

# Physical Activity Guide Aims to Improve Health of Canadians

To help inactive Canadians improve their health, Health Canada is now distributing *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* and a special Guide for Older Adults. Designed to compliment the widely used *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*, the new *Guide* provides clear and concise guidelines on how to achieve better health by making physical activity an important part of daily living.

## **Regular activity protects against disease and illness**

The potential benefits of regular activity include significant protection against premature disability and death, heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, adult-onset diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, depression, and colon cancer.

The *Guide* is designed to help inactive Canadians take important first steps towards regular healthy activity. Although more Canadians are physically active today than any time over the past two decades, two-thirds still remain inactive and at serious health risk as a result.



## **Physical activity reduces burden on health care system**

Canadians who become more physically active can reduce the burden on our health care system as the population ages.

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for fitness, recreation and sport have set a target to decrease the level of physically inactive Canadians by 10% by the year 2003. If this target is achieved, it is estimated that this would result in a savings of \$5 billion in discounted lifetime costs for medical care, sick leave, and lost revenues from taxes resulting from premature mortality.

**To obtain your free copy of *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* or the *Guide for Older Adults*, call Health Canada toll free at 1-888-334-9769 or visit the *Guides* Web site at [www.paguide.com](http://www.paguide.com).**

# Time needed depends on effort

Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living recommends that Canadians start slowly and progress gradually towards accumulating 30 to 60 minutes of activity a day. And this can be added up in periods of at least 10 minutes each. The time needed depends on effort.

If the activity is of light effort, aim towards accumulating 60 minutes a day. The Guide provides examples of light and moderate activities to help Canadians understand how much activity produces health. Remember — start slowly...and build up!

## Time needed depends on effort

Very Light Effort	Light Effort <i>60 minutes</i>	Moderate Effort <i>30-60 minutes</i>	Vigorous Effort <i>20-30 minutes</i>	Maximum Effort
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strolling</li> <li>• Dusting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light walking</li> <li>• Volleyball</li> <li>• Easy gardening</li> <li>• Stretching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brisk walking</li> <li>• Biking</li> <li>• Raking leaves</li> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Dancing</li> <li>• Water aerobics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerobics</li> <li>• Jogging</li> <li>• Hockey</li> <li>• Basketball</li> <li>• Fast swimming</li> <li>• Fast dancing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sprinting</li> <li>• Racing</li> </ul>
<b>Range needed to stay healthy</b>				

### Benefits of regular activity:

- better health
- improved fitness
- better posture and balance
- better self-esteem
- weight control
- stronger muscles and bones
- feeling more energetic
- relaxation and reduced stress
- continued independent living in later life

### Health risks of inactivity:

- premature death
- heart disease
- obesity
- high blood pressure
- adult-onset diabetes
- osteoporosis
- stroke
- depression
- colon cancer