



Benefits of Physical Activity

“If exercise could be packed into a pill, it would be the most widely prescribed and beneficial medicine in the world”.

Robert N. Butler, M.D. Former Director, National

Here are the facts...

- ◆ 85% of Canadian adults are not active enough for health benefits
- ◆ Inactivity is as harmful to your health as smoking
- ◆ Being inactive leads to declines in strength and flexibility

There are numerous health benefits associated with being physically active:

- ◆ Live independently longer
- ◆ Cuts age-related decline in half
- ◆ Helps you to manage/maintain a healthy weight
- ◆ May reduce cholesterol
- ◆ Increases energy levels
- ◆ Helps you to sleep better
- ◆ Improves flexibility
- ◆ Improves fitness
- ◆ Strengthens muscles, bones and joints
- ◆ Improves alertness and reaction time
- ◆ Improves posture and balance
- ◆ Reduces risk of falling
- ◆ Reduces stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms
- ◆ May delay the onset of certain chronic conditions or at least help manage some of the symptoms
- ◆ Reduces risk of Type 2 diabetes
- ◆ Helps to prevent osteoporosis, remineralizes bones and prevents bone fractures
- ◆ Reduces the risk of dying from coronary artery disease
- ◆ May lower blood pressure
- ◆ Reduces cancer, heart disease and stroke risks
- ◆ Improves confidence and self-esteem
- ◆ Improves mental health and well-being
- ◆ Improves relaxation

Make sure to consult a physician before starting any new form of physical activity.



How Much Is Enough?

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines

recommend Older Adults 65 years and older:

- ◆ Accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity per week.
- ◆ **Moderate-intensity activities** will cause older adults to sweat a little and to breathe harder. Activities like: Brisk walking, bicycling
- ◆ **Vigorous-intensity activities** will cause older adults to sweat and be 'out of breath'. Activities like: Cross-country skiing, swimming
- ◆ If you haven't been active for some time, start with activities that you can build into your routine—start with 10 minutes at a time.
- ◆ Add up your minutes throughout the day.
- ◆ Build up gradually and don't do too much all at once.

How Do I Get Started?

- ◆ Remember—doing anything is better than nothing! **Reduce the amount of sedentary time in your day.**
- ◆ Set a realistic goal, write it down, and post it where you can see it. Share your plan with someone else.
- ◆ Do little things— for example, turn off the television without using the remote control, walk the stairs instead of using the elevator, park your car at the end of the parking lot, walk to the corner store to pick up milk.
- ◆ Find a buddy that can help to motivate you.
- ◆ Find something that you enjoy doing.
- ◆ Join a **Forever...in motion** group.
- ◆ Check out the **in motion** website for challenges and ways to get and keep motivated.



What Kind of Activities are Best?

Our **Forever...in motion** recommendation is to include the following:

- ◆ **Endurance** activities help to increase your energy and are good for your heart, lungs and circulation. You should do these in bouts of at least 10 minutes at a time, anywhere from 4-7 days per week.
- ◆ **Flexibility** activities help you to move more easily so that you can keep up with daily tasks to stay independent. You should do these at least 5-10 minutes per day. Minimum of 2 days/week but can be daily.
- ◆ **Strength** activities help to keep your muscles and bones strong and improve your balance and posture. You should start slowly and build up to 12-15 repetitions of each strengthening exercise 2 to 4 days per week.
- ◆ **Balance**—good balance is essential for fall prevention. You should do something every day to challenge your balance.



For more information and resources for Older Adults, contact Forever...in motion at (306)844-4080 website www.in-motion.ca/olderadults

References

1. **Physical Activity and Health. June 2002. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: A Report of the Surgeon General.**
2. **CSEP. Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults.**