

that individuals who were active were more likely to report having excellent health, being of normal weight, having fewer health conditions, consuming vegetables and fruit several times a day, consuming traditional foods, having good support, feeling in balance, and having a high positive and low negative emotional score.⁸ Other benefits include better sleep, increased self-esteem, reduced anxiety, and an overall improvement in mental well-being.⁹ For children and youth specifically, physical activity can increase opportunities for peer interaction and decrease loneliness.¹⁰

Tips to Get Active

Canada's *Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* recommends trying to be a little more active each day by doing healthy activities that you are familiar with and

that you enjoy. If you haven't been active in a while, it is important to start slowly and gradually progress towards physical activity goals that are meaningful to you. Involving friends and family in daily physical activity sessions is also a good way to socialize and stay motivated.

Positive habits are built early in life, so children should be encouraged to get at least one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day, and doing strengthening activities that build muscles and bones at least three times a week. Get your children active by reducing screen time (television and computer) and encouraging them to play active games, dance to their favourite music, and ride a bike, skateboard or walk to school. Kids can help around the home by raking leaves, shoveling snow, carrying groceries and helping with other chores.

School sports teams are an excellent way for kids to stay active and build positive social relationships with others in the community. Find out what activities your kids enjoy, and make it a family priority to spend time being active with your kids.

For adults just starting to get active, choose a variety of physical activities that you enjoy and start to build routines around these activities. You can start slowly with 10 minute sessions, and build from there until you reach a minimum of 2.5 hours of physical activity each week. Limit the amount of time you spend watching TV or sitting in front of a computer, and find someone to plan activities with. Having a walking, jogging or working out partner can be a great motivator to get active. Remember that every step counts, and as you build new habits you will start to enjoy the many benefits of being physically active.





For More Information

There are many organizations across Canada that support physical activity, from organized sport and coaching to advice on how to be more active each day.

- Aboriginal Physical Activity and Cultural Circle (APACC) – A network for Aboriginal people who are involved in sports, recreation, fitness and traditional activities
www.a-pacc.com
- Aboriginal Walk this Way
parc.ophea.net/wtw-aboriginal-adaptation
- Aboriginal Youth FIRST
www.youthfirst.ca
- Active Circle: Pathways for active Aboriginal youth
www.activecircle.ca
- Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/index-eng.php
- “Come Meet the Challenge” – Physical Activity and Nutrition Initiatives in Aboriginal Communities resource guide
www.niichro.com/2004/pdf/cmc-eng-binder.pdf
- First Nations Health Council. Adult First Nations Fitness video
www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMfMkT6FaSY
- First Nations Health Council. Bear Workout: First Nation Fitness video for children
www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBso9ZmDPeI
- Gen7
www.motivatecanada.ca/en/gen7
- Heart & Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon “Tips to get physically active”
www.heartandstroke.bc.ca/site/c.kpIPKXOyFmG/b.3644691/k.5EB7/Healthy_Living_Tips_to_get_physically_active.htm
- North American Indigenous Games
www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/traditions/English/index.html
- Participaction
www.participaction.com

Endnotes

- ¹ In the context of this fact sheet, the term 'Aboriginal' is used broadly to refer to the Indigenous inhabitants of Canada, including First Nations (whether they be status/non-status or live on or off reserve), Métis and Inuit. Wherever possible, we provide information for distinct groups/communities.
- ² Foulds, H.J.A, Bredin, S.S.D., & Warburton, D.E.R. (2011). An evaluation of the physical activity and health status of British Columbian Aboriginal populations. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism*, 37: 127-137; Dacipe, A.N. (2006). The Medicine Wheel. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 17:251.
- ³ Harris, S.B., Zinnan, B., Hanley, A., Gittelsohn, J., Hegele, R., Connelly, P.W., Shah, B., & Hux, J.E. (2002). The impact of diabetes on cardiovascular risk factors and outcomes in a Native Canadian population. *Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice*, 55:165-173.
- ⁴ This information was derived from The First Nations Information Governance Centre (2012) report, First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS) Phase 2 (2008/10) National report on adults, youth and children living in First Nations communities. Ottawa, ON: The First Nations Information Governance Centre. Since the RHS survey was undertaken, the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) has revised their physical activity guidelines. For children and youth, they now recommend 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily, and 150 minutes per week for adults (18+) (CESP website, <http://www.csep.ca/english/view.asp?x=949>)
- ⁵ Findlay, L.C. (2011). Physical activity among First Nations people off reserve, Métis and Inuit. *Health Reports*, 22(1). Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 82-003-XPE.
- ⁶ Warburton, D.E.R., Nicol, C.W., & Bredin, S.S.D. (2006). Health benefits of physical activity: The evidence. *CMAJ*, 174(6): 801-809.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ The First Nations Information Governance Centre (2012).
- ⁹ Fox, K. (1999). The influence of physical activity on mental well-being. *Public Health Nutrition*, 2(3a): 411-418.
- ¹⁰ Page, R.M., Frey, J., Talbert, R., & Falk, C. (1992). Children's feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction: Relationship to measures of physical fitness and activity. *Journal of Teaching and Physical Education*, 11: 211-219.



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