

Physical Activity and your Health

Source: [Government of Canada](#)

Physical activity is important for being healthy. Canadians of all ages need to move more and sit less as part of their everyday to help them achieve their optimal health.

Physical activity helps healthy growth and development. It:

- Gives us energy
- Decreases stress
- Makes us stronger
- Prolongs independence as we age

It also helps prevent these chronic diseases:

- Cancer
- Obesity
- Hypertension
- Heart disease
- Type 2 diabetes

Tips to get active

Being active doesn't have to be difficult. There are many ways to make physical activity a part of daily life:

- At play
- At work
- At home
- At school
- On the way

Getting started is easier than you think. Start today and slowly increase your physical activity to meet the Canadian Guidelines.

Some easy ways you can stay active are:

- Recreation and sports
- Planned consistent exercise sessions
- Active forms of transportation like walking or biking

For children (ages 5-11) and youth (ages 12-17)

Physical activity is essential for healthy growth and progress. Regular physical activity in childhood develops:

- Strength
- Heart health
- Bone density

These benefits can prevent chronic diseases later in life.

Establishing positive habits early in childhood and adolescence can last a lifetime.

For adults (ages 18-64)

Physical activity can reduce the risk of over 25 chronic conditions including:

- Stroke
- Colon cancer
- Osteoporosis
- Hypertension
- Breast cancer
- Type 2 diabetes
- Coronary heart disease

Regular physical activity and higher levels of fitness allow daily tasks to be done with greater ease and comfort and with less fatigue. Research shows that as much as half of functional decline between the ages of 30 and 70 is due, not to aging, but to an inactive way of life.

For older adults (age 65 and older)

Weight-bearing physical activity reduces the rate of bone loss that goes with osteoporosis.

Regular physical activity maintains:

- Balance
- Strength
- Flexibility
- Coordination

It can also help reduce the risk of falls. In short, physical activity helps prolong good health and independence.