



The Benefits of Physical Activity for First Nation, Inuit and Métis Communities:  
**Sharing Knowledge and Community Leading Practices**



The goal of this initiative is to encourage the use of the **Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines** in all First Nations, Inuit and Métis community-based programs, through the development and sharing of culturally relevant messages with community health and recreation workers.

This resource is meant for a national audience, and will be used in rural, remote, isolated and urban settings. This resource has been designed to reflect the diversity of available recreational infrastructures across all settings.

A theme woven throughout the resource is that of traditional, land-based activities and a wholistic approach to the benefits of physical activity.



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## Partners/Working Group Members

### Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

- Ray Irvine, Senior Analyst – Program Planning and Development
- Charlene Dysart, Recreation and Wellness Consultant

### First Nations and Inuit Health – Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative

- Elizabeth Proskurnik, Physical Activity Specialist

## Saint Elizabeth First Nations, Inuit and Métis Program

- Lyna Hart, Program Elder
- Tracy Scott, Program Lead
- Suzanne Stephenson, Engagement Liaison for Quebec
- Janetta Soup, Engagement Liaison for Alberta
- Melissa Spence, Engagement Liaison for Manitoba
- Jodie Dupas-Zemliduk, Program Assistant

## Saint Elizabeth Corporate Office

- John Stathakos, Director – Learning and Development
- Don Abreu, Instructional Designer
- Jo Wong, Marketing and Communications Specialist



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- Alice Merchand
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## Photo Credits – In-Kind Contributions

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## Graphic Design

This booklet was designed by Trevor Harper, Graphic Artist at All Nations Print Ltd. Our wholehearted thanks to Trevor, whose vision and creativity have brought this booklet to life.

<http://www.allnationsprint.com>

## Interactive On-Line Version

This resource is also available in an interactive, e-learning resource format, with avatar hosts.  
For information on how to access the e-learning resource please click here:

<http://www.saintelizabeth.com/FNIM/News/Program-News/All-News/RESOURCE-LAUNCH.aspx>



Hey, Boozhu, I'm Wab Kinew.

Balanced health is important at any age, physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally.

There are many benefits of physical activity: feeling stronger, feeling better, more physical fitness. It also helps to prevent diseases like cancer, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. It also helps you control your weight.





You know, our bodies are designed for us to be warriors, for us to be paddling canoes, to be riding horses, to be out there on the land gathering the things we need to live.



They're not designed to play iPod, iPad, Xbox all day long. So we need to get out there and do the things that our bodies were designed for.





When you think back hundreds, thousands of years, our ancestors, their way of life, it provided them with the physical activity that they needed – when they were carrying a pail of water back to the tipi, when they were out at the river pulling fish out, when they were chopping wood in the middle of winter, that provided their physical activity.

Since our way of life has changed, we need to find new ways to provide our body with those outlets. Plus, there's all the social benefits that come along with exercise and sport.





There are probably already a lot of things that are being done in your community that can help you reach those physical activity goals. When you think about the things that Aboriginal people do on the land—hunting, fishing, trapping—those all involve a lot of physical activity, and getting a lot of fresh air.

Then you have cultural activities, like dance. You know, if you're travelling on the pow wow trail, you might be in good shape. Or, if you're jigging, you're probably breaking a sweat when you're doing that.

So any of those things, if they're a part of your lifestyle, well good on you, because you are working towards hitting your physical activity goals.





And if those things are present in your community, well, they're not only a fun way to help reach your fitness targets, but they're also an important cultural and spiritual exercise that can help you benefit all those other facets of your life.

When you think about it, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, those things are all important. But we can't have a healthy mind, unless we have a healthy body. We can't have a healthy spirit, unless we have a healthy body. And emotionally, we're not going to do well either, unless, you guessed it, we have a healthy body.

So finding ways to incorporate physical fitness and to realize the maximum health potential of our bodies, is a way to find well-being across all the different aspects of being a human being.

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines are published by the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology and ParticipACTION, and they're evidence-based. Physical activity guidelines describe the amount and types of physical activity that offer substantial health benefits for Canadians.

The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology released new physical activity guidelines in January, 2011. The guidelines describe the amount and types of physical activity that offer substantial health benefits to children, youth, adults, and older adults. The guidelines reflect advances in exercise science and input from experts in the field, and align with international guidelines.



## **Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines**

**Your Plan to Get Active Every Day**





## INTENSITY LEVELS

In each age-group category of this resource, there are recommendations based on duration and intensity of physical activity.

### Moderate Intensity

Moderate Intensity physical activity. On a scale relative to an individual's personal capacity, moderate intensity physical activity is usually a 5 or 6 on a scale of 10. As a rule of thumb, if you're doing moderate intensity physical activity, you can talk, but not sing your favourite song, during the activity. You're working hard enough to raise your heart rate.

### Vigorous Intensity

Vigorous Intensity physical activity. On a scale relative to an individual's personal capacity, vigorous intensity physical activity is usually a 7 or 8 on a scale of 10. If you're doing vigorous intensity activity, you will not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. Your heart rate has gone up quite a bit.

### MVPA

Moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity. MVPA. MVPA is a combination of moderate and vigorous intensity activity. This is what you're aiming for to meet the Guidelines.

### Energetic Play

Energetic Play. Energetic Play is similar to MVPA, but is more contextualized to the way young children move. It refers to activities for young children that get them working hard, breathing heavily, and feeling warm.



# Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for the Early Years 0-4 Years





There are many ways to incorporate physical activities with your younger children.





We all want to give our children the best, so it is important to keep in mind these tips:

- Create safe spaces for play
- Play music and learn action songs together
- Dress for the weather and explore the outdoors
- Make time for play with other kids
- Get where you're going by walking
- Young kids should not stay sitting, such as in a stroller or high chair, more than one hour at a time
- Limit use of playpens and infant seats when baby is awake
- Take children outside every day
- Explore and play with your child
- Stop during long car trips for playtime





Kids under 2 should not have screen time, such as TV, video games and the computer.

Kids 2-4 should spend less than 1 hour a day in front of a screen.

Keep TVs and computers out of bedrooms.





By being more active with your children, it ultimately helps them to:

- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Develop social skills
- Behave better
- Improve learning and attention, as well as improve language skills





For healthy growth and development, the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines say that:

Babies age less than one year should be active several times daily, especially through playing interactive games on the floor.

Toddlers age one-to-two years, and children aged three-to-four years, should get **at least 180 minutes of physical activity, at any intensity, spread throughout the day**, including:

- A variety of activities in different environments
- Activities that develop movement skills
- Moving towards at least 60 minutes a day of energetic play by age 5
- Overall, the more physical activity you do with your child now, the better the chance is he or she will have a healthier future.





# Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children 5-11 Years





It's easy and fun to do physical activities. Here are some examples:

- Playing in the snow
- Playing games outside
- Going for a walk in nature
- Going tobogganing
- Going ice fishing
- Playing hopscotch
- Going horseback riding





It is important to do physical activities because:

Being active makes you feel good in your body, your mind,  
your heart and your spirit.





Activities make you feel happy.

Physical activity is good for your health.

Physical activities helps you do well in school.





Wow, thinking about all these activities, it sure beats staying at home and playing video games.

They say kids our age, between 5-11, should get **at least an hour of physical activity per day** to stay healthy.

If we stay active now, it will help us to avoid health problems in the future.





They also say that we need to include 3 days per week of activities that make our muscles and bones stronger.





# Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Youth 12-17 Years





Hey! Stop playing that video game and come to the gym with me to play basketball!

Not today. I'm busy.



But you always say that!  
Watch, I'll leave, and then you'll still be playing that game.

Okay, okay, I'll go with you!



Good! I'm glad! Physical activity is really important for us, and for people at any age. The **Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines** say that youth our age should spend at least **60 minutes a day** doing physical activity, of moderate to vigorous intensity.

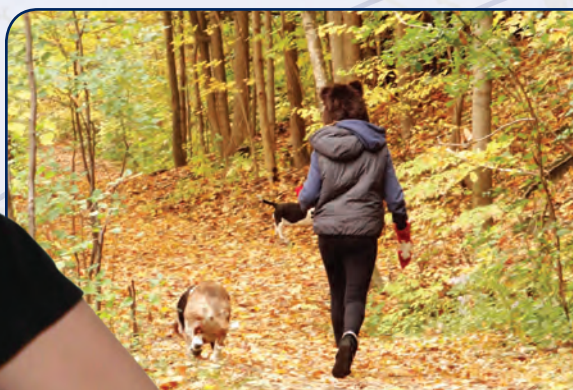
The Guidelines say that youth our age need to do **vigorous-intensity physical activities at least 3 times a week**, and **muscle and bone strengthening activities at least 3 times a week**.



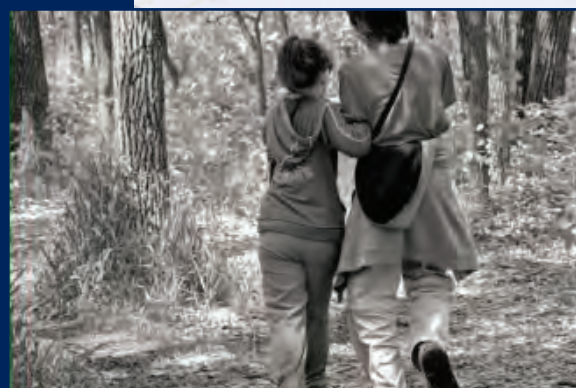


There are a lot of ways to be active in our everyday lives. For example:

- Walking in the community, and to and from school
- Playing outdoor games with friends and family
- Dancing
- Throatsinging
- Playing team sports

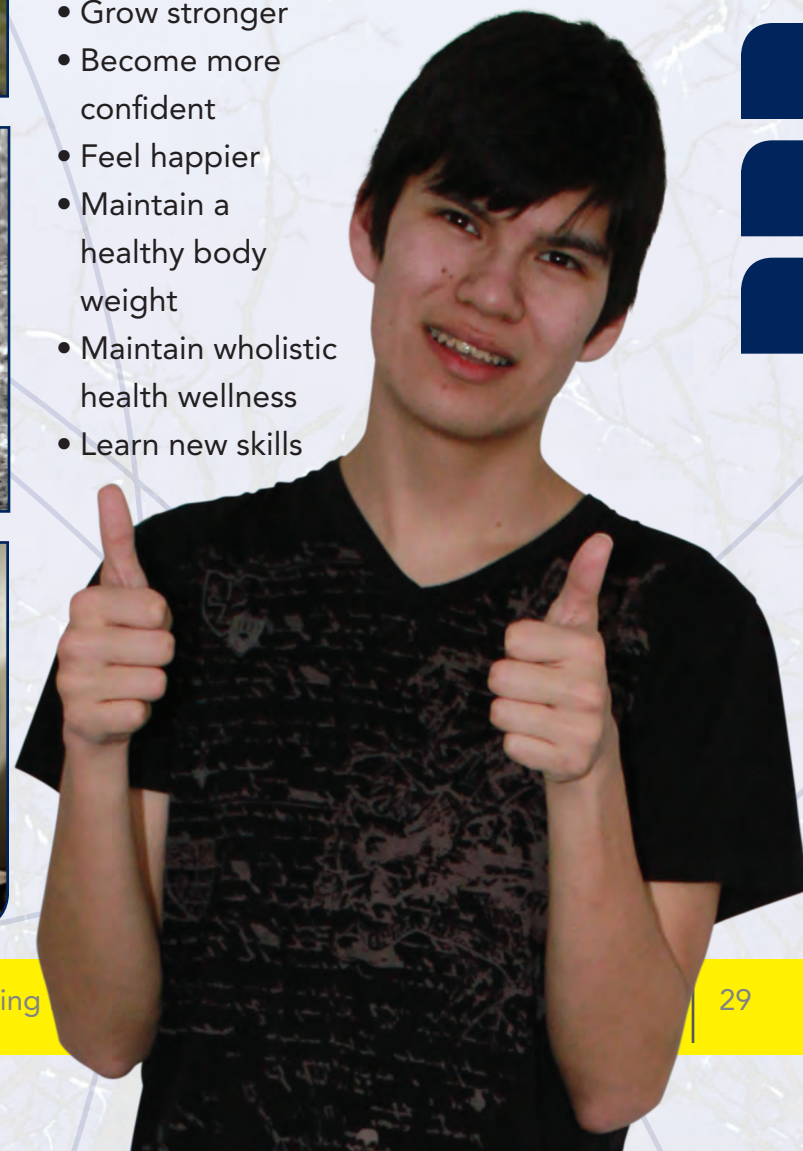






Getting off the couch and being active has made me realize how important physical activity is. It is helping me to feel better and stronger, and it's fun to hang out with my friends. Other benefits of physical activity are:

- Improve fitness
- Grow stronger
- Become more confident
- Feel happier
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Maintain wholistic health wellness
- Learn new skills





# Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults 18-64 Years





Hmm, I wonder if I do enough physical activity in my life. I sure wouldn't want to end up with diabetes or be at risk for heart disease. Maybe I should visit the community recreation centre and talk to a fitness instructor to help me get back on track with a healthy routine.





I would like to begin working out. Are you able to develop a work-out routine for me?

Sure, no problem. The **Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines** recommend adults do at least **150 minutes** of physical activity **per week** in sessions of **10 minutes or more**. I'd be happy to recommend a workout routine that would include both cardio and strength training.

That would be great.  
I'm actually a little concerned about being diagnosed with diabetes or heart disease.



Again, you're right. There are so many benefits in becoming physically active. For example, not only can it help prevent diabetes and heart disease, but also high blood pressure, osteoporosis, arthritis and premature death.





So, what type of activities do you like to do?

I mainly like to do outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting and baseball. But I'm worried that I do not get enough exercise on a consistent basis. Wondering if you can provide me with some suggestions?







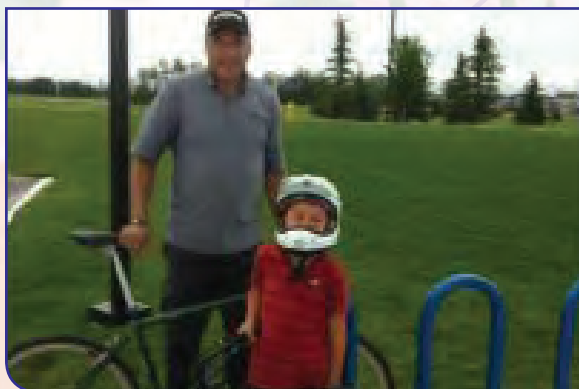
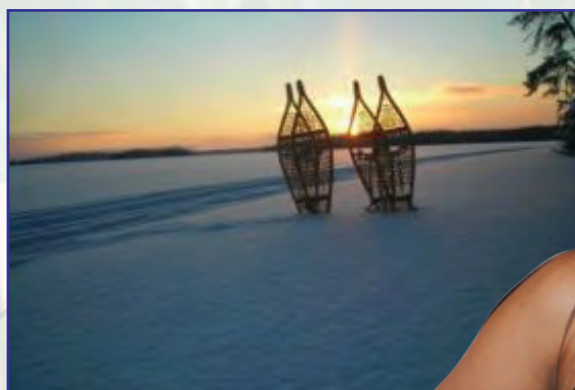
Of course. I can recommend a number of activities that include both cardio and strength training exercises. For the first couple of weeks, why don't we start with building up your cardio and flexibility with exercises such as: jump rope, treadmill, and elliptical. Then we can progress to ab workouts, leg curl, leg press, and weightlifting. We even offer a number of workout sessions throughout the day and evening. For example, we offer boot camp classes, yoga classes, zumba classes, and a couple of others throughout the year.







You mentioned you like spending time outdoors. There are a lot of other activities that you can do if you do not feel like coming in here, such as: walking or jogging in the evening, chopping wood, riding bike, canoeing, showshoeing, golfing, raking, and garden work. And remember, you can do these exercises alone, or with your family.







Sounds good! I'm looking forward to getting started then.

Me too. Sure glad you made the decision to become more active.

Let's get started with the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire.





## For adults : 18 to 64 years



I'm so glad I decided to become more active.  
Here is an example of my typical weekly routine.

As you can see, I can fit 180 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week into my timetable, while having fun and spending time with my family.

### SUNDAY

Go canoeing with family – 30 minutes

### MONDAY

Strength training – 30 minutes

### TUESDAY

Go for a bike ride with my kids in the evening – 30 minutes.

### WEDNESDAY

Strength training – 30 minutes

### THURSDAY

Go for a walk after supper – 30 minutes

### FRIDAY

### SATURDAY

Chop wood – 30 minutes



# Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults 65 Years and Older

Hello, I'm Alice Marchand, a member of the Okanagan First Nation, which is located in the Okanagan Valley, near Vernon, BC. I'm very happy to be participating in this resource to exemplify the importance of physical activity for Elders.





There are a lot of ways to be involved with physical activities, at home, or in your community. For example:

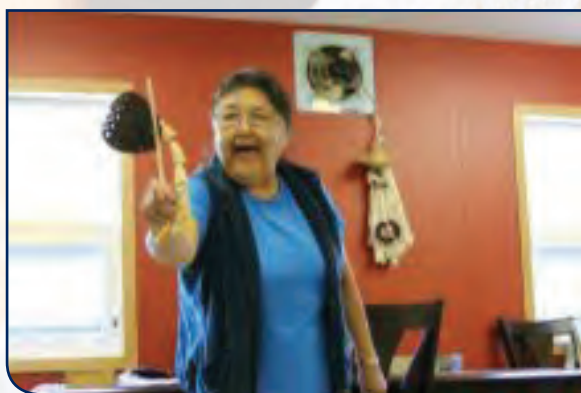
- Join a community walking group
- Chop wood
- Do garden work
- Exercise with tether bands
- Go for a nature hike on the weekend
- Take the dog for a walk after dinner





Physical activity will help to prevent: chronic disease, sickness, falls and injury, and premature death, and will also help to maintain wholistic health and wellness, maintain mobility, and improve fitness.

It improves or maintains body weight, maintains bone health, and maintains mental health, and allows everyone to feel better.







It has been said by the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines that the recommended amount of physical activity for people 65 years and older is to spend **150 minutes per week**. And for those of us who are 65 years and older, we have that **150 free minutes**, most of us, because perhaps around that age we're no longer working. However, people are becoming much healthier and staying working longer.

The importance of physical activity, as I mentioned before, is important to all stages of life. It's important that we stay healthy emotionally, mentally and spiritually. And I have found that physical exercise actually helps those three areas of my life. It helps me feel well in all areas of my life. I encourage First Nations, Inuit and Métis people to resort back to roots in terms of physical activity, if you're not already there.



## For adults : 65 years and older



To make sure I get at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week, I organize my activities into sessions of 30 minutes or more.

My weekly routine is realistic, and filled with activities I enjoy!

### SUNDAY

Do garden work – 30 minutes

### MONDAY

Do house cleaning – 30 minutes

### TUESDAY

Do a group exercise class : Tether Bands - 30 minutes

### WEDNESDAY

### THURSDAY

Do a group exercise class :  
Community walking group - 30 minutes

### FRIDAY

### SATURDAY

Play with my grandchildren – 30 minutes



