

Fact Sheet – New Physical Activity Recommendations

Background

There have been advancements in physical activity research since the current Canada's Physical Activity Guides for children, youth, adults and older adults were released in 2002, 2002, 1998 and 1999 respectively. The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) and ParticipACTION want all Canadians to have access to the most current information on how much and what type of physical activity is required for healthy, active living. The following is a summary of recommendations derived from three years of research analysis by CSEP, including summaries of Canada's current physical activity guidelines for comparison. The research was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and is available in complete form in a thematic series of academic articles published on May 11, 2010, in the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Public Health* at www.ijbnpa.org/series/canada_physical_activity

For more information on CSEP, please visit www.csep.ca.

For more information on ParticipACTION, please visit www.participACTION.com

Children and Youth (aged 5-17)

How much and how often?

- Children and youth should accumulate at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours, of moderate physical activity (such as brisk walking, skating or bike riding) each day.
- For very inactive or sedentary children and youth, some health benefits can be achieved through 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day.
- Some physical activity is better than none, and more is better.

What kind?

- The physical activity should be mostly aerobic, and should include vigorous activity (such as running and playing soccer) at least 3 days a week, and muscle and bone strengthening activities (such as skipping, jumping or playing in the park) at least 3 days a week.
- Daily physical activity should be achieved through play, games, sport, work, transportation, recreation, physical education or planned exercise, with family, at school and in the community.

Existing guidelines – Children (aged 6-9) and Youth (aged 10-14)

- Increase time currently spent on physical activity starting with 30 minutes more moderate to vigorous activity per day, increasing to 90 minutes more per day.
- Reduce non-active time spent on TV, video, computers games and surfing the internet, starting with 30 minutes less per day, increasing to 90 minutes less per day.

Adults (aged 18 to 65)

How much and how often?

- Adults should get at least 150 minutes/week of moderate intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking, swimming or raking leaves). This can be achieved in a variety of ways, for example 30 minutes 5 days a week.
- Activity can be broken into smaller bouts at least 10 minutes long. If activity is vigorous (such as jogging, hockey or aerobics), health benefits can be achieved with 90 minutes/week. In general, the more time spent being active and the more intense the activity, the better.

What kind?

- The physical activity should be mostly aerobic activity, and should include muscle and bone strengthening activities 2 to 4 days a week, and flexibility activities 4 to 7 days a week.
- Some examples of muscle and bone strengthening activities include skipping, jumping, lifting, tennis, curling and weight training. Some examples of flexibility activities include stretching, martial arts and yoga.

Existing guidelines - Adults (aged 20 to 55)

- Accumulate 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity every day, including endurance activities 4 to 7 days per week, flexibility activities 4 to 7 days per week and resistance (strength) activities 2 to 4 days per week.
- Time needed depends on effort: 60 minutes light effort, 30 to 60 minutes moderate effort activities and 20 to 30 minutes vigorous effort. Accumulate in increments of at least 10 minutes each.
- Reduce sitting for long periods.

Older Adults (over age 65)

How much and how often?

- Older adults should get at least 150 minutes/week of moderate intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking, biking or water aerobics). This can be achieved in a variety of ways, for example 30 minutes, five days a week. Activity can be broken into shorter bouts at least 10 minutes long.
- If activity is vigorous (such as jogging, fast swimming or fast dancing), health benefits can be achieved with 90 minutes/week.
- In general, the more time spent being active and the more intense the activity, the better. However, only those who are used to being active should engage in vigorous activity.

What kind?

- The physical activity should be mostly aerobic, and should include muscle and bone strengthening activities two days a week, and flexibility and balance training activities 4 to 7 days a week to prevent falls and facilitate independent living.
- Some examples of muscle and bone strengthening activities include lifting, carrying, curling, heavy gardening and weight training. Some examples of flexibility and balance training activities include Tai Chi, curling, stretching or walking on uneven surfaces such as forest trails.

Existing guidelines – Older Adults (over age 55)

- Accumulate 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.
- Include endurance activities 4 to 7 days per week, strength and balance activities 2 to 4 days per week and flexibility activities daily.