



Work Better

in Active Spaces & Places

Toolkit

Everything gets better when you get active.



Move Better, Think Better, Focus Better At Work.



To help employers and employees create a more active workplace, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has teamed up with ParticipACTION and Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador to develop the **Work Better in Active Spaces and Places Toolkit**.

This toolkit is designed to get employees and employers to think about how they can incorporate a movement culture within their workplace to support healthy active living and help them reach the recommended physical activity guidelines.

It is recommended that all adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every week. It is also beneficial to add muscle and bone strengthening activities using major muscle groups, at least two days per week.

Regular physical activity can decrease the risk of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, some cancers, depression and obesity.

There are benefits to supporting physical activity in the workplace and creating a culture that values employee well-being:

- Improved productivity
- Decreased turnover
- Lower absenteeism
- Decreased short- and long-term disability
- Improved employee health
- Improved employee morale

Explore this toolkit to find:



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Blog Article



10 clever ways to nudge your workplace to move more and sit less



Every day we make countless decisions. What to wear? What to eat? What to watch on Netflix?

While we like to think that every one of our decisions is completely and entirely our own, the truth is that our choices can easily be influenced, even by small things, even by things we hardly even realize are there – researchers call these nudges.

A nudge is something that gently guides you to act in a certain way without limiting your choices. It's something that indirectly affects your behaviour in a predictable way. Ideally, a healthful nudge will prompt you to move more and sit less. In fact, the **British Medical Journal** recently published a commentary that concluded nudging to cue certain behaviours can be “extremely effective.”



Nudging in the workplace

In the workplace, nudges can be used to encourage people to sneak in extra physical activity and limit hours of uninterrupted sitting. They're a wonderful way to help shift the overall culture of an organization to one that embraces and supports physical activity. Though typically small and subtle, they can have huge impacts on a company and its employees.

What makes a good nudge

Nudges can include signs, posters, emails, apps, objects and more. A good one should:

- Use simple messaging that's easy to understand
- Be personalized, contextual, or tailored in some way
- Contain educational or awareness-building information
- Include a direct and specific call-to-action
- Be interactive in some way, if possible

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10 examples of awesome workplace nudges



A sign by the elevator that encourages everyone to take the stairs. **“Get Your Daily Dose of Physical Activity – Take The Stairs!”**



An hourglass timer on the boardroom table that runs out every 30 minutes, prompting people to take a break from sitting and do some stretches.



A sign on the front door of your building that prompts people to park farther away and walk more instead. **“Park Far Away. Walk and Enjoy Your Day!”**



Post signage that encourages people to sit less and move more when in meetings. **“Let’s All Take Some Time and Take A Stand”**



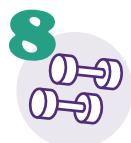
A note at the end of your meeting invitation that says **“To promote a healthy active workplace, we will be encouraging participants to stand throughout the meeting, if at all possible.”**



An email letting your coworkers know that you’ll be taking a half-hour walk at lunch and that they’re welcome to join you.



A handy map that’s kept in a common area that highlights all the nearby hiking and biking trails.



A designated activity space in the office with welcoming signage such as **“Get Active and Unwind Here”**. The space can include small equipment such as yoga mats, resistance bands, or light hand weights. Whatever works with your space and budget that gives the impression that movement is permitted.



A sticky note on your desktop computer reminding you to stretch for a minute or two every 30 minutes.



Leave a pair of sneakers or snowshoes in your workspace so you always have access to an activity throughout the work day.

Blog Article



DIY active workplaces

So you want to be more active during the work day, but you're finding that your office hasn't exactly embraced the news that sitting is the new smoking. Many offices are engineered to make our work lives easier; there is plenty of space to sit, meet, discuss and exchange ideas, but what about more room to move? It isn't exactly a priority for most, but it should be!

These ideas can help you ease your colleagues into a more active lifestyle, without asking too much from the company budget.



DIY Change Room

We don't have access to showers here at ParticipACTION, but we wanted a space where we could comfortably change out of our exercise clothing into business-appropriate attire. For about \$50.00, we made space in our storage room and added a mirror, coat hooks and a shelf with a few beauty products like deodorant, dry shampoo, floss – even a hair straightener – to keep us looking professional.



DIY Daytime Workout

If you don't have a company gym or gym membership, repurpose a meeting room with a computer or TV screen and use it for instructional exercise that uses little equipment. There are plenty of free videos on YouTube that can help you stay active for an hour during lunch. Having yoga mats on hand and accessible to employees is key. Plus, this is good low-intensity exercise that doesn't leave us soaked in sweat for the rest of the day.

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DIY Sit/Stand Desk

Sit/Stand desks can be a very costly endeavour that your office may not be able to support. Some offices may be able to purchase one desk that can be used as a shared station for employees to sign out for periods throughout the day. If you can't spend the money on a sit/stand desk, find yourself a drafting table! Artists have been using these sit/stand desks for years and they are most cost efficient.



DIY Cultural Shift

A big barrier to making a workplace more active is simply that it's not a priority for most people. At this point, you may need to become your office's unofficial Active Ambassador, and start sharing some resources to educate your colleagues on the importance of regular movement.



DIY Active Transportation

Consider getting a company bike. It's likely someone has a bike in their garage they aren't using, or perhaps you could find one at a garage sale. Having a company bike available to take a ride during lunch is an excellent way to incorporate physical activity and help you stay focused for the remainder of the day. Many employees may not live within biking distance, but having access to a bike or walking/wheeling paths provide an option for employees to use. Commit to just one bike day a week and start your way to improved health. Consider using the bike to get to meetings that are close to your office and have a backpack available so you can easily take meeting materials with you. Don't forget to check out this [Safe Cycling Checklist](#) to make sure you're equipped with the right gear before you start!

Recognizing that many employees have busy lives in their non-work hours, with family commitments and responsibilities taking up much of our home time. Finding time to squeeze in physical activity isn't easy. Implementing some easy changes during the work day, including where you park in the parking lot can be the difference in meeting daily physical activity goals. We hope these suggestions help get your team on board with a more active lifestyle!

Blog Article



Six tips for taking better breaks at work

It's time to turn the idea of breaks on its head.

Typically, we think that taking a break from work is just that – a break. We see it as a luxury, a nice-to-have, and when things get busy, something we simply don't have time for. Raise your hand if you've ever said, "I'm too busy to take a break." Yeah, we're talking to you.

The problem with this mentality is that it's at odds with all sorts of science.

From a productivity standpoint, breaks help. They actually boost energy levels and allow employees to maintain focus.

From a health perspective, breaks are essential. Sitting for long periods of time is harmful to your health.

When things are hectic, powering through might seem like the logical thing to do, but the reality is that it's often better to take a break before you start to lose focus, your mind starts to wander, and your productivity dips.

With that in mind, here are six tips for making the most of your breaks at work.



Plan Them!

Every day we write to-do lists, schedule meetings, and plan to get things done. Breaks, however, are often neglected. We assume they'll happen on their own. And sometimes they do. But sometimes they don't.

Rather than leaving it up to chance and circumstance, plan your breaks. Schedule in a 3 pm walk in your calendar and get active.



Embrace nature

Breaks in nature have been scientifically proven to be better. There's something restorative about leaves and trees. They help us relax and boost our creativity.

Take some time to get out and breathe some fresh air. Walk to a nearby green space with a few colleagues and take your lunch with you.

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Find a technique that works for you.

Some people swear by the Pomodoro Technique, where they take short breaks every 25 minutes. Other people can focus for longer and like working for 90 minutes straight. It will depend on the day and the type of work you typically do (though more frequently is generally better for your health). If you're staring at a computer screen all day, it's good to use the **20-20-20 Rule** (every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away).

Experiment with the various options and find something that works for you.



Make it social

Interacting with people is a great way to spend your breaks. Conversation helps take your mind off work and allows you to build the relationships that are so crucial to our well-being. If you're walking with a co-worker, try to commit some time talking about non-work things too.



Unplug completely

Scrolling through emails or social media doesn't give your mind or body the break it needs. Challenge yourself to leave your phone in your pocket when you get away from your workspace. It will help you more fully recharge and to return to your work with more energy than when you left.



Lead by example

We all know that there may be times that you cannot get away for an active break, but if you are leading a team or playing any supervisory role to others leading by example is important, so be a champion and take active breaks too!

How to be a champion for an active workday



Commit to creating and maintaining an organizational culture that encourages and supports daily physical activity among employees. Share the below tip sheet to help encourage co-workers to sit less and move more throughout the workday:



Choose standing or walking meetings (where appropriate) to break up hours of sedentary time.



Take the stairs rather than the elevator. Challenge yourself to only take the stairs at work. Once you get a streak going, you won't want to stop!



If available, use standing desks/work stations for short periods throughout the day.



Be a champion of physical activity and initiate activity breaks throughout the workday. Try the **7-streak challenges** to start!



Consider active transportation both to and from work a couple times a week. Or create the option of having a bike share initiative at work for employees to use throughout the work day.



Take regular standing/stretch breaks during the day. Keep resistance bands at your desk to exercise while reading or taking conference calls.



Have a “get active at work” kit at your desk to use when needed (deodorant, face wipes, dry shampoo, sneakers, hair elastic, etc.)



Set reminders on your phone alarm to get moving every hour or so. Whatever works for you and your workplace!

How to be a champion for an active workday



Buddy up with a colleague to be active at lunch with or get active yourself during lunch break.



Take advantage of on-site facilities and/or on-site classes or opportunities for physical activity.



Take a short walk to co-workers stations/offices instead of emailing those you work with.



Provide maps of walking routes around the area and post them with times and distances.



Post wellness information in a central area.



Organize quarterly physical activity breaks to introduce new activities and to revisit favourites.



Benefits of Physical Activity in the Workplace



ParticipACTION has prepared messages to make it easy to communicate the benefits of physical activity in your workplace and encourage employees to make it part of their everyday lives. Below you'll find some pre-written messaging to help you generate discussion of physical activity around the office.



Having trouble setting aside time to be active? Adults should accumulate at least 150 minutes of heart-pumping physical activity per week – but how you get those 150 minutes is up to you! Working out in 10-minute bursts can help sneak in physical activity.



Irritated? Stressed? Overwhelmed with work? Physical activity is a great way to improve your mood, your focus, and help you unwind after a long stressful day.



Research shows that people who are regularly physically active are consistently more productive after seven hours of work than those who aren't. Think better when you move.



Daily physical activity has been proven to improve divergent and convergent thinking, the two components of creative thinking. Kick it up a notch in your next brainstorming session by getting your sweat on beforehand.



Immediately following exercise, problem solving, memory and attention improve. Higher intensity aerobic physical activity also improves concentration and cognitive function. So, try going for a quick walk or run before your next big meeting.



Sedentary adults who engaged in as little as 20 minutes of low to moderate physical activity, three days a week for six weeks, reported feeling less fatigued and more awake. Get moving to energy better.



Active people get more done at work. People who are regularly physically active are consistently more productive after seven hours of work than those who aren't. Get ahead at work by moving more in the office.

Communication Assets

Facts on physical activity



How physical activity can improve your day at work

Provide your employees or your employer with the below facts to encourage and support increased physical activity and decreased sedentary behaviour in their day-to-day lives. These can be sent out in the company newsletter, staff emails, email taglines, or even posted in common office spaces and places.



Physical activity can help you work better in some major ways: it can help improve your productivity, attention and focus, but it can also help you enjoy work more and manage stress so that you're a better employee – and family member.



People who are regularly active are consistently more productive after seven hours of work than those who aren't – they have better executive function, more energy, less stress, clearer minds, more confidence, better memory, enhanced concentration and more creativity.



Regular activity breaks increase blood flow to your brain, resulting in better focus and attention.



Get active on your lunch hour! Research shows that some of the most productive employees take, on average, a 17-minute break for every 52 minutes of work. Allow your brain the recovery time it needs to get back to its creative, productive and focused self.

Communication Assets

Facts on physical activity



Research shows that immediately following exercise, problem solving, memory and attention improve. The hippocampus, which is the core of the brain's learning and memory systems, responds strongly to aerobic exercise.



Evidence shows that this part of the brain grows as people get fitter and helps partly explain the attention and memory-boosting benefits of physical activity.



A recent study shows that moderate aerobic physical activity not only improves cognitive function, but concentration as well.



Did you know that employees spend an average of 25 seconds waiting for an elevator, when 2 flights of stairs can be accomplished in about the same time? Active time can be accomplished anywhere – get creative!

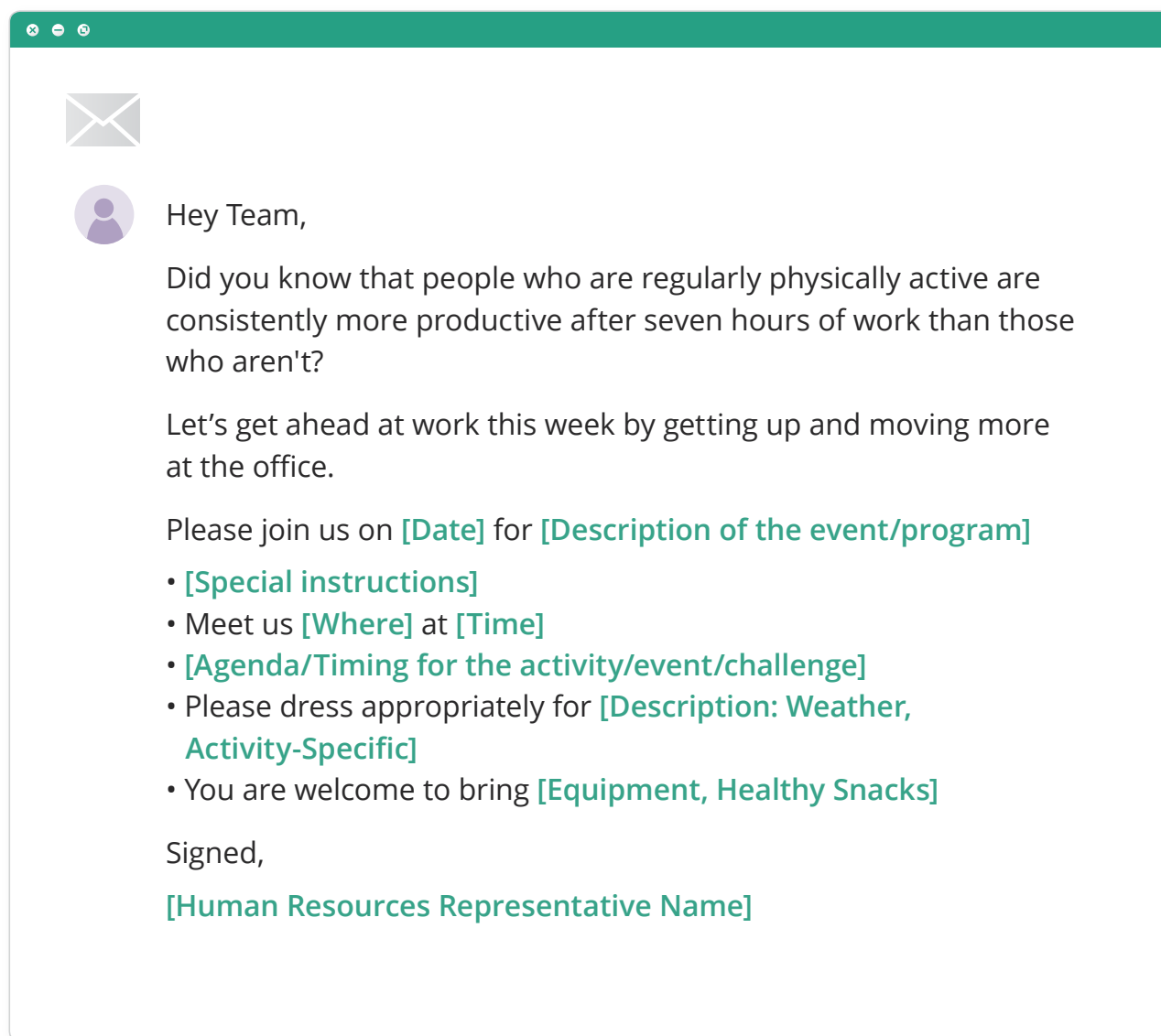


Communication Assets

Sample E-Blast



To be shared by Human Resources or the workplace wellness committee to encourage a staff wide activity or sport, played over lunch hour.



Communication Assets

Posters



To help make your space more active for members of your community, we've provided you with two posters to print and display in your workplace. These posters are aimed to provide employees with the extra nudge of encouragement to sit less and move more, and that **Everything gets better when you get active**. We recommend displaying these in highly visible areas within your workplace, and that they are accessible to all ages and abilities. **Download and print the posters here.**



Communication Assets

Movement Guidelines



Print and display the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines in your workplace to educate employees on the recommended physical activity they should be achieving for a healthy lifestyle. The guidelines are available in versions for **Adults (18–64)** and **Older Adults (65+)**.

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines

FOR ADULTS - 18 - 64 YEARS

Guidelines

To achieve health benefits, adults aged 18-64 years should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

It is also beneficial to add muscle and bone strengthening activities using major muscle groups, at least 2 days per week.

More physical activity provides greater health benefits.

Let's Talk Intensity!

Moderate-intensity physical activities will cause adults to sweat a little and to breathe harder. Activities like:

- Brisk walking
- Bike riding

Vigorous-intensity physical activities will cause adults to sweat and be 'out of breath'. Activities like:

- Jogging
- Cross-country skiing

Being active for at least 150 minutes per week can help reduce the risk of:

- Premature death
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Certain types of cancer
- Type 2 diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Overweight and obesity

And can lead to improved:

- Fitness
- Strength
- Mental health (morale and self-esteem)

Pick a time. Pick a place. Make a plan and move more!

- Join a weekday community running or walking group.
- Go for a brisk walk around the block after dinner.
- Take a dance class after work.
- Bike or walk to work every day.
- Rake the lawn, and then offer to do the same for a neighbour.
- Train for and participate in a run or walk for charity!
- Take up a favourite sport again or try a new sport.
- Be active with the family on the weekend!

Now is the time. Walk, run, or wheel, and embrace life.

Participation

CSEP | SCPE
THE CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR EXERCISE SCIENCE AND PERSONAL TRAINING
www.csep.ca/guidelines

Additional Resources



Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador is the provincial voice promoting and fostering the spirit and practice of recreation for all.

Everything Gets Better

In its new campaign, ParticipACTION shines a light on the ways in which everything, from thinking, mood and relationships to sleeping, aging and work, can improve with physical activity. The campaign encourages Canadians to think about the benefits of physical activity in a new light to help shift attitudes and perceptions beyond traditional health benefits, such as weight loss.

The ParticipACTION App: The Active App for Everyone

Want to Sleep Better, Happy Better or even Poop Better? Then get moving! It's easy with the new (and FREE!) ParticipACTION app, designed to help you fit physical activity into your busy life and reward you with great prizes. Get the app and see how everything gets better when you get active.

UPnGO: Sit Less. Move More. At Work.

UPnGO with ParticipACTION helps deskbound workplaces seamlessly integrate fun, rewarding, and healthy behavior programming into the workday to help employees be at their best. Get your company moving with us today.

Movement Log

A movement log to track where you have been and where you are going.

A Common Vision For Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada: Let's Get Moving!

Federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation released A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada: Let's Get Moving in 2018. The purpose of the Common Vision is to guide and stimulate coordinated and collaborative policies and actions to increase physical activity and to reduce sedentary behaviours among all Canadians across their lifetime. The Common Vision will build on current policies, frameworks and strategies already in place relating to sport, recreation and healthy living, while advancing new and emerging approaches in policies and programming.

Additional Resources



Universal Design NL

Universal design is about designing for everyone. It's a way of creating environments and products that are usable for all people, regardless of age, ability or situation. The Coalition of Persons with Disabilities – NL, in partnership with the Disability Policy Office – Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, has created this interactive website to promote and increase awareness of universal design in our communities.

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador: ParticipACTION Partnership

ParticipACTION's 2017 – 2018 Get Started program introduces the information and tools you need to work towards your health and fitness goals – the ParticipACTION way. Check out the tools and resources to help you Get Started.

**This toolkit
is available in
alternate formats.**

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