

# Let's Get Active!

## Planning Effective Communication Strategies

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT MONITORING PROGRAM



### Intention to be active and reasons to be active

The 2014-2015 Physical Activity Monitor asked adults in Canada about factors associated with their activity level, including their intention to be more active, the reasons for being more active, and describing what would help them become more active. This bulletin summarizes these findings in relation to individual, household, and community characteristics.

#### Intention to be active

Just over half (54%) of adults indicate that they *fully intend* to be active within the six months following the survey. An additional 37% *moderately* intend to be active and the remaining 9% have *less intent* (less than moderate intention). From a regional perspective, a greater proportion of residents of the Northwest Territories indicate that they have less intent compared to the national average.

Several groups are more likely to have *lower intentions* to be active in the immediate future, including:

- older adults (versus adults younger than 45 years),
- adults with less than secondary school education,
- adults living in the lower income households (compared to highest income households),
- those who are widowed, divorced, or separated (compared to single adults or those who have never married),
- adults who are retired or unemployed for a specific reason,
- adults living in the smallest communities (compared to largest communities).

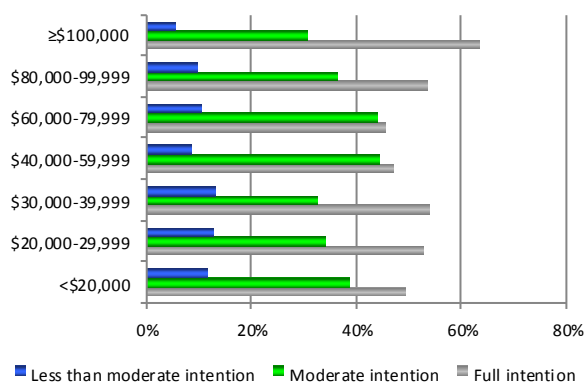
On the contrary, adults living in the highest income households are more likely to say that they *fully intend* to be active in the near future compared to those living in households with incomes of \$40,000 to \$80,000 per year.

#### Reasons to be active

In addition to their intention to be active, adults were also asked about the *main reasons* for intending to become *active* within the following six months.

FIGURE 1

Intentions to be active by household income



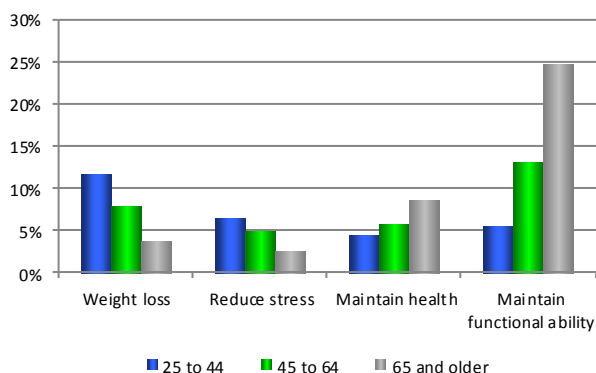
2014-2015 Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI

One-third (33%) of adults say that the main reason is to stay fit, whereas 22% indicate weight maintenance or weight loss. Less than 10% of adults claim that the main reason is to maintain functional ability with age (9%), for fun or excitement (9%), to maintain health (6%), to reduce stress (6%), to reduce risk of chronic health conditions (5%), to state that it is necessary including for work (3%), or for social reasons (2%). Regionally, residents of Northwest Territories are less likely than the national average to say that they intend to be active in order to maintain functional ability with age.

More women state that their main reason that they intend to be active within the next six months is to lose weight, whereas more men cite fun, excitement or necessity (such as for work) as reasons. The reason provided for becoming active varies by age. For example, the percentage citing weight loss decreases with increasing age, whereas the opposite relationship is true for those intending to become active in order to maintain functional ability while aging. Older adults (65 years and older) are more likely than 25 to 44 year olds to say that they plan to be active to maintain health.



**FIGURE 2**  
Select reasons to be active by age



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On the contrary, 25 to 64 year olds are more likely than their older counterparts to say that they plan to be active in order to reduce stress.

College educated adults are more likely than those who have not graduate from high school to say that they plan to be active to lose weight. On the contrary, adults who have not graduated from high school are more likely to say that they intend to be active out of necessity (for example at work) compared to university educated adults. Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated are most likely to say that they intend to be active in order to maintain functional ability with age. Similarly, married adults or those living with a partner are more likely than adults who are single or who have never been married to state this.

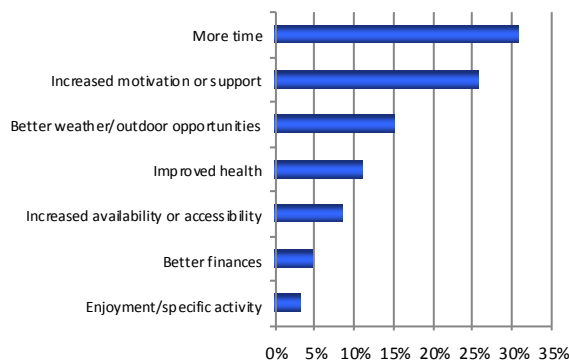
Compared to the national average, a greater percentage of homemakers cite losing weight as a reason for their intention to be active. Relatively fewer retirees cite losing weight or reducing stress as reasons for intending to be active, whereas they are more likely to say maintaining functional ability is the main reason.

**Enabling factors for becoming more active**

In the 2014-2015 Physical Activity Monitor, adults were also asked what would help *enable* them to become more active. Responses were categorized into eight themes. Almost one-third (31%) of adults say more time would be helpful, followed closely by 26% who cite increased motivation or support as helpful. An additional 15% say that better weather or outdoor opportunities, 11% say that better health, and 9% state that better availability and accessibility would help them become more active. Roughly 5% of adults or fewer cite better finances (5%) and enjoyment or a specific activity (3%) as helpful.

From a regional perspective, adults living in New Brunswick are more likely than the average to say that better health would help them become more active, whereas those living in Newfoundland and Labrador are less likely to say that increased motivation or support would be helpful.

**FIGURE 3**  
Enabling factors for becoming more active



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As age increases so does the percentage saying that improved health would help enable one to become more active. Interestingly, 25 to 44 year olds are generally less likely to cite motivation or support, but are most likely to say more time would be helpful. University educated adults are most likely to indicate that more time would be helpful whereas they are less likely than those who have not graduated from high school to say that improved health would be helpful. Adults living in some lower income households (\$20,000 to \$39,999 per year) are more likely to indicate that better health would help them become more active than those living in some higher income household (\$60,000 or higher per year). Adults living in the highest income households are more likely than the average to say that more time would help them be more active.

Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated are most likely to indicate that improved health would help them be more active. Single adults or those never married are more likely than those who are married to say that better availability or accessibility or increased motivation or support would be helpful. On the contrary, married adults or those living with a partner are most likely to say that more time would help. Compared to the average, retirees are more likely to say that better health and are less likely to indicate that more time would help them become more active. Those employed either on a full-time or part-time basis are more likely to say that more time would help.

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Production of this bulletin has been made possible through a financial contribution from Sport Canada and the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of these agencies.