Canadians overall to *strongly agree* with this statement. In addition, over one-quarter of Canadian adults *strongly agree* that the hours and class times offered by their local centres don't suit them. In this regard, residents of the Yukon are less likely than Canadians in general to *strongly agree*. A significantly lower proportion of sport participants (13%) *strongly agree* that it is too hard for them to get to places to be active compared to the general population. Moreover, slightly more sport participants (24%) *strongly agree* that the hours and class times offered by their local centres don't suit their needs.

Age and sex Overall, women are slightly more likely than men to *strongly agree* that it is too hard for them to get to places where they can be active and that the hours and class times provided by their local sport and recreation centres don't suit their schedules. Adults aged 65 and older are more likely than younger adults to *strongly agree* that it is too hard for them to get to places where they can be physically active. In general, older adults are more likely than their younger counterparts to *strongly agree* that the class times or hours of their local facility are not suitable. Among sport participants, women are also slightly more likely than men to *strongly agree* that it is too hard for them to get to places where they can be active. Similar to the general population, sport participants that are 65 years and older are more likely than their younger counterparts to *agree* (*somewhat or strongly agree*) that it is difficult for them to get to places where they can be active. However, the age and gender differences that appear for the general population pertaining to suitability of hours and class times do not appear among sport participants.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors The proportion of adults that *strongly agree* that it is too difficult for them to get to places where they can be physically active decreases with increasing education levels. Similarly, university graduates are the least likely to *strongly agree* that the hours and class times offered by their local centers don't suit their needs. This is similar among sport participants, as those with less than secondary school education are more likely to *agree* than those who are university educated report that it is difficult for them to get to places to be active and to *agree* that class times or hours of their local facility are not suitable.



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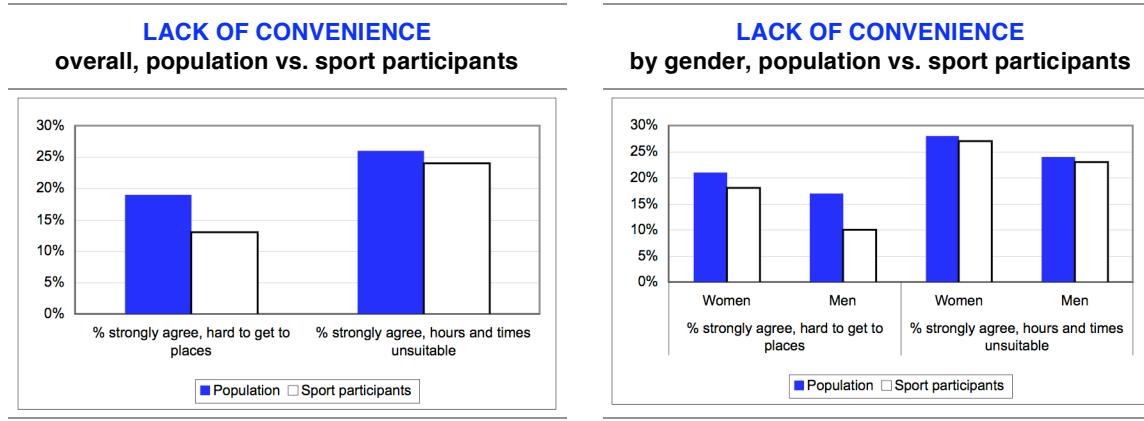
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Adults' barriers to becoming more active—convenience (cont'd)

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Adults who are retired, unemployed, or report lower levels of household income are more likely to *strongly agree* that it is too difficult to get to places to be active. Adults with lower incomes are also more likely than others to report that the hours and class times offered by their local centers don't suit them. Similar to the general population, sport participants in the lowest household income bracket are more likely to *agree* (*somewhat* or *strongly agree*) that class times or hours of their local facility are not suitable compared to those in the highest income brackets ($\geq \$80,000$). Reporting difficulty in getting places to be active decreases with increasing community size, in that adults living in the communities with less than 1,000 residents are more likely than those who reside in small communities (1,000–10,000 residents), who in turn are more likely than those in the largest communities (300,000+ residents), to *strongly agree* with this statement. This pattern is somewhat similar among sport participants, where those living in communities with 5,000 residents or fewer are more likely to *agree* (*somewhat* or *strongly agree*) that it is difficult to get to places to be active compared to those living in larger communities (75,000 residents or more).

Activity level Individuals reporting the lowest levels of daily physical activity are more likely than those reporting moderate or high levels of activity to *strongly agree* that it is too hard to get to places to be active and that hours and class times offered by local facilities are not suitable. This pattern is not evident among sport participants.

Type of sport participation Individuals who participate in a *non-competitive* yet *structured* sporting environment are more likely than those in a *competitive* and *structured* environment to *strongly agree* that the hours and class times offered are not suitable. Among sport participants who compete, those who do so at a provincial level are significantly more likely to *strongly agree* that the hours and class times are not suitable.



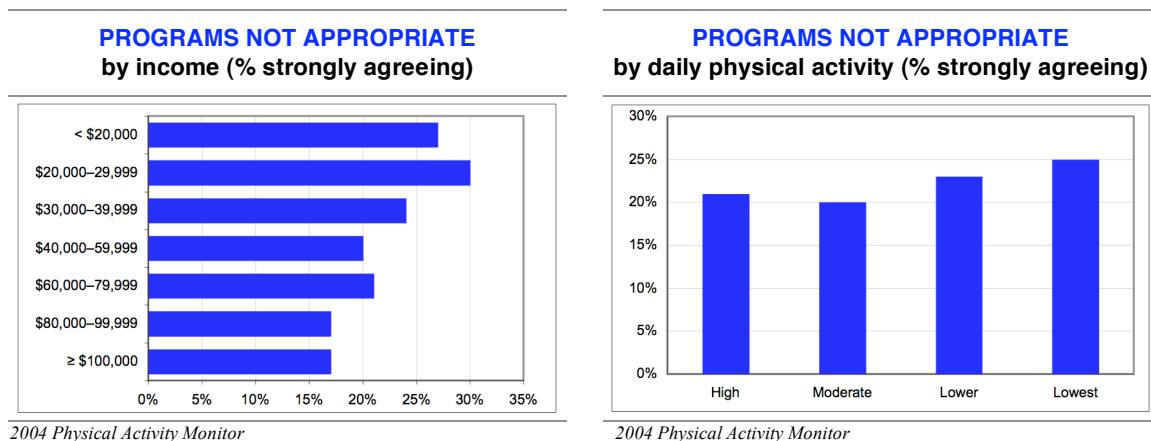
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Adults' barriers to becoming more active—programs available

Just over two in ten Canadian adults *strongly agree* that the physical activity programs and facilities that are available in their community are not the right type for them. There are no differences in the proportions by region. Similar proportions of sport participants (19%) *strongly agree* that these opportunities are not the right type.

Age and sex Women are slightly more likely than men to report that available programs and facilities are not the right type for them. Generally speaking, with increasing age, a greater proportion of adults *strongly agree* that the programs and facilities available in their community are not suitable. Women aged 65 and older are more likely than men of the same age to *strongly agree* with this statement. Although the gender differences that appear in the general population do not exist among sport participants, there are significant differences for age. Similar to the population as a whole, with increasing age, there is a general increase in the proportion who *strongly agree* that the physical activity programs and facilities available are not the right type for them.

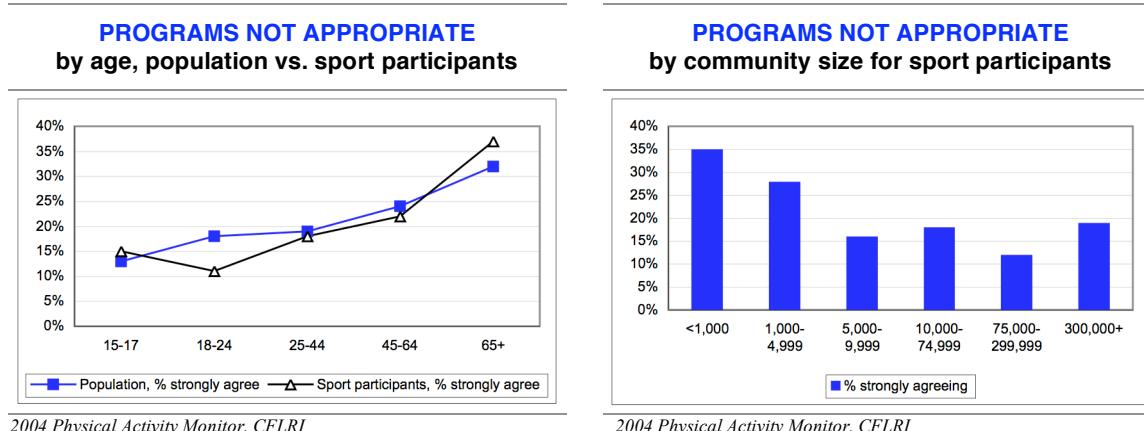
Socio-economic and -demographic factors Adults with a university level education are less likely than others to *strongly agree* that the lack of available programs and facilities are a barrier to physical activity in their community. Similarly, adults with lower income, those retired, unemployed (with the exception of homemakers), and those who are widowed, divorced, or separated are more likely to *strongly agree* that the programs and facilities are not appropriate for them compared to other adults. Among sport participants, the differences with education and income are not as clear. However, retired sport participants are more likely than those working on a full- and part-time basis, as well as students, to state that the physical activity programs and facilities available are not the right type for them. The lack of available physical activity programs and facilities appears to be more of a barrier in smaller communities than it is in larger ones, with more individuals in smaller communities *strongly agreeing* that the options that they have are not the right type for them. This pattern is similar among sport participants, where those residing in the smallest communities (<1,000 residents) are more likely than those living in larger communities ($\geq 75,000$ residents) to *strongly agree* that their opportunities are not the right type for them.



Adults' barriers to becoming more active—programs available (cont'd)

Activity level Individuals reporting the lowest levels of daily physical activity are more likely than those with a high or moderate level of daily physical activity to *strongly agree* that the programs and facilitates that are available are not the right type for them. However, this relationship is not significantly different among sport participants more specifically.

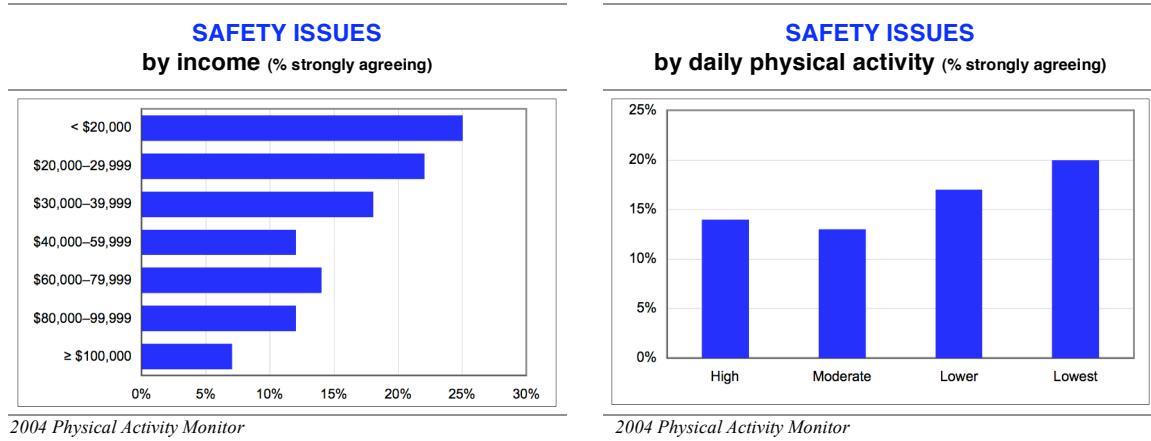
Type of sport participation There are no significant differences among sport participants' agreement that the opportunities available are the right type for them and type of sport participation (i.e. the amount of structure and competitiveness).



Adults' barriers to becoming more active—safety

Canadians were asked a series of questions to determine the impact that various safety concerns have on their willingness to walk and bike. Although the majority of adults *strongly disagree* (over 50%) that safety issues prevent them from walking and bicycling, a notable 15% *strongly agree* with the statement. About one in ten *strongly agree* that there is too much traffic to safely walk or bike (12%), that the sidewalks in their neighbourhood are poorly lit making walking and biking dangerous (12%), and that street crime poses a barrier to their being more physically active (8%). Residents of Nova Scotia are more likely than Canadians overall to *strongly agree* that general safety concerns, the volume of traffic, and poorly lit sidewalks and streets prevent them from being active. In comparison to the general population, even fewer sport participants (10%) *strongly agree* that safety issues prevent them from walking and bicycling. Compared to the general population, roughly the same proportion of sport participants *strongly agree* that: traffic is a barrier (10%); poorly lit sidewalks and streets make walking and biking dangerous (14%), and street crime is a barrier (7%).

Age and sex Women are more likely than men to *strongly agree* that general safety concerns, more specifically street crime and poorly lit sidewalks and streets, prevent them from becoming more active. Among sport participants, a similar pattern exists where women are more likely than men to *strongly agree* that general safety concerns prevent them from being more active and are more than twice as likely as men to strongly agree that poorly lit sidewalks and streets prevent them. Older adults (65 years and older) are more likely than younger individuals to *strongly agree* that general safety concerns, the volume of traffic, poor lighting, and street crime prevent them from walking or biking. Although not statistically significant, this seems pattern generally also appears for older sport participants.



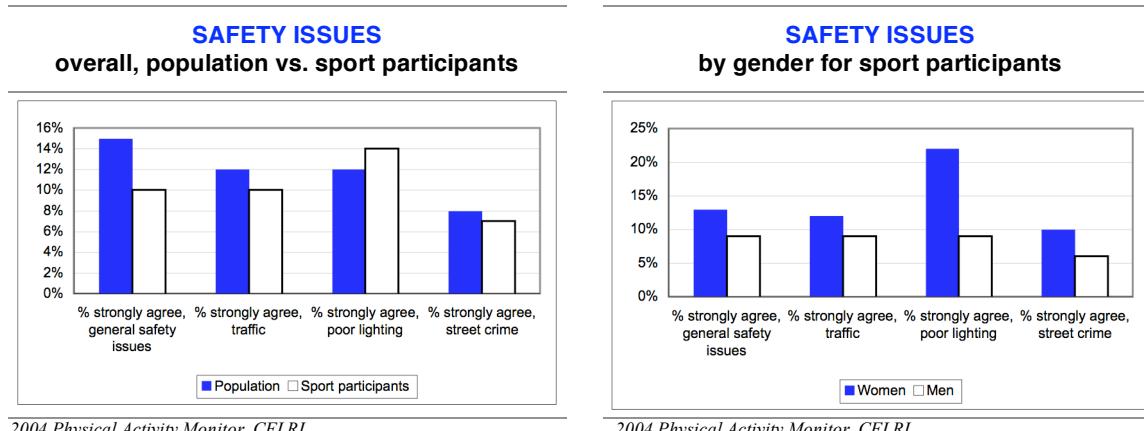
Adults barriers to becoming more active—safety (cont'd)

Socio-economic and -demographic factors The proportion of Canadians who *strongly agree* that general safety concerns prevent their activity decreases with increasing education and income levels. In particular, Canadians with less than a secondary school education are more likely than those with a post-secondary school education to *strongly agree* that traffic, street crime, and poor lighting prevent them from being active. Similarly among sport participants, adults with less than a secondary school education are more likely than those with a post-secondary school education to *strongly agree* that poor lighting acts as a barrier. Adults earning less than \$20,000 are more likely than those earning higher incomes to *strongly agree* that street crime, poor lighting, and traffic prevent them from being active. The relationship that appears at the general population with income does not appear for sport participants.

Retired individuals are more likely than those who are working (full- or part-time) or students to *strongly agree* that general safety concerns, street crime, poor lighting, and traffic keep them from being active. Widowed, divorced, or separated adults are more likely than others to *strongly agree* that general safety issues, poor lighting, and too much traffic prevent them from being active. These relationships do not appear among sport participants.

Activity level Adults with the lowest activity levels are more likely than those who are highly active to *strongly agree* that general safety concerns, street crime, and traffic keep them from being active. The relationship with activity level that is seen among adults overall does not hold true for sport participants.

Type of sport participation There is no relationship between perceptions of safety issues as a barrier and type of sport participation, such as the amount of structure, level of competition, and participation.

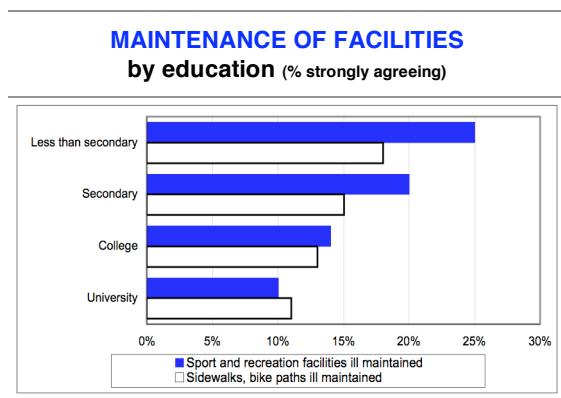


Adults' barriers to becoming more active—maintenance of facilities

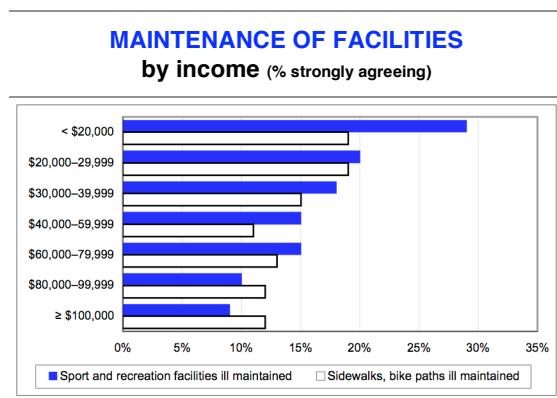
A total of 17% of Canadians *strongly agree* that the sport and recreation facilities available in their community are not well-maintained and 14% *strongly agree* that badly maintained sidewalks and bike lanes in their area keep them from walking and biking. Residents of Nova Scotia are more likely than Canadians overall to *strongly agree* that maintenance issues in both of these domains prevent them from being more active. Compared to the general population, significantly fewer sport participants *strongly agree* that the facilities for sport and recreation are not well maintained in their community. There are no statistical differences, however, in the proportion adults in the general population compared to those who participate in sport with regarding their perceptions of the maintenance of sidewalks and bicycle lanes in their community. There are no regional differences with respect to maintenance of facilities, sidewalks or bicycle lanes.

Age and sex Women are more likely than men to *strongly agree* that badly maintained sidewalks prevent them from becoming more active. This is true for the general population and for sport participants. Older adults (65+) are more likely than younger adults to *strongly agree* that the sport and recreation facilities in their community are poorly maintained, and are more likely than 25–44 year olds to *strongly agree* that poorly maintained sidewalks and bike lanes prevent them from being active. These age-related differences are similar among sport participants, however, are not statistically significant.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Adults with less than secondary school education are more likely than those with post-secondary school education to *strongly agree* that the poor maintenance of facilities, sidewalks, or bike lanes poses a barrier to their activity. In a similar fashion, sport participants with less than secondary school education are more likely to *agree* (*somewhat* or *strongly agree*) that poor maintenance poses a barrier compared to those with higher levels of education. In the general population, percentage of Canadians reporting that sport and recreation facilities in the community are not well-maintained decreases as income increases. These differences are not evident among sport participants, however, this is probably due to low sample size. Similarly in the general population, adults with household incomes of less than \$30,000 are more likely to *strongly agree* that sidewalks and bike lanes are badly maintained. Again, this is not evident among sport participants.



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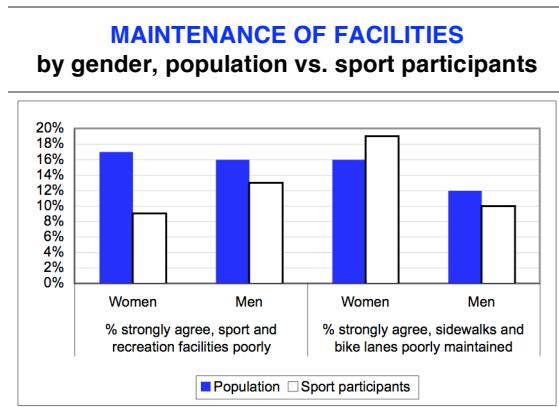
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Adults' barriers to becoming more active—maintenance of facilities (cont'd)

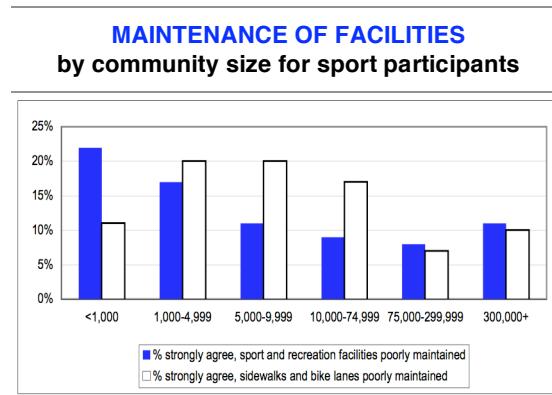
Socio-economic and -demographic factors (cont'd) Unemployed adults are more likely than those who work (full-time or part-time) or are students to say that facilities and walking or bicycling amenities are poorly maintained. Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated are more likely than those who have never been married to *strongly agree* that poor maintenance of facilities and walking or bicycling amenities prevents them from being active. The relationships for employment and marital status that appears for the population overall does not appear for sport participants more specifically. In the general population, residents of the smallest communities are more likely than larger ones to *strongly agree* that poor maintenance poses a barrier. Sport participants living in the smallest communities (<1,000 residents) are also more likely than those in larger ones ($\geq 10,000$ residents) to *strongly agree* that sport and recreation facilities are poorly maintained in their community.

Activity level Canadians with the lowest activity levels are more likely to *strongly agree* that the maintenance of sport and recreation facilities in their area is poor compared to those with the highest levels of activity. Among sport participants, there are no differences in the proportions *strongly agreeing* that poor maintenance of facilities, sidewalks and bicycle lanes are barrier with activity level.

Type of sport participation There are no differences among sport participants' perceptions of maintenance of facilities as a barrier and type of sport participation (i.e. the amount of structure, competitiveness, and participation).



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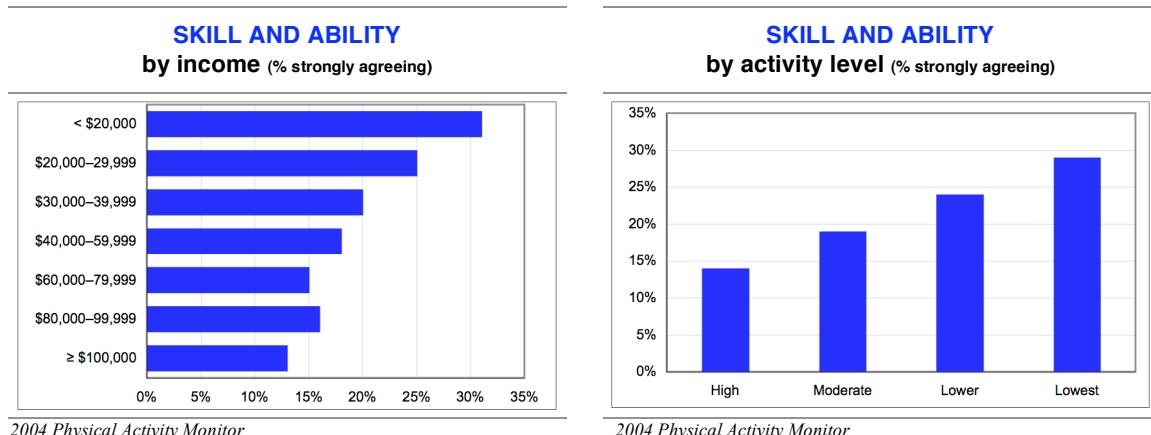
Adults' barriers to becoming more active—skill and ability

One in five Canadians (20%) *strongly agrees* that they are not good at doing sports and physical activities. Sport participants are significantly less likely (10%) than those in the general population to *strongly agree* that lack of skill is a barrier to their activity. This varies little by region or province of residence for the population overall and among sport participants more specifically.

Age and sex Women are more likely than men to report not being good at sports and physical activities. This relationship is strongest among older adults (aged 65 years or more). Among sport participants overall, the gender gap disappears. In the general population, adults aged 65 years and older are more likely than 45–64 year olds, who in turn are more likely than adults aged 45 years and younger, to *strongly agree* that lack of skill is a barrier to their activity level.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors The percentage of Canadians who *strongly agree* that they are not good at doing sports and physical activities decreases as income and education levels increase. Among sport participants, adults with the less than secondary school education are more likely than those with higher levels of education to *strongly agree* that lack of skill and ability prevents them from becoming more active. However, the relationship with income observed for adults overall does not exist for sport participants.

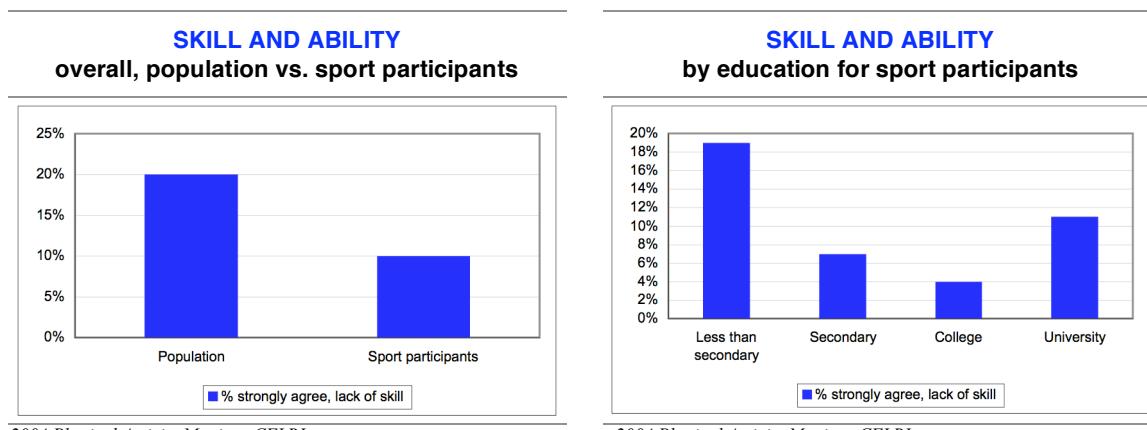
Adults who are unemployed, retired, or are homemakers are more likely than those who work (full-time or part-time) and those who are students to *strongly agree* that lack of skill or ability is a barrier to their activity level. Among sport participants, adults who are retired are more likely than those who work on a full-time basis to *strongly agree* with this statement. Moreover, adults who are widowed, divorced or separated are more likely than those who are married or living in a common-law relationship, who in turn are more likely than those who never have been married to *strongly agree* that the lack of skill poses a barrier to their activity level. This pattern with marital status does not appear for sport participants.



Adults' barriers to becoming more active—skill and ability (cont'd)

Activity level As daily physical activity levels increase, the proportion of Canadians that *strongly agree* that they are not good at doing physical activities and sports decreases, in that 14% of those who report the highest levels of activity *strongly agree*, compared to 29% of those in the lowest activity level category. Differences in activity level and perceptions of lack of skill and ability do not appear among sport participants.

Type of sport participation There are no differences in the prevalence *strongly agreeing* that lack of skill poses a barrier to activity by the amount of structure, competitiveness, and participation involvement in sport.



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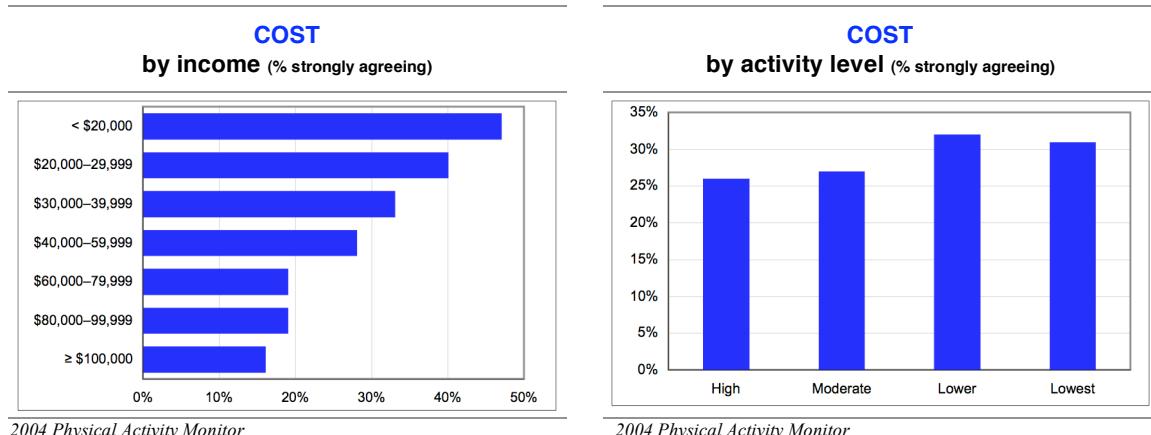
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Adults' barriers to becoming more active—cost

Over one-quarter (28%) of Canadian adults *strongly agree* that the dollar costs of participating in physical activities and sports are too high for them. This figure is true for the population at large and for sport participants more specifically. In the general population, those living in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories are less likely than Canadians in general to report that engaging in physical activity and sport is too costly for them. Among sport participants, regional differences do not appear.

Age and sex Overall, women are more likely than men to *strongly agree* that the dollar costs of participating in physical activities are too high for them. This is true for the population at large and among sport participants more specifically. Younger adults (18–24) and older adults (65+) are more likely than middle-aged adults (45–64) to *strongly agree* that the cost of participating in physical activity is too high. Among sport participants, this relationship is only statistically significant between younger adults and middle-aged adults. In the general population, the differences in reporting cost as a barrier between men and women are apparent in all age groups over 25 years of age; however, the differences are greatest among adults older than 65 years, where 43% of women *strongly agree* that cost is a barrier, compared to 23% of men.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors The lower their income level, the more likely it is that adults will report that engaging in physical activity and sport is too expensive for them. For example, 47% of adults living in households with incomes of less than \$20,000 *strongly agree* with this statement, compared to 16% of those with incomes greater than \$100,000. A similar pattern emerges for education, where university educated adults are less likely to report costs as a barrier than are those with less education. Among sport participants, adults with less than secondary school education are generally more likely to *strongly agree* that cost is a barrier compared to those with a university education. As for income, sport participants in the lowest household income category (<\$20,000 per year) are more likely to cite cost as a barrier compared to those in the highest income brackets (i.e. $\geq \$60,000$ per year).



Adults' barriers to becoming more active—cost (cont'd)

Socio-economic and -demographic factors (cont'd) Part-time workers, retired adults, homemakers, and unemployed individuals are more likely to report cost as a barrier to their activity, compared to those who work on a full-time basis. No significant differences were found among sport participants.

Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated are more likely than others to *strongly agree* that cost prevents them from participating in physical activity and sport. However, among sport participants, adults who have never been married are more likely than those who are married or living in a common-law relationship to *strongly agree* that cost is a barrier.

Activity level In general, Canadians who are less active are less likely than those with moderate or high levels of physical activity to *strongly agree* that the dollar costs of participating in physical activity and sport are too high for them. Although suggestive, this pattern is not statistically significant among sport participants.

Type of sport participation There are no differences among those *strongly agreeing* that cost is a barrier and the amount of structure, competitiveness, and participation involvement in sport.



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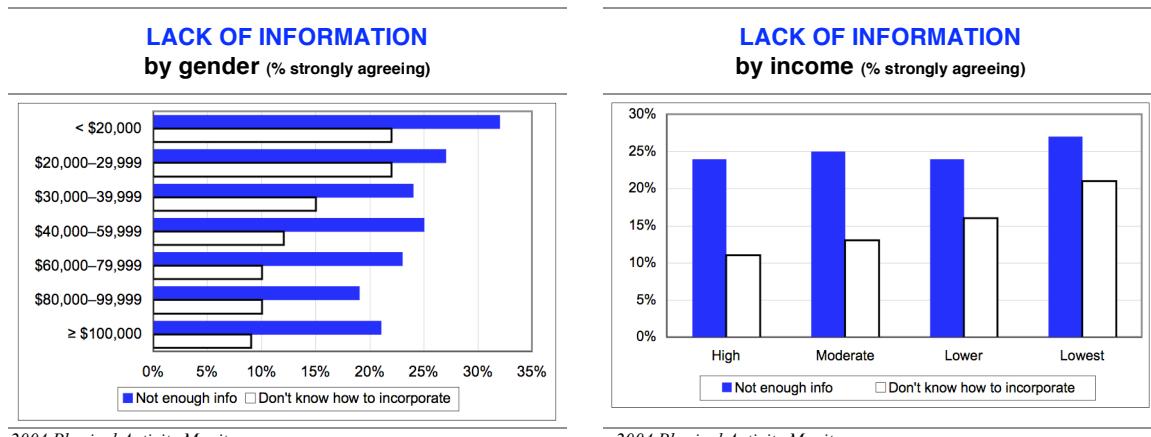
Adults' barriers to becoming more active—information

One-quarter of Canadian adults *strongly agree* that there is not enough information provided about the available opportunities for physical activity and sport in their community, and 14% of adults *strongly agree* that they don't know how to go about building more physical activity into their lifestyle. When compared to Canadians overall, residents of the Northwest Territories are less likely to *strongly agree* that there is not enough information about the availability of opportunities for physical activity locally.

Although similar proportions of sport participants (26%) *strongly agree* that there is not enough information on opportunities in the community compared to the population as a whole, fewer sport participants (9%) strongly agree that lack of awareness on how to build activity into daily life prevents them from being active.

Age and sex Overall, women are more likely than men to *strongly agree* that there is not enough information provided about local opportunities for physical activity and sport, and that they lack awareness on how to go about building physical activity into their lifestyle. These gender differences are not apparent for sport participants. Older adults (65+) are more likely than any other age group to *strongly agree* that there is not enough information about opportunities for activity and that they lack awareness on how to build activity into their daily life. This relationship with age that appears for the population overall does not appear among sport participants.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors As income levels decrease, larger percentages of Canadians *strongly agree* that there is not enough information provided about local physical activity and sport opportunities and that they lack awareness on how to go about building more physical activity into their lifestyle. Sport participants within the lowest income category are more likely than those with higher income to strongly agree that there is not enough information on local opportunities. University educated individuals are less likely than those having lower levels of education to *strongly agree* that there is not enough information available on local opportunities. Similarly, as education levels increase, Canadians are also less likely to *strongly agree* that they don't know how to incorporate more activity into their everyday life. These relationships are not evident among sport participants.



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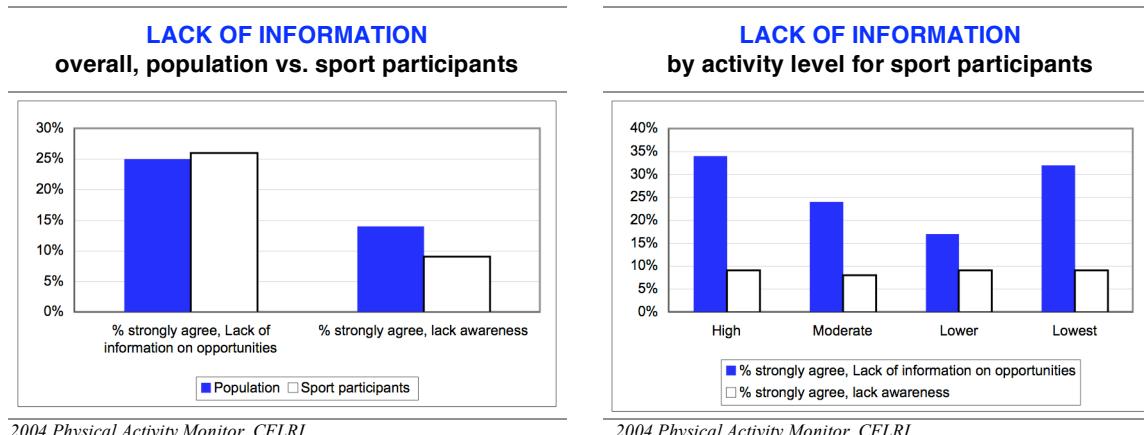
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Adults barriers to becoming more active—information (cont'd)

Socio-economic and -demographic factors (cont'd) Homemakers or retired adults are more likely than students to *strongly agree* that there is not enough information on local opportunities and, similarly, homemakers and retired or unemployed individuals are more likely than full-time workers and students to *strongly agree* that they lack awareness on how to build activity into their lives. These differences that exist for the population overall do not appear for sport participants.

Activity level Canadians with the low or lowest activity levels are more likely than those who are highly active to *strongly agree* that they are unaware of ways to incorporate more physical activity into their lifestyle. Among sport participants, adults who are highly active are more likely than those who are low or moderately active to *strongly agree* that there is not enough information on local opportunities to be active.

Type of sport participation There is no relationship in the proportion of adults that *strongly agree* that lack of information is a barrier and the amount of structure, competitiveness, and participation in sport.

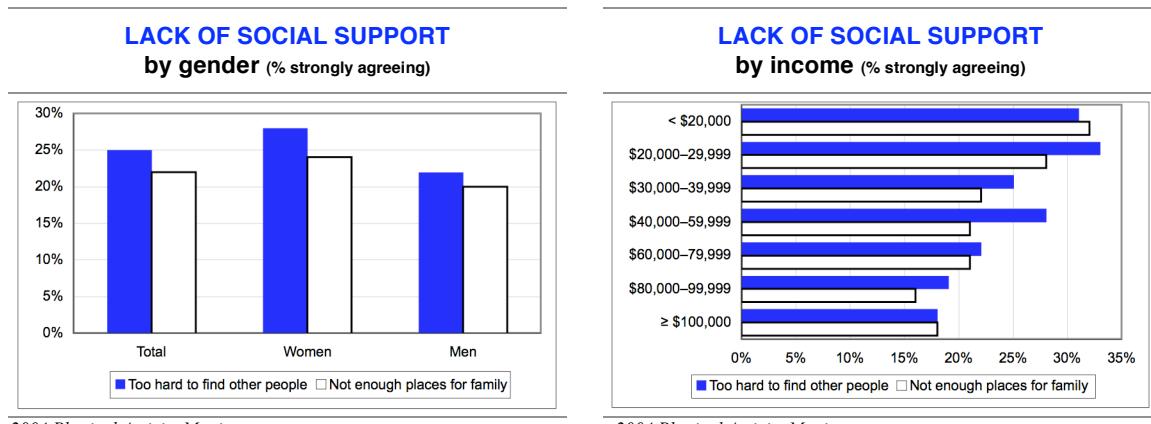


Adults' barriers to becoming more active—social support

One-quarter of adults *strongly agree* that it is too hard to find other people to be active with, 22% that it is too hard to find family-oriented activity programs and classes, and 21% that it is too difficult to find the proper kind of coaching or instruction. When compared to Canadians more generally, individuals living in the Yukon are less likely to say that a lack of other people to be active with prevents them from being more active. Residents of Nova Scotia are more likely while those in Alberta are less likely than Canadians overall to *strongly agree* that it is difficult to find family-oriented activity programs and classes. Adults residing in the Northwest Territories are more likely to *strongly agree* that it is too difficult to find the right kind of coaching or instruction locally. Although an equivalent proportion of sport participants (21%) strongly agree that it is hard to find other people to be active with, slightly fewer sport participants *strongly agree* that it is difficult to find family-oriented programming (18%) and proper coaching or instruction (17%).

Age and sex Overall, women are more likely than men to *strongly agree* that it is too difficult to find other people to be active with and that there aren't enough places where they can be active and bring their children along. These gender differences do not appear for sport participants. In the general population, older adults (aged 65 years and older) are more likely than younger adults to report difficulty in finding other people to be active with, more family-oriented programming and classes, and the proper kind of coaching or instruction in their community. Although not significantly different, a similar age-related pattern appears among sport participants.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Canadians with low incomes are more likely to report that it is too difficult for them to find others to be active with, family-oriented programming, and the proper kind of coaching or instruction, compared to adults with higher levels of income. The relationship with income is not as clear among sport participants. This may be partly due to the smaller sample of sport participants relative to the population overall. Generally speaking, adults with higher levels of education are less likely to report all of these types of social barriers compared to adults with less education. Sport participants with less than secondary school education are more likely than those with post-secondary school education that the lack of family-oriented programming is a barrier to activity.



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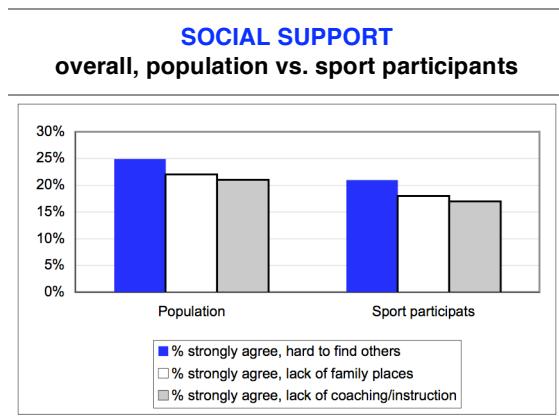
Adults' barriers to becoming more active—social support (cont'd)

Socio-economic and -demographic factors (cont'd) Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated are more likely than those who have never been married to report that difficulty finding others to be active with, lack of family-oriented programming, and lack of suitable coaching or instruction are barriers to their own activity levels. The pattern that appears for the population overall for marital status and lack of proper coaching or instruction as a barrier to activity also appears among sport participants.

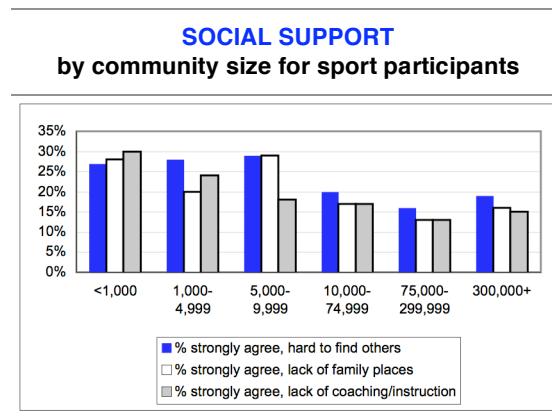
Residents of smaller communities are more likely to report that it is difficult to find family-oriented programming and appropriate coaching or instruction, compared to residents of larger communities. Among sport participants, residents of the smallest communities (<1,000 citizens) are more likely than communities with 10,000 citizens or more to *strongly agree* that these are barriers.

Activity level Canadians who are highly active are less likely than those in the lowest category of activity to report difficulty finding others with whom to be active. This pattern is also suggestive, but not statistically significant among sport participants.

Type of sport participation There is no statistical difference among adults who *strongly agree* with these three types of social barriers and the amount of structure, competitiveness, and participation in sport.



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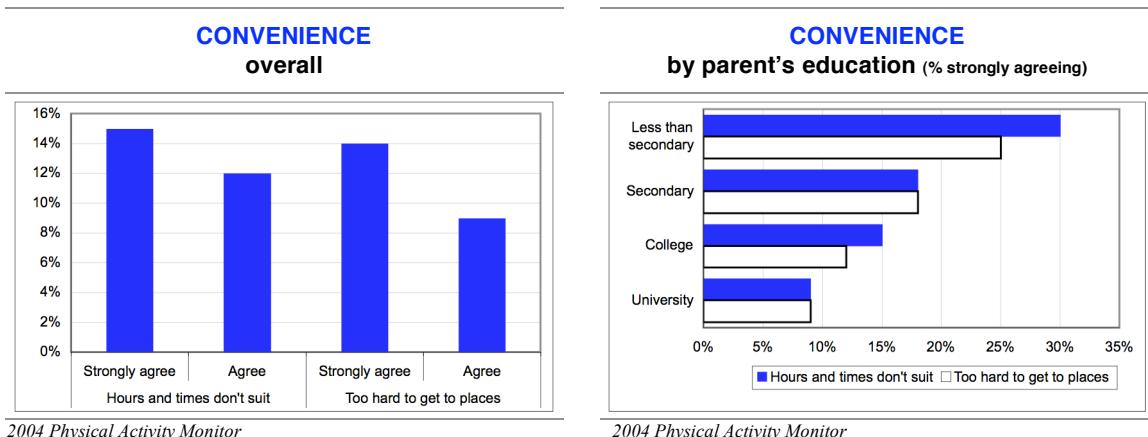
Children's barriers to becoming more active—convenience

Over one in five parents report difficulty getting their children to places where they can be active (14% of parents *strongly agree* that this is the case, 9% *somewhat agree*). Similarly, 15% of parents *strongly agree* and 12% *somewhat agree* that the hours and class times offered by their local sport and recreation centres do not suit their child's needs. There are no significant regional variations in these rates.

Compared to parents overall, those who are sport participants are less likely to report that it is too hard to get their children to places where they can be active (13% *somewhat or strongly agree*), yet are just as likely to *agree* that the hours and class times offered locally are not suitable (23% *somewhat or strongly agree*).

Child's age and sex Reporting transportation or scheduling difficulties does not differ between parents of older and younger children or of girls and boys.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Parents with lower levels of education and those with household incomes less than \$20,000 are more likely than others to cite that difficulty in getting their children to places where they can be active, and unsuitable hours and class times at their local sport and recreation centres, prevent their child from engaging in physical activity and sport. Canadian parents residing in smaller communities are more likely than those living in larger communities to *strongly agree* that it is difficult to get their children to places where they can be active, and that the hours and class times offered by their local sport and recreation centres don't suit their child's needs.



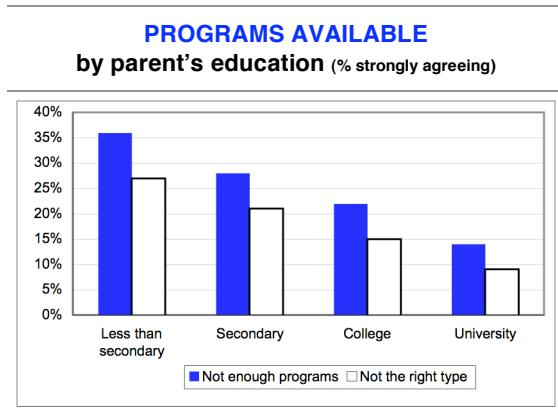
Children's barriers to becoming more active—programs available

When asked whether a lack of activity programs, services, or facilities available for children in their community acted as a barrier preventing their children from becoming more active, over one-fifth of parents *strongly agree* that this is the case. In addition, 15% of parents *strongly agree* that the programs and facilities available are not the right type or are not suitable for their child. Like parents generally, 13% of parents who participate in sport *strongly agree* that the lack of programs, services or facilities available for children in their community posed as barrier to their child's activity. In addition, 11% of these parents *strongly agree* that the programs and facilities that are available are not suitable for their child.

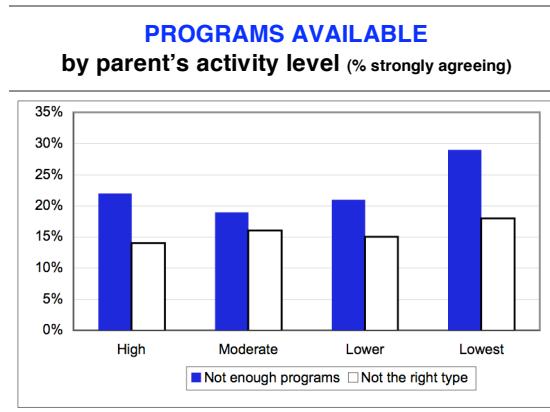
Child's age and sex There are no differences in the ratings of program availability and suitability between parents of older and younger children and parents of girls and boys.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Parents with lower levels of education are more likely than those with higher levels of education to *strongly agree* that a lack of availability and suitability of activity programs, services, or facilities in their community poses barriers to their child's activity. Parents residing in households earning lower incomes are more likely to *strongly agree* that a lack of local programs, services, or facilities inhibits their children from becoming more active. Parents living in communities with less than 10,000 residents are more likely than those living in larger communities to report that there are not enough activity programs, services, or facilities available locally for their children and that those available are not the right type or are not suitable for their child. These relationships are not detected for parents who are sport participants.

Parent's activity level Parents who are the least active are more likely than those with moderate activity levels to report that they *strongly agree* that a lack of activity programs, services, or facilities available in their community prevents their child from being active.



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Children's barriers to becoming more active—safety

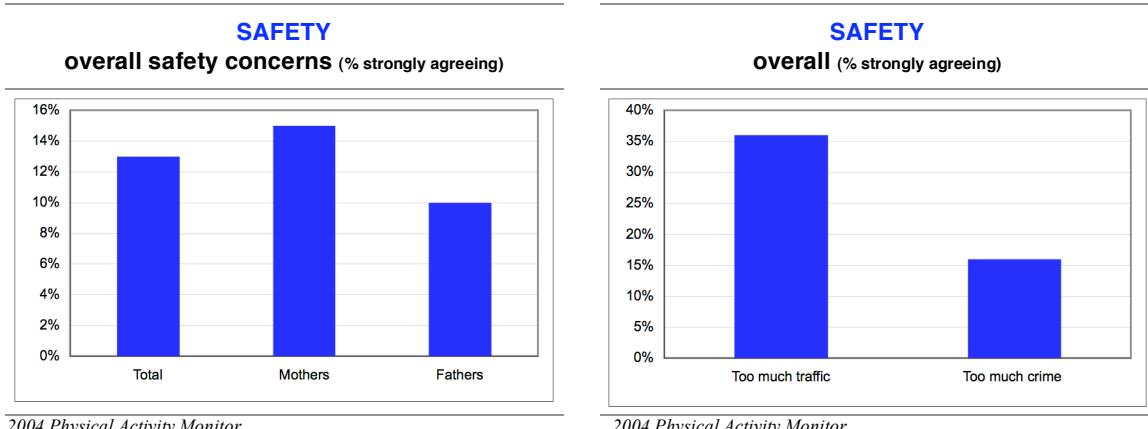
Parents were asked if their safety concerns prevented their children from becoming more active. Just over one in ten respondents say that their child does not walk or bicycle in their neighbourhood because they are concerned generally about the child's safety. For Canadian parents, the issue of too much traffic in their neighbourhood seems to be the number one safety concern, with 36% parents *strongly agreeing* that it is a major barrier. Equal proportions of parents *strongly agree* that badly maintained sidewalks and bike lanes (24%) and poorly lit sidewalks and streets in their neighbourhood (24%) keep their children from being more active. Slightly less than one in five parents (16%) *strongly agrees* that there is too much crime on the streets for their child to safely walk or bike.

Similarly, just over one in ten (12%) of parents who participate in sport *agree (somewhat or strongly agree)* that general concerns about their child's safety prevent them from walking or bicycling in the neighbourhood. Interestingly, compared to parents in the general population, considerably fewer sport participating parents *agree* that traffic concerns are a barrier to their child's activity (19% *somewhat or strongly agree*).

Children's age and sex There are no differences in concerns about their children's safety between parents of older and younger children or between parents of girls and boys.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Parents with household incomes lower than \$20,000 per year are more likely than those earning at least \$40,000 per year to *strongly agree* that their child does not walk or bike because parents are concerned about safety. Although there are significant differences among the proportions indicating concern about traffic by community size, the pattern is not clear.

Parent's activity level Reported concern about children's safety does not differ by the activity level of the parent.



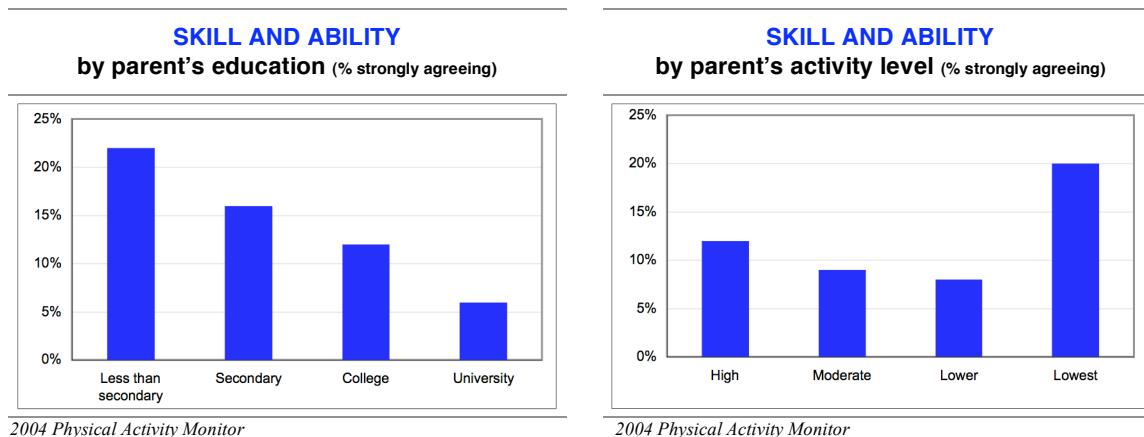
Children's barriers to becoming more active—skill and ability

Canadian parents were asked about the degree to which their child's skills and abilities prevent their child from participating in physical activity and sport. Although the majority (69%) of parents *strongly disagree* that this is the case, a notable 18% *agree* with the statement (12% of parents *strongly agree*, 6% *somewhat agree*) Parents who were sport participants were less likely to *agree* (9% *strongly or somewhat agree*) that their child's skills and abilities prevent their child from being active. There do not appear to be differences in these rates by province or territory of residence.

Children's age and sex There are no differences in the reporting of skill and ability as a potential barrier to activity between parents of older and younger children or between parents of girls and boys.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Parents with less than secondary school education are more likely than those having a university level education to *strongly agree* that their child's skills and abilities prevent them from participating in physical activity and sport. Similarly, parents from households reporting incomes less than \$30,000 a year are more likely than those earning more to *strongly agree* that their child's skills and abilities pose a barrier to their participation in physical activity and sport.

Parent's activity level Generally speaking, parents with the lowest activity levels are more likely to *strongly agree* that their child's lack of skill and ability affects their participation compared to more active parents.



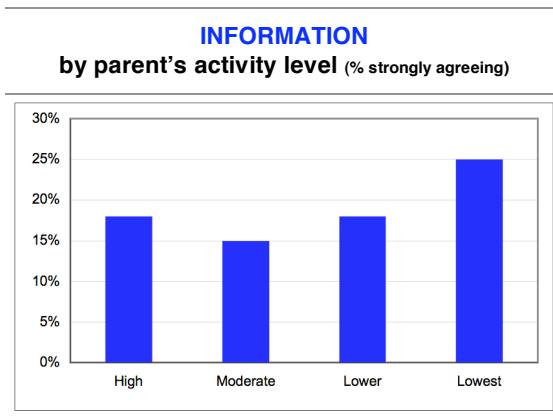
Children's barriers to becoming more active—information

Nearly one-fifth of parents *strongly agree* that there is not enough information available regarding local physical activity and sport opportunities for their child. In contrast, 13% of parents who participate in sport *strongly agree* with this statement, however, these differences are not significantly different. There do not appear to be any regional or provincial differences in ratings of the availability of this type of information.

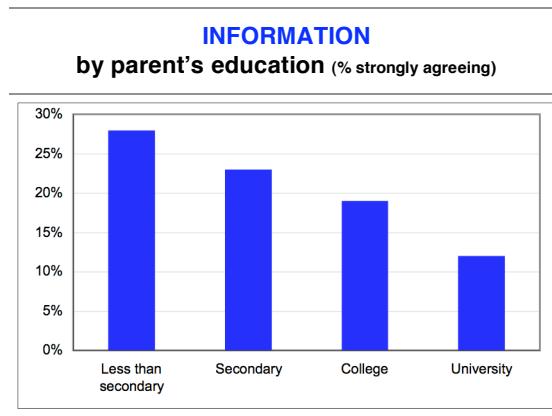
Children's age and sex There are no differences in the reported availability of information on local opportunities between parents of older and younger children or between parents of girls and boys.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Parents with less than some secondary school education are more likely than parents with a university education to *strongly agree* that a lack of information prevents their child from being more physically active. Parents from households with incomes of less than \$20,000 per year are also more likely than those in the highest income bracket (more than \$100,000 per year) to *strongly agree* that there is not enough information provided regarding the availability of local physical activity and sport opportunities for their child. Parents living in communities with a population of fewer than 10,000 citizens are more likely to *strongly agree* that there is not enough information provided about what is available locally for their children, compared to parents residing in larger communities.

Parent's activity level Parents that are least active are more likely than those who are moderately active to cite that the lack of this type of information poses a barrier to their child's activity participation.



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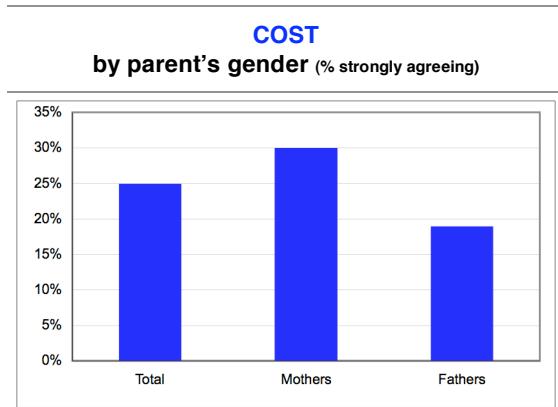
Children's barriers to becoming more active—cost

One-quarter of Canadian parents *strongly agree* and a further 12% *somewhat agree* that the dollar costs of participating in physical activity and sport pose a barrier to their child's participation. Similar proportions (35% *agree*, 23% of these *strongly agree*) of parents who participate in sport report that cost is a barrier to their child's activity level. There are no significant differences in these prevalence rates for provinces and territories compared to the Canadian rates more generally.

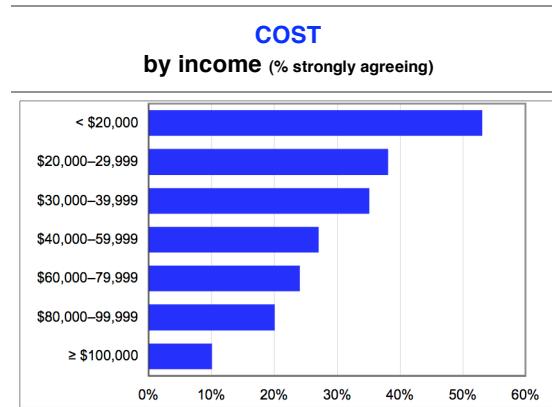
Age and sex Although no differences are apparent for cost as a barrier among children of different age groups or for boys and girls, there are differences according to the parent's gender. Mothers are more likely than fathers to *strongly agree* that the dollar costs of children participating in physical activity and sport are too high. These gender differences are particularly evident among younger parents, namely those aged 25 to 44. Interestingly, for parents who participate in sport, there is a notable distinction between parents of girls and boys who rate cost as an issue; roughly two in five parents (43%) of boys *agree* that cost is an issue compared to 26% of parents of girls.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Parents with less than some secondary school education are more likely than parents with a university degree to *strongly agree* that the cost of physical activity and sport poses a barrier for their child's participation in physical activity and sport. As income levels increase, fewer parents are likely to *strongly agree* that the high cost of certain physical activities and sports prevents their children from being more physically active. In fact, parents residing in households with incomes less than \$20,000 are over five times more likely than those in the highest income bracket (more than \$100,000) to *strongly agree* that cost is a barrier to their child's participation in physical activity and sport. Parents who have never been married are more likely than those who are, or have been, married, to *strongly agree* that the dollar cost prevents their child from participating.

Parent's activity level The cost of children's participation is just as likely to be a concern among parents with lower activity levels as it is among those with higher activity levels.



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Children's barriers to becoming more active—social support

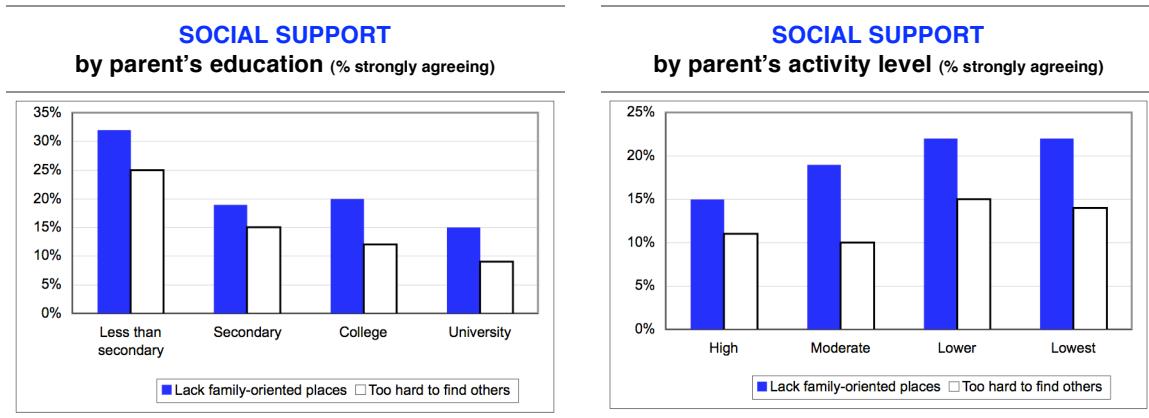
Parents were asked if the lack of various types of social support prevented their children from participating in physical activity and sport. Nearly two in ten parents *strongly agree* and 11% *somewhat agree* that there aren't enough places where their child can be active with other family members. In addition, 21% *agree* (13% *strongly agree* and 8% *somewhat agree*) that it is too difficult for their child to find other children with whom to be active. Moreover, 15% of parents *strongly agree* and 10% *somewhat agree* that it is too hard to find the proper type of coaching or instruction for their child. There do not appear to be any significant variations in these forms of social support by province or territory of residence.

Generally speaking, there are no statistically significant differences between parents in the general population and those who participate in sport when reporting these three types of social support. For example, 27% of sport participating parents *agree* there aren't enough places to be active as a family; 17% *agree* that it is difficult to find other children to be active with; and 24% *agree* that it is difficult to find proper coaching or instruction for their child.

Child's age and sex Parents of older and younger children and parents of girls and boys are equally likely to cite the lack of these types of social supports as potential barriers.

Socio-economic and -demographic factors Generally speaking, individuals with less than a secondary school education are more likely than those with higher levels of education to *strongly agree* that all three factors pose potential barriers: insufficient places where their child can be active with other family members, difficulty finding other children for their own children to be active with, and difficulty finding the right kind of coaching and instruction for their child. Canadians with the lowest levels of household income are more likely than those in the highest income bracket to *strongly agree* that there are not enough places where their child can go to be active with other family members and that it is too difficult to find other children for their own children to be physically active with. Similarly, these low income earners are also more likely than those earning at least \$40,000 per year to cite difficulty in finding the right kind of coaching or instruction for their child. Parents living in very small communities (<1,000 citizens) are more likely than parents living in communities of 10,000 citizens or more to *strongly agree* that there aren't enough places where their child can be active with other family members and that it is too difficult to find the right type of coaching or instruction for their child.

Parent's activity level Parents that are least active are more likely than those that are highly active to *strongly agree* that difficulty finding suitable coaching or instruction for their child presents a barrier to their child's participation.



Summary of section

Potential barriers to adult participation in physical activity

Certain perceived barriers are more frequently reported by adult Canadians, namely cost, lack of information on physical activity opportunities, and social barriers including finding people and places to help one be active. Generally speaking, relatively few adults report that safety related barriers including traffic, lighting, and crime prevent them from being more active. This holds true for adults at the population level and sport participants more specifically.

What are the most frequently reported barriers for adults?

- Dollar costs of participating in physical activity or sport is too high (28% strongly agree both among the general population and among sport participants);
- Lack of information on the opportunities for physical activity and sport in the community (25% strongly agree generally and 26% among sport participants);
- Difficulty finding other people to be active with (25% strongly agree overall; 21% among sport participants);
- Difficulty finding more family-oriented activity programs and classes (22% strongly agree overall; 18% among sport participants);
- Difficulty finding the proper kind of coaching or instruction (21% strongly agree overall; 17% for sport participants);
- Lack of skill in physical activity or sport (20% strongly agree overall; 10% among sport participants);
- Lack of maintenance of sport and recreation facilities (17% strongly agree overall; 12% among sport participants);
- General safety issues (15% strongly agree overall; 10% among sport participants);
- Unaware of how to build physical activity and sport into their lifestyle (14% strongly agree overall; 9% among sport participants);
- Poorly maintained sidewalks and bike lanes (14% strongly agree overall; 13% among sport participants);
- Too much traffic (12% strongly agree overall; 10% among sport participants);
- Poor lighting (12% strongly agree overall; 14% among sport participants);
- Street crime (8% strongly agree overall; 7% among sport participants).

Who are more likely to strongly agree that barriers prevent them from being active?

- Women;
- Older adults;
- Adults with lower income;
- Adults with lower education;
- Retired or unemployed individuals and homemakers;
- Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated;
- Adults with the lowest level of daily physical activity; and,
- Generally speaking, individuals living in the smallest communities.

Potential barriers to children's participation in physical activity

Rankings of barriers for children's physical activity (as reported by parents) are quite different from adults. Parents are roughly twice as likely to rate safety issues, such as too

much traffic, poorly maintained sidewalks and bike lanes, and poor lighting, as barriers to their child's physical activity compared to adults from the general population. Similar to adults more generally, the perceived dollar cost of their child's participation in physical activity and sport ranks highly as a barrier reported by parents. Perceptions of lack of skills and abilities are generally lower among parents reporting on behalf of their child compared to adult perceptions more generally.

What are the most frequently ranked barriers reported by parents for their children in the general population?

- Too much traffic (36% *strongly agree*);
- Poorly maintained sidewalks and bike lanes (24% *strongly agree*);
- Poor lighting (24% *strongly agree*);
- Dollar costs of their child participating in physical activity or sport are too high (25% *strongly agree*);
- Lack of activity programs, services, or facilities available for their child in the community (22% *strongly agree*);
- Lack of information on the opportunities for physical activity and sport for the child in the community (18% *strongly agree*);
- Not enough places where their child can be active with other family members (19% *strongly agree*);
- Unsuitable hours and class times for their child's needs at local sport and recreation centres (15% *strongly agree*);
- Difficulty finding the proper kind of coaching or instruction (15% *strongly agree*);
- Difficulty getting child to places where they can be active (14% *strongly agree*);
- General safety issues for their child (13% *strongly agree*);
- Difficulty finding other children for their child to be active with (13% *strongly agree*); and,
- Child's lack of skill for doing physical activity or sport (12% *strongly agree*).

Among parents, who are more likely to strongly agree that barriers prevent their child from being active?

- Parents with lower income levels;
- Parents with lower attained levels of education;
- Parents with the lowest level of daily physical activity; and,
- Generally speaking, parents residing in the small communities.

What are the most frequently ranked barriers for children as reported by parents who are sport participants?

- Dollar costs of their child participating in physical activity or sport is too high (35% agree);
- Lack of information on the opportunities for physical activity and sport for the child in the community (29% agree);
- Not enough places where their child can be active with other family members (27% agree);
- Difficulty finding the proper kind of coaching or instruction (24% agree);
- Unsuitable hours and class times for child's needs at local sport and recreation centres (23% agree);

- Lack of activity programs, services or facilities available for their child in the community (21% agree);
- Too much traffic (19% agree);
- Difficulty finding other children to be active with (17% agree);
- Difficulty getting child to places where they can be active (13% agree);
- General safety issues for their child (12% agree);
- Child's lack of skill for doing physical activity or sport (9% agree).

Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

It is important to note that, among adults, those who are more likely to *strongly agree* that certain perceived barriers prevent them from being active are also members of the same population groups who are less likely to be active, and who are less likely to participate in organized and unorganized physical activities or sport. For some specific populations, such as those with low income, these individuals are also more likely to report that they are not at all satisfied with the opportunities for physical activity and sport in general, and for organized and unorganized activities more specifically. The data from this survey are cross-sectional and, as such, causal relationships cannot be determined; however, one can speculate that the increased prevalence of barriers and lack of satisfaction will affect their physical activity behaviour.

As mentioned in the previous section, detailed research is required to find out why inactive individuals are not satisfied with opportunities available and whether it is this dissatisfaction with opportunities, or a combination of individual factors such as less knowledge, more negative attitudes, lower outcome expectations, lower perceived social norms, or lower self-efficacy, that influences why they do not participate in the existing opportunities. Research from this section helps shed light on some of these questions, in that sedentary Canadians are more likely to report most barriers and the profile of individuals reporting barriers differs somewhat between those with lower activity levels and those who are more active. This has important implications for devising strategies to increase current physical activity levels among those less active and preventing declines or 'relapse' among those more active.

The following table summarizes which population groups are more likely to report specific barriers taking into account all demographic factors and their current level of daily activity. For example, less active adults who are 45 and older are more likely to report that skill is a barrier preventing them from being more active, taking into account their gender, income, education, and marital status. Similarly, less active adults with lower education are more likely than their higher educated peers to view lack of skill as a barrier.

Table 1: Demographic factors associated with greater likelihood (odds) of reporting specific barrier among adults with low versus moderate-to-high activity levels .

Adults	Lower daily activity (Focus: Increase current level)						Moderate to higher activity (Focus: Prevent decreases in activity levels)					
	Age	Women	Low income	Low education	Marital status	Community size	Age	Women	Low income	Low education	Marital status	Community size
Lack of skill and ability	√	√		√			45+		√			
Dollar costs too high		√	√	√				√	√	√		
Lack of info on available opportunities												
Lack of info on how to be active				√			45+			√		
Too hard to get places	65+		√	√		<10,000			√	√		<10,000
Unsuitable scheduling		√										
Wrong type of activities	√			√		<5,000	65+		√	√		<10,000
Lack of family programming								√		√		
Lack of instruction or coaching		√		√		<5,000			√	√		<5,000
Difficulty to find people to be active with						<5,000				√		<10,000
Safety concerns	65+	√		√			45+		√	√		
Traffic concerns	45+	√							√	√		
Too much crime		√		√					√	√		
Poor networking of paths									√			
Poor lighting		√		√		<5,000	65+		√			<10,000
Poorly maintained facilities	√		√	√		<5,000	65+		√	√		<10,000

Based on these analyses, several implications emerge for the development of a community-wide strategy for increasing physical activity and sport. With respect to the adequacy of physical activity and sport facilities and programs, , in the general population, less active women have a greater likelihood of citing cost, scheduling, and suitability of programs as potentially limiting their participation. In 2000, almost two-thirds of municipalities reported that they offered programming and scheduling specifically to meet the needs of women and almost 40% offered discounted fee schedules for low income individuals.⁴⁷ In 2004, the availability of programming and scheduling for women increased to three-quarters of municipalities.⁴⁸ These approaches may well be working, as more active women are no more and no less likely to report that cost, scheduling, and suitability of programs are an issue. To ensure the specialized programming meets needs and helps increase activity levels, local focus groups could be conducted with women, as well as lower education and lower income groups, who are not

currently using facilities and programs. Focus group testing could examine the awareness of currently available programs and facilities, the types of activities that would be of interest to women, factors related to scheduling, social interaction, cultural appropriateness, and degree of structure or level of competition.

In addition, improving the maintenance and safety of existing physical activity and sport opportunities may help to increase perceptions of the suitability of opportunities for certain groups. For example, a recent study concluded that improving safety and aesthetics of existing facilities might be an important tactic, particularly among disadvantaged groups.⁴⁹ This indicates that maintaining existing infrastructure in good repair may be an important aspect of a population-wide physical activity or sport strategy and may be particularly relevant for attracting women and residents in neighbourhoods with low income who more likely to report concerns with safety.

A physical environment that is supportive of physical activity is also a key component of a community-wide strategy for increasing physical activity and sport. Based on analyses reported in the chart above, inactive women have a greater likelihood of reporting concerns about traffic, crime, and poor lighting in their neighbourhood as barriers to becoming more active. In addition, among sport participants, women and residents of larger communities are more likely to report general safety concerns and poor lighting as barriers to their activity. Among the active population, concerns about the physical environment are more prevalent among lower income adults. Among sport participants, those with low income were more likely to report that it is difficult to get to places to be active. Studies have shown that residents of areas characterized by a population with lower socioeconomic status were more likely to report walking, and it was suggested that this may be due to the greater density within these neighbourhoods; however, among these residents, participation in more vigorous activities was lower, perhaps due to the cost and low visibility of activities in facilities.^{50,51} Researchers suggest that increased access to low-cost facilities and availability of open spaces and a more walkable environment may help increase the “visibility” of physical activities in low socioeconomic areas and affect the social norms of that area.⁵¹ A walkable environment includes higher levels of neighbourhood aesthetics and fewer perceived barriers (crime, graffiti, poor traffic safety, poor lighting, poor sidewalk maintenance, etc.).

Reed and colleagues⁵² showed that there was no relationship between awareness of trails and their actual presence. This would suggest that any program to increase walking among the inactive should include a promotional component about local opportunities, including the availability of trails, group walking programs, and clubs. Furthermore, this may be a particularly relevant strategy for those reporting that they lack skill or that the dollar cost is too high: older adults, women, and lower income and lower education groups.

Table 2 summarizes the groups that are more likely to report barriers pertaining to children after taking into account demographic factors of parents as well as current parental level of daily activity.

Table 2: Demographic factors associated with greater likelihood (odds) of reporting specific barriers among for children by low versus moderate-to-high active parents

Children	Lower daily activity						Moderate to higher activity					
	Age	Mother s	Low income	Low education	Marital status	Community size	Age	Mother s	Low income	Low education	Marital status	Community size
Lack of skill and abilities												75,000-299,000
Dollar costs high			✓				✓	✓	✓			
Lack of info on available opportunities				✓								<10,000
Too hard to get places				✓								<5,000
Unsuitable scheduling				✓								<10,000
Unavailable programs				✓								<10,000
Wrong type of activities									✓			<10,000
Difficulty to find other children to be active with									✓			<5,000
Hard to find family-oriented programming								✓				<5,000
Hard to find instruction or coaching									✓			
Safety				✓				✓				
Traffic				✓								
Crime												
Bad paths												<10,000
Bad lighting				✓								<10,000

The majority of municipalities provide programming or scheduling targeted towards families and children.⁴⁸ This result differs from parents' views. For example, a key barrier of children's activity (as reported by parents) is the lack of programs, services, and facilities for children in the community. Moreover, roughly one quarter of parents agree (somewhat or strongly) that local sport and recreation centres provide hours and class times unsuited to their child's needs, and that there are not enough places where their child can be active with other family members. Although municipalities are reporting availability of programs, a fair proportion of adults are not aware of existing programs or do not feel that this programming and scheduling is appropriate to support their children's participation either individually or with the family. Strategies to increase children's participation in physical activity and sport can recognize and encourage the role of parents in promoting and enabling their children's physical activity. This role encompasses providing encouragement, tangible supports (e.g., payment of fees,

purchase of equipment, transportation, etc),⁵³ modeling positive active behaviours, and providing reinforcement or incentives for activity.

The dollar cost of physical activity and sport is an important issue among parents, particularly among parents with lower income and education. A recent study surveying municipalities shows that 35% of municipalities do not have a discounted fee structure in place for children and 60% of municipalities do not have a discounted fee structure for individuals of low income.⁴⁸ Previous national data indicates that that 48% of parents agree to some extent that a drop or reduction in user fees would help their children become more active.¹⁷ Thus, reducing the actual or perceived costs of physical activity and sport are important considerations. Alternatives such as reducing user fees for low-income households or providing alternatives to paying fees by providing services in lieu of fees may be potential options. Indeed, programs that currently exist such as Jumpstart⁵⁴ or other provincial and territorial financial support programs may be helpful for this purpose.

In sum, perceived barriers may cause constraints that diminish the likelihood of establishing and pursuing an active lifestyle. Certain barriers (e.g., scheduling) appear to be a potential issue among adults who are less active, whereas others (e.g., lack of instruction or coaching) are more likely to be cited by those with moderate to higher activity levels. Similar types of differences occur among reported barriers for encouraging and sustaining children's participation. Information on these differences in perceived barriers by target groups can help customize action plans to increase activity levels among inactive groups and prevent decreases in physical activity among those more active.