

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology and ParticipACTION share new research to inform Canadians of physical activity levels required
Research shows even small increases in activity can bring benefits

TORONTO (ONTARIO) MAY 12, 2010 - New research from the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) indicates that measurable health benefits can be achieved at lower activity thresholds than previously thought. However, Canadians should aim to exceed the minimum activity thresholds as the more variety, the more intensity and the longer the duration of the physical activity, the greater the health benefit.

CSEP and ParticipACTION, the national voice of physical activity and sport participation in Canada, are using the new research, conducted over three years and funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, to educate all Canadians about the amount and type of physical activity they require. Clarity on physical activity recommendations is needed, because according to the 2010 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card, only 27 per cent of parents know how much physical activity their children should be getting each day.

“We hope that these new findings will inspire inactive or sedentary Canadians of all ages to add more physical activity to their lives, as they will reap some health benefits at lower thresholds than originally thought,” says Dr. Mark Tremblay, Chair of the Physical Activity Guidelines Committee of the CSEP. “Plus, all Canadians can achieve better health by increasing the frequency, duration, intensity and variety of their physical activity. Some is good, but more is clearly better.”

To summarize, the new physical activity recommendations are:

Children and youth (aged 5 to 17)

TIME

- At least 60 minutes, and up to several hours, of moderate physical activity each day.
- For very inactive or sedentary children and youth, some health benefits can be achieved through 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day.
- Some activity is better than none, and more is better.

TYPE AND FREQUENCY

- The physical activity should be mostly aerobic such as brisk walking, skating or bike riding.
- Include vigorous activity such as running and playing soccer at least three days a week.
- Include muscle and bone strengthening activities such as skipping, jumping or playing in the park at least three days a week.
- Should be accumulated through play, games, sport, work, transportation, recreation, physical education or planned exercise, with family, at school and in the community.

Adults (aged 18 to 65)

TIME

- At least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity physical activity. This can be achieved in a variety of ways—for example, 30 minutes, five days a week.
- Activity can be broken into smaller bouts at least 10 minutes long.
- If activity is vigorous, health benefits can be achieved with 90 minutes per week. In general, the more time spent being active and the more intense the activity, the better.

TYPE AND FREQUENCY

- Activity should be mostly aerobic such as brisk walking, swimming or raking leaves.
- Examples of vigorous activity include jogging, playing hockey or doing aerobics.
- Include muscle and bone strengthening activities such as weight training, jumping and playing tennis two to four days per week.
- Include flexibility activities such as stretching, martial arts and yoga four to seven days a week.

Older adults (over age 65)

TIME

- At least 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity physical activity. This can be achieved in a variety of ways—for example, 30 minutes, five days a week.
- Activity can be broken into smaller bouts at least 10 minutes long.
- If activity is vigorous, health benefits can be achieved with 90 minutes per week. In general, the more time spent being active and the more intense the activity, the better. However, only those who are used to being active should engage in vigorous activity.

TYPE AND FREQUENCY

- Activity should be mostly aerobic such as brisk walking, biking or water aerobics.
- Examples of vigorous activity are jogging, fast swimming or fast dancing.
- Include muscle and bone strengthening activities such as weight training, jumping and playing tennis two days per week.
- Include flexibility and balance activities such as stretching, walking on uneven trails and yoga four to seven days a week to prevent falls and facilitate independent living.

In comparison, the existing Canada's Physical Activity Guides say children and youth should achieve at least 90 minutes of physical activity per day, adults should achieve 30 to 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity and older adults 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.

"As leaders in physical activity, we feel it is our responsibility to inform the public of research that has emerged since Canada's Physical Activity Guides were created," says Audrey Hicks, President of CSEP. "We hope to collaborate with the Public Health Agency of Canada to revise Canada's existing physical activity guidelines to reflect the current evidence."

The Canadian research is already being used by the World Health Organization and the United Kingdom to inform other national and international physical activity guidelines.

"Physical activity is an achievable means for Canadians of all ages to improve their health," says Kelly Murumets, President and CEO of ParticipACTION. "We suggest people try a variety of activities until they find something that they enjoy and can stick with—all Canadians deserve to live healthy, active lives."

The new research is available in a thematic series of seven articles in the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* at www.ijbnpa.org/series/canada_physical_activity. ParticipACTION has created easy-to-understand fact sheets that summarize the research, available at www.participACTION.com.

About Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology

The CSEP is a voluntary organization composed of professionals interested and involved in the scientific study of exercise physiology, exercise biochemistry, fitness and health. The CSEP (then known as the Canadian Association of Sport Sciences), was founded at the Pan American Games, Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1967—the result of four years of cooperative efforts by the Canadian Medical

Association and the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. For more information, visit www.csep.ca

About ParticipACTION

ParticipACTION is the national voice of physical activity and sport participation in Canada. Originally established in 1971, ParticipACTION was re-launched in 2007 to help prevent the looming inactivity and obesity crisis that faces Canada. As a national not-for-profit organization solely dedicated to inspiring and supporting healthy and active living for Canadians, it works with its partners, which include sport, physical activity, recreation organizations, government and corporate sponsors, to inspire and support Canadians to move more. ParticipACTION is generously supported by Sport Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. For more information, visit www.participACTION.com.

-30-

For more information, to schedule an interview or speak to a spokesperson, please contact:

Katherine Janson, ParticipACTION
(416) 913-1471 / kjanson@participACTION.com

Nina Kalos, Hill & Knowlton Canada
(416) 413-4642 / nina.kalos@hillandknowlton.ca