



ACTIVE AGING IN NEW BRUNSWICK

A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCE
FOR OLDER ADULTS

Physical activity is all about moving our bodies. It can be as simple as climbing the stairs in your own home, running errands, taking a walk around the block with a friend or sowing seeds in a community garden.

Physical activity plays an important role in our well-being and quality of life. As we get older, it becomes essential to maintaining our health and independence. It is never too late to adopt new habits and a more active lifestyle. Consider opening this booklet the first step toward a healthier, happier life.

It's important to recognize that the healthy choice is not always the easy choice and that our surroundings impact on our health and ability to adopt active lifestyles. Age-friendly communities that promote healthy aging can set us up for success.

This resource will provide you with tips and fun ideas for making physical activity a bigger part of your life. It contains relevant information and motivational stories that will help you understand how becoming more active can improve physical fitness, as well as your mental, social, spiritual and emotional health. The resource also contains worksheets that will guide you through identifying your strengths and interests, setting goals, mapping out your first steps and tracking your progress as you become more physically active.

Let's follow Judy's story to learn how she incorporated physical activity into her daily life. Like Judy, each of us can move forward on a journey toward improved health and well-being.

Hi, my name is Judy..

JUDY

I'm a retired school teacher living in New Brunswick. I'm fortunate to be in good health for my age (72) and enjoy living independently in my own home. A few years ago, my days began with more aches and pains and I noticed myself tiring more easily. I wasn't moving as efficiently as I had been and found myself unable to shovel my own walkway or keep up with my grandchildren when they came to visit. I became discouraged, but then realized that small changes could improve my situation.

Though I had played outside a lot as a kid, I hadn't led a particularly active life since or thought of physical activity as something important. I often drove to places when I could have walked and had never even considered going to an exercise class.

Then, I learned about its holistic benefits and realized how much I had to gain from adopting this healthy behaviour. I discovered that being active could positively impact my physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual well-being.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN...¹

INCREASE/IMPROVE

- ↑ quality of sleep
- ↑ mobility
- ↑ functional ability (ability to perform daily tasks)
- ↑ fitness (strength, endurance, balance, coordination, etc.)
- ↑ quality of life
- ↑ independence
- ↑ social interactions
- ↑ energy
- ↑ productivity
- ↑ mental performance
- ↑ positive mental health
- ↑ sense of belonging

DECREASE/REDUCE

- ↓ slips and falls
- ↓ stress and anxiety
- ↓ risk of chronic diseases and health issues, including:
 - arthritis
 - heart attack and stroke
 - cardiovascular diseases
 - type 2 adult-onset diabetes
 - depression
 - high blood pressure
 - osteoporosis
 - breast and colon cancer
 - obesity
 - back pain

DID YOU KNOW?

Individuals who engage in regular physical activity stay stronger and healthier, which also means they are more resilient to falls, stress, injuries and disease. They recover sooner and maintain a higher level of function following setbacks (e.g. surgery, illness, fall, etc.).²



JUDY

The prospect of improving my physical fitness and reducing my risk of developing chronic disease hadn't been incentive enough. Now, I had more personal reasons that motivated me to get active. I wanted to continue living independently in my own home. I wanted to gain the strength, stamina and balance to dance the night away at my granddaughter's wedding the following summer.

Consider how you could benefit from becoming more physically active.

What benefits of physical activity appeal to me?	As a result of being active, I want to experience the following:
<input type="checkbox"/> Increased strength, endurance and balance <input type="checkbox"/> Increased independence <input type="checkbox"/> More energy	<input type="checkbox"/> Dancing at my granddaughter's wedding and shoveling my walkway <input type="checkbox"/> Continued living in my own home <input type="checkbox"/> Running my own errands and playing with my grandchildren

WORKSHEET

Using this information, answer Question 1 on the **First Steps Planning Worksheet** included in this Toolkit.



JUDY

I spoke to some of my friends about their motivations for becoming physically active. It turns out we all had personal reasons for wanting to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Here's what some of them had to say about getting active:

- ▶ "Cross country skiing helps keep me motivated to finish other tasks, whether it's cooking healthy meals or running errands."
- ▶ "Being in the pool distracts my mind from the stresses of life. It relaxes me and I almost always feel better afterwards."
- ▶ "Gardening is a great way to spend time with my family and connect with new members of my community."
- ▶ "Running gives me a way to set and accomplish short and longer-term goals that are meaningful for me. I get to identify my own 'why'."
- ▶ "Going for a tour around the neighbourhood after dinner helps me wind down at the end of the day."
- ▶ Dancing helps me connect to my cultural identity.
- ▶ "Pickleball is so much fun!"

JUDY

I began thinking about how I could become more active. I learned about something called **physical literacy**.³ Just like knowing our ABC's helps us read and write, knowing how to move in a variety of ways helps us to enjoy more activities.

Everyone's physical literacy journey is different. I was fortunate enough to learn a lot of skills through activities I took part in as a child, like skipping rope, climbing trees and playing baseball with the neighbourhood kids. I hadn't done those activities in years and was no longer interested in tree climbing at this stage in my life. I realized that a lot of the balance, coordination and skills I had learned all those years ago were still being used for other tasks of daily living today.

I could climb a step ladder to clean the top of the refrigerator and carry bags of groceries home from the market. Because I learned to strike a ball with a bat, I was well equipped to try racquet sports like tennis or pickle ball. I never did learn how to swim, so I wasn't comfortable trying aqua fitness classes yet. As a starting point, I decided to play to my strengths, embracing the skills I did have and the activities I already engaged in and enjoyed.

Consider your strengths and what activities you might enjoy participating in.

What activities have I enjoyed in the past?	What activities do I enjoy now?	What new activities am I interested in?
<input type="checkbox"/> Baseball	<input type="checkbox"/> Walking to the market to buy fresh vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/> Pickleball

PLAYING TO YOUR STRENGTHS:

- » If you enjoy(ed) **SWIMMING**, try aqua-fitness or aqua-stretching classes, canoeing, kayaking, or taking a grandchild to a local beach or pool.
- » If you can **STRIKE** a ball, try pickle ball, tennis, table tennis, golf or mini putt.
- » If you can **BALANCE** or want to improve, try yoga, Thai Chi, cycling, skating, cross-country skiing or Zumba.
- » If you enjoy(ed) **WALKING**, try hiking, nature photography, speed walking, snowshoeing or ballroom dancing.
- » If you can **THROW**, try bowling, bocce, darts, washer toss, horseshoes, frisbee golf, playing catch, or lawn bowling.
- » If you **WHEEL** or use a walker or cane, try boccia, chair yoga, wheelchair curling, raised bed gardening, handcycling or adaptive skiing.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Para NB Equipment Loan Service is a provincial, bilingual service that aims to increase access to adaptive sport and recreation equipment and devices for persons with a physical disability in New Brunswick. Learn more at: www.paranb.ca/para-nb-equipment-loan-service.

JUDY

After I had identified my personal motives for getting active and recognized my strengths, I realized that there were a few things that had come between me and physical activity in the past. I decided to identify these barriers so I could put together some strategies for overcoming them.

I often told myself that I just didn't have time to exercise. This, believe it or not, is the top personal reason most people do not engage in physical activity. In order to get around this, I decided to start small, committing to just 10-minute bouts of physical activity at a time, a few times each day. I spoke to some friends and family about their reasons for not exercising more. I offered some suggestions.

My daughter says:

I have way too much work to do.

I say:

If you take a 5-minute stretch break, you'll be more productive.

My friend Pierre says:

It's too hot, cold, wet or slippery outside.

I say:

Try walking or dancing around the house!

My friend Alice says:

I'm in a rotten mood.

I say:

Get moving—exercise will likely make you feel better.

My cousin Larry says:

Walking is boring.

I say:

Have you tried listening to music? Or, I'll go for a walk with you!

My brother says:

I have no way of getting to the community centre.

I say:

Let's see if we can coordinate a car pool.

My friend Sheila says:

I can't afford to join a gym.

I say:

There are many options at home or outside. Let's try a yoga video or go for a walk in the park.



WORKSHEET

Use the **Barriers to Physical Activity Worksheet** included in this Toolkit to help you identify the things that make it difficult for you to get active and learn some strategies that will help you overcome these obstacles.

Consider what keeps you from being active and how you could overcome these barriers.

Things that get in the way of my physical activity:

- ☐ I just want to watch TV.

Strategies to get around these obstacles:

- ☐ I can march in place while I enjoy my favourite show.

JUDY

I had learned about the potential benefits, identified my strengths and potential barriers, thought about some activities that I might like to try, and confirmed that it was okay for me to get started. It was time to set some realistic goals for my physical activity journey.

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that seniors take part in at least 2.5 hours of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity each week. They also recommend spreading out the activities into sessions of 10-minutes or more and adding muscle and bone strengthening activities at least twice a week to improve your posture and balance.⁴

WHAT IS MODERATE AEROBIC ACTIVITY?	WHAT IS VIGOROUS AEROBIC ACTIVITY?	WHAT ARE STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES?
Moderate-intensity aerobic activity makes you breathe harder and your heart beat faster. You should be able to talk, but not sing.	Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity makes your heart rate increase quite a bit and you won't be able to say more than a few words without needing to catch your breath.	Strengthening activities build up your muscles and weight-bearing exercises have positive impacts on maintaining bone density.
► Examples of moderate activity include walking quickly or cycling.	► Examples of vigorous activity include jogging or cross-country skiing.	► Examples of strengthening activities include climbing stairs, digging in the garden, lifting weights, and body-weight exercises such as push-ups.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Use the **Get Active Questionnaire** with its accompanying Reference Document included in this toolkit to help you make an informed decision about whether you should seek further advice from a health care provider or qualified exercise professional before becoming more physically active.



DID YOU KNOW?

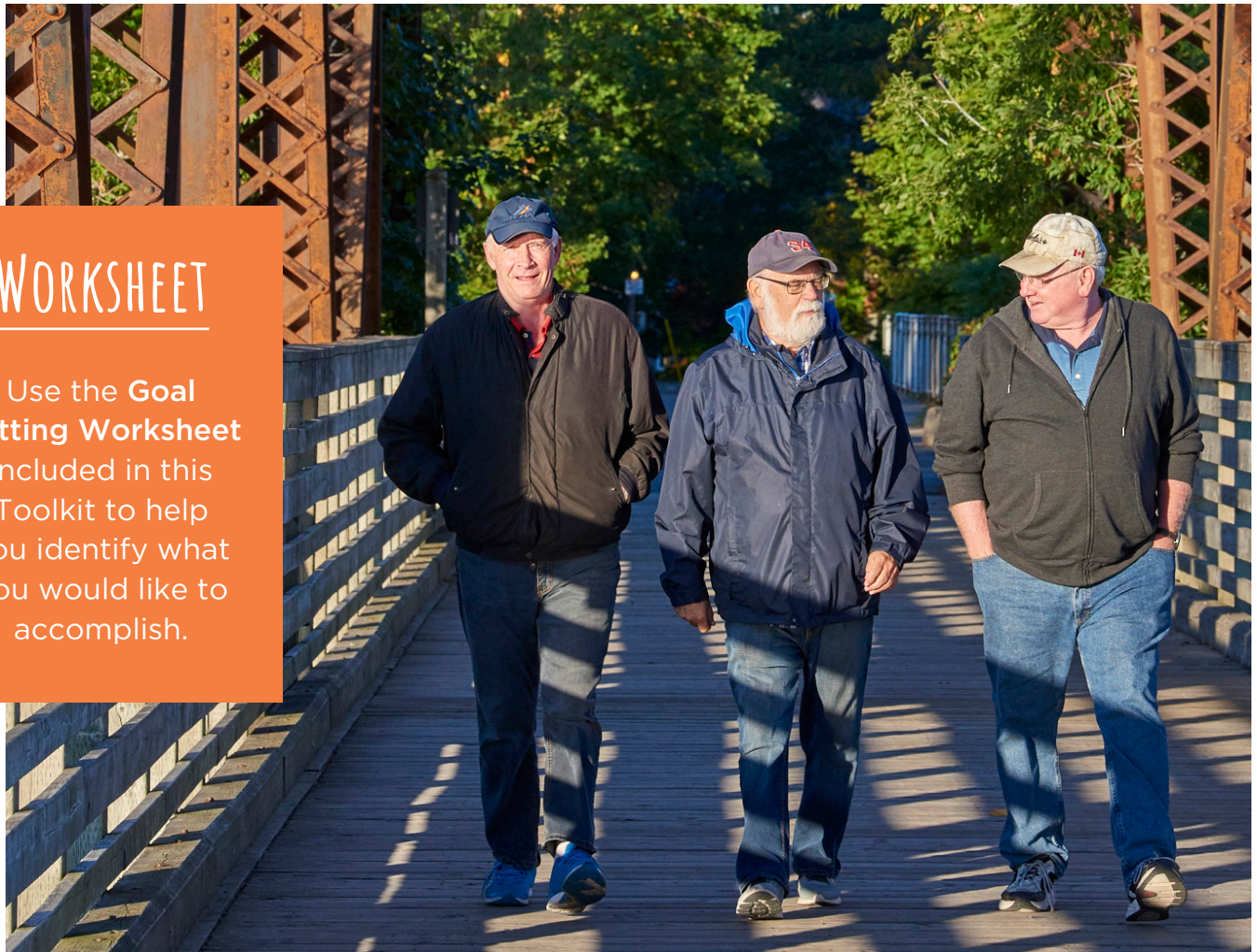
Balance and flexibility exercises are also important elements of physical activity.

- ▶ To maintain or improve your balance, try standing on one foot while chatting on the telephone or watching TV. You can hold on to a chair or counter top for stability. Yoga, dancing and household chores that require reaching are also great for balance.
- ▶ To maintain or improve your flexibility, try simple stretching and exercises like ankle or wrist rotations. Be sure to use slow and controlled movements. Though mild discomfort is normal, stretching should never be painful.



WORKSHEET

Use the **Goal Setting Worksheet** included in this Toolkit to help you identify what you would like to accomplish.



JUDY

Jumping into new activities and meeting the Public Health Agency's recommendations felt daunting. I decided to start small and work up to them at my own pace.

I discovered that adding some “sweat sessions” to my weekly routine, even in small bouts, could make a big difference. I learned to play pickleball with my neighbours and joined an introductory yoga class (these count as moderate to vigorous aerobic and strengthening activities). Over time, we've improved our skills and enjoy longer games and I now practice yoga regularly as part of my weekly routine.

Moving more throughout the day turned out to be another key to my healthier lifestyle. I already did a variety of light physical activities such as sweeping the floor, washing dishes, raking leaves and doing yard work. It was fairly easy for me to step up and add more of these ‘beneficial’ movements and tasks to my daily routine (they can count as aerobic, strengthening, balance and flexibility exercises).

EVERYDAY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Consider how you can incorporate more physical activity into your daily routine.

- ☐ Hanging laundry to dry on the clothes line
- ☐ Lifting soup cans while listening to the radio
- ☐ Taking the stairs instead of the elevator at my doctor's office
- ☐ Walking or wheeling to the mailbox
- ☐ Finding a neighbourhood walking partner for after supper strolls
- ☐ Parking the car farther from store entrances to allow for more steps
- ☐ Carrying my groceries home or to my car instead of using a cart
- ☐ Trying to balance on one foot while brushing my teeth
- ☐ Taking stretch breaks during meetings or while reading
- ☐ Preparing healthy meals from scratch
- ☐ Standing up during commercial breaks while watching TV
- ☐ Planting seeds and tending to my garden
- ☐ Tidying up my house
- ☐ Not using the remote control for the TV
- ☐ Dancing to music while waiting for a friend to pick me up
- ☐ Setting up play dates with my grandchildren
- ☐ Taking my neighbour's dog for a walk
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

JUDY

I also encouraged my friends and family to get active with me. My favourite new hobby is gardening with my granddaughter.

EXPERT TIPS:

- ▶ To maintain your strength and confidence on stairways, practice by holding onto the railing and stepping up and down on your bottom step (20 times).
- ▶ To maintain mobility and increase strength, practice sitting down on a chair and standing back up (10 times) each day in your own home.



WORKSHEET

Use the **First Steps Planning Worksheet** included in this Toolkit to help you determine the easiest ways to increase your daily physical activity.



WORKSHEETS

Use the **Physical Activity Log** included in this Toolkit to keep track of your progress.

Use the **Physical Activity Bingo Game** included in this Toolkit for physical activity ideas and inspiration.

JUDY

I kept track of my progress using a physical activity log, and increased my activity levels by gardening, doing some yoga videos online and walking more often. I tried to stay motivated and think positively about my journey, but it was challenging at first. However, I adopted a positive approach to healthy living.

My past accomplishments were a stepping stone to my current level of activity. I had good experiences in the past and I believed that I could be successful in my efforts. Even when I was discouraged, positive thinking helped me manage my stress and figure out a plan to overcome the obstacles. Positive thinking helped me stay on track.

My positive sense of well-being came from:

- ▶ being able to identify and use my strengths to meet my personal goals and encourage my family and neighbours;
- ▶ from having choices in how I set and tried to achieve my goals; and
- ▶ by having satisfying and supportive relationships with family and friends.

Keeping a positive outlook on life is easier when things are going well. Positive thinking may be easier when you feel strong, capable of influencing your environment or life situation, and when you have supportive relationships. When you are facing challenges, it is possible to intentionally redirect your focus on positive thinking, but it takes practice. Here are some tips to get started:

- ▶ Feel – Listen to your body and acknowledge your feelings. Then, take a moment to think about how you might express them in a healthy way.
- ▶ Accept – Accept who you are as a person, as a friend, and as a community member.
- ▶ Practice Gratitude – Appreciate the things in your life that make you grateful.
- ▶ Set Goals – create an action plan which includes specific steps that will help you reach your goals.
- ▶ Enjoy – Participate in activities that make you happy and savour the moment. Motivate other people to get involved in such activities.
- ▶ Share Knowledge – Inspire others with stories of your accomplishments and the ways you learned how to overcome difficulties.
- ▶ Be Generous – Think about how you can enhance the quality of life for the people around you. You can inspire, help, connect and empower others.⁵

DID YOU KNOW?

When a person is mentally fit, they are more resilient (able to cope with challenges) and able to make healthier choices. There is a resource entitled *Inspired and Well - A Toolkit for Seniors* that you might find helpful along the way.





JUDY

Positive thinking helped me stay on track. I soon discovered that friends and family were another great source of inspiration and motivation. Ultimately, it was the support of my daughter and a few close friends that kept me on track and saw me through to the day I danced the night away at my granddaughter's wedding.

Here are some tips to ensure that these social supports are in place:

1. Identify your support group
 - ▶ Do you have family or friends you can talk to about your lifestyle changes?
 - ▶ Do you have a “buddy” who you can talk to about your goals or achievements – better yet can your “buddy” join you on your journey?
2. Join an activity-based group or form your own
 - ▶ Talk to family and friends who may have interest in the activity (e.g. walking, bowling, etc.)
 - ▶ Find a time of day everyone agrees on
 - ▶ Hold each other accountable
 - ▶ Make it fun by including challenges or themes for the activity
3. Join a health/wellness centre or community club
 - ▶ Join a centre or club where you feel comfortable. Ask a friend or family member to go with you for the first time.
 - ▶ Form a buddy system. Invite a friend or even make a new one at the centre or club.
 - ▶ Participate in group classes. Check-in with your community to see what opportunities are available outside the centre or club.

JUDY

As I began to increase my commitment to physical activity and the intensity of my exercise, the following guidelines were important for me to keep in mind.⁶ I call them “Notes to my Active Self.”

Always warm-up:

- ▶ Spend 5 to 10 minutes preparing your heart and muscles for action.
- ▶ Start with a slow walk or jog and gradually increase the intensity of your activity.

Dress appropriately:

- ▶ Wear comfortable clothing and dress in layers so that you can remove or add items as you warm up or cool down.
- ▶ Your shoes should fit well, provide support and have a non-slip sole.
- ▶ In hot weather, wear light clothing, sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat.
- ▶ In cold weather, avoid wearing cotton next to your skin. Instead, layer with fleece or wool and an outer layer that protects you from rain, wind and snow. Wear a hat and gloves to help prevent heat loss.

Avoid temperature extremes:

- ▶ In extremely hot, cold or wet weather, choose indoor facilities, like malls or indoor tracks, for safe walking.

Eat moderately:

- ▶ If you plan to exercise within the next two hours, snack lightly on something like fruit or yogurt. Never exercise vigorously right after a full meal.

Stay hydrated:

- ▶ Drink plenty of water before, during and after you exercise to avoid dehydration and increased risk of heat-related illnesses.

Safety first:

- ▶ Be aware of obstacles and fall risks on your walking route or in your activity space.
- ▶ If you're exercising outdoors in the morning or late in the evening, stay visible by carrying a flashlight, wearing light coloured clothing and a reflective vest or armband.
- ▶ If you're going out alone, bring a cell phone or let someone know of your plans ahead of time.

Allow for recovery:

- ▶ Make sure you allow your body adequate time to recover from intense activity.

Always cool-down:

- ▶ Your body must adjust from exercise to rest. Never sit or lie down immediately after vigorous activity. Stopping abruptly may cause dizziness.
- ▶ Walk slowly for 5 to 10 minutes before stretching any tight muscles.

Listen to your body:

- ▶ Signs you are overdoing it include pain or pressure in your chest, sudden dizziness, shortness of breath that prevents conversation during activity, cold sweats, nausea, heart palpitations and irregular heartbeat.
- ▶ If you notice any of these signs, STOP and REST immediately. If the symptom persists for longer than 10 minutes, call a friend for help or dial 9-1-1.

As you may have noticed, Judy's journey toward a more active lifestyle has been about more than her individual lifestyle choices. It was shaped by the people around her and the places she lives, learns and spends her free time. Just like a tree, she needed the right conditions in order to thrive.



HAVE FUN!

DID YOU KNOW?

New Brunswick has launched an Age-Friendly Initiative. Many municipalities, communities and organizations in our province are working to create age-friendly and supportive environments that can help you on your path towards a more active, healthy and happy life.

A whole collection of resources and tools are available to you. Start your journey today!

REFERENCES

1. Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology. *Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults*
www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP_PAGuidelines_older-adults_en.pdf

Ontario Physical and Health Education Association. *Physical Activity Promotion for Older Adults: A Step by Step Guide*
www.ophea.net/product/physical-activity-promotion-older-adults-step-step-guide

Public Health Agency of Canada. *Benefits of Physical Activity*
www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/healthy-living/physical-activity/benefits-physical-activity.html
2. Canadian Sport for Life. *Active for Life: Durable by Design*
www.sportforlife.ca/portfolio-view/active-for-life-durable-by-design
3. Sport for Life Society & Physical Literacy for Life. *Physical Literacy*
www.physicalliteracy.ca
4. Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology. *Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults*
www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP_PAGuidelines_older-adults_en.pdf
5. The Wellness Movement. *Inspired and Well: A Toolkit for Seniors*
www.wellnessnb.ca/seniors
6. Saskatoon Health Region. *Forever...in motion: Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Resource*
www.in-motion.ca/uploads/tools/Resource_Guide_2016.pdf

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Recreation NB. *NB PLAYS! Gold: A Resource for Quality Older Adult Programming*
www.nbplays.ca/gold-resource

Social Development. *Seniors' Guide to Services and Programs*
www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/sd-ds/pdf/Seniors/SeniorsGuide-e.pdf

The Wellness Movement. *Wellness Resources for Seniors*
www.wellnessnb.ca/seniors

- *Aging Well Seniors Toolkit*
- *Go Ahead Seniors*
- *Your Personal Passport to Healthy*

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FIRST STEPS PLANNING

- Write down two benefits you hope to gain from being more physically active.
 - _____
 - _____
- Think about some easy ways to increase your physical activity. Choose an option below or add your own.
 - ☐ Go for a walk after dinner
 - ☐ Follow an exercise video
 - ☐ Lift soup cans while watching TV
 - ☐ _____
- To start, try to this activity just once.

Day: _____ Activity: _____

- Reflect on the day. Answer the questions below by circling the rating that applies. Add up the numbers you selected to get a score. If you score 6 or above, this physical activity may be a good one for you to start with. If you scored less than 6, consider another option.

	NOT AT ALL	A LITTLE	A LOT
Did you enjoy the activity?	1	2	3
Was the activity convenient?	1	2	3
Are you interested in adding the activity to your daily routine?	1	2	3

Total Score: _____

BARRIERS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Strategies to Overcome Barriers to Physical Activity	
BARRIER	SUGGESTION
Exercise is hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select simple activities (walking, climbing stairs, etc.) or try activities that play to your strengths (e.g. ability to swim – join a swimming club). Take on a new activity with a friend of the same caliber to learn new skills.
I do not have time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create time in small bouts or start by scheduling in 30 minutes once a week for activity. Add physical activity into your daily routine (lift soup cans while watching TV, etc.).
I am usually too tired for exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule physical activity for times in the day or week where you feel most energetic. Convince yourself that physical activity will give you more energy; then, try it.
I hate to fail, so I will not start.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical activity is not a test. Setting reasonable, realistic goals increases your chance of success.
I don't have anyone to work out with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite neighbours, friends or family members along your journey. Join a group in your community who are already doing physical activity (e.g. walking club).
I can't afford to join a gym.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify activities that require minimum facility or equipment. Consult your community guide (see references) to identify what programs are offered in your community.
I am afraid of being injured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to warm up and cool down properly. Choose activities involving minimum risk to start (walking). Choose a safe, well lighted area.

Strategies to Overcome Barriers to Physical Activity	
BARRIER	SUGGESTION
The weather is too bad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">You can do many activities in your home or in other indoor settings (e.g. at a shopping mall) in any weather.
Exercise is boring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some ways to make exercise more fun are: exercising with a companion, varying the exercise with the season, setting a non-exercise-related goal such as running an errand or two done in the course of it, or giving yourself a reward periodically for achieving your goals.
I am too old.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is never too late to start.People of every age benefit from increasing the amount of physical activity they participate in.

GOAL SETTING

Decide what you want to achieve and make goals based on these interests.

Goals can be set for different lengths of time:

- Long-Term: to be accomplished in 6 months to 2 years
- Short-Term: requires less than 6 months
- Weekly: goal of the week which leads to your short term goal
- Daily: what you will accomplish on a specific day

MY GOAL

Make your goal **SMART**:

SPECIFIC – What exactly will you accomplish?

MEASURABLE – How will you know (or others) when you have achieved your goal?

ADJUSTABLE – In case of a setback or progression, how will you adjust your goal?

REALISTIC, YET CHALLENGING – Is your goal moderately difficult? If not, please adjust it.

TIME-BASED – When will your goal be achieved?

This goal is important to me because...

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LOG

EXERCISE: Day:	AEROBIC (CARDIO)	FLEXIBILITY	STRENGTH	BALANCE
Monday	Walked for 25 minutes with John	Touched my toes 10 times	Lifted soup cans while listening to CBC	Brushed my teeth while standing on one foot
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BINGO GAME

Garden	Walk around the house	Lift soup cans 10x per arm	Stretch for 10 minutes during your favourite tv show	Talk to a friend about your goals
Do yoga	Lawn bowl	Sweep or vacuum the floor	Walk a dog	Mall walk
Go swimming	Mow the lawn (not on the tractor)	Your choice: any activities not on this list!	Use the stairs instead of the elevator	Play with grand-child or neighbour
Use a public walking trail	Join an activity group or fitness class	Park further away from store entrance	Try pickleball	Sit to stand from a chair 10x
Walk in place while watching a movie	Listen to music while walking around the neighbourhood	Balance on one foot while chatting on the phone	Dance to music in your living room	Drink eight glasses of water in one day

Physical activity improves your physical and mental health. Even small amounts of physical activity are good, and more is better.

For almost everyone, the benefits of physical activity far outweigh any risks. For some individuals, specific advice from a Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP – has post-secondary education in exercise sciences and an advanced certification in the area – see csep.ca/certifications) or health care provider is advisable. **This questionnaire is intended for all ages – to help move you along the path to becoming more physically active.**

- ☐ I am completing this questionnaire for myself.
- ☐ I am completing this questionnaire for my child/dependent as parent/guardian.

PREPARE TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE

The following questions will help to ensure that you have a safe physical activity experience. Please answer **YES** or **NO** to each question before you become more physically active. If you are unsure about any question, answer **YES**.

1 Have you experienced ANY of the following (A to F) **within the past six months**?

- A** A diagnosis of/treatment for heart disease or stroke, or pain/discomfort/pressure in your chest during activities of daily living or during physical activity?
- B** A diagnosis of/treatment for high blood pressure (BP), or a resting BP of 160/90 mmHg or higher?
- C** Dizziness or lightheadedness during physical activity?
- D** Shortness of breath at rest?
- E** Loss of consciousness/fainting for any reason?
- F** Concussion?

2 Do you currently have pain or swelling in any part of your body (such as from an injury, acute flare-up of arthritis, or back pain) that affects your ability to be physically active?

3 Has a health care provider told you that you should avoid or modify certain types of physical activity?

4 Do you have any other medical or physical condition (such as diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis, asthma, spinal cord injury) that may affect your ability to be physically active?

..... ➤ **NO** to all questions: go to Page 2 – ASSESS YOUR CURRENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ➤

YES to any question: go to Reference Document – ADVICE ON WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A YES RESPONSE ... ➤ ➤

ASSESS YOUR CURRENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Answer the following questions to assess how active you are now.

- 1 During a typical week, on how many days do you do moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity (such as brisk walking, cycling or jogging)? DAYS/
WEEK
 - 2 On days that you do at least moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity (e.g., brisk walking), for how many minutes do you do this activity? MINUTES/
DAY
- For adults, please multiply your average number of days/week by the average number of minutes/day: MINUTES/
WEEK

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity per week. For children and youth, at least 60 minutes daily is recommended. Strengthening muscles and bones at least two times per week for adults, and three times per week for children and youth, is also recommended (see csep.ca/guidelines).



GENERAL ADVICE FOR BECOMING MORE ACTIVE

Increase your physical activity gradually so that you have a positive experience. Build physical activities that you enjoy into your day (e.g., take a walk with a friend, ride your bike to school or work) and reduce your sedentary behaviour (e.g., prolonged sitting).

If you want to do **vigorous-intensity physical activity** (i.e., physical activity at an intensity that makes it hard to carry on a conversation), and you do not meet minimum physical activity recommendations noted above, consult a Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) beforehand. This can help ensure that your physical activity is safe and suitable for your circumstances.

Physical activity is also an important part of a healthy pregnancy.

Delay becoming more active if you are not feeling well because of a temporary illness.



DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge, all of the information I have supplied on this questionnaire is correct.
 If my health changes, I will complete this questionnaire again.

I answered **NO** to all questions on Page 1



Sign and date the Declaration below



I answered **YES** to any question on Page 1

Check the box below that applies to you:

- ☐ I have consulted a health care provider or Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) who has recommended that I become more physically active.
- ☐ I am comfortable with becoming more physically active on my own without consulting a health care provider or QEP.



Name (+ Name of Parent/Guardian if applicable) [Please print]

Signature (or Signature of Parent/Guardian if applicable)

Date of Birth

Date

Email (optional)

Telephone (optional)

With planning and support you can enjoy the benefits of becoming more physically active. A QEP can help.

- ☐ Check this box if you would like to consult a QEP about becoming more physically active.
 (This completed questionnaire will help the QEP get to know you and understand your needs.)

Use this reference document if you answered **YES** to any question and you have not consulted a health care provider or Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) about becoming more physically active.

1 Have you experienced ANY of the following (A to F) within the past six months?

<p>A A diagnosis of/treatment for heart disease or stroke, or pain/discomfort/pressure in your chest during activities of daily living or during physical activity?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	<p>Physical activity is likely to be beneficial. If you have been treated for heart disease but have not completed a cardiac rehabilitation program within the past 6 months, consult a doctor – a supervised cardiac rehabilitation program is strongly recommended. If you are resuming physical activity after more than 6 months of inactivity, begin slowly with light- to moderate-intensity physical activity. If you have pain/discomfort/pressure in your chest and it is new for you, talk to a doctor. Describe the symptom and what activities bring it on.</p>
<p>B A diagnosis of/treatment for high blood pressure (BP), or a resting BP of 160/90 mmHg or higher?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	<p>Physical activity is likely to be beneficial if you have been diagnosed and treated for high blood pressure (BP). If you are unsure of your resting BP, consult a health care provider or a Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) to have it measured. If you are taking BP medication and your BP is under good control, regular physical activity is recommended as it may help to lower your BP. Your doctor should be aware of your physical activity level so your medication needs can be monitored. If your BP is 160/90 or higher, you should receive medical clearance and consult a QEP about safe and appropriate physical activity.</p>
<p>C Dizziness or lightheadedness during physical activity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	<p>There are several possible reasons for feeling this way and many are not worrisome. Before becoming more active, consult a health care provider to identify reasons and minimize risk. Until then, refrain from increasing the intensity of your physical activity.</p>
<p>D Shortness of breath at rest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	<p>If you have asthma and this is relieved with medication, light to moderate physical activity is safe. If your shortness of breath is not relieved with medication, consult a doctor.</p>
<p>E Loss of consciousness/fainting for any reason</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	<p>Before becoming more active, consult a doctor to identify reasons and minimize risk. Once you are medically cleared, consult a Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) about types of physical activity suitable for your condition.</p>
<p>F Concussion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	<p>A concussion is an injury to the brain that requires time to recover. Increasing physical activity while still experiencing symptoms may worsen your symptoms, lengthen your recovery, and increase your risk for another concussion. A health care provider will let you know when you can start becoming more physically active, and a Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) can help get you started.</p>

After reading the ADVICE for your YES response, go to Page 2 of the *Get Active Questionnaire – ASSESS YOUR CURRENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY*

Use this reference document if you answered **YES** to any question and you have not consulted a health care provider or Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) about becoming more physically active.

2 Do you currently have pain or swelling in any part of your body (such as from an injury, acute flare-up of arthritis, or back pain) that affects your ability to be physically active?

☐ **YES**

If this swelling or pain is new, consult a health care provider. Otherwise, keep joints healthy and reduce pain by moving your joints slowly and gently through the entire pain-free range of motion. If you have hip, knee or ankle pain, choose low-impact activities such as swimming or cycling. As the pain subsides, gradually resume your normal physical activities starting at a level lower than before the flare-up. Consult a Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) in follow-up to help you become more active and prevent or minimize future pain.

3 Has a health care provider told you that you should avoid or modify certain types of physical activity?

☐ **YES**

Listen to the advice of your health care provider. A Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) will ask you about any considerations and provide specific advice for physical activity that is safe and that takes your lifestyle and health care provider's advice into account.

4 Do you have any other medical or physical condition (such as diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis, asthma, spinal cord injury) that may affect your ability to be physically active?

☐ **YES**

Some people may worry if they have a medical or physical condition that physical activity might be unsafe. In fact, regular physical activity can help to manage and improve many conditions. Physical activity can also reduce the risk of complications. A Qualified Exercise Professional (QEP) can help with specific advice for physical activity that is safe and that takes your medical history and lifestyle into account.

After reading the ADVICE for your YES response, go to Page 2 of the
Get Active Questionnaire – ASSESS YOUR CURRENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

WANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON BECOMING MORE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE?

► csep.ca/certifications

CSEP Certified members can help you with your physical activity goals.

► csep.ca/guidelines

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for all ages.