

# Physical Activity Promotion for Older Adults



A Step-by-Step Guide

## Acknowledgements

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Physical activity is an essential component of a healthy community, and promoting an active way of life is a critical strategy to help maintain health and quality of life as we age.

Municipal, provincial, and federal governments are facing the challenges of an aging population. The importance of physical activity for older adults is now undisputed, including the physiological, psychological, and social benefits and its impact on maintaining mobility and independence. Given the innumerable benefits of physical activity for the adult population, significant emphasis should be focused on physical activity promotion for this population.

This guide is intended for those who play an important role in promoting physical activity for older adults. It assists professionals in advocating and implementing physical activity programming for older adults by identifying the rationale for physical activity promotion and providing direction, practical tips, and resources to support health promotion efforts focused on promoting awareness, informing policy, and developing programs. The simple steps outlined in this guide are intended to support professionals in bringing change in policy and practice to enhance the health and well-being of older adults. Only through health promotion strategies will we be successful.



# Physical Activity Promotion for Older Adults: A Step-by-Step Guide

## Who Is an Older Adult?

While *age* is a relative term and a person's functional capacity can change at any age, generally an individual who is 65 years of age or older is considered an older adult.<sup>2</sup>

## Why Target Older Adults?

Our population is aging! In 2011, the first baby boomers reached 65 years of age, accelerating the aging of the Canadian population.

- By 2031, one in four Canadians will be older than 65 years of age.<sup>1</sup>
- The aging of the population will be one of the most significant social forces shaping our society for decades to come.<sup>1</sup>

## The Physical Inactivity Crisis

The benefits and resultant health outcomes of physical activity participation by older adults are well established, and physical activity is now identified as the single most important factor in maintaining independence. Despite being aware of the many benefits of physical activity, older adults are the most sedentary segment of the Canadian population.

- 60% of Canadians older than 65 years of age are inactive.<sup>2</sup>
- 69% of waking hours of older adults are spent performing sedentary activities such as television viewing, computer use, workplace sitting, and time spent in automobiles.<sup>3</sup>

## Physical Activity Is a Beneficial and Essential Investment

- The health care of older adults accounts for 44% of provincial health spending and 90% of expenditures in long-term care.<sup>4</sup>
- The estimated direct, indirect, and total health care costs of physical inactivity in Canada in 2009 were \$2.4 billion, \$4.3 billion, and \$6.8 billion, respectively. These values represented 3.8%, 3.6%, and 3.7% of overall health care costs.<sup>5</sup>
- Health care costs of population aging will be manageable only if the physical and mental health issues due to chronic diseases and injuries can be prevented or delayed to the end of life, that is, if there is a "compression of morbidity."<sup>4</sup>





### What Is Physical Activity?

**Physical activity** is movement that is intentional, voluntary, and directed toward achieving an identifiable goal. It can also refer to any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure.

Regular **exercise** is a type of planned physical activity performed to increase physical fitness (e.g., brisk walking, bicycling, swimming, rowing, etc.).

**Physical fitness** is a set of attributes a person has in regards to his or her ability to perform physical activities that require aerobic fitness, endurance, strength, or flexibility.

As we age, the type of physical activities we may be concerned with are activities of daily living or being able to maintain our functional capacity to continue participation in the activities we enjoy doing. Often, in an older adult population, this is referred to as **functional fitness**.

### It's Never Too Late to Become Physically Active!

- It is never too late to become more active; people of any age and even those who have never been active can benefit from becoming active.
- For people who are active, even more health benefits can be gained from increasing physical activity.
- Studies have shown that under proper supervision, even frail older adults and those with chronic illness can safely participate and benefit from exercise.

### What Kind of Physical Activity Should Older Adults Do for Optimal Health and Fitness?

Physical activity recommendations for older Canadians come from evidence-based sources<sup>6</sup> and reflect the type and amount of physical activity needed to have a **meaningful** impact on health and function as we age.

For more information on the *Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults*, visit [www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca).

For tips on how to use the guidelines, visit [www.uwo.ca/actage](http://www.uwo.ca/actage) and click the "Research" tab. In the right-hand menu, scroll over "Get Fit for Active Living!" and click "General Information." Under "What Kind of Exercise Do I Need...?" click the link to download the CCAA brochure.

### Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults

Older adults need to accumulate **150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity** aerobic physical activity per week!<sup>6</sup>

- It is also beneficial to add muscle- and bone-strengthening activities using major muscle groups at least two days a week.
- Those with poor mobility should perform balance activities to enhance stability and prevent falls.

# Steps to Physical Activity Promotion for Older Adults

Physical activity promotion for older adults can take a variety of forms. Whether your role focuses on implementing physical activity programming, supporting professionals providing physical activity programming, or developing policies that encourage and enable active lifestyles, an action plan and readily available resources will enable you to promote physical activity to older adults. Below are some steps to consider.

- 1. Understand and communicate the benefits of physical activity for older adults.**
- 2. Identify and use existing resources.**
- 3. Identify barriers and solutions for physical activity for your target population.**
- 4. Develop and implement action plans.**
- 5. Evaluate successes and identify areas for improvement.**

## STEP 1: Understand and Communicate the Benefits of Physical Activity for Older Adults

The basis of physical activity promotion is establishing a knowledge base of the many benefits of physical activity and sharing this information with the target population. There are physiological, psychological, and social benefits of being active for every age group across the lifespan.

Specific benefits of physical activity for older adults include:

- continued or new participation in favourite activities,
- engagement in communities,
- maintenance of independence and postponed functional loss associated with aging,
- decreased use of health care,
- prevention and maintenance of chronic disease,
- treatment of arthritis,
- reduced risk of obesity and muscle loss,
- social interaction, and
- promotion of positive mental health.

Strong evidence indicates that physical activity (in particular, exercise) reduces the risk of more than 25 chronic conditions (a majority of which are adult-onset in nature), including:

- coronary heart disease,
- stroke,
- hypertension,
- breast cancer,
- colon cancer,
- type 2 diabetes, and
- and osteoporosis.<sup>7</sup>

Communicating and bringing awareness to the numerous benefits associated with being an active older adult is an important element of successful health promotion initiatives. Effective communication strategies for this audience often involve messages that are developed for the specific age group within the older adult age spectrum, engage peer role models in communications, provide examples of peer success stories, and use health care professionals in communicating the message.

Following *Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults* will translate into a 30% reduction in the risk of losing independence, premature death, and morbidity, with greater physical activity levels resulting in a 60% reduction in risk.<sup>6</sup>

Many local, national, and international organizations, public health units, and the fitness profession recognize and promote the role of physical activity for healthy aging. Many of these organizations have existing resources and action plans that are available to assist with promoting physical activity to older adults.

Below are some tips to help identify and access existing local and provincial resources and organizations.

#### Contact Local Partners and Networks

- Local health units and municipal networks now have focused physical activity departments or resources, often developed for their own communities.
- Become familiar with and promote existing community-wide or national campaigns. Such campaigns often have sustained high visibility, which have the greatest potential to affect physical activity levels. These campaigns often include materials that can be used in your community.

#### Take a Multi-Level Approach

- Take a multi-level approach to physical activity promotion by using not only mass media messages but also by providing local links to community-based physical activity events and lists of local opportunities for physical activity, including

recreation facilities and physical activity counselling services. Finally, engage policy makers to assist in physical activity promotion efforts.

#### Use Current, Best Evidence-Based Practice to Inform Your Initiatives

- Evidence-based practice is the conscientious use of current, best evidence in making decisions about the delivery of health services. Current, best evidence is up-to-date information from relevant, valid research sources.
- Look for resources that are based on quality research and/or that have been developed by consensus groups of recognized and certified organizations.
- Link with certified professionals or organizations for expertise, such as certified exercise physiologists who are available to chat through the Physical Activity Line ([www.physicalactivityline.com](http://www.physicalactivityline.com)).

#### Identify and Partner with Physical Activity Champions and Experts

- Enlist older adults who are active in their communities to serve as peer-to-peer champions of physical activity.
- Increase the visibility of older adult role models by engaging active older adults in presentations to organizations and participants.

There are many issues related to why some individuals are not active or have a harder time becoming more active.

## STEP 2: Identify and Use Existing Resources

An easily accessible, low-cost, familiar, and effective activity for older adults is walking. Consider implementing PARC's Walk This Way program, available on the "Resources" page at [parc.ophea.net](http://parc.ophea.net).

The **Resources** section of this guide lists useful evidence-based resources, websites, and organizations for physical activity promotion for older adults.

## STEP 3:

### Identify Barriers and Solutions for Physical Activity for Your Target Population

In order to develop strategies to assist those who work with older adults or older adults themselves in getting and staying active, it is useful to take a look at the determinants of physical activity participation and the barriers or reasons why older adults do not exercise.

Determinants of physical activity in the older adult population can be categorized into four areas that should be considered during physical activity promotion strategies, including:

1. personal factors,
2. social determinants,
3. program- or regimen-based factors, and
4. environmental factors.

Each determinant is discussed and suggestions for facilitation are included in **Figure 2** on page 11.

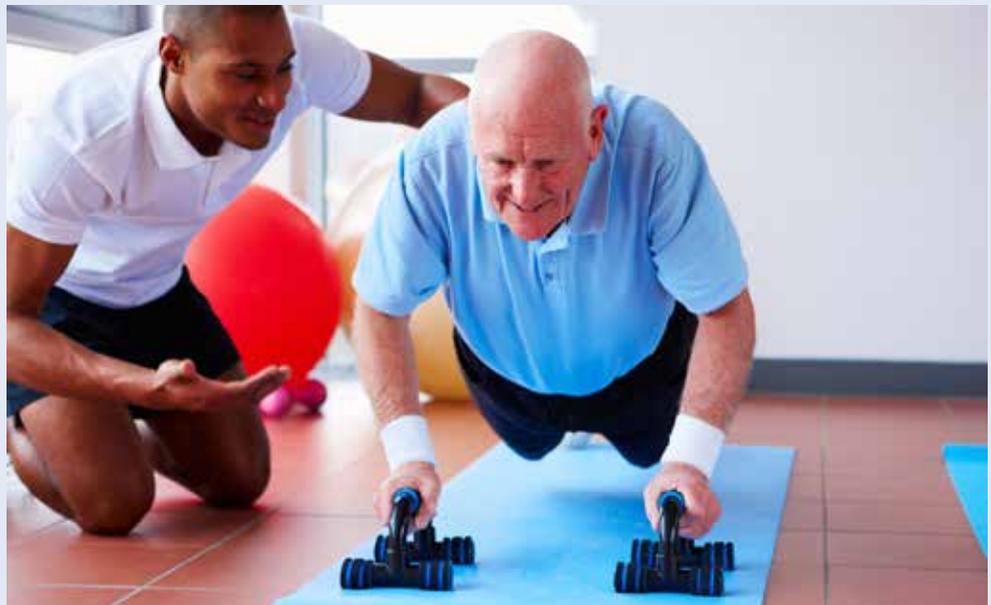
## STEP 4:

### Develop and Implement Action Plans

The action steps below will allow for the assessment of attitudes, resources, needs, and barriers and will determine the feasibility and development of physical activity promotion. Physical activity promotion for older adults requires a cross-cutting approach involving many stakeholders, including policy makers, service and health care providers, and program participants, whose roles will entail varying approaches to fostering physical activity promotion.

#### Identify Your Role Along the Physical Activity Promotion Spectrum

- Are you responsible for planning or implementing older adult physical activity programs or providing support to professionals who implement physical activity programs?
- Are you responsible for informing policy or advocating for older adult physical activity programming?



Depending on your role, **Figure 1** provides some considerations for developing and implementing action plans for planning a physical activity program or advocating and informing policy for older adult physical activity in your community.

## Figure 1. Action Steps for Physical Activity Promotion by Role

### Developing, Implementing or Supporting Older Adult Physical Activity Programming

- Assess your target population, facilities, and equipment available as you plan your readiness for offering programming to meet *Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults*.
- Assess the qualifications of staff who will be implementing the programming and encourage certifications and continued education in the area of physical activity and aging. Also include staff in the planning process and encourage their role in promoting physical activity.
- Get to know your target population. Survey the population, keeping in mind the determinants and challenges of physical activity, and choose the most appropriate type of programming and to enhance program uptake and keep adherence levels high.
- Establish specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic goals within a time frame for your target audience. Include a continued support system to increase uptake and long-term adherence.
- Advertise and create a supportive atmosphere for physical activity programming within your organization.
- Essential to any promotion initiative is the establishment of steps to evaluate the effectiveness of your program. Evaluation should be built into your program during the planning process to ensure effective results. See **Step 5** for more information on evaluation.

### Advocating and Informing Policy for Older Adult Physical Activity

- Collaborate with existing partners to inform your promotion strategy and develop the most effective, appropriate, and sustainable/feasible programming. Finding a way to connect local decision makers, service providers, and community leaders around a unifying agenda can make a significant difference in sustaining initiatives with the need of little funding or effort.
- Encourage the exchange and development of best practices.
- Build the capacity of knowledgeable stakeholders, health professionals, and fitness leaders in the area of physical activity and aging by creating opportunities for those in your organization to learn about the vital role of physical activity to the health of older adults, the issues related to increasing physical activity levels, and opportunities for appropriate standardized training and/or certification to work with older adults.
- Promote and support more robust health policies by highlighting the need to advocate for further research that quantifies the causal links between physical activity and intersecting health topics.

To assist in advocating for policy change, PARC provides a comprehensive and easy-to-follow Policy Workbook. Go to [parc.ophea.net](http://parc.ophea.net), click the "Resources" tab, then in the left-hand menu click "Policy Workbook."

## STEP 5:

Evaluate  
Successes  
and Identify  
Areas for  
Improvement

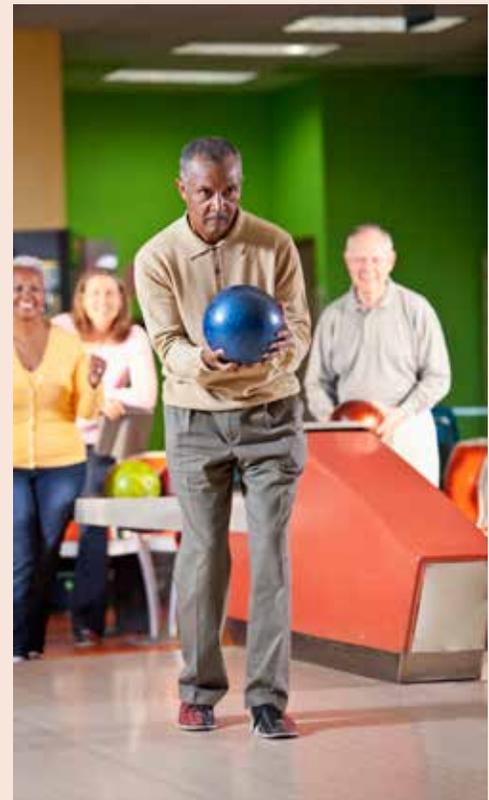
Not only will program evaluation allow you to assess if your physical activity programming is effective, but it will also assist you in identifying issues related to the adoption, implementation, and sustainability of your older adult physical activity programs.

Program evaluation applies to documenting changes in physical activity levels and fitness changes. It also applies to institutional factors and processes involved in the planning and implementation of programs. Various frameworks are available to assist you in incorporating program evaluation into your initiative. RE-AIM (see **Resources**) is one framework that considers evaluation in five areas and associates tools and resources to support implementation. The five evaluation areas include:

1. **Reach:** Tracking the rate of participation within the target population and identifying the characteristics of participants versus non-participants in effort to understand the potential barriers associated with participation.
2. **Effectiveness:** Assessment of the impact of an initiative on identified outcomes.
3. **Adoption:** Identifying the extent of interest in or adoption of the identified initiative by health

professionals. In other words, tracking the representativeness of health professionals who implement the physical activity promotion initiative.

4. **Implementation:** Observation of how the initiative is being implemented in comparison to how it was intended to be executed in effort to understand where changes can be made to the initiative.
5. **Maintenance:** Assessment of how well behaviour change efforts of participants hold up in the long term, as well as the long-term assessment of the extent to which the initiative is being implemented by health professionals.



Increasing the physical activity levels of older adults can be a challenging task. However, the overwhelming benefit to older adults makes it a worthwhile investment of time and resources. It's time to take action! The key to success lies in putting into action the evidence about the benefits of physical activity with effective promotion strategies.

## Figure 2. Physical Activity Promotion Challenges and Strategies

| Physical Activity Promotion Challenges and Strategies  |   |
|--|---|
| Barriers   | Physical Activity Promotion Strategies  |
| <p><b>Age</b><br/>Physical activity levels decline as we age; in particular, those older than the age of 80 years are the least active age group.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce that physical activity can be engaged in safely at any age.</li> <li>• Use the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire Plus (PAR-Q+) in the <b>Resources</b> section to assess if your clients are able to safely start an exercise program. Physical activity is safe for most people, and this questionnaire will determine if advice from a physician or qualified exercise specialist is necessary before a client becomes more physically active.</li> <li>• Reinforce that activities can be modified to address all issues related to function in the oldest older adults. Consider engaging qualified exercise specialists during communications.</li> <li>• Encourage addition of effective exercise programs in long-term care facilities and home-care services.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Gender</b><br/>Older women are the most sedentary segment of the population.</p> <p>Older women are often primary caregivers and therefore do not have time or do not want to commit time for their own health.</p> <p>Older women for whom aspects of their faith rule on activities among the genders and dress code requirements are less likely to participate in physical activity.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider societal, cultural, and time issues related to low participation in older women when planning physical activity programs and policies.</li> <li>• Emphasize the benefits of personal health and assist caregivers with access to convenient opportunities such as home-based programs, with electronic/telephone-based consultations for support.</li> <li>• Engage cultural organizations to advise on cultural sensitivities related to physical activity programming.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Subgroups</b><br/>Some subgroups are often associated with lower levels of physical activity (e.g., individuals with depression and those who are isolated tend to be less physically active).</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce physical activity as a mechanism to promote positive mental health and social inclusion.</li> <li>• Emphasize that regular participation in physical activities can decrease the symptoms of depression and anxiety in older adults and result in psychosocial benefits as well. Participating in physical activities with others can boost feelings of support, belonging, and positivity—feelings that are integral for mental well-being.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Psychosocial Factors</b><br/>Older adults often have low confidence or self-efficacy in their ability to plan and participate in physical activity, which can greatly influence their participation.</p> <p>An older adult's motivation to participate in physical activity is greatly influenced by the benefit they believe they will get out of being physically active.</p>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assist in changing the behaviour of older adults, successful programs need to incorporate strategies that:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase knowledge of the vital role of physical activity plays in one's health and function,</li> <li>• provide information on the theory and practice of how to exercise safely, and</li> <li>• provide assistance in setting goals and maintaining motivation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |

| Barriers            |   | Physical Activity Promotion Strategies  |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Personal Factors    | <p><b>Chronic Conditions</b><br/>Many older adults will have at least one chronic condition, and many will fear that physical activity is unsafe.</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize the benefits of physical activity in preventing and managing chronic conditions.</li> <li>• Provide examples of how exercise helped to improve the condition or quality of life of older adult peers.</li> <li>• Recommend consulting with qualified exercise specialists to increase confidence in participating in physical activity.</li> <li>• Emphasize that all physical activities can be modified to accommodate various chronic conditions.</li> <li>• Promote resources that explain the appropriate type of exercise for each chronic condition.</li> </ul>   |
|                     | <p><b>Time Issues</b><br/>Similar to other age groups, older adults identify time as a significant barrier to exercise.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend scheduling an appointment to be physically active or incorporating physical activity into current interests (e.g., dog walking, shopping, socializing, etc.).</li> <li>• Develop or recommend home-based programs that do not require travel.</li> <li>• Emphasize that incorporating short bouts of daily physical activity is better than not engaging in any activity at all.</li> <li>• Identify strategies to incorporate physical activity into smaller 10-minute time frames (e.g., take the stairs in buildings, park farther away from the destination).</li> </ul>                                   |
| Social Determinants | <p><b>Cultural Influences</b><br/>Even when controlling for education and socioeconomic status, older adults of marginalized ethnic groups have lower physical activity levels.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research or develop culturally appropriate physical activities.</li> <li>• Engage cultural organizations to advise on cultural sensitivities related to physical activity programming.</li> <li>• Advocate for women’s only facilities.</li> </ul>   |
|                     | <p><b>Socioeconomic Status</b><br/>As with many health issues, those of lower income often have lower physical activity levels.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage increased levels of physical activity in disadvantaged groups to assist in reducing health inequalities and narrow the health gap.</li> <li>• Identify and promote activities that are just as effective but do not need expensive equipment or gym memberships (e.g., home-based programs, walking for exercise).</li> <li>• Advocate for increased access to facilities and opportunities in low-income and underserved areas.</li> <li>• Recruit volunteers to provide recreation services. Contact local colleges/universities to provide volunteer opportunities to new fitness professionals.</li> </ul> |

|                                  | Barriers   | Physical Activity Promotion Strategies   |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Social Determinants              | <p><b>Social Support</b><br/>For many older adults, a lack of social support is identified as a significant barrier to physical activity. However, the level and source of social support required for those initiating and maintaining physical activity programs can vary from individual to individual.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the whole family to get involved and participate in physical activity together.</li> <li>• Recommend involving a fitness buddy to increase accountability.</li> <li>• Encourage primary care physicians to promote and prescribe physical activity. Physicians are seen as a highly credible source of information and are aware of a person's medical history.</li> <li>• Provide physicians with sources for referral (e.g., local public health unit, community health centres, certified exercise specialists, etc.).</li> <li>• Incorporate continued long-term contact, counselling, and support into your programming. Support can come in many forms and can be chosen to best suit each individual. Engage participants to determine which form of support to incorporate into your program (e.g., face-to-face meetings, telephone chats, Internet-based website tracking, etc.)</li> </ul> |
|                                  | <p><b>Cost</b><br/>As older adults are often on a limited budget, the cost of a program is a very important consideration.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek funding opportunities or subsidies to support a program.</li> <li>• Recruit volunteers to provide recreation services. Contact local colleges/universities to provide volunteer opportunities to new fitness professionals.</li> <li>• Identify and promote activities that are just as effective but do not need expensive equipment or gym memberships (e.g., home-based programs, walking for exercise).</li> <li>• Advocate for increased access to facilities and opportunities in low-income and underserved areas.</li> </ul>   |
|                                  | <p><b>Location</b><br/>Just as with younger adults, the location of opportunities to be physically active can influence a person's participation.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Factors such as convenience, aesthetics of facilities or parks, and ease of parking should be taken into consideration in planning new and assessing existing programs.</li> <li>• Consider places where older adults may already gather (e.g., places of worship, community centres, etc.) to increase convenience and appeal of a location.</li> </ul>  |
| Program or Regimen Based Factors | <p><b>Program Type</b><br/>Involvement in physical activity programming will greatly depend on the type of program offered and the individuals' interests and goals.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on individually tailored programming to address multiple barriers related to engaging older adults in physical activity (e.g., transportation, time preferences, schedules, etc.).</li> <li>• Take into account the qualifications and characteristics of fitness leaders, as these factors may influence the initiation or maintenance of a physical activity program.</li> <li>• Consider engaging community partners in facilitating a physical activity passport campaign to allow individuals to try different activities. Finding activities that suit individual needs and interests is essential in keeping older adults motivated and active.</li> <li>• Invest time into keeping an up-to-date resource of available options for older adults in your community (e.g., list of local pools and swim times).</li> </ul>  |

| Barriers              |  | Physical Activity Promotion Strategies   |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Environmental Factors | <p><b>Setting</b><br/>The location of the physical activity program can greatly influence an individual's motivation to be active, and not all older adults prefer to be active in the same settings.</p>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize that effective programming has been shown in a variety of settings for older adults (e.g., fitness facilities, community parks, individual homes).</li> <li>• Make clients aware that home-based programs can be just as effective as group fitness programs or fitness facility memberships.</li> <li>• Tailor programs to meet the needs of participants.</li> <li>• Offer programs that incorporate a multi-setting approach to suit the needs and preferences of participants.</li> </ul>   |
|                       | <p><b>Awareness</b><br/>Not all older adults are aware of the vast benefits of physical activity.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical activity messaging may not be as prominent in all communities or within areas of communities or be relevant enough to incur a change in behaviour.</li> <li>• Choose awareness campaigns targeted to your audience for maximum effectiveness.</li> <li>• Partner with organizations, seniors groups, older adult peer role models, and/or health professionals who can assist in increasing awareness.</li> <li>• Incorporate action steps that older adults can take to become physically active into awareness campaigns.</li> </ul> |
|                       | <p><b>Built Environment</b><br/>Many neighbourhood areas are not accessible and are not designed with activity in mind. Inaccessibility may influence an older adult's decision to participate in physical activity.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take into account issues that may deter older adults when choosing where and when programming is located and scheduled (e.g., some older adults may feel vulnerable to traffic or crime).</li> <li>• Support improved access to places that older adults can be active, such as walking trails, bike paths, and classes at fitness facilities or senior centres.</li> <li>• Advocate for age-friendly, inclusive communities to allow for increased physical activity.</li> </ul>   |
|                       | <p><b>Transportation/Accessibility</b><br/>Many older adults have limited access to transportation, making participation in facility-based physical activity difficult.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage a transportation buddy system.</li> <li>• Identify public transit options and special service options. Many cities offer specialized transit services for older adults with mobility issues.</li> <li>• Arrange for transportation alternatives for older adults with limited mobility or safety concerns or during the winter months.</li> <li>• Encourage home-based programming and establish online communities for a sense of group belonging or incorporate telephone consultations for added social support.</li> </ul>        |
|                       | <p><b>Rural Settings</b><br/>Older adults in rural settings may experience a variety of additional challenges when engaging in physical activity, such as transportation and safety issues and program availability.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider home-based programs with occasional gatherings in community settings and establish online communities for a sense of group belonging.</li> <li>• Encourage older adults to participate in outdoor physical activities in groups or pairs for safety reasons.</li> </ul>  |

## Resources For Promoting Physical Activity for Older Adults

### **Active Living Coalition for Older Adults (ALCOA)**

ALCOA is a partnership of Canadian organizations and individuals interested in the field of aging that encourages older Canadians to maintain and enhance their well-being and independence through a lifestyle that embraces daily physical activities. ALCOA produces resources that take cutting-edge and practical research results in the field of physical activity and older adults and presents them in plain language for health practitioners, leaders, and older adults.

[www.alcoa.ca](http://www.alcoa.ca)

### **ALCOA Research Updates**

The ALCOA Research Updates take cutting-edge and practical research results in the field of physical activity and older adults and present them in plain language for health practitioners, leaders, and older adults.

[www.alcoa.ca](http://www.alcoa.ca)

### **Age-Friendly Communities**

#### **Public Health Agency of Canada**

A description of the policies, services, and structures related to the physical and social environment that are designed to help seniors “age actively.” Visit [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca). In the right-hand “Information for” menu, choose “Seniors” and click “Go.” In the right-hand “Aging & Seniors” column, double-click “Age-Friendly Communities.”

### **Canadian Best Practices Portal**

#### **Public Health Agency of Canada**

Resources to assist in planning programs that promote physical activity. Visit [www.cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca). Scroll over the “Public Health Topics” tab and click “Physical Activity.”

### **Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults Fact Sheet**

#### **Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP)**

This CSEP fact sheet outlines the recommended level of physical activity for older adults to achieve health benefits and improve functional abilities. Visit [www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca). At the bottom of the page, click “Link to the Canadian Guidelines.” Scroll to “Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults 65 years and older” and choose your preferred format (online or PDF).

### **Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults**

#### **Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging**

This brochure provides a description of the *Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults* and activities to achieve the recommended levels of physical activity. Visit [www.uwo.ca/actage](http://www.uwo.ca/actage) and click the “Research” tab. In the right-hand menu, scroll over “Get Fit for Active Living!” and click “General Information.” Under “What Kind of Exercise Do I Need...?” click the link to download the brochure.

### **Exercise Is Medicine**

Effective tools and resources for using exercise as a “medicine” to help prevent or manage many of the most common chronic health conditions.

[www.exerciseismedicine.org](http://www.exerciseismedicine.org)

## Resources For Promoting Physical Activity for Older Adults

### **Get Fit for Active Living Program—Facilitator Training**

#### **Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging**

An additional training program for individuals designated with the Seniors Fitness Instructor Certification to deliver the Get Fit for Active Living (GFAL) workshop. The GFAL workshop is an eight-week education and exercise program designed to introduce older adults to the benefits of exercise and an active lifestyle.

[www.ccaa-outreach.com](http://www.ccaa-outreach.com)

### **Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide World Health Organization (WHO)**

This guide seeks to engage cities to become more age-friendly so as to tap the potential that older people represent for humanity. Visit [www.who.int](http://www.who.int). Click the “Publications” tab, type “global age-friendly cities guide” into the Search window, then click the download link.

### **Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care**

Through its “Healthy Living” link, the ministry encourages involvement in sport, recreation, and physical activity for the health, social, and economic benefit of Ontarians and the communities in which they live.

[www.mhp.gov.on.ca](http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca)

### **Physical Activity and Aging Resource Guide**

#### **Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging and Physical Activity Resource Centre**

A guide to better understanding physical activity and aging and becoming an advocate for older adult physical activity in your community.

<http://parc.ophea.net/resources>

### **Physical Activity Readiness Medical Examination (ePARmed-X+)**

#### **Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP)**

PARmed-X is a four-page physical activity–specific checklist to be used by a physician with clients who have had positive responses to the PAR-Q+.

<http://parmedx.appspot.com>

### **Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire Plus (PAR-Q+)**

#### **Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP)**

A simple checklist to assist you and your clients in ensuring it’s safe to start or increase physical activity. Go to [www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca), click the “Publications” tab. In the right-hand column under “PAR-Q forms,” click your language preference and download the form.

### **Physical Activity Tips for Older Adults**

#### **Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)**

PHAC promotes and protects the health of Canadians through leadership, partnership, innovation, and action in public health with a mission of healthy Canadians and communities in a healthier world. PHAC provides tips to help you improve and maintain your health by being physically active every day.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

## Resources For Promoting Physical Activity for Older Adults

### **RE-AIM**

**Russ Glasgow, Shawn Boles, and Tom Vogt**

A five-step framework to implement program evaluation for your physical activity initiative.

[www.re-aim.org](http://www.re-aim.org)

### **Seniors Fitness Instructor Certification**

**Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA)**

Provider of evidence-based certifications for older adult fitness, CCAA offers this certification program for anyone who wants to learn how to design and lead effective fitness classes for older adults.

[www.ccaa-outreach.com](http://www.ccaa-outreach.com)

### **The National Blueprint: Increasing Physical Activity Among Adults Aged 50 and Older**

**American College of Sports Medicine, Active Aging Partnership**

A U.S.-based guide for organizations, associations, and agencies to plan strategies to help people 50 years of age and older increase their physical activity based on the input from a coalition of national organizations.

[www.agingblueprint.org](http://www.agingblueprint.org)

## Resources To Achieve Fitness and Health at Any Age!

### **eaTracker**

#### **Dietitians of Canada**

eaTracker is an online program to help clients set goals, keep track of nutrition and exercise progress, and keep motivated.

[www.eatracker.ca](http://www.eatracker.ca)

### **Go4Life**

#### **National Institute of Aging at the National Institute of Health**

A U.S.-based exercise and physical activity campaign designed to help incorporate exercise and physical activity into daily life. *Go4Life* provides great tips and stories about older adult fitness. This site also has tip sheets and materials to share with clients.

[go4life.nia.nih.gov](http://go4life.nia.nih.gov)

### **ParticipACTION**

ParticipACTION is the national voice of physical activity and sport participation in Canada. Through leadership in communications, capacity building, and knowledge exchange, ParticipACTION inspires and supports Canadians to move more.

[www.participaction.com](http://www.participaction.com)

### **Physical Activity Line (PAL)**

PAL is a *free* phone line and online resource to active, healthy living. PAL provides evidenced-based resources to support health professionals and community health and fitness programs. PAL also provides support to individuals to become more physically active and lead healthier lifestyles.

[www.physicalactivityline.com](http://www.physicalactivityline.com)

## References

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- <sup>3</sup> Colley, R. C., Garriguet, D., Janssen, I., Craig, C. L., Clarke, J., & Tremblay, M. S. (2011, March). Physical activity of Canadian adults: Accelerometer results from the 2007 to 2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey. *Health Reports*, 22(1), 7-14.
- <sup>4</sup> *Healthy aging in Canada: A new vision, a vital investment*. (2007, December). A discussion brief prepared for the federal, provincial and territorial committee of officials (seniors).
- <sup>5</sup> Janssen, I. (2012, August). Health care costs of physical inactivity in Canadian adults. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*, 37(4), 803-6.
- <sup>6</sup> Paterson, D. H., & Warburton, D. E. (2010, MAY 11). Physical activity and functional limitations in older adults: A systematic review related to Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 11(7), 38.
- <sup>7</sup> Warburton, D. E., Nicol, C., & Bredin, S. S. (2006). Health benefits of physical activity: The evidence. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 174, 801-9.

