

Lifestyle Tips



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Oh Canada, our home and unfit land?



As we prepare to celebrate our national holiday and revel in all that makes us uniquely Canadian, we should give

pause to the news that; as a nation we are definitively less fit than we were 25 years ago.

Researchers compared data from the 2007-2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey, which examined current fitness levels of Canadian adults and children

and youth, and these results were compared to the findings from 1981. What is apparent is this; while Canadians' muscular strength and flexibility has decreased in the past 25 years, body mass indices and waist circumference measurements are on the rise. Ouch.



The research from 2007-2009 also shows that Canadians have less than ideal health benefit ratings across all fitness components analyzed. And compared to the previous generation, we are now more likely to have poor ratings for overall body composition. We are not measuring up as a nation.

Are too many double-doubles, plates of poutine, or maple-glazed doughnuts to blame? Perhaps. To modify the (lack of) movement that have gotten many of us a fair bit rounder, weaker and less able to touch our toes, why not take a pledge to make some changes to our everyday activities that take on a distinctly Canadian bent?

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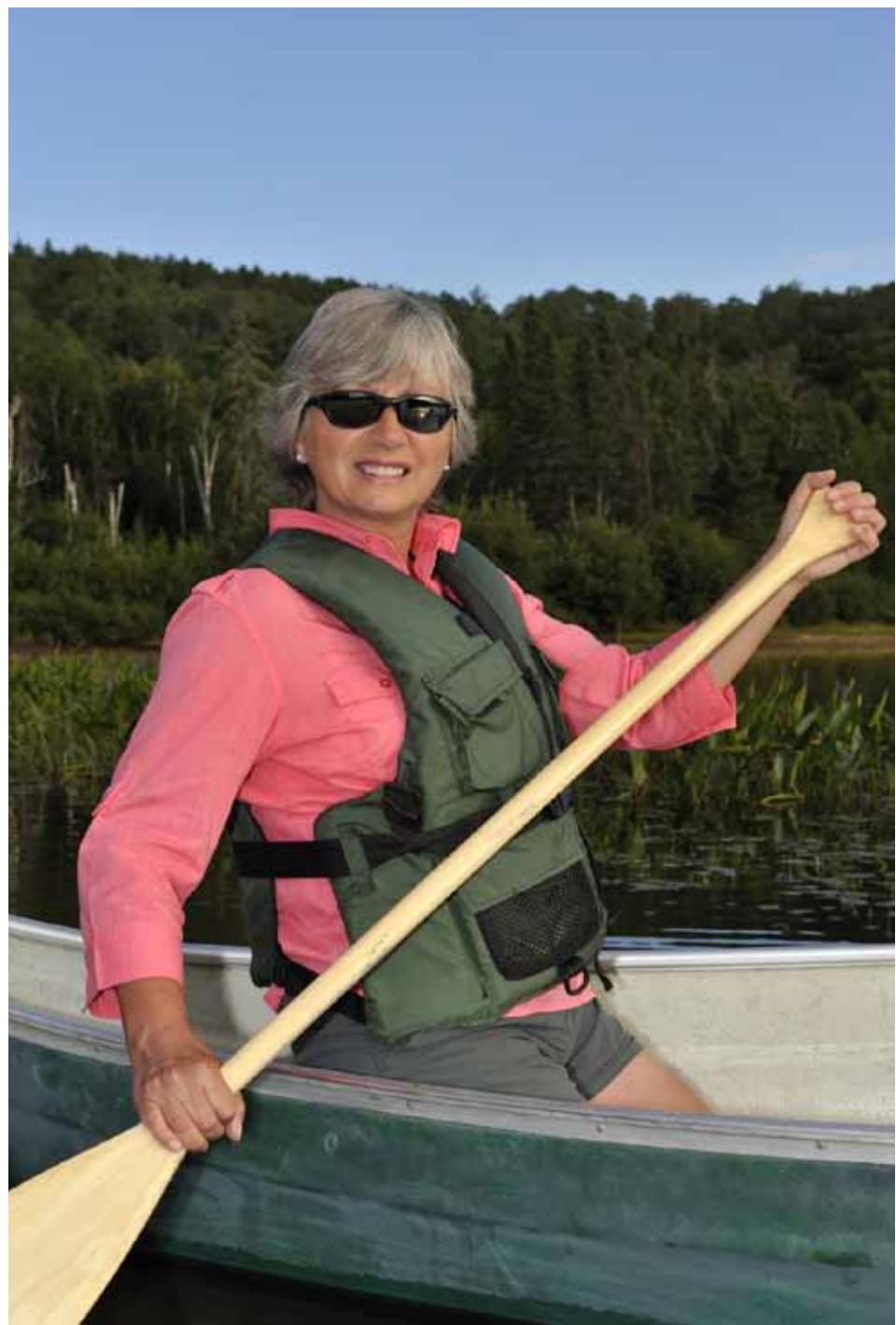
Did you know that five-pin bowling was invented in Canada in 1909 and that we remain the only nation on earth that plays the game? Bowling is a great way to be social without being sedentary. It can be played any time of year and both adults and kids can hurl that ball down a lane, making five-pin bowling a great active family outing.

Looking to elevate your heart rate—a lot? How about grabbing a basketball and heading to the local schoolyard to shoot some hoops. The inventor of basketball, James Naismith, was born in Almonte, Ontario and with these strong Canadian roots you can dribble your way across the court with pride.

For those who want to follow in the footsteps of the “couriers du bois”, Canada offers some of the most beautiful walking trails in the world. Whether on the Trans-Canada Trail, or in your local park, our paths and trails allow you to enjoy the outdoors while wood-chipped or grassy paths deliver the added benefit of being gentle on the joints.

Ever tried lacrosse? It's another home-grown classic; a First Nations game that's been played here long before the first Europeans set foot on Canadian soil. The early French settlers were introduced to the game by the indigenous population and it is still played across the nation today. In fact, lacrosse is billed as Canada's official national sport.

With nearly 900,000 square kilometers of Canada covered in fresh water, we are a nation with a true gift. Grab a canoe or kayak and paddle one of



our quiet lakes, or fast-moving rivers. Canoes and kayaks were the main means of transportation in our country in early days. If swimming is more your thing, Canada boasts some of the cleanest waters on the planet, perfect for a summer dip to get your body moving. Just look before you leap!

When the lakes and rivers freeze over, and temperatures plummet, Canadians often find it harder to stay active. Snow-shoeing is another exceptional Canadian activity that requires a minimal investment, and can take you into your neighbourhood

parks in the snowy winter months. Break new trails and take the kids to seek out winter birdlife. It's a fantastic way to elevate your heart-rate and stay warm while outside.

Whether it is playing street-hockey, stick-pull, dog-sledding, or going for a walk beneath the maple trees, we can all find ways to move more with a bit of Canadian flair. And if all else fails this July, put the sprinkler on, and run through it. Really, what could be more Canadian than that?