



MAKE
YOUR
MOVE

Make Your Move at Work Toolkit

Make Your Move at Work Toolkit

A resource to support Nova Scotia organizations to become more active.

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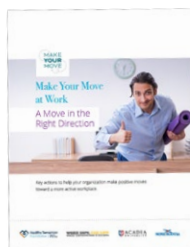
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This Toolkit provides general information about how to move more throughout your day, which is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. If you feel you need advice, please contact your health-care professional(s). Always follow the advice of your physician and health-care team. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information that appears in this Toolkit. Our partner organizations are responsible for the content that appears on their own sites.

This toolkit provides support and direction for your organization to become a more active workplace. An investment in physical activity can improve the health of your organization and your bottom line. The following resources help support the people in your organization to move more in the workplace.

Simply click on any of the Toolkit cover images to go directly to each component.



A Move in the Right Direction

Summary of the key evidence for investing in physical activity in the workplace and an overview of effective strategies.



A Healthy Investment: ROI business case

Quick highlights of the health and cost benefits of moving more at work.



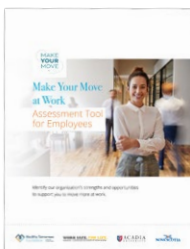
Assessment Tool for Employers

A quick evaluation tool to help your organization assess your needs and develop strategic plans.



Move More Working From Home: Guide for employers

Guide for employers to motivate and support their workforce in moving more.



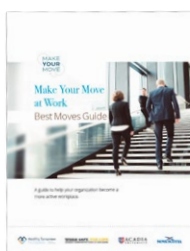
Assessment Tool for Employees

An easy-to-use evaluation tool to help you gather employees' perspectives on your organization's efforts to support an active workplace.



Move More Working From Home: Guide for employees

Guide for employees to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviour while working from home.



Best Moves Guide

Highlights of the best practices, policies and programs to help you integrate physical activity into your workplace.



Workplace Physical Activity Sample Policy

Sample policy for employers to develop and foster a culture of movement in the workplace and increase opportunities for physical activity at work.



Fast Facts Quick Reference Guide.

A guide for engagement featuring key evidence, messages, resources and actions.



Make Your Move at Work

Toolkit Primer

A resource to support Nova Scotia organizations
to become more active.

Make Your Move at Work Toolkit

If physical activity is not yet an organizational priority for your workplace, this easy-to-use toolkit can help you take your first steps. Or, if physical activity is already a priority, the toolkit can tell you how you're doing and help you find ways to do even better.

Moving more at work not only improves the lives of your employees. It can also boost your bottom line. Here's how.

Physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour contribute to high rates of chronic disease and negatively impact the quality of life of Canadians.¹ Physical activity, on the other hand, can reduce the risk of many chronic conditions² and improve mental health.³

Given that working adults spend 35 to 40 hours (or more) per week at work and, in many jobs, are sitting for long periods, the workplace is a prime avenue to encourage physical activity and movement.⁴ Canadian employers are paying the increasing costs of drug plans, paramedical benefits, and long-term disability coverage.⁵ However, after implementing comprehensive wellness interventions that increase physical activity,⁶ many businesses have realized a significant return on investment, achieving returns of \$2 to \$4 for every dollar they've invested.

The Nova Scotia government is committed to encouraging Nova Scotians to move more and sit less, as outlined in its Let's Get Moving framework and through its collaboration with the Healthy Tomorrow Foundation's Make Your Move campaign.⁷ The goal is to inspire people to think about movement differently and to recognize that moving more is easy to do. To promote the "Make Your Move at Work" message, a provincial committee was established to develop resources to support organizations to be more active. As researchers from Acadia University, we conducted a literature review, an environmental scan, focus groups, and a survey of Nova Scotia employers to evaluate their level of engagement in practices that promote physical activity in Nova Scotia workplaces. We also looked for opportunities to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour at work.

The following is a snapshot of the key findings and a toolkit of resources to equip employers to address physical activity at work.

A Snapshot of Physical Activity in Nova Scotia Workplaces

As researchers, we learned that for most organizations in Nova Scotia, helping their employees become more physically active and less sedentary was not a priority. In fact, most of them reported little or no action. We were encouraged to find small pockets of employers who were trying to address physical activity and sedentary behaviour, such as by providing access to off-site facilities, having insurance companies provide services, or providing flexible work hours for employees to be active on their own time. Although these actions "checked the box" for promoting physical activity, they did not always align with best practices and were often not integrated with a broader health and safety plan. As a result, the outcomes were difficult to evaluate.

Organizations identified the following primary barriers to action:

- being short staffed
- lacking amenities on site
- lacking financial and administrative resources to act
- lacking organizational awareness and understanding of how to act

Organizations identified a need for greater supports, such as the following, to help encourage physical activity:

- amenities on site to support physical activity
- education sessions and resources to help employees be more active
- incentives to encourage physical activity

The literature shows that effective physical activity practices start by creating a culture of movement that is built on policies that engage employees while also meeting the organization's objectives.⁸

This toolkit is meant to help provide support and direction for your organization to become a more active workplace. An investment in physical activity can improve the health of your organization and your bottom line.

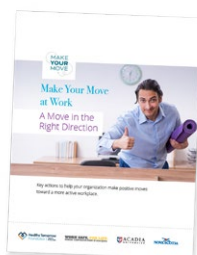


About this Toolkit

This toolkit comprises key resources, described below, to help support the people in your organization to move more in the workplace. The goals of the toolkit are to:

- create awareness of the benefits of supporting movement in the workplace
- engage employers and employees in simple actions that can promote health and wellbeing through movement in the workplace
- engage Nova Scotia organizations that don't currently have movement on their radar, but also to complement existing resources (such as the Centre for Active Living Active Workplace Audit Tool (CAL AWA – described later) for any organizations that want to activate their workplace at a higher level.

The Toolkit Components

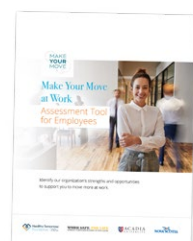


A Move in the Right Direction

A 5-page summary of the key evidence for investing in physical activity in the workplace and an overview of effective strategies.

Assessment Tool for Employers

A 5-page evaluation to give you a snapshot of where your organization is in supporting an active workplace. This tool can help your organization assess your individual circumstances and develop strategic plans to reduce sedentary behaviour or increase physical activity in the workplace.



Assessment Tool for Employees

This 4-page tool will help you gather information about employees' perspectives on your organization's efforts to support an active workplace.

Best Moves Guide

This 8-page summary highlights the 5 best practices, policies and programs to help you integrate physical activity into your workplace. All of them are backed by evidence. Each section starts off with steps that will be reasonably easy for your organization to adopt. From there, the sections progress to more complex interventions that produce greater outcomes in the long term. Each item is cost-rated to help your organization make informed decisions about what initiatives to pursue.

- Best Practices*: an overview of strategies in key areas of social support, organizational support and employee awareness.





ii. *Best Policies*: an outline of key policies ranked from easiest to most complex with the objective, actions, rationale and investment. A sample policy provides direction to create your own.

iii. *Best Programs*: best programs, from easy awareness and education approaches to multi-layered and comprehensive approaches for both reducing sedentary behaviour and increasing physical activity.



A Healthy Investment: ROI business case

What's the business case for movement? This 1-page infographic highlights the health and cost benefits of moving more at work for the employees and the employer.

Move More Working From Home

These 2-page tools provide ideas for:

- employers to motivate and support their workforce in moving more, and
- employees to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviour while working from home. Each resource includes suggestions to integrate activity into their day.



Fast Facts

Key evidence, messages, resources and actions to refer to when engaging management or employees in initiatives to move more at work.

Centre for Active Living's Active Workplace Audit Toolkit

An additional tool, if your organization has the resources to engage more fully, is the Centre for Active Living's Active Workplace Audit Toolkit (CAL AWA).⁹ The CAL AWA outlines how to build the case for an active workplace, assess current workplace practices, find resources for action, and plan for change and improvement.⁹

The CAL AWA describes many processes of who, what, where, how and why to implement strategies to increase physical activity in the workplace. It also provides many links to other existing tools and resources. Because of that, it can be used as a primary resource for Nova Scotia organizations that are already doing some physical activity promotion, as identified in the Organizational Assessment. The CAL AWA may not apply to all organizations, however, as it is focused on office-based employees, and it may be missing some elements identified through our provincial assessment.

The CAL AWA refers to many comprehensive tools and guidebooks for developing policies, infrastructure, social environments, and programs for a physically active workplace.

Additional resources are also available to you:

- The final third of the CAL AWA contains many “best practice” ideas focusing on social support, organizational support, community assets & partnerships, and policies & programs.
- The Conference Board of Canada’s “Moving Ahead” report¹⁰ includes criteria for effective initiatives.
- A linked document from Johns Hopkins University¹¹ mentions the importance of a multi-pronged approach.
- The Alberta Healthier Together toolkit¹² and the Hamilton Public Health Services Toolkit for Policy Development¹³ describes how to build a physical activity policy.
- The Alberta Health Services Healthier Together web page¹⁴ includes tips for “quick wins,” a physical activity strategy kit, and ideas for initiatives that are accessible to small and large organizations.

Laying the Groundwork

One key finding from our work is the importance of changing the environmental context to make healthy choices easier. You can make positive changes through employee awareness and education by delivering messages about the importance and simplicity of moving more and providing prompts to move throughout the day if your workplace is typically sedentary by nature. If your workplace is active by nature, educating employees about healthy postures may be relevant.

As an employer, you can provide organizational support by, for example, providing sit-to-stand desks and improving stairwell access to encourage stair climbing, or supporting employees to be active and fit with flexible hours to fit in physical activity or exercise. In this way, you will make it accessible, acceptable and expected for workers to change their work position regularly and to take active breaks. Evidence tells us that the biggest bang for your buck is through helping employees get out of the sedentary category, both at work and outside of work.

Recent literature promotes an integrated health approach, which brings together the domains of occupational health and safety and employee wellness. This approach builds on the importance of your organizational culture and norms. The key facilitators to this approach are leadership buy-in and a balanced plan that addresses the needs of both employees and employers. Managers must embed physical activity initiatives into the workplace culture and strategic direction of an organization through organizational support, policies and programs, employee awareness and education, and leading by example.^{8,13}

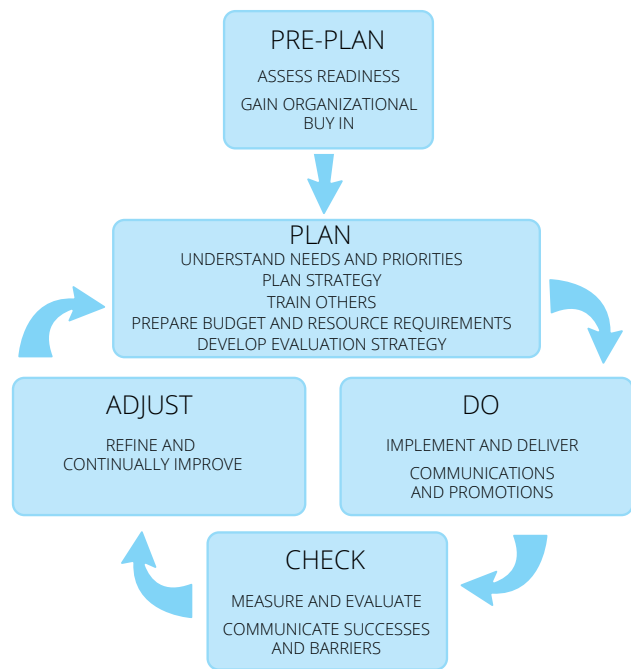
Within these plans for Nova Scotia workplaces, there is an opportunity to:

- facilitate the development of workplace cultures that encourage physical activity
- enhance uptake of nearby physical environments and increase availability of onsite physical environment supports
- promote use of existing tools and resources to overcome organizational barriers

A Step-by-Step Framework to Follow

Our recommendations flow from the following framework developed by Avi Biswas at the Institute for Work & Health (2020): “Developing practical recommendations for integrating workplace safety and wellness initiatives.”

RECOMMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK



From Biswas, 2020; Institute For Work & Health
Developing practical recommendations for integrating
workplace safety and wellness initiatives

Recommendations for Nova Scotia organizations to Move More at Work

Pre-plan

Assess your individual situation. What are your organization’s needs, priorities, gaps, barriers and opportunities? Our Assessment Tools can help with this. Your overall assessment should also emphasize employee needs and context to ensure your employees are engaged with any interventions you are planning.

Plan the strategy

Best practices encourage a culture of movement supported by comprehensive and integrated plans. Therefore, before initiating any interventions, you will need

to develop physical activity policies that integrate with your organization's strategic priorities, including occupational health and safety. Your physical activity policy becomes your foundation for action. When your organization has a solid physical activity policy, you won't quit when an individual intervention doesn't work. Rather, you can return to the policy and choose a new intervention. Our Best Moves Guide can help you take the first steps in developing organizational policies to support movement in your workplace.

The key to success is to lead by example and create a positive culture for employees to follow. This helps pave the way to make it acceptable and expected that your employees will move more. Integrated within this plan is the need to train others, prepare budget and resource requirements, and develop an evaluation strategy. Our Best Moves Guide can help you here as well.

Do

Communicate, promote and engage. This is where you'll ensure that your employees are aware of opportunities for greater engagement in the integrated health process and in the programs and plans that consider their individual needs. Here, physical activity can be promoted as a primary contributor to employee health, quality of life, and presenteeism as well as to reducing absenteeism and risks for workplace injury and disability. Engaging your employees in identifying the personal and organizational benefits of being more active can help you build a positive culture of health through movement, especially when combined with approaches to reduce stress, improve eating, and reduce risk for injuries at work.

To provide this tie-in, you need a communications strategy that encourages movement as an easy first step toward better health and highlights the information, resources, and supports that are already available. For example, resources or messaging can encourage the use of amenities that already exist (such as stairwells, hallways, and walking paths) as opportunities for non-traditional physical activity

"snacks." Evidence supports that the most cost-effective workplace interventions are ones that help the least active become more active. Resources and messaging can promote small amounts of physical activity or exercise as beneficial; even 2 minutes of physical activity done 5 times a day improves mood, productivity, and health.

Regardless of the approach or specific actions you choose to take, your plans should all integrate back to your organization's strategic priority to promote an active culture for the health and wellbeing of employees and your organization. For example, providing education and/or training and workshops can improve employee awareness. They can also be opportunities to address workplace culture and facilitate engagement and buy-in to the plan by the whole organization – especially when attended by both leadership and employees. Any actions you take to support more physical activity and less sedentary behaviour should be part of your long-term vision to sustain an active workplace.

Check and Adjust

Evaluate the process and celebrate the results! Our Make Your Move Assessment Tools or the CAL AWA tools are designed to give you baseline and follow-up measurements of existing physical activity and sedentary behaviour supports in your workplace, along with areas for improvement. In addition, before you implement a physical activity policy or program, we recommend you collect baseline data of employee and manager physical activity and sedentary behaviour. Once your policy or program is in place, it is important to again measure employee and manager participation and the objective outcomes of their physical activity and health. These evaluation results will provide evidence for the business case, support employee progress, and boost morale.

Physically active employees are happier, healthier and more engaged. Your support, with the help of this toolkit, is a positive investment in their health and the health of your organization. *Let's get moving!*

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Much of the data used in this Toolkit can be found in the full *Physical Activity in the Workplace Final Report*. This project is directed by **Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia**, the provincial government's plan for encouraging Nova Scotians to move more.



Make Your Move at Work

A Move in the
Right Direction



Key actions to help your organization make positive moves
toward a more active workplace.

Introduction

When your employees are more physically active, they are healthier, happier and more engaged in your organization. Promoting physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour in the workplace provides a positive return on your investment toward a higher-performance organization with a healthier bottom line.

Here in Canada, physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour contribute to high rates of chronic disease and mental health burden, and they negatively impact quality of life. Increasing our physical activity can decrease the risk of many chronic conditions and improve mental health. The workplace is considered a primary avenue to promote physical activity and to improve employee physical, mental, emotional and overall health and wellbeing.

This brief identifies key actions to help your organization make positive moves toward a more active workplace.



The costs and benefits

Canadians are sedentary for an average of 9.6 waking hours every day.¹ In fact, although about half of Canadian adults are active, only about one in three adults meets the 150-minutes-per-week guideline for physical activity.² Given that the average Canadian adult spends about two-thirds of their waking life sedentary and half of their waking life at work,³ working conditions can be a major factor in physical inactivity.

This physical inactivity, and its related low physical fitness, is expensive. Besides costing employees their health, it affects employers' bottom line. For example, general employee health problems accounted for 1.35 absent days per employee over a three-month period. Productivity loss due to mood disorders, diabetes, and arthritis cost Canadian employers a total of \$299 million, \$82.8 million, and \$135 million respectively in a single year.⁴

How can you reduce your employees' health risks and the associated costs? By helping your employees to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviour.

For every dollar invested in workplace interventions to increase physical activity, BC's Canada Life realized a return of \$3.40.⁵ Alberta Health Services' savings calculator shows savings of anywhere from \$2,461 to \$243,595 for small organizations (1 to 99 employees), \$246,056 to \$1,227,819 for medium-sized organizations (100 to 499 employees), and \$1,230,280+ for large organizations (500+ employees) when they take steps to increase employees' physical activity or reduce sedentary behaviour.⁶

Investing in your employees' health in this way yields far-reaching benefits. For the employees, these include improved energy, focus, efficiency, confidence and job satisfaction, and reduced stress.⁷ For you as their employer, potential benefits include improved corporate reputation,³ reduced insurance and Workers' Compensation Board claims, and increased customer loyalty.⁸

What we offer

The team working on the Make Your Move at Work project has developed three ways we can help you make positive changes:

1. Provide education about the benefits of physical activity and a business case for action to help you and your employees understand the importance of moving more at work.
2. Encourage you to assess your individual situation, develop a strategic plan to create a culture of health, and evaluate outcomes.
3. Support your use of tools and existing resources as well as potentially create external incentives that allow you to engage.

The key support for this work is a toolkit for Nova Scotia organizations to implement effective strategies: “Make Your Move at Work.”

This complements the Centre for Active Living’s “Active Workplace Audit Tool”⁹ and supports implementation of the provincial “Let’s Get Moving” framework to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour in Nova Scotia.

Since we recognize that organizations will vary in their motivation and ability to put our proposals into practice, we offer a variety of ways you can make a difference.

Options for engagement

You can start with simple changes that help your least active employees to move more, which has been identified as the most cost-effective way to increase physical activity. By making changes that address access and the physical environment, you can effectively reduce sedentary behaviour by making physical activity the easy or default choice. Here are a few ways to do that:

- modify the workspace by distancing printers and refreshment stations from desks
- beautify the stairways
- provide wireless headsets for standing during calls
- install sit-stand or pedal workstations

In active workplaces with medium to heavy physical demands, you can support employees’ health by:

- providing flexible work hours to fit in exercise
- providing paid work time for warm-up prior to a physically demanding shift
- having stretch breaks during a long shift
- subsidizing memberships to on-site or local fitness facilities

Each of these investments can help maintain employees’ fitness to be able to continue to meet the physical demands of their job. Challenges and competitions such as step-counting and stair-counting can also encourage your people to move more. Rallying physical-activity champions, holding standing meetings, and giving movement prompts and reminders are positive changes that focus on your organization’s culture and norms. Keep in mind that although these changes are simple and require less commitment and investment, they can fizzle out if they’re implemented in isolation. You can give your positive changes a lasting impact by integrating them with an overall health and wellness plan.

Interventions with a greater return on investment are built on a foundation of a culture of movement.¹⁰ They are multifaceted, have leadership buy-in, don’t place all the onus on employees to act, and are refined with feedback. As a leader, you can demonstrate your support of initiatives that encourage your employees to move more in three ways:

- establish committees and supportive policies
- dedicate resources and time for maintaining interventions
- participate alongside your employees

Effective change involves systemic engagement. This means approaching interventions from the bottom up as well as from the top down. Employee engagement depends on management commitment.

Key resources to support action

Our research uncovered key resources that can support you as you act to increase physical activity in the workplace:

- 1) Our “Make Your Move at Work” Toolkit: resources tailored to the needs of Nova Scotia organizations, outlining simple steps toward an active workplace. There are tools to engage decision-makers and perform a brief organizational self-assessment with direction to resources identifying best practices in policies, practices and programs.
- 2) The Centre for Active Living Active Workplace Audit (CAL AWA) is a comprehensive tool for primarily office-based organizations that want to take bigger steps toward an active workplace. The CAL AWA guides workplaces through a comprehensive self-assessment of physical activity and sedentary behaviour, identifying areas that may need attention and following up with a list of resources for creating an active workplace and plans for change.⁹
- 3) The Conference Board of Canada’s “Moving Ahead” report³ is a helpful planning tool that describes criteria for effective initiatives and key implementation strategies.
- 4) Johns Hopkins University’s Physical Activity Employer User Guide¹¹ is another helpful planning tool.
- 5) The Alberta Health Services’ Healthier Together webpage¹² includes tips for “quick wins,” ideas for initiatives that are accessible to small and large organizations, and a physical activity toolkit that provides strategies around policy development, programs and resources, education and training, and communication and awareness.

- 6) The UPnGO program with ParticipACTION is an easy-to-implement program that helps deskbound workplaces bring fun, rewarding and healthy behaviour programming into the workday. It is built on three core pillars: a mobile app for employees to track their movement and healthy choices; monthly themes to build team cohesion with friendly competitions; and workplace support provided by a ParticipACTION team member who guides a step-by-step launch process.¹³

Every dollar you invest in time and resources to create a more active workplace can produce returns in reduced costs and improved outcomes for your employees and your organization. The investment is worth it. *Let’s get moving!*



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Make Your Move at Work

Assessment Tool for Employers



Identify your organization's strengths and opportunities
for encouraging employees to move more at work.

Part 1: Sedentary Behaviour

Sedentary behaviour is any waking behaviour when we expend very little energy and are sitting or reclining (such as driving or sitting at a desk). Some sedentary time is inescapable, but it often can be replaced with some type of movement. This could include breaking up sitting time by standing, taking the stairs, or taking a quick walking break.

Addressing sedentary behaviour can be your first step to improving the wellbeing of your employees. Current national guidelines recommend we limit daily sedentary time to eight hours, which includes no more than three hours of recreational screen time, and we break up long periods of sedentary activity as much as possible.

Check the answer you believe best describes the situation in your organization. These are examples only, not a complete list. They are simply to provide you with guidance for your next steps.

	Component 1: Employee Awareness and Education Does your organization actively communicate the benefits of reducing sedentary behaviour at work to all employees? (Examples may be newsletters, emails, or signs that encourage moving more at work, such as by taking the stairs.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 2: Social Support Are managers, supervisors and co-workers seen talking about or taking part in promoting reducing sedentary behaviour in your organization? (Examples may be praising stretching breaks and role modelling movement at work through the use of sit-stand desks, or walking to visit employees instead of using email or phone.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 3: Organizational Support Does your organization have an action plan to designate resources (funds and personnel) toward reducing sedentary behaviour at work? (Examples may be having a contact staff person, a committee, educational materials, a budget for activities, or physical supports such as standing desk stations or making stairways attractive for walking.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 4: Community Assets and Partnerships Does your organization use expert supports for reducing sedentary behaviour at work? (Examples might include using information from outside sources like ParticipACTION, or collaborating with local professionals to support employees to reduce sedentary behaviour at work.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 5: Policies and Programs Does your organization implement policy-backed programs to support managers, supervisors, and employees in decreasing sedentary behaviour in the workplace? (Examples may be holding walking meetings, sending email prompts to interrupt sitting time, or offering flex time during workdays for physical activity breaks.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
To calculate your score: For every “yes” check mark add 1 point.				

Part 2: Physical Activity

Physical activity is any bodily movement that requires us to expend energy beyond sitting or reclining. Current national guidelines recommend that we do several hours of light physical activities every day, such as standing and casual

movement. We should also do 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous physical activities (such as walking or jogging) as well as muscle-strengthening activities for fitness.

Check the answer you believe best describes the current supports in your organization. These are examples only, not a complete list. They are simply to provide you with guidance for your next steps.

	Component 1: Employee Awareness and Education Does your organization provide opportunities for employees to learn the knowledge and skills they need for increasing physical activity in the workplace? (Examples include providing informative materials, workshops, or lunch and learns.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 2: Social Support Can managers and supervisors be seen promoting and taking part in increasing physical activity in your organization? (For example, they might hold walking meetings, take part in lunchtime walking groups, or promote and share policies and programs for physical activity.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 3: Organizational Support Does your organization have an action plan to designate resources (funds and personnel) toward increasing physical activity in the workplace? (Examples could include establishing and funding a wellness committee or staff person, creating a budget for activities, offering safe storage for bicycles, and having a fitness room or shower facilities.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 4: Community Assets and Partnerships Does your organization seek out and leverage community assets or partnerships (such as organizations, people, local facilities, or funding agencies) for increasing physical activity at the workplace? (Examples could include collaborating with local community centres, applying for municipal funding, or using local parks to provide access for physical activity and exercise.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 5: Policies and Programs Does your organization implement policy-backed programs to support managers, supervisors and employees in increasing physical activity in the workplace? (Examples could include scheduled time for exercise, an extended paid lunch break for physical activity, subsidized gym memberships, or provision for on-site exercise classes.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
To calculate your score: For every “yes” check mark add 1 point.				

How did your organization do?

What does your overall score mean?

How did your organization do? What does your overall score mean? Tally all your “yes” answers from sections 1 and 2. That is your total score. Your overall score gives the big picture of how well your organization is doing at fostering a healthier workplace.

0–2: NEEDS ACTION

You have a great opportunity to take action to reduce sedentary behaviour and support movement in your organization. This will improve the wellbeing of your employees. Start small and build up. Is this something your organization wants to address? Begin understanding why your workplace scored “needs action” by breaking down section scores. Our “Make Your Move at Work” Toolkit has tools and information to help your organization take the first steps.

3–5: ROOM TO MOVE

Your organization has taken some action toward supporting employees’ wellbeing by reducing sedentary behaviour and supporting movement in the workplace. Perhaps you have addressed some areas but missed others. To maintain and build on your successes, look at your component scores (see below) to identify areas you may have overlooked. See our “Make Your Move at Work” Toolkit for ideas on supports you may not have considered. The Toolkit’s Best Moves section summarizes effective, evidence-based practices, policies and programs by component that can help your organization foster a culture of movement and/or become an active workplace.

6–10: GREAT START!

Your organization has taken clear action toward supporting your employees’ wellbeing by reducing sedentary behaviour and supporting movement in the workplace. For ways to maintain and improve on the supports you have already addressed, please see the Centre for Active Living Active Workplace Audit Tool. This tool provides a comprehensive breakdown of different components in an overall physical activity plan for an organization. It also offers a further assessment that will provide you and your organization with details on how to build on your successes in the different categories.

What are your section scores?

Check the “yes” answers for each section for a score out of 5. Your section scores highlight specific areas of strength and weakness – they can give direction in how your organization can improve. Sedentary behaviour is not the same as being inactive, so sedentary behaviour and physical activity must be addressed as separate concepts.

0–1: NEEDS ACTION

Addressing more elements in the sedentary behaviour section might be the best option for getting your organization started. See the Return on Investment tool contained in our “Make Your Move at Work” Toolkit to start making a case for movement in your workplace. The Moving More at Home tools can help your employees find ways to sit less during their days when working from home.

2–3: ROOM TO MOVE

Your organization has made initial steps in improving workplace wellbeing. Further opportunities to address this section can be found in the “Make Your Move at Work” Best Moves document. This highlights “quick wins” to encourage less sitting (e.g., through employee awareness and education, and organizational and social supports) and more physical activity (policies and programs that support active meetings, flex time or community partnerships for facility access).

4–5: GREAT START!

Your organization has recognized this area as a key support in reducing sedentary behaviour and increasing movement in the workplace. What items did you select “yes” for? How might these items complement each other? Is there anything your workplace could do to strengthen the actions already taken?

For guidance on how to address the areas of strength and weakness, and for guidance on how to maintain successes, please refer to our “Make Your Move at Work” Toolkit and the full Active Workplace Audit Tool developed by Alberta’s Centre for Active Living. Both of these tools break down sedentary behaviour versus physical activity, and they match the elements of this assessment tool with suggested activities and outcomes for your next steps.

Specific suggestions for your organization

What further tips, suggestions or advice do you have to help your organization support employees to move more throughout their workday?



Make Your Move at Work

Assessment Tool for Employees



Identify our organization's strengths and opportunities to support you to move more at work.

Why an assessment tool?

Moving more during the workday can improve your overall health and wellbeing, have a positive impact on your mood and relationships, and make you feel good.

We want to ensure we're doing everything we can to support our employees to move more at work. To help us do that, we'd like your advice.

Please take a few minutes to complete this assessment tool to give us:

- your perspective on the supports currently available to you at work
- your ideas on more ways we could help you be active during your workday

Together, we'll do better at helping you to move more at work.






Part 1: Sedentary Behaviour

What is sedentary behaviour? What can we do to reduce it? Sedentary behaviour is any behaviour when we are awake while sitting or reclining. Examples are driving a car or sitting at a desk. Too much sitting can be bad for our health.

Although we can't avoid some sedentary time, we can often replace it with some type of movement. For example, we might break up sitting time by standing. We could

take the stairs or have a quick walking break. Changing sedentary behaviour can be our first step to improving our own health and wellbeing at work. Current guidelines recommend no more than eight hours of total sedentary time in one day, which includes no more than three hours of recreational screen time. We should break up long sedentary periods as much as we can.

Please begin the questionnaire by checking the answer you believe best describes the supports in our organization. These are examples only, not a complete list.

	Component 1: Employee Awareness and Education Does our organization communicate the benefits of reducing sedentary behaviour at work to all employees? (Examples may be newsletters, emails, or signs that encourage moving more at work.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 2: Social Support Do you see managers, supervisors and co-workers talking about or taking part in reducing sedentary behaviour at work? (Examples may be praising stretching breaks and role modelling movement at work through the use of sit-stand desks or walking to visit employees instead of using email or phone.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 3: Organizational Support Does our organization have resources to help you reduce sedentary behaviour at work? (Examples may be having a contact staff person, educational materials, a budget for activities, or physical supports such as standing desk stations or making stairways attractive for walking.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 4: Community Assets and Partnerships Do you see our organization using outside supports for reducing sedentary behaviour at work? (Examples may include using materials from outside experts like ParticipACTION or working with local professionals.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
	Component 5: Policies and Programs Does our organization have policies and programs to support you as an employee to decrease sedentary behaviour at work? (Examples may be holding walking meetings, sending email prompts to interrupt sitting time, or offering flex time during workdays for physical activity breaks.)	YES	NO	UNSURE
Now calculate your score. Add 1 point for every "yes" check mark.				




Part 2: Physical Activity and Moving More at Work

How do we define physical activity? How much is enough?

Physical activity is any movement beyond sitting or reclining. Current national health guidelines recommend that we do light physical activities for several hours every day. Examples at work can include standing and casual movement.

We should also do 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activities every week. Examples of these are walking or jogging. In addition, we should do activities that strengthen our muscles and keep us fit.

For this part of the questionnaire, please check the answer you believe best describes the current supports and/or opportunities in our organization. These are examples only, not a complete list.

 <p>Component 1: Employee Awareness and Education Does our organization provide ways for employees to learn about the importance of moving more at work and how to increase physical activity in your day? (Examples may include providing information in brochures, newsletters, workshops or education sessions.)</p>	YES	NO	UNSURE
 <p>Component 2: Social Support Do you see managers, supervisors and co-workers talking about or taking part in physical activity opportunities at work? (Examples may include walking meetings, fitness classes, lunchtime walking groups, or workplace physical activity programs such as a step challenge.)</p>	YES	NO	UNSURE
 <p>Component 3: Organizational Support Does our organization have resources to help you move more or be physically active at work? (Examples may include having a wellness staff person, a committee, a budget for activities, safe bicycle storage, a fitness room, or shower facilities.)</p>	YES	NO	UNSURE
 <p>Component 4: Community Assets and Partnerships Does our organization use outside partnerships to help you move more or be physically active at work? (Examples may include collaborating with local community or recreation or fitness centres, or using local parks for physical activity and exercise.)</p>	YES	NO	UNSURE
 <p>Component 5: Policies and Programs Does our organization have policies and programs to support you to increase your physical activity or to exercise at work? (Examples may include active transportation incentives, an extended paid lunch break for physical activity, subsidized gym memberships, or on-site exercise classes.)</p>	YES	NO	UNSURE
<p>Now calculate your score. Add 1 point for every “yes” check mark.</p>			

How did our organization do?

What does your overall score mean?

Add all your “yes” scores from sections 1 and 2. This overall score gives the big picture of how well our organization is doing at fostering a healthier workplace with physical activity.

0-2: NEEDS ACTION

Our organization has a great opportunity to take action. Take a look at your scores for our organization, and please tell us in the comments section how we can take steps toward supporting movement in the workplace.

3-5: ROOM TO MOVE

Our organization has taken some action. Have we addressed some areas but missed others? What practices, policies, or programs could help our organization become an active workplace? Please give your ideas to your supervisor, manager, or our safety/wellness coordinator or committee. Take a look at your scores for our organization, and in the comments section please note areas where you feel we can develop.

6-10: GREAT START!

Our organization has taken clear action. How can we maintain and improve the supports you have identified? Take a look at your scores for our organization, and in the comments section please discuss how you feel our managers, supervisors, and you and your co-workers could continue to build on the good work that is being done.

What are your section scores?

Now let's look at your scores for each of the two sections. To get your score out of 5, add up your “yes” check marks under Part 1: Sedentary Behaviour. Then do the same for Part 2: Physical Activity. The section scores highlight specific areas of strength and weakness. They can give direction in how our organization can improve in each section.

0-1: NEEDS ACTION

Where is a good place to start? The best first steps for our organization may be to address sedentary behaviour. Check out the Moving More at Home tools. These can help employees find ways to sit less when working from home.

2-3: ROOM TO MOVE

Our organization has taken good first steps to improve employee wellbeing. How can we support employees to speak up and ask for information or education about organizational supports such as policies and programs to support physical movement?

4-5: GREAT START!

Our organization is making great strides in this area! We have recognized that reducing sedentary behaviour and increasing movement in the workplace is important and beneficial. What items did you select “yes” for? How might these items work together and support each other?

Comments

What tips, suggestions or advice do you have to help our organization support you and your co-workers to move more throughout your workday? If you need more space, feel free to attach a separate sheet of paper.



Make Your Move at Work

Best Moves Guide



A guide to help your organization become a more active workplace.

Workplace Best Moves

If you want to help your organization become a more active workplace, this guide can show you how. The practices, policies and programs outlined here are backed by evidence, and they're effective.

In each section, we start you off with the easier-to-adopt steps. Then, as you work through the guide, the steps you can take become more complex. As their complexity increases, they may require more resources on your part or more readiness among your employees.

First, let's explain our terms.

Practices are the scaffolding for your interventions. They include general themes you may want to consider as you implement interventions.

Policies are the foundation that will support your successful interventions to decrease sedentary behaviour and increase physical activity in your workplace.

Programs are your sustained efforts to engage employees in policies and practices.

The “best moves” listed here are bare-bones examples. Although we suggest the objectives of these “best moves,” how you achieve them is up to you. You and your organization will need to assess and evaluate your own practices, policies and programs over time.

A note on policies: Policies are more elaborate than what we have presented here. They include background and rationale, required actions, scope, specific objectives, timelines, and evaluation plans.^{10,17,18} Creating a policy requires four steps:

1. Engage with joint committee of employees and management to help plan policy.
2. Assess and identify physical activity needs and goals of a workplace.
3. Develop the policy and distribute it to employees for feedback.
4. Notify employees of the policy launch date and celebrate.¹¹

Before you implement any new policy, always consult legal advisors and policy analysts to ensure that it is appropriate and feasible for your organization. We provide a few example policies to help you develop your own.






A note on programs: Programs are the most intensive of the three “best moves” factors and the most difficult to balance in terms of costs versus returns on investment. Finding a balance between what you and your organization put into programs and what you get out of them may require trial and error in the early stages. For example, determining the right amount of time to allow for physical activity that will benefit employees’ wellbeing while minimally impacting their work performance may require some fine-tuning. You will need to assess the program and tailor it to your workplace. Cost-effective interventions you can start with are programs that promote a reduction in sedentary behaviour by replacing it with standing or with increases in light physical activity. To reap additional physical, emotional, and cognitive returns on investment while minimally impacting work performance, short sessions of physical activity several times a week that total 20 to 30 minutes weekly have been shown to be effective.¹⁵

Effective programs engage employees in the development of policies and in implementation of best practices.



Best Practices




The “scaffolding” for your interventions – general themes to consider as you implement interventions. Ranked here from easiest (and most accessible) to more complex (but even greater benefit).

The Practice	The Framework	The Rationale	
<p>Top-down modelling of culture of movement</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour AND Promotes Physical Activity</i></p>  PROVIDES SOCIAL SUPPORT	<p>Bring ideas and opportunities to your employees instead of expecting them to always bring ideas to management</p>	<p>This practice can create the biggest change in the outcomes for an organization. Employees benefit from managerial engagement and commitment. When managers model a culture of movement and present opportunities for their employees to join, they are communicating to employees that the organization supports their wellbeing and betterment. This form of social support is critical for employee motivation.⁶</p>	LESS
<p>Follow a consistent strategy framework</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour AND Promotes Physical Activity</i></p>  REQUIRES ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT	<p>Pre-plan, plan, do, check, adjust³</p>	<p>Consistent and recurring commitment is critical for any return on investment. Results will not be instantaneous, and employees need to feel that their organization will continue to value their wellbeing despite any difficulties or setbacks. Fortunately, using employee feedback to inform the evolution of your practices can help you keep your employees engaged and progressing. Without a framework, your interventions will be short-lived and costly, as the investment of resources may not reap rewards unless uptake is sustained. This practice addresses organizational support.</p>	
<p>Advertise and celebrate your interventions</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour OR Promotes Physical Activity</i></p>  PROMOTES EMPLOYEE AWARENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announce workplace commitments to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviour • Personally invite employees and managers by email, in person, by newsletter, etc. 	<p>Employee awareness is critical to success. Your best interventions won't work if nobody knows about them or understands how to get involved. By ensuring that employees and managers are aware of the options for moving more and sitting less, your interventions can reap returns on investment.</p>	
<p>Establish and/or empower a wellness committee</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour AND Promotes Physical Activity</i></p>  REQUIRES ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a movement or wellness committee, post a call for volunteers to find leaders who are already motivated • Ensure that the committee includes representation from various levels • Establish a system for recruiting and including employees and managers who may need a little extra convincing to participate 	<p>Administrative resources are important in organizing and monitoring efforts to sustain returns on investment. If something is not someone's responsibility to oversee, it likely won't get done. Returns on investment are not immediate, and an empowered wellness committee can keep the workplace on the right track toward reaping them. Such a dedication of resources is a powerful organizational support.</p>	
<p>Implement multi-pronged interventions</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour AND Promotes Physical Activity</i></p>  REQUIRES ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to implement a variety of interventions that work together and have a broad appeal • Ensure the interventions are not overly burdensome for managers and employees and resources (for example, start with one simple + one complex instead of two complex) 	<p>Interventions that address multiple target areas are more likely to appeal to a broader range of employees and show greater strength.⁵ Integrated occupational health and safety and workplace wellness activities communicate organizational support and are being embraced more and more because of their greater effects on health, safety, and wellbeing.⁴ The framework for public health action⁸ highlights potential target areas for workplaces to consider when implementing strategies. Among these target areas are socioeconomic factors and changing the context to encourage healthy decisions.</p>	MORE

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Best Policies

The foundation that will support your successful interventions. Ranked here from easiest (and most accessible) to more complex (but even greater benefit).



Objective	The (Sample) Policy	The Actions	The Rationale	The Investment
<p>Decrease sedentary behaviour by encouraging and supporting reduced sitting time</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour</i></p> <p>PROVIDES SOCIAL SUPPORT</p> 	<p>At least a quarter of any internal meeting will be spent active (e.g., standing, walking, stretching), starting upon the approval of this policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess employees' readiness for and accessibility of physical activity Collect ideas from meeting participants Determine the physical activity before the meeting from suggestions by those participating in the meeting (e.g., standing during Q&A period, having a stretch/ activity break) 	<p>Incorporating physical activity breaks into paid work hours communicates an organizational culture of health and creates a social support that motivates employees to move more and sit less. Getting employees out of the sedentary category offers the biggest bang for your buck.⁶</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to assess employee readiness Time to collect employee perspectives Time to implement during meetings <p>Approximate investment costs: \$</p>
<p>Remove barriers to, and promote, decreased sedentary behaviour</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour</i></p> <p>REQUIRES ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT</p> 	<p>All stairwells to the workspace will be safe, clean, appealing, and promoted by [insert month/year]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the safety policies for stairwell access Survey what would make stairs more appealing to employees (e.g., art, anti-slip rugs or paint, improved lighting) Promote the use of stairs using other best practices (see practices and programs) 	<p>Employees are challenged by a "lack of on-site amenities."⁶ Nudging employees to reframe use of existing infrastructure can overcome this barrier. Improving employee access to infrastructure is an important organizational support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey or email (time to write it and analyze results) Promotion email or signage (time to write and post, potentially printing costs) <p>Other potential costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artist (if beautifying the stairwell) Anti-slip rugs or paint (if applicable) <p>Approximate investment costs: \$\$</p>
<p>Flexible work arrangements will honour and protect employees' scheduled physical activity time</p> <p><i>Promotes Physical Activity</i></p> <p>REQUIRES ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT</p> 	<p>By [insert month/year], 30% of our employees and 30% of our managers will have incorporated physical activity into their work schedule. See example "Flexible Work Hours" policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask employees to suggest a realistic amount of time that such a scheduled break will take and budget for that time as part of paid hours Determine who will provide the activities (for example, your organization or an external service?) Establish a tracking system for engagement 	<p>Enabling employees to schedule physical activity through job sharing, flexible hours, telecommuting, or longer lunch break gives them the necessary opportunity to get moving and mitigates the lack-of-time barrier.</p> <p>Be aware of other supports that may be needed, such as comfortable shoes, an accessible change area, or peer support to be active.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to collect employee perspectives Time to research activity coordinators Time to establish and maintain a tracking system <p>Note: Employee time that is paid for physical activity is typically returned on increased productivity, improved creativity, and improved positive attitude/mood and morale.</p> <p>Approximate investment costs: \$-\$\$</p>

LESS

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Best Policies (continued)

Objective	The (Sample) Policy	The Actions	The Rationale	The Investment	
<p>Quantifiable decreases in sedentary behaviour and/or increases in physical activity will be formally rewarded by the organization</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour AND Promotes Physical Activity</i></p> <p>REQUIRES ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT</p> 	<p>By [insert month/year], 25% of managers will model attempts at moving more and sitting less. Furthermore, 25% of employees will have met the engagement threshold and been rewarded</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult the Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act Establish a percent change threshold that is realistic for all employees Determine how your employees would prefer to be rewarded (for example, praise, recognition or financial reward) Develop methods to evaluate progress toward the policy goal 	<p>Rewards are more effective than punishments and bear less financial risk for the organization.¹² Incentives for physical activity are proven to be very cost effective.¹³ Formal policies like this are powerful in improving employee wellbeing. For work with heavy physical demands, providing incentives for employees to exercise and keep fit can improve health, reduce risk of injury on the job and lower prevalence of chronic disease.⁴</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to determine employee readiness and appropriate percent change threshold The costs for rewards typically yield a return on investment because of reduced absenteeism, greater employee presenteeism, and reduced health and insurance costs over the long term <p>Approximate investment costs: \$\$</p>	<p>LESS</p> <p>↑</p> <p>COMPLEXITY</p> <p>↓</p> <p>MORE</p>
<p>Increase physical activity by encouraging, supporting, and promoting physical literacy in employees and management</p> <p><i>Promotes Physical Activity</i></p> <p>PROMOTES EMPLOYEE AWARENESS</p> 	<p>30% of employees and 30% of managers will have participated in at least one physical activity information session hosted and paid for by the organization by [insert month/year]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek out reliable resources Budget for the program and the program evaluation Consult experts (perhaps hire them to run the workshops or programs) Supply employees and managers with resources and professional advice 	<p>It is important that both employees and managers are educated in moving more and sitting less in the workplace. Engaging in education together creates cross-level support in a unified effort.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to research what education is desired by your organization and your employees Costs of regular communications through email and newsletters (require someone to source content) Expert consultation Time to disseminate resources (e.g., via automated email) Costs of workshops <p>Approximate investment costs: \$ – \$\$\$</p>	

A sample workplace policy is provided for your review. The sample is an overarching organizational physical activity policy that can be used or adapted on its own or further refined to create specific policies such as:

- a policy to reduce sedentary behaviour (e.g., walking meetings)
- a policy to increase physical activity (e.g., flexible work hours)

An excellent resource to help you develop a specific physical activity policy for your organization is provided by Hamilton Public Health Services, Investing in Physical Activity Through the Workplace: A Toolkit for Policy Development. (2012)






<http://www2.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/7C1B3EDD-A6C2-4716-BFF9-91356F85770F/0/PhysicalActivityToolkit.pdf>

Link to it here to get more details and examples of physical activity policy development for your workplace.

Best Programs

Your sustained efforts to engage employees in policies and practices.

Ranked here from easiest (and most accessible) to more complex (but even greater benefit).

The Program	The Actions	The Rationale	The Investment	
<p>Nudges, point-of-decision prompts (PDPs), and wayfinding aids</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour and Promotes Physical Activity</i></p> <p>PROMOTES EMPLOYEE AWARENESS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Browse ideas from experts like the Healthy Tomorrow Foundation Post nudges by elevators, parking lots, and other areas where people have the opportunity to pick an active alternative Change the location and look of PDPs on occasion so they continue to grab attention 	<p>Nudges* and PDPs improve employee awareness, knowledge and motivation and tell them that their organization recognizes their time barrier and wants to help them find opportunities for movement that fit within their day. They can help to move people out of the sedentary category.⁷</p> <p>* Such as Make Your Move at Home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printing and lamination (\$5 per poster)²⁰ Maintaining PDPs and wayfinding aids Someone responsible for planning and monitoring placement and awareness of PDPs <p>Approximate investment costs: \$</p>	LESS
<p>Scheduled team/group stretch sessions to break up sedentary time</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour</i></p> <p>PROMOTES EMPLOYEE AWARENESS</p>  <p>PROVIDES SOCIAL SUPPORT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search for reputable sources (e.g., ParticipACTION or the Make Your Move at Work Toolkit) and collect a library of instructional stretching videos. Create an email list of employees who are both in the office and remote Choose your intervals. Will the tutorials be shared three times over the course of one day or three times throughout the week? Will you use an automated emailing service? Share the stretching tutorial links with employees regularly Celebrate engagement and participation 	<p>Nudges and instructional stretching tutorials can improve the awareness and knowledge of employees whether they're in the office or working remotely. That said, they only work when employees trust that they will not be penalized for taking the healthier option and following the nudge. This program works well only when the organization actively promotes the taking of active stretch breaks. This also provides social support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to collect reputable material Time to prepare automated emails Time for employees to prioritize ~5 minute stretch breaks <p>Approximate investment costs: \$</p>	
<p>Join existing local, provincial, or national challenges such as ParticipACTION, UPnGO (workplace), Optimity (previously known as Carrot Rewards)</p> <p><i>Promotes Physical Activity</i></p> <p>BUILDS COMMUNITY ASSETS AND PARTNERSHIPS</p>  <p>PROVIDES SOCIAL SUPPORT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research opportunities Assess employee interest (maybe vote on several options) Help connect employees in forming teams if applicable Support and encourage one another in achieving the challenges 	<p>With community assets and partnerships, your organization can find experts who have practical advice for any organization at any stage. Their challenges are already designed for you, and they take care of the administrative duties and prizes. All you have to worry about is connecting teams and cheering one another on. This also provides social support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to find and promote opportunities Time to assess employee interest Time to connect employees Time to engage in competitions during work hours Optimity has no upfront costs for individuals but costs \$10/month/user for corporate membership UPnGO (\$5/month/employee) <p>Approximate investment costs: \$\$</p>	MORE

LESS






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Best Programs (continued)

The Goal	The Actions	The Rationale	The Investment	
<p>Active workspaces</p> <p><i>Reduces Sedentary Behaviour OR Promotes Physical Activity</i></p> <p>REQUIRES ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for or set up standing work stations or active work stations with fixed monitors • Create a sign-up calendar for employees to access communal workstations they can visit and plug into for an hour or two • Promote the new standing option(s) 	<p>Investing in this infrastructure communicates organizational support. Standing desk stations are more easily predicted in terms of costs than providing everyone with sit-stand desks. They are also more socially supportive because standing employees don't feel alone, as they would when they're the only ones standing among the cubicles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustable standing desks (\$200+ per desk), or bike desk (\$400+), or under desk cycle machine (~\$200)² • Extra monitors, keyboards, cables, and mouses (~\$200 per set)² • Equipment maintenance (time and repairs) <p>Approximate investment costs: \$\$\$</p>	<p>LESS</p> <p>↑</p> <p>COMPLEXITY</p> <p>↓</p> <p>MORE</p>
<p>On-site physical activity programs/workshops</p> <p><i>Promotes Physical Activity</i></p> <p>REQUIRES ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT</p>  <p>PROVIDES SOCIAL SUPPORT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess your employees' stage of readiness to determine the appropriate intervention (such as a workshop or an on-site or virtual exercise class) • Delegate a leader or team to organize and administer the program • Delegate the leader or team to discuss with the workshop/class instructor what the workshop will need to provide (perhaps exercise equipment such as resistance bands, food, water etc.) 	<p>On-site physical activity programs are more accessible to employees, as they require minimal travel time. Professionally delivered workshops give valuable education to managers and employees alike and can also be a bonding opportunity that builds a positive social environment for all. On-site programs also boost social and organizational support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exercise professional • Time (of both project leader/team and attending managers and employees) <p>Potential additional costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment (e.g. exercise bands, \$15–30 per set)² • Catering (not required, but adds incentive to attend, \$10–30 per person) <p>Approximate investment costs: \$\$\$</p>	

Links to External Resources

- **Make Your Move:** www.makeyourmoves.ca
- **Healthy Tomorrow Foundation:** www.healthytomorrow.ca
- **Alberta Health Services Centre for Active Living:** www.centre4activeliving.ca
- **ParticipACTION:** www.participaction.com
- **UPnGO:** www.participaction.com/en-ca/programs/upngo
- **Optimity (previously known as Carrot Rewards):** www.myoptimity.com/2
- **Hamilton Public Health Services:** www2.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/7C1B3EDD-A6C2-4716-BFF9-91356F85770F/0/PhysicalActivityToolkit.pdf

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A Healthy Investment

Make Your Move at Work

ROI business case for a healthy organization.



Every dollar invested in an active workplace produces returns.

As Canadians, most of us spend half our waking life at work – and 69% of our waking hours are sedentary. When your employees are more physically active, they're healthier and happier. But did you know your bottom line is healthier too?

Increasing employee physical activity works!

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE EMPLOYEES:

- are happier and healthier
- improve their workplace performance
- are more productive
- are more resilient
- have lower risk for some workplace injuries

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMS:

- improve work attendance and engagement
- elevate corporate reputation
- improve employee satisfaction, creativity, loyalty and morale
- can reduce insurance claims for physical and mental health issues
- lessen staff turnover

The cost of inaction

Employees who are sedentary are at higher risk of physical and mental illness, and their illness is also costing employers. In a single year, that cost to Canadian businesses was more than \$500 million.

Employee absences cost the Canadian economy roughly \$16 billion annually, but physically active employees or wellness programs can save 1.5 absent days per employee. That works out to a savings of around \$2 billion or \$250 per employee, per year!

What can you do?

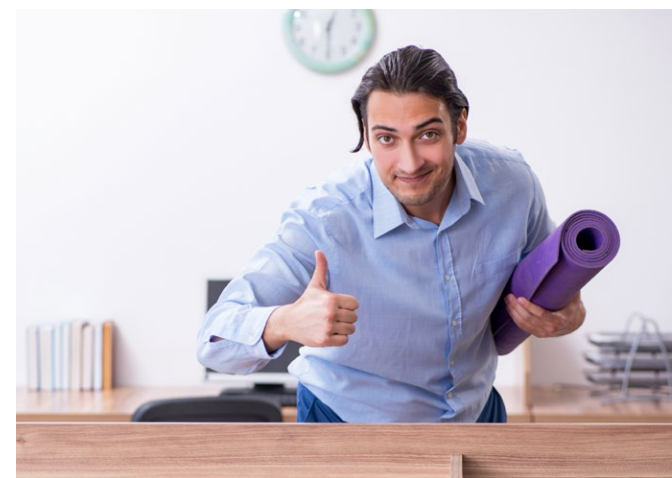
Changing workplace attitudes about physical activity is the most effective way you can support an active workplace. Providing information and counselling to your employees can help. The best way to reduce sedentary behaviour is to improve access and modify the environment. Even moving printers and the coffee machine is a simple step that can make a difference.

The best way to increase physical activity is through organizational support: having policies and program that help employees fit physical activity into their workday.

Taking a variety of approaches and keeping the momentum going will have the greatest long-term impact. Setting up social activity groups with some challenges and competitions is a way to invest in your employees to be active.

Every dollar invested can return \$2 to \$4 in reduced costs and improved outcomes.

The investment is worth it.
Let's get moving!





Move More Working From Home.

Make Your Move at Work

Guide to help your employees move more while working from home.



Working from home: How is it working for your organization and your employees?

The workplace has changed. Our new reality is that many workers now work from home. This has certain benefits but also has some drawbacks. One key aspect is that your employees may not be moving as much in their home office as they did when they were coming to work. This has important impacts on their physical and mental health.

Being physically active and reducing sedentary behaviour is known to:

- improve mood and lower stress
- improve energy and performance
- improve productivity
- improve physical and mental health

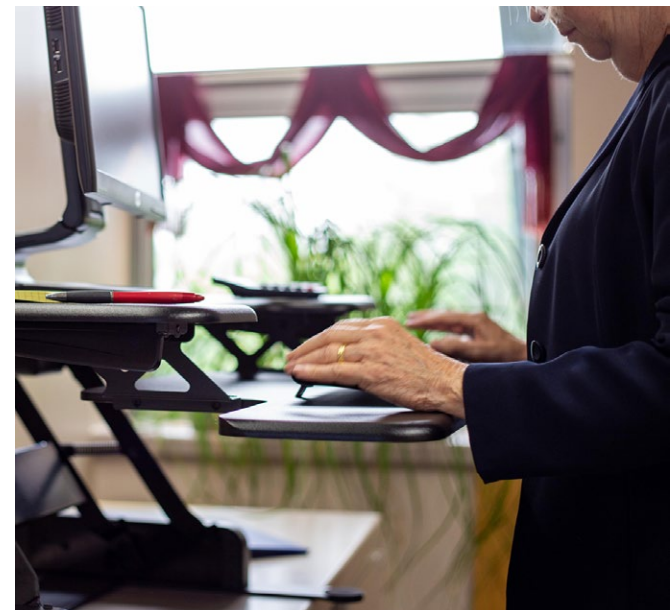
Physically active employees are happier, healthier and more engaged. Supporting their physical activity while they work from home is a positive investment in their health and the health of your organization. Use this guide to spark ideas for helping your employees increase their physical activity while they work from home.

You are a leader

As an employer, you can use your influence on workplace culture and practices to motivate your employees to sit less and move more – wherever they happen to be working.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THE LONG GAME?

Employers have a great deal of control over the environment and conditions their employees work in, even if that environment is virtual. For a culture of movement to persist, it needs regular reinforcement, especially while employees are isolated at home. A one-off intervention does not reap returns on investment. Sustained commitment does. Investing in a culture of movement encourages both employees and employers to contribute to a common goal: a happier, healthier workforce and a healthier organization.



Physically active employees are happier, healthier and more engaged. Your support is a positive investment in their health and the health of your organization.

To help your employees move more at home, take these important steps:

Get informed

REACH OUT: Schedule a conference call or email a survey. Determine your employees' home set-ups. Are they able to be active at home? If not, why not? The barriers they report can guide you as you plan. Common barriers to becoming more physically active include perceptions of no time, no motivation, no energy, no buddy, no confidence, and no support from managers.

HAVE YOU BRAINSTORMED?

Encourage ideas and options for reducing the specific barriers your employees face. It may be an issue of not knowing what to do, or not having someone to be active with. Take a few minutes at the start of a video meeting to share what you've found. Ask for suggestions on resources and supports. By opening the door to such a conversation, you are already addressing the barrier of a perceived lack of managerial support.

Ready to make YOUR move?

- **Healthy Tomorrow Foundation:**
www.healthytomorrow.ca; www.makeyourmovers.ca
- **Alberta Health Services Centre for Active Living:**
www.centre4activeliving.ca
- **ParticipACTION:** www.participaction.com



Breaking up your employee's day with physical activity can improve mental focus and creativity, so it is an investment in their work.

Advocate

MODEL: Communicate your support for a culture of movement by modelling the attitudes and behaviours you want to see from your workforce. Communicate that an active workforce, even from home, is important.

HAVE YOU WALKED THE WALK?

Showing employees that management is taking this seriously demonstrates your support. Maybe share pictures of management teams moving more and sitting less in their own homes.

CHAMPION: Working from home can make employees feel less connected to their colleagues and managers. Champions are individuals who help ensure that everyone feels they have someone to move more with and sit less with (despite physical distancing).

HAVE YOU BUDDIED UP?

By buddying up physical activity champions with less-confident employees, you're addressing the "no buddy" barrier. And you're fostering employees' motivation, because nobody wants to be left out. Champions can help by leading team challenges, group activities, and group discussions about moving more and sitting less.

Support

COMMIT TO GROWTH: Implement formal policies that mitigate the barriers your employees face in moving more and sitting less at home. For example, you can overcome their time barrier by allowing employees to schedule physical activity into their workday. Breaking up their day with physical activity can improve mental focus and creativity, so it is an investment in their work.

Launch programs that inform employees of ways they can move more and sit less at home. Tailor these programs to your people to address low confidence or motivation. Simple reminders on meeting notices to move more or stand during meetings can help.

HAVE YOU SHARED?

Sharing their stories will reinforce your supportive culture. Sharing goals and motivations in a group chat also gives colleagues something in common to talk about besides work.

CELEBRATE SUCCESS: Recognize and reward those in the workplace who are making efforts to move more and sit less (in their own way). **Share results** of programs and interventions with everybody: stakeholders and employees alike.



Move More Working From Home.

Make Your Move at Work

Guide to help employees move more while working from home.

How is working from home working for you?

Do you feel drained at the end of the day? Maybe that's because you're not moving as much as you used to. Where you once walked in to work from the parking lot, now you commute from the kitchen. And maybe now you're spending hours in front of a screen without a break. Not to worry. Working from home doesn't mean you have to miss out on being active.

Being physically active and reducing sedentary behaviour will improve your physical and mental health:

- better moods and lowered stress
- more energy and better sleep
- better immune system function
- more focus, creativity, and productivity

WHY WORKING FROM HOME IS DIFFERENT:

How much physical activity should you aim for? The recommended amount is 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every week. This often translates to about 7,500 steps a day. Taking fewer than 5,000 steps a day is considered a sedentary lifestyle.

Working a desk job in an office can lead to an average 3,500 steps a day. Working from home can mean you take even fewer steps than that – as low as 1,500 steps.

That's why, if you work from home, it's even more important to protect your health. Break up sitting time and seek out physical activity throughout your day.

Opportunities

Working from home may be different from what you're used to. But with change comes opportunity!

To make physical activity part of your day:

- Use your former commuting time as physical activity time.
- Have a mini-stretch or a physical activity break while you wait for an email.
- Bookend specific "office hours" with an exciting physical activity. This will energize you and remind you your workday is done.
- Schedule movement into your workday. You'll find plenty of ideas overleaf.
- Hit the "gym." Even if your home gym consists of soup cans or a resistance band, it is only seconds away from your desk.
- Get sweaty! Go for it – you're only steps away from your own private changeroom.

The steps you take to become more physically active can also make you feel good:

- **Set goals** and work toward them. This builds your confidence.
- **Be active**, *especially in nature*. This reduces your stress.
- **Plan time** for yourself. This enhances your wellbeing.
- **Socialize** during physical activities. This improves your mental health.
- **Take steps** to get back into physical activity. This builds your confidence.
- **Reward yourself** for being active. This gives you a boost.

Moving more

Aim to add movement throughout your day. Include a variety of activities.

Light physical activity is safe for nearly everyone, and more is better. When you replace sitting behaviour with light activity or standing, you improve your health. For moderate-to-vigorous activity, 150 minutes per week is the goal. But any minute of physical activity that you can do benefits your health and fitness. This kind of physical activity gets your heart pumping. Build it up gradually. Consult your doctor first if you have any health concerns.

For the best results, engage in several types of physical activities. The main categories are:

- **Aerobic:** speed walking, jogging, swimming, stairs
- **Muscle strengthening:** resistance bands, weights
- **Flexibility and balance:** yoga, tai chi

ACTION TIP | 5 MINUTE RULE:

If physical activity is not super appealing to you at first, that's okay. Set a 5-minute timer and commit to doing only 5 minutes of the physical activity. If after 5 minutes you're still not feeling up to it, cut yourself some slack. Next time, try an easier (perhaps lighter) physical activity. Every minute counts. With luck, you'll be inspired to finish your physical activity session.

Ready to make YOUR move?

- **Healthy Tomorrow Foundation:**
www.healthytomorrow.ca; www.makeyourmovers.ca
- **Alberta Health Services Centre for Active Living:**
www.centre4activeliving.ca
- **ParticipACTION:** www.participaction.com

Sitting less

Even when you are physically active for the recommended amount of time, you may still be sitting during the rest of the day. This is normal. We often need to sit to work. Many leisure activities also involve technology and a lot of sitting.

Limit sitting time to 8 hours or less (including your leisure screen time). You can break up that sitting time and still be efficient. Here are 5 easy ways you can do it:

1. Take an outdoor micro-break
2. Do seated exercises and stretches
3. Stand or pace on phone calls or podcasts
4. Do some exercises during a webinar
5. Stand for all or parts of meetings

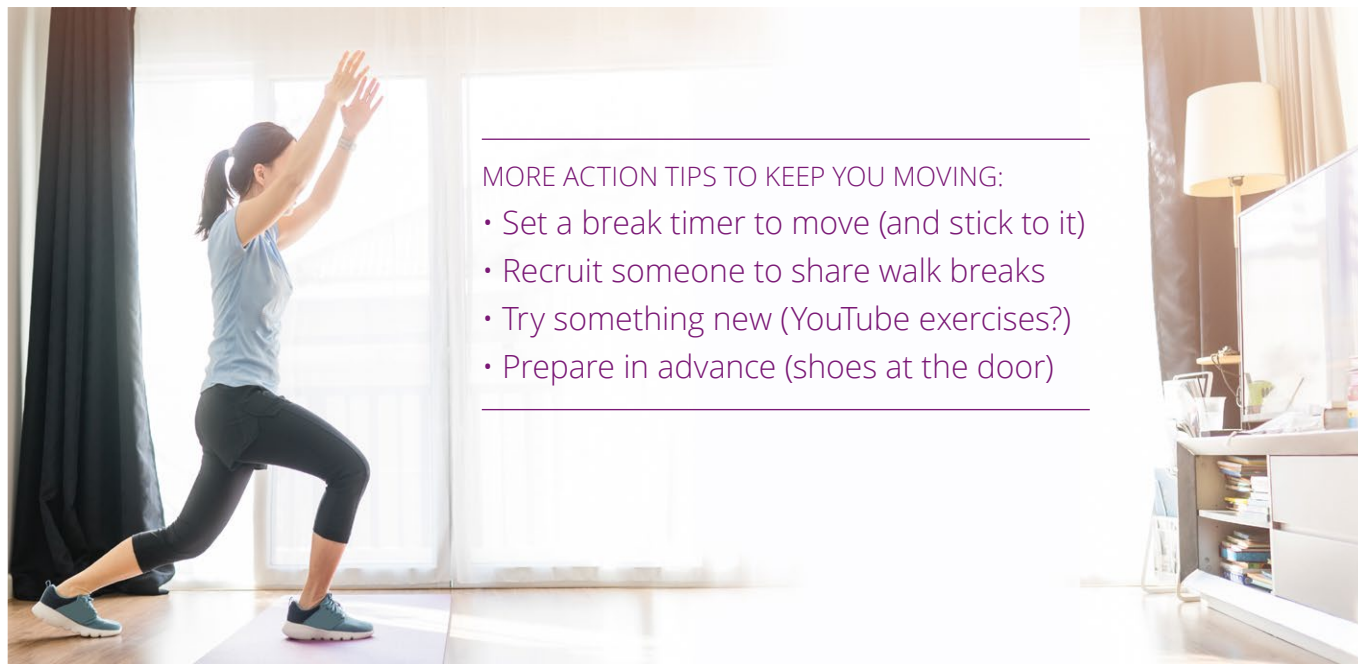
ACTION TIP | MENTAL HEALTH BREAK:

Even 10 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity can boost your wellness and mood. Throw 10 minutes into your day here and there. Suddenly you've spent 30 minutes taking care of your health.

Sample schedule

The following example is not a prescription. But it may give you some ideas of how you can move more and sit less during your day. Tailor it to suit your own needs and interests.

Activity	Duration
Morning walk or yoga	15 min
Work	2 hrs
Stretch break or exercise "snack"	5 min
Work	2 hrs
Do some stairs around the house	5 min
Lunch	30 min
Walk outside	15 min
Work while standing	2 hrs
Move during a conference call	20 min
Work	1.5 hrs
Afternoon bike, hike, or play	30 min



MORE ACTION TIPS TO KEEP YOU MOVING:

- Set a break timer to move (and stick to it)
- Recruit someone to share walk breaks
- Try something new (YouTube exercises?)
- Prepare in advance (shoes at the door)



Workplace Physical Activity Sample Policy

Make Your Move at Work

A Sample Policy¹ for a healthy organization.

Our Aim

To develop and foster a culture of movement in the workplace and increase opportunities for physical activity at work.

As an organization, we value the health and wellbeing of our employees and acknowledge that there are benefits to supporting a culture of movement at work, such as:

- improved physical and mental health
- improved employee morale
- improved productivity
- lower absenteeism
- decreased turnover
- decreased short- and long-term disability

Background and Rationale

We recognize that physical activity is a critical element for the health and overall wellbeing of our employees. We also recognize that our staff spend a significant number of their waking hours at work and that the workplace is an important setting in which they can increase their physical activity levels.

National guidelines recommend that all adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity per week.² It is also beneficial to accumulate several hours of light physical activity per day, to limit sedentary behaviour to no more than eight hours per day, and to do muscle-strengthening activities using major muscle groups at least two days per week.²

Regular physical activity can decrease the risk of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, depression, and obesity. It improves mental and physical wellbeing and makes us feel good.

Workplace Environment

As a high-performing organization that values employee health and wellbeing, we provide facilities and amenities for employees to be active: accessible stairways, change rooms and shower facilities, bike racks to support active transportation, organized group physical activities and walking paths nearby. Employees have access to a wide variety of free and registered programs.

We support movement at work by making the stairs an attractive option, encouraging movement during meetings, and providing flexibility for employees to be active during their workday.

Our Commitment

As an organization dedicated to creating a culture of movement and helping our employees to be physically active, we commit to providing a variety of supports to help employees move more at work. **We will:**

- Post wellness information in a central area
- Aim to reduce prolonged sitting by holding standing meetings, having breaks for meetings longer than one hour, discouraging meetings at lunch, and promoting walking to workstations/offices instead of emailing colleagues
- Offer sit-stand desks and/or shared workstations
- Encourage the use of on-site or off-site facilities and/or classes or opportunities for physical activity
- Encourage staff to join the many activities offered locally
- Institute dress down or casual dress code to encourage active transportation
- Provide flexible working hours for physical activity before, during or after work
- Support staff participation in physical activity special events during the workday (e.g., Wellness Wednesdays)
- Provide maps of walking routes around the area and post them with times and distances
- Organize quarterly physical activity breaks to introduce new activities and to revisit favourites

1. This Workplace PA policy was developed based on the Workplace PA policy from the Centre for Active Living. https://www.centre4activeliving.ca/media/filer_public/03/1b/031bc324-b462-4b29-bce4-27fc601bf29/cal-workplace-policy.pdf Accessed March 30, 2021.

2. Physical activity (PA) is movement that increases heart rate and breathing and is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Moderate-intensity physical activities will cause adults to breathe harder but still be able to hold a conversation. Vigorous-intensity physical activities will cause adults to sweat and be out of breath. From the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Adults ages 18–64 years: An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep (2020). <https://csepguidelines.ca/adults-18-64/>. Accessed April 20, 2021.



Fast Facts

Quick Reference Guide

Make Your Move at Work Toolkit

A guide for engagement.



Key Evidence

- Employee absences cost the Canadian economy ~\$16 billion annually,¹ but physically active employees² or wellness programs³ can save \$250 per employee per year.
 - Reducing sedentary behaviour brings greatest cost improvement (in sedentary employees).⁴
 - On active/exercise days, employees are more motivated to work, have improved mood and concentration and are more productive.^{5,6}
- A culture of movement and engagement by leadership is one of the most important factors for an active workplace,⁷ but lack of organizational support is the greatest barrier to success.⁸ There is a need for:
 - strategic plans integrated into workplace health initiatives with actionable policies
 - improved social (education) and physical (facilities, amenities) environments
 - programming and evaluation that support long-term sustainability
- COVID-19 has further reduced physical activity, leading to poorer health. Physical inactivity is a risk factor for poorer outcomes from COVID-19⁹ and contributes to physical and mental distress and employee burnout.

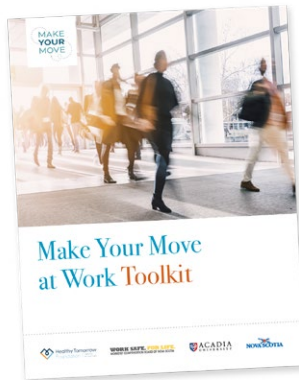


Key Messages

- Moving more improves the health of your employees and the health of your organization's bottom line (i.e., returns \$2–4 on every \$1 investment).
 - It produces immediate benefits to employees' mental and physical health and wellness and engagement to the organization (e.g., reduces absenteeism, increases presenteeism).
 - Any minute of physical activity improves health; every minute counts!
- Most effective approaches have several components within a "culture of movement."
 - Leadership of senior management is essential: actions integrated into strategic planning.
 - Employees are engaged in relevant solutions that meet organizational objectives.
- Unique opportunity exists in the post-COVID environment.
 - Initiatives to reduce sedentary behaviour and increase physical activity can address 6 of the top 10 factors related to employee burnout.¹⁰

Key Resources

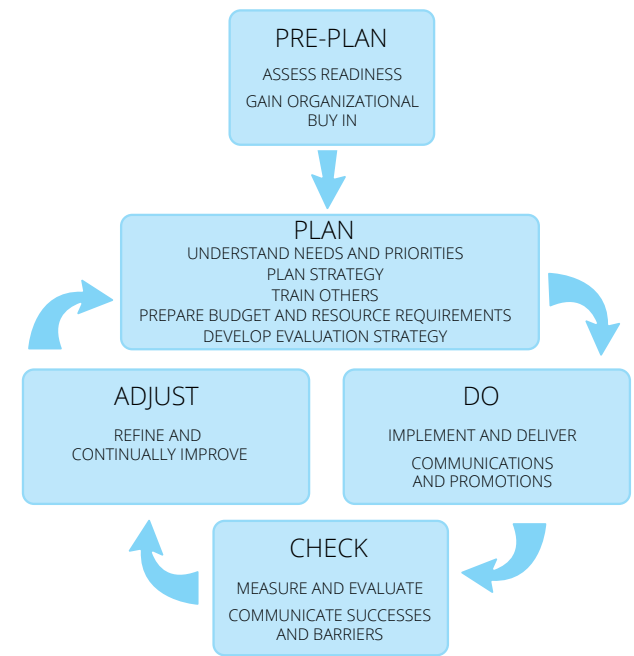
- “Make Your Move at Work Toolkit”
 - a resource to support Nova Scotia organizations to become more active:
- Evidence summary, assessment tools, Best Moves Guide and quick reference tools to help organizations take first steps
 - available on the Healthy Tomorrow Foundation website (<https://healthytomorrow.ca/make-your-move>); individual tools available for download
 - further education and promotion through the Make Your Move campaign and partner organizations like Workers’ Compensation Board
- Active Workplace Audit Tool – for organizations already taking action:
 - more comprehensive assessment and guidance
 - available from Centre for Active Living (<https://www.centre4activeliving.ca/active-workplace-audit-toolkit/>)



Key Actions

- Just begin – any minute is a good minute of physical activity and improves mood and health.
- Provide education and awareness about benefits of more movement:
 - Management – ROI tool, WFH Employer tool
 - Employees – Move More Working From Home
 - Other awareness and education through MYM campaign, newsletters, promotions
- Complete organizational assessment:
 - Management – Employer Assessment
 - Employees – Employee Assessment
 - Identify key strengths and weaknesses of organizational approach to movement
- Use Best Moves Guide to identify practices, policies and programs that are right for your organization.
 - Policies are greatest leverage for change – create one that is relevant to your organization and your employees (see Toolkit Sample Policy).
 - Other possible policies to create:
 - Move More at Meetings
 - Flextime for physical activity
- Evaluate and adjust
 - Seek input: from employees, management and outside
 - Refine and continually improve

Recommendations Framework



From Biswas, 2020; Institute For Work & Health
Developing practical recommendations for integrating
workplace safety and wellness initiatives

References

- 1 The Conference Board of Canada: Missing in Action (2013)
- 2 Public Health Agency of Canada (2008)
- 3 Sun Life-Ivey Canadian Wellness ROI Study Update (2015)
- 4 Spence & Din (2015). Conference Board of Canada
- 5 Coulson et al. (2008). Int. J. Workplace Health Mgmt.
- 6 Malik et al. (2014). Br. J. Health Psych.
- 7 Biswas A. (2020). Institute for Work & Health
- 8 Physical Activity in the Workplace Nova Scotia Final Report (2019)
- 9 Sallis R., Young D.R., Tartof S.Y., et al. (2021). British Journal of Sports Med. doi: 10.1136/bjsports-2021-104080
- 10 Get happy.com (2020). 10 factors related to employee burnout

