



Let's Get Active!

Planning Effective Communication Strategies

2008 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MONITOR: FACTS & FIGURES



Preferred physical activity routine: Is it enough and can it be maintained?

In the 2008 Physical Activity Monitor, Canadians were asked what their preferred activity routine would be if they were not constrained by circumstances. This type of questioning is useful for determining whether or not their own preferred physical activity (PA) routine would meet Canadian PA guidelines, without the imposition of perceived barriers affecting their responses.

Respondents were asked to report the preferred number of days per week that they would be active, the intensity of their preferred activity, and the preferred duration per session. For this bulletin, responses were analyzed in relation to meeting the activity recommendations as outlined in *Canada's Physical Activity Guides to Healthy Active Living for Adults¹* and *for Older Adults²* (CPAG), as shown in Table 1. Additionally, Canadians were asked about the possibility of *incorporating* this routine into their current schedule and the feasibility of *maintaining* the routine into the future.

Overall, 80% of Canadians report a preferred PA routine that meets CPAG. Among these individuals,

- 29% of Canadians indicate that it is highly possible to fit their preferred activity routines into their current schedules,

TABLE 1

Weekly Activity Recommendations of Canada's Physical Activity Guides to Healthy Active Living for Adults¹ and Older Adults²

| Adults* | Older adults* |
|---|---|
| 60+ min, any intensity, daily <i>or</i> 30+ min, at least moderate intensity, most days <i>or</i> 20+ min, at least vigorous intensity, most days | 30+ min at least moderate intensity most days |

* This bulletin considers 'adults' to be those aged 18 to 64 years, and 'older adults' to be those aged 65+ years. 'Most days' is taken to mean more days with activity than without (i.e., at least 4 days per week).

- 47% indicate that it is somewhat possible, and
- 24% say that it is not very or at all possible to fit this in.

These proportions are similar among those whose preferred routines do *not* meet CPAG.

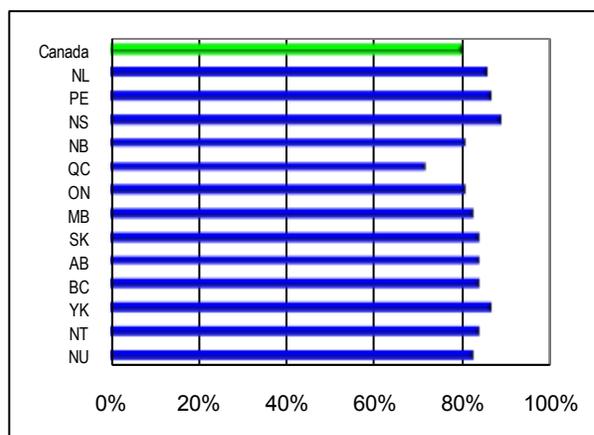
Of those whose preferred activity routine meets CPAG,

- 63% say that they would be able to maintain their preferred routines for more than six months,
- 21% could maintain it for three to six months, and
- 16% say that they could maintain it for less than three months.

Interestingly, a higher proportion of individuals whose preferred routines meet guidelines say that they could maintain their preferred routines for more than six months compared to those whose preferred routines do not meet guidelines.

FIGURE 1

Preferred PA routine meets guidelines, by province/territory



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Region

The proportion citing a preferred activity routine meeting CPAG is:

- higher among Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Yukon residents, and
- lower among Quebec residents.

Among those whose ideal activity routine meets CPAG, a higher proportion of those living in Newfoundland and Labrador say that:

- it is highly possible to fit their preferred routines into their current schedules, and
- they could maintain that routine for longer than six months.

Socio-economic and demographic characteristics

Table 2 summarizes the demographic and economic factors related to a preferred PA routine that meets CPAG and to whether it can be maintained for an extended period.

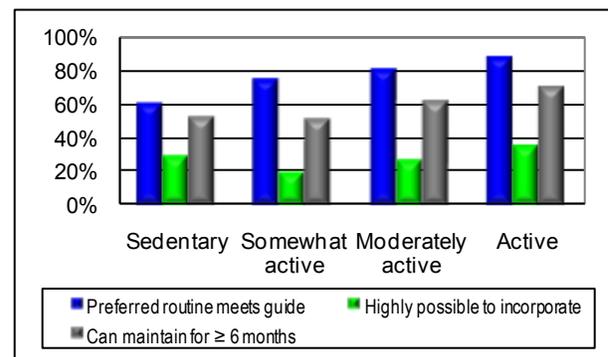
Physical activity and sport participation

The proportion citing a preferred activity routine that meets CPAG increases with increasing activity levels, and is more likely among sport participants than non-participants.

Among those who cite a preferred routine that would meet guidelines, active adults are more likely to:

- rate it as being highly possible to fit into their current schedule, and
- say that they would be able to maintain their preferred routines for an extended period (six or more months).

FIGURE 2
Preferred PA routine meets CPAG by activity level



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No differences appear between sport participants and non-participants with respect to incorporating or maintaining preferred routines.

Trends

Compared to 2003, more adults in 2008 cite a preferred PA routine that meets CPAG. Increases have occurred among:

- women, and
- adults aged 25 to 64 years.

Relationships with age, sex, income, and education evident in 2008 have not changed from 2003.

TABLE 2

Preferred routine meets CPAG and the possibility of incorporating and maintaining routines, by socioeconomic and demographic characteristics

| Characteristic | Preferred PA routine meets CPAG | Among those stating preferred routines that meet CPAG | |
|--------------------|---|--|---|
| | | Very possible to incorporate into current schedule | Maintain routine for more than six months |
| Gender | -No difference | -No difference | -No difference |
| Age | -Decreases with increasing age group | -Older age groups more likely | -Older age groups more likely |
| Education | -Higher education more likely | -No difference | -No difference |
| Income | -Highest income more likely than lower income (<\$30,000) | -Low income (\$20,000-\$29,999) more likely than high income | -No difference |
| Employment status* | -Retirees less likely | -Retirees more likely -Full-time employees less likely | -Retirees more likely -Part-time employees less likely |
| Community size | -No difference | -No difference | -No difference |

* Compared to national average

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Among those whose routines meet guidelines, similar proportions of Canadians in 2003 and 2008 say that it is:

- highly possible that they can integrate their ideal activity routines into their current schedules, and
- feasible to maintain this routine for an extended period (more than six months).

Several relationships have changed over time among specific target groups:

- An association has emerged between income and rating the likelihood of incorporating of the preferred routine into current schedules highly.
- The relationship between education and higher likelihood of incorporating the preferred routine has disappeared.

References

1. Public Health Agency of Canada, *Canada's Physical Activity Guides to Healthy Active Living for Adults*, Ottawa (Ontario), 2003, www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pag-gap/downloads-fra.php
2. Public Health Agency of Canada, *Canada's Physical Activity Guides to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults*, Ottawa (Ontario), 2003, www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pag-gap/downloads-fra.php

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