

Day Twenty-Six: May 26, 2020

STAY ACTIVE AND HEALTHY WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Over the past few months, we've heard countless ways to describe the situation we all are currently living through: challenging times, uncertain times, unprecedented times.

We want to take more of a positive approach and support all Canadians in staying active and healthy by looking at this physical distancing thing a bit differently: *through the lens of opportunity*. We have a unique chance to make some positive change in our lives right now – be it from our own living rooms, backyards or balconies.

There is no denying the serious impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe or the important safety precautions we must follow to keep everyone safe. We all must do what we can to be as healthy as possible, in both body and mind.

Everything gets better when you get active.



Right now, everyone should be focused on self-care, and if that means getting into the couch, hammering the food delivery apps and racking up some solid hours of streaming, that's ok!

But moderation is key and spending too much time being sedentary can have seriously negative impacts on your mental health and stamina - such as low energy levels, poor moods and increased symptoms of anxiety.

Physical activity needs to be part of your self-care routine - and you don't have to be a gym rat to reap the benefits, as research consistently highlights that even small bouts of daily physical activity (in five- to 10-minute intervals) can have [immediate positive impacts on your mood](#). No matter your age or fitness level, you can learn to use physical activity as a powerful tool to feel better.

Now more than ever it's important to be doing everything we can to ensure everyone's physical and mental health is as strong as it can be by engaging in regular physical activity. But how much do we need each day? To ensure you're getting the most out of your active minutes, you can check out the daily recommended movement guidelines for your age group [here](#).



Sit less and move more – every active minute counts.



Hiking your favourite trail, working out at your nearby gym or riding a local bike path might not be options right now, but that doesn't mean you can't be outside getting active and reaping the [scientifically proven benefits](#) that come along with outdoor activity. Which include [boosted immune systems](#), [decreased stress](#) and [improved moods](#) - three benefits we could all probably use a little bit of right now.

Instead of getting stuck on the couch or in bed all day, be the change you want to see and use physical activity as a tool to better both your and your family's life - in both body and mind. To help you do just that, read on for a handy list of tips to stay active and healthy, even if you are still stuck at home:

- **Start the morning off right with a stretch.** Stretching first thing in the morning will help us get more out of our daily movement! Who needs the stiffness?
- **Consider taking micro breaks outdoors.** For parents trying to get a full day's worth of work done while at home, taking small physical activity breaks outdoors with kids may just be the way to do this. Outdoor activity allows for the release of feel-good chemicals within the brain (endorphin and dopamine) which support the whole family's physical and mental health while also allowing you to [Sleep Better](#).
- **Schedule time in the calendar to be active.** There are several activities we can do right in our homes with little to no equipment: Pilates or yoga, dancing, stair climbing, tai chi, housework, cycling on a stationary bike. And by adding activity to the calendar, we are more likely to do it.
- **Plan a family recess.** Set up an indoor basket toss in a hallway using a bucket and rolled up socks. For added fun, have everyone jog forward to pick up their socks, and then crawl back to the shot line!
- **Get up & move around the house every hour.** Moving for a minimum of five minutes every hour will help keep circulation going, which will help keep blood sugars and triglycerides low, and our body limber. Play some tunes to get going. Music has been found to [stimulate and increase movement](#).

So, get out there, take some deep, cleansing breaths and get moving with various indoor and fresh-air activities - even if it's just in the yard, driveway or balcony.

Any movement is good movement, and time spent outdoors can further help us feel more connected to the environment and less isolated while maintaining physical distancing. Still be sure to avoid engaging in activities in large groups, maintain two-metre distances from passersby and ensure everyone is following up-to-date public-health recommendations.

Photo and content credit: participACTION

<https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/blog/movement-for-everyone-creating-life-changing-opportunities-through-dance>

DISCLAIMER: The CVRD is not responsible for any harm, including bodily or infrastructure, that may be caused as a result of doing this activity at home, so please use your discretion and participate within the scope of your abilities, knowledge and comfort level. Please feel free to alter this activity to suit your needs, and remember to be safe and have fun!