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Simple Steps to an Active New Year

Canadians spend an alarming amount of time on sedentary activities, such as sitting at work or watching television. According to a recent report from the Canadian Community Health Survey, 29 percent of Canadian adults watch 15 or more hours of television per week and 15 percent of Canadian adults spend 11 or more hours in front of computers during their spare time.

Sedentary activities coupled with the conveniences of a contemporary lifestyle, make it easy for Canadians to have limited overall daily activity levels. In the world today, people drive more and walk or cycle less. There are fewer manual jobs and more labour-saving technologies. One can remember the everyday chores from our past that expended energy. The actions that used to help increase daily physical activity levels have all but disappeared, however, with the introduction of devices such as electronic garage openers, automated leaf blowers, remote controls, and washing machines.

Along with increased sedentary behaviour, one can expect increased risks of overweight and obesity and other health-related issues. So, how do we get Canadians more active in a modern day society where computers and automation are here to stay and, where demands on

one's personal time can be a barrier? There are simple steps you can take to introduce more daily physical activity into your and your family's life. Start the new year by incorporating movement into your current activity or doing things that will help you and your family increase physical activity levels:

- Limit sedentary behaviours like television watching and computer use for yourself and your kids.
- Replace watching television with a family activity such as skating, cycling, swimming, etc. Choose an activity for the family that everyone is enthusiastic about.
- When watching television, get up and move around during commercial breaks.
- Get together as a family and write up an activity plan for the week. Set aside at least half an hour per day for recreation time. Let each family member give their input as to what activity they

would like to do that week. Post the schedule on the fridge or in a visible area and stick to the plan.

- Make a resolution to incorporate more physical activity into your work day. Do things like taking the stairs instead of the escalator or elevator, parking in the furthest parking spot and walking the rest of the way, holding walk-and-talk meetings with your colleagues, and breaking up your day with walk breaks instead of coffee breaks.
- Look for small openings in your schedule and fill them with something active. Even 15 minutes of activity is worthwhile.
- Combine physical activity with running errands or doing chores. Taking an extra lap in the grocery store or mall when you're doing your shopping will help.
- Walk to work or walk your kids to school.

Whatever you do, just sit less during your day and encourage your family to be more active.

WALK, RUN, JUMP, SKATE, PLAY...
YOU GET THE IDEA.



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