

Step To It!



4 Week Physical Activity Challenge Individual Toolkit

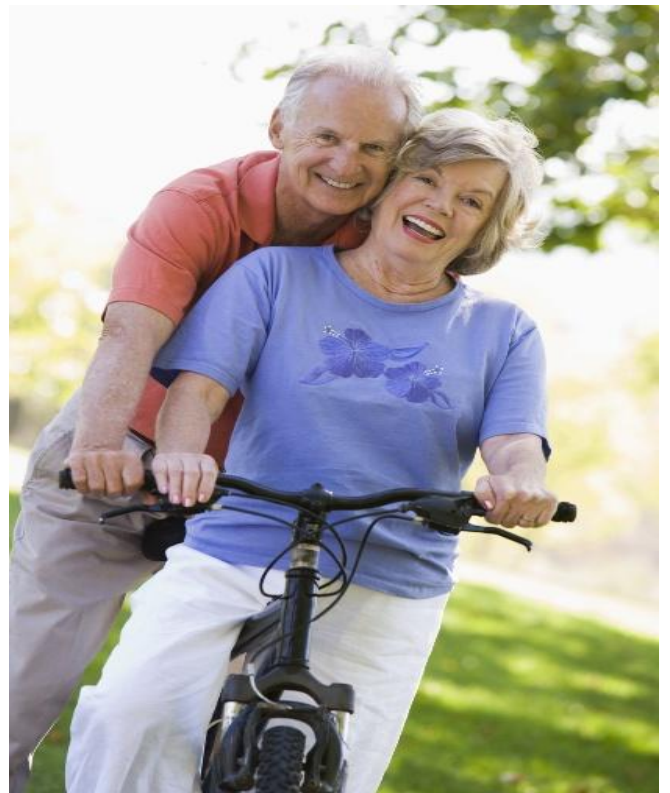


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Getting Started





This challenge has been developed to encourage employees to become more active at work and help build a corporate culture that supports physical activity in the workplace. It is designed to include people of all activity levels so all interested employees are welcome to participate, learn, and have fun!

What is Active Living?

Active living is an approach to life that values and includes physical activity in everyday living. This is **NOT** the same as an exercise program. When most people hear the term physical activity they think of activity that is planned, structured, and done to improve strength, flexibility, or endurance. However, active living includes physical activity that is a part of everyday life such as:

- Household physical activity: vacuuming and gardening
- Workplace physical activity: lifting boxes and taking the stairs
- Lifestyle physical activity: carrying a basket at the grocery store instead of using a cart

To receive health benefits the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology recommends the following physical activity guidelines:

	For Adults 18-64 Years	For Adults 65 Years and Older
	At least 150 minutes of moderate-to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.	At least 150 minutes of moderate-to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.
	It is also beneficial to add muscle and bone strengthening activities using major muscle groups, at least 2 days per week.	It is also beneficial to add muscle and bone strengthening activities using major muscle groups, at least 2 days per week.
		Those with poor mobility should perform physical activities to enhance balance and prevent falls.
	More daily physical activity provides greater health benefits.	More daily physical activity provides greater health benefits.

Moderate-intensity activities will make you breathe harder and cause you to sweat a little:

- Brisk walking
- Biking

Vigorous-intensity activities will make you sweat a lot and cause you to breathe heavy enough that you cannot engage in conversation:

- Jogging
- Cross-country skiing

Why Active Living?

You may already know that being physically active regularly will give you more energy, improve your mood, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis. However, what you may not know is that

- Only 15% of Canadian adults are meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines
- On average Canadian adults are sedentary 9+ hours a day
- The average work day, including commute, in Nova Scotia is 10.5 hours
- Physically active employees take 27% fewer sick days in comparison to those who are inactive.

Other benefits of physical activity participation include:

- Improved sleep patterns
- Weight management
- Improved self-image
- Continued independent living
- Increased quality of life
- Reduced stress
- Improved job satisfaction and team spirit
- Increased productivity



Tracking Your Steps!

This challenge is based on the use of a pedometer as it counts the number of steps taken while you are wearing it. A basic pedometer that measures only the steps taken, is all that is necessary for this challenge.

Where do I get a pedometer?

- Purchase your own from a local store (Walmart, FutureShop, Cleves, SportCheck, Chapters, Best Buy, etc.)
- Borrow one from your local library
- Download an application on your smart phone
- Order one online (Amazon, StepsCount Canada, 4imprint)
- Register as a Walkabout member at <http://www.walkaboutns.ca> and use the online step tracker
- Use conversion tools

How to use a pedometer:

- Reset your pedometer each morning
- Attach it to your clothing somewhere above you knee – imagine a straight line from your knee to your waist. Place just off center to the right or left but keep level.
- Ensure the pedometer is parallel to the ground to accurately count your steps.

The 20 Step Test

- Place your pedometer on your waist
- Reset it to zero and close the cover
- Take 20 steps then stop and check your number
- Your pedometer should read between 19 and 21. If it does not, reposition and try again



There will be times when a pedometer cannot accurately measure the activity. To ensure that all physical activity is included toward your step count, a **conversion chart** has been provided in **appendix A**. Simply keep track of the duration of the activity, look up the activity (or one similar to it) in the chart, and multiply the number of minutes of activity you did by the steps per minute indicated in the conversion chart.

Example: 30 minutes of swimming= 30 mins x 203 steps/min= 6, 090 steps

IMPORTANT

You must fill in the **tracking form** on **page 6** and submit it to the challenge coordinator (Kelcey DeCoste) on a weekly basis. It is your responsibility to submit the tracking forms to the challenge coordinator no later than **12:00pm** each **Monday**, throughout the duration of the challenge. Any late submissions will not be included in the overall step count. A **calendar** outlining all of the deadlines has been included on **page 7** for your convenience.

Tracking Form

Participant Name: _____

Individual Goal: _____

Week #: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Goal: _____

	Activity	Duration (minutes)	Pedometer Reading	Step Equivalents	Total Daily Steps
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					
Weekly Total					

4 Week Physical Activity Challenge

Important Dates

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Week #1 Challenge Begins Start tracking form	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Week #2 Submit Week #1 tracking form (12pm) Start new tracking form	10	11	12	13 Presidents Wellness BBQ	14
15	16 Week #3 Submit Week #2 tracking form (12pm) Start new tracking form	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Week #4 Submit Week #3 tracking form (12pm) Start new tracking form	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 Challenge Ends Submit Week #4 tracking form (12pm)	1	2	3	4 Challenge wrap-up ceremony (12-1:00pm)	

Setting Your Challenge Goal

Prior to beginning the challenge you must set a challenge goal. Setting a goal is an effective motivational tool used to assist with becoming more active each day. To experience lasting health benefits and reduce the risk of chronic disease, it is recommended that individuals take 10,000 steps a day.

The current activity categories for adults with the corresponding step counts are as follows:

Steps per day	Classification
Under 5,000	Sedentary
5,000 – 7,499	Low active
7,500 – 9,999	Somewhat active
Greater than or equal to 10,000	Active
Greater than 12,500	Highly active

To account for the differing physical activity levels of individuals, the overall challenge goals have been divided into three levels (gold, silver, and bronze) and are based on the categories above.

Individual Goals (steps per week)
Gold: 50,000+
Silver: 37,500
Bronze: 25,000

Ex: 7,500 steps per day x 5 days a week x 1 person= 37,500 steps per week (for Silver Individual level)

You should choose an individual goal prior to the start of the challenge. This goal should be chosen based on your current activity level with the idea that the goal can be reached by the end of the fourth week of the challenge.

It is encouraged that you set weekly goals along the way to help achieve the final goal total. A safe and healthy recommendation is to increase your step count by 10% each week. For more information on how to **set appropriate goals** refer to **appendix B**.

To further assist you in meeting your goals, an **activity planner** has been included in **appendix C**. This can be used to plan and fit physical activity into your schedule on a weekly basis.

Adding Activity to Your Workday

Research indicates that Nova Scotians spend approximately 10.5 hours at work a day, including the commute. It is no wonder many of us feel there is not enough time to be physically active! Fortunately, there are many ways to increase physical activity both getting to and from work and in the office.

Ways to increase physical activity at work:

- Use active transportation (walk, bike, run, rollerblade, etc.) to get to and from work
- Park further away from work and walk the rest of the way
- If taking the bus, get off a stop or two early and walk the rest of the way
- Take the stairs
- Get up and talk to people instead of sending an e-mail or calling
- Invite co-workers to walk around the block during your coffee break
- Use a printer, fax machine, or washroom further from your office or on another floor
- Suggest taking stretch breaks during long work meetings
- Have a walking meeting with co-workers
- Organize group activities during lunch hour
- Attend scheduled walks via the new Saint Mary's walking program



Tips for staying on track with your activity:

- Add variety by changing your route or trying a new activity
- Encourage family members or friends to be active with you
- Listen to music during your activity if possible
- Participate in activities you enjoy
- Schedule activity regularly, at a time of day that works for you
- Make specific plans and write them down
- Be prepared - have a back-up plan in case of poor weather or scheduling changes
- Set specific goals that you know you can accomplish
- Track your progress and reward yourself!



Overcoming Barriers to Being Active

Most of us already know why being physically active is important, yet sometimes things get in the way of following through with our good intentions. Attempting to become more physically active can be difficult, but remember you are not alone! It can be helpful to think about what factors may be preventing you from being physically active and determine ways to work on these problems.

Some barriers that commonly prevent individuals from being more active and tips to help overcome them are listed in the table below.

Common problems	Possible Solutions
The weather is poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan ahead! Have a rainy day plan.• Make a list of activities you will do in good weather and bad weather.• When it's hot, bring water, wear a hat and find shade.• When it's cold, dress in layers, wear gloves, and a warm hat.
I feel tired and have no energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you are too tired in the evening, be active in the morning or during lunch when you have more energy.• Remind yourself that you will have more energy after your activity.• Plan to be active with other people, they can help motivate you and provide accountability.
I feel uncomfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep in mind physical activity can be anything you like to do. It is not only going to the gym and working out.• Choose activities that are comfortable for you.• Be active with others who you feel comfortable with such as family and friends.• Try not to compare yourself to others.
I have no one to be active with	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Join an exercise class, group, or club.• Make new friends who are already active.• Invite friends to be active with you.
I do not have enough time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Break activity up throughout the day, in bouts of at least 10 minutes.• Make weekly schedule and stick to it.• Take active breaks at work.• Use active forms of transportation.

Take a few minutes and reflect on why you have not been more physically active. Then write down some ways you may go about fixing the problem. We believe it is a good idea to start journaling your thoughts and opinions to track how you are feeling and review these notes for improvement.

What stops me from being more active?	How I am going to solve this problem



Safety First

When engaging in any type of physical activity it is important to ensure you are using proper form, technique, equipment, and following appropriate safety procedures. Although becoming more active is safe for most people, if you have any concerns please fill out the **PAR-Q form** in **appendix D** and/or speak to a health care professional.

Comfort and Safety tips:

- Wear light, loose, and comfortable clothing
- Start walking with a proper warm up and cool down
- If your breathing becomes uncomfortable, slow down
- Drink water before, during, and after your activity
- In the summer avoid the hottest times of the day, apply sunscreen, and try to stay in shaded areas
- In the winter dress in layers and wear a hat to prevent heat loss from your head
- Wear proper footwear
- Listen to your body- If you begin to feel nauseous or dizzy stop the activity.
- When walking or running alone provide details of the route and expected time of return
- If you are walking in the dark wear reflective or bright colored clothing so motorists can see you



Don't Forget to Stretch!

It is important to take a few minutes to stretch both before and after participating in any physical activity. A basic **stretching routine** has been outlined on **page 13**. More stretching ideas and tips can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBGDpo2bp74>

Why stretch?


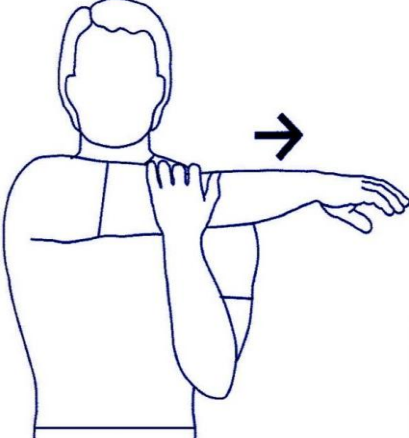


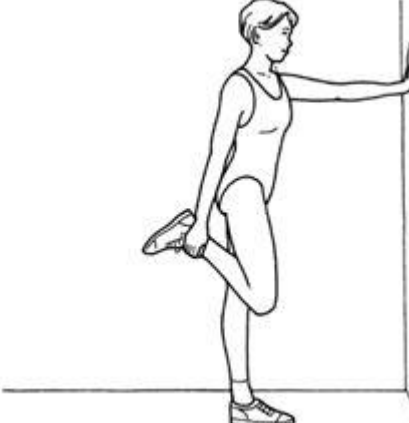


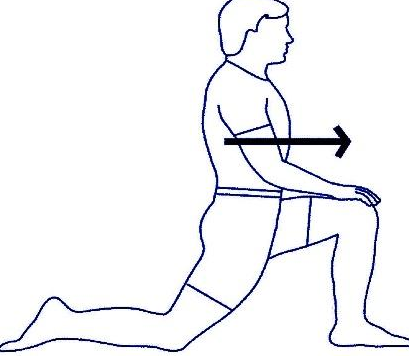
- Decreased risk of injury
- Decreased risk of low back pain
- Increased movement efficiency
- Increased blood flow throughout the body
- Increased coordination
- Improved balance and posture
- Reduced muscle tension



Tips for proper stretching

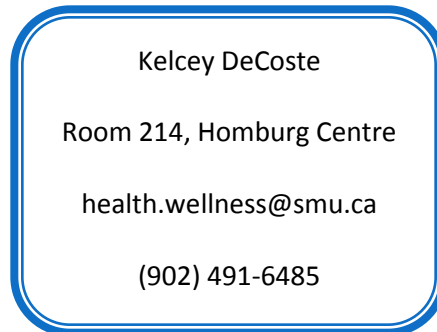
- Remember that stretching should never be painful, but mild discomfort is normal.
- Hold each stretch for 15-30 seconds
- Do not bounce while stretching, just focus on your breathing
- Perform stretches on both arms and legs

Basic Stretching Routine

Neck Rotation	Shoulders	Chest
		
Triceps	Quadriceps	Hamstrings
		
Calf	Hip Flexor	
		

Resources

If you have any further questions or concerns about the four week physical activity challenge contact the Spring Physical Activity Coordinator:



The following are excellent resources that can help you learn more about getting active, staying motivated, and being safe.

The Canadian Council for Health and Active Living at Work
http://www.cchalw.ca/english/info/Making_It_Work_Eng%20 2.pdf

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia
www.walkaboutns.ca

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP)
http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP_Guidelines_Handbook.pdf

Government of Alberta: Healthy U
<http://www.healthyalberta.com/activeliving.htm>

Alberta Centre for Active Living
<http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/>

Appendix A: Non-Step Conversion Chart

Activity	Steps/min	Activity	Steps/min
Aerobics (low impact)	145	Pilates	101
Aerobics (step)	246	Ping pong	116
Badminton	131	Racquet Sports	203
Basketball	174	Raking leaves	125
Bicycling, leisurely	116	Rollerblading	203
Bicycling, moderate	203	Rowing, light	101
Bowling	87	Rowing, moderate	203
Canoeing, light	87	Running, (6 min/mile)	463
Circuit Training	232	Running, (7.5 min mile)	391
Cross-country skiing	232	Running, (10 min mile)	290
Curling (sweeping)	125	Running, (12 min/mile)	232
Dancing	131	Scuba diving	203
Downhill skiing	174	Snow shovelling	174
Elliptical trainer	203	Snowboarding	182
Firewood, carrying/stacking	145	Soccer	203
Football	260	Softball	145
Gardening (light)	116	Squash	348
Gardening (heavy)	174	Stair climbing (light)	180
Golfing, without a cart	131	Stair climbing (moderate)	260
Golfing, with a cart	101	Stretching	72
Grocery Shopping	67	Swimming	203
Handball	348	Tai Chi	116
Hiking, general	172	Tennis	232
Horseback riding	116	Trampoline	101
Hockey	260	Volleyball	87
Housework, general	101	Wash the car	87
Ice skating	203	Water aerobics	116
Jumping rope	290	Water skiing	174
Martial Arts	290	Weight lifting, moderate	87
Mowing the lawn	160	Weight lifting, vigorous	174
Orienteering	260	Yard Work	145
Painting walls	131	Yoga	72

If the activity you are looking for is not on this list, more options are available at:

<http://www.stepup.excellusbcbcs.com/stepChartPop.jsp>

Appendix B: S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting

Goal setting is a useful technique that can be used every day to help you lead a healthy life. It is an effective way to keep you motivated and change your current behaviours and habits. Unfortunately we often have goals that do not get achieved because we do not plan for them properly. To be successful, goals should be **S.M.A.R.T.**

Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you want to accomplish?
Measurable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How often and how much?• How will you know when you have reached this goal?
Attainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you achieve the goal and is it realistic?• Is the effort and commitment required realistic?
Relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is this important to you?
Time Oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When will you do it and for how long?• When will this goal be achieved?

Here are some examples outlining how to use the S.M.A.R.T. approach:

Goal Idea: To reach a healthy weight.

Specific: I will lose 10 pounds.

Measureable: Weigh myself once a week.

Attainable: Eat more fruits and vegetables and complete a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity each day.

Relevant: It will raise my self-esteem.

Time Oriented: Lose 10 pounds over the next 8-10 weeks.

Goal Idea: To become more active

Specific: I will walk.

Measureable: 3 times per week for 30 minutes after supper

Attainable: Around my neighborhood







Relevant: It will help me be able to go for walks with my family.

Time Oriented: For the next 3 weeks.

In the space below, write down your own S.M.A.R.T. physical activity goal.

Appendix C: Weekly Activity Planner

Use this planner to schedule when you will be physically active and for how long each day. This will help you build a routine and stay on track to meeting your goals.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Activity 							
Activity 							
Activity 							
Activity 							
Activity 							
Total Time 							

Appendix D: The Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q)

Becoming more active is very safe for most people. However, some people should check with their doctor before they start becoming much more physically active.

If you are planning to become more physically active, start by answering the seven questions below. If you are between the ages of 15 and 69, the PAR-Q will tell you if you should check with your doctor before you start. If you are over 69 years of age, and are not used to being very active, check with your doctor first.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only do physical activity recommended by a doctor? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. In the past month, have you had chest pain when you were not doing physical activity? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you have a bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Is your doctor currently prescribing drugs (for example, water pills) for your blood pressure or heart condition? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Do you know of any other reason why you should not do physical activity? |

If you answered YES to one or more questions:

Talk with your doctor before you start becoming much more physically active.

If you answered NO to all questions:

You can be reasonably sure that you can start becoming more physically active right now.

Be sure to start slowly and progress gradually as this is the safest and easiest way to go.

Delay becoming much more active if:

- You are not feeling well because of a temporary illness such as a cold or a fever – wait until you feel better.
- You are or may be pregnant – talk to your doctor before you start becoming much more active.

Note: If your health changes so that you then answer YES to any of the above questions, ask for advice from your fitness or health professional.

