

# Let's Get Active!

## Planning Effective Communication Strategies

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT MONITORING PROGRAM



### Preferred physical activity routine

The 2014-2015 Physical Activity Monitor asked Canadians about their preferred or ideal physical activity routine in the absence of conflicting commitments. This includes the number of days one would prefer to be active, the amount of time, intensity of the activity, as well as the feasibility of incorporating this preferred routine into their current schedule given current commitments. This bulletin summarizes these findings in relation to individual, household, and community characteristics.

#### Preferred physical activity routine

Canadians were asked to indicate a scenario incorporating the number of days per week, the amount of time per occasion, and the preferred intensity of activity if they could be as active as they would like to be given no influencing commitments. Roughly two in five adults (44%) indicated that they would be active every day, whereas 33% report 5 or 6 days, and the remaining 23% state 4 days or less per week. Adults indicate that their preferred amount of time to be active would be slightly less than two hours daily (108 minutes). Moreover, when asked further about preferred intensity of activity given the number of days and amount of time specified, 29% indicate that they would prefer to participate in vigorous-intensity activities, 62% indicate moderate-intensity, 4% state light-intensity, and 5% cite a mix of activities of varied intensity.

Although there are no differences by gender in the reported number of days that one would prefer to be active and the preferred intensity of activity, men reported a higher average time than women (129 minutes for men versus 89 minutes on average for women). Although there are no age-related differences regarding preferred time, older adults (65 years and older) are more likely than those aged 25 to 44 years to say that they would prefer to be active 4 days or less per week. The proportion of adults who report a preference for vigorous-intensity activities decreases with increasing age, whereas generally the opposite relationship is true for those preferring moderate-intensity activities.

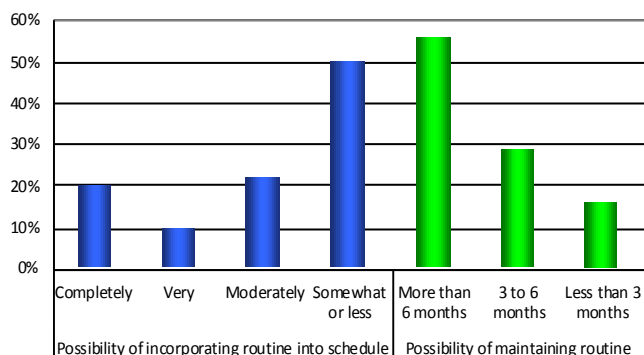
A greater proportion of older adults say that they prefer light-intensity activities compared to those between the ages of 25 to 64 years.

Adults who have not graduated secondary school are more likely than those with a university education to indicate a preference for fewer days to be active (less than 4 days per week), and are most likely to state a preference for light-intensity activity. On the contrary, a higher proportion of adults with a post-secondary education report a preference for being active 5 to 6 days per week, yet report a lower preferred amount of time compared to those who have not graduated from secondary school. Furthermore, adults with a university education are more likely than those who graduated from secondary school or have a college education to cite a mix of intensity activities.

A higher percentage of adults living in the highest income households ( $\geq \$100,000$  per year) report a preference for being active on a daily basis compared to those living in some lower income households, whereas the opposite relationship exists for those reporting 4 days or less. Moreover, a greater proportion of adults living in the highest income households cite a preference for vigorous-intensity activities, yet are less likely to report a preference for moderate- or light-intensity activities compared to those living in some lower income households.

Adults who are single or never married are most likely to say that they prefer vigorous-intensity activities, yet are less likely to say that they prefer moderate-intensity activities compared to others. Adults who are widowed, divorced or separated are most likely to say that they prefer light-intensity activities. Compared to the average, a higher percentage of retirees indicate a preference for light- or moderate-intensity activities, yet are less likely to report preferring vigorous-intensity activities or a mix of intensities.

**FIGURE 1**  
Feasibility of incorporating and maintaining a preferred activity routine



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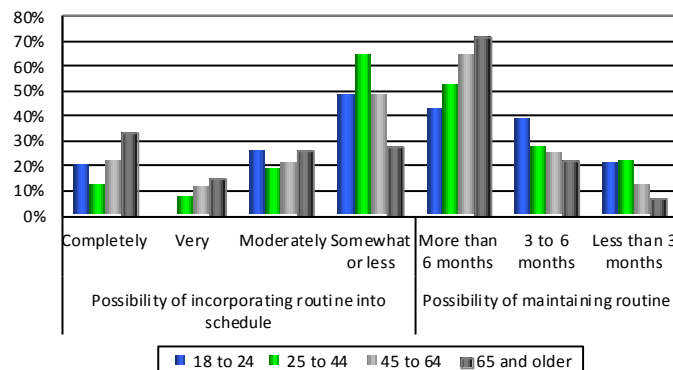
Despite no significant differences in the number of preferred days to be active, adults living the largest communities (500,000 or more residents) report a lower amount of time that they would ideally be active compared to those in smaller communities (1,000 to 4,999 residents). Compared to the average, a higher proportion of adults living in Nova Scotia and the Yukon indicate a preference for being active on a daily basis, whereas fewer adults living in Quebec say this. Relatively more adults living in Quebec, yet fewer living in the Yukon, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia cite a preference for being active 4 days or less per week when compared to the national average. In a similar way, adults in the Yukon report a higher ideal amount of time that they would be active compared to the average, whereas those living in Quebec report a lower amount of time. A greater proportion of adults living in Nova Scotia, Manitoba, or the Northwest Territories indicate a preference for moderate-intensity activities, whereas those living in Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories are less likely to prefer vigorous-intensity activities when compared to the national average.

### Feasibility of incorporating and maintaining a preferred activity routine

The 2014-2015 Physical Activity Monitor also asked Canadians about the possibility of fitting in their preferred physical activity routine into their current schedules and how long they could maintain the routine. One in five adults (19%) say that it would be completely feasible to incorporate the preferred routine into their schedule, whereas 10% say it is very feasible, 21% report a moderate amount, and 50% said that it is only somewhat feasible at best. More than half (56%) of adults say that they feel that they could keep up the routine for longer than six months, whereas 28% report three to six months, and 16% state less than three months.

Adults who are 45 years and older are more likely to indicate that it is completely feasible to incorporate the preferred routine into their schedule and that they could maintain the

**FIGURE 2**  
Feasibility of incorporating and maintaining a preferred activity routine by age



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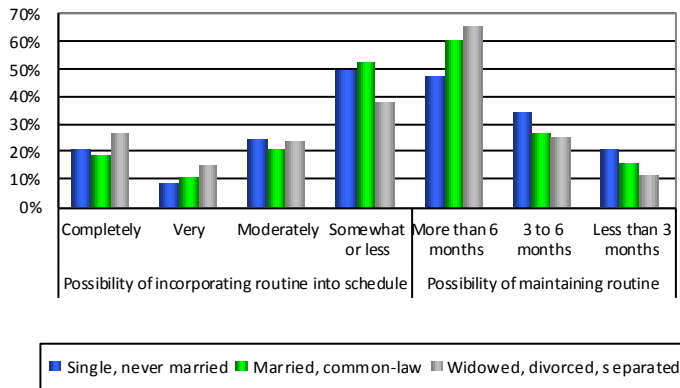
routine for longer than six months, compared to younger adults. Older adults (65 years and older) are more likely to indicate that it is moderately or very feasible compared to younger adults (25 to 44 year olds), whereas adults aged 25 to 44, in fact, are most likely to say that it is only somewhat feasible at most. The youngest adults (18 to 24 year olds) are more likely than those 45 years and older to maintain the routine for three to six months. Older adults are least likely to indicate that they can maintain the routine for less than three months.

A higher percentage of adults living in lower income households say that it is completely feasible to incorporate the identified preferred routine into their current schedule compared to those from higher income households, whereas the opposite relationship exist among those who indicate that it is somewhat feasible at best. A greater proportion of university educated adults say that they could maintain the routine for less than three months compared to those who have not graduated from secondary school.

Adults who are widowed, divorced, or separated are more likely to indicate that it is completely feasible to incorporate the preferred physical activity routine into their schedule compared to those who are married or living with a partner, whereas they are least likely to say that it is only somewhat or less feasible. Single or adults who have never been married are least likely to say that they could maintain the routine for longer than six months, yet are more likely than those who are widowed, divorced, or separated to say that they could maintain it for less than three months.

In a similar way, retirees are more likely than the average to indicate that it is completely or very feasible to include the routine into their current schedule, whereas adults who are employed (on a full-time or part-time basis) are less likely than the average to report that it is completely feasible.

**FIGURE 3**  
Feasibility of incorporating and maintaining a preferred activity routine by marital status



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The opposite relationship is true for these groups to say that it is somewhat feasible at best. A higher percentage of retirees say that they could maintain the routine for longer than six months, yet are less likely to report the lower time frames, compared to the national average.

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