

Sample Workplace Physical Activity Policy

PURPOSE: Most Canadian adults are not meeting national physical activity guidelines, which puts them at risk of developing chronic diseases.¹ Regular physical activity can help reduce the risk of chronic conditions and improve mental wellbeing, as well as productivity at work. Physical activity contributes to positive mental health by helping to boost mood, cope with stress, and reduce anxiety and depression.² [Company Name] is committed to providing a work environment that promotes physical activity and reduces sedentary behaviour before, during, and/or after work, and supports employees in meeting the [Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines](#). The 24-Hour Movement Guidelines recommend that adults participate in a variety of physical activities in different environments and contexts in all seasons, limit sedentary behaviours and practice healthy sleep hygiene. Health benefits associated with following the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines include a lower risk of mortality, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, several cancers, anxiety, depression, dementia, weight gain, adverse blood lipid profile and improved bone health, cognition, quality of life and physical function.³

POLICY STATEMENT: [Company Name] will support employee wellness and provide opportunities for employees to be physically active while at work, specifically:

- Managers and supervisors will support employees to use breaks and lunch periods for physical activity if desired, and if feasible for the employee's position.
- Employees may request a flexible schedule to engage in physical activity, including an alternate start or end time to the workday to accommodate physical activity before, during or after work.
- Employees will be encouraged to engage in active meetings, including taking walking or rolling meetings, providing activity breaks during meetings, not scheduling meetings over the lunch period, and allowing for standing, moving, or stretching during meetings.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all employees, students, interns and volunteers of [Company Name].

[Company Name] will ensure that wellness opportunities are provided for all employees, regardless of age, cultural or religious practices, gender, sexual orientation or disability status.

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES: The following activities will be provided to employees to support the implementation of this policy: [Select one or more activities or add any others that are applicable to your workplace]

- Bike racks will be provided onsite and employees are encouraged to get to work through active or sustainable means of transportation.
- Onsite change rooms and shower facilities will be available.
- Functional on-site fitness equipment will be available to employees at no cost.

¹ Clarke, J., Colley, R., Janssen, I. and Tremblay, M.S. Accelerometer-measured moderate-to-vigorous physical activity of Canadian adults, 2007-2017. (Released August 21, 2019). Statistics Canada Available from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/82-003-x/2019008/article/00001-eng.pdf?st=gYu1FGul>

² Canadian Mental Health Association (March 16, 2023). Understanding Brain Health and Its Connection to Mental Well-being. Retrieved September 27, 2023 from: <https://cmha.ca/news/understanding-brain-health-and-its-connection-to-mental-well-being/>

³ Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, (2021) 24 Hour Movement Guidelines. Available from: <http://csepguidelines.ca/>

- Ergonomic assessments will be offered to employees at no charge.
- Signs will be posted at usable stairwells to encourage the use of stairs when able.
- Active workstations, such as standing desks or treadmill desks, will be offered to employees at no charge.
- [Company Name] will subsidize membership to offsite fitness centers for employees up to a maximum of \$_____ per year.
- [Company Name] will subsidize membership to [fitness center's name] for employees and their domestic partners and dependent children up to a maximum of \$_____ per year.
- [Company Name] will promote and provide regular educational opportunities and resources regarding the benefits of physical activity and the risks of sedentary behaviour.
- [Company Name] will support and encourage the use of active and sustainable transportation by providing subsidies. (elaborate on details)

For more information about this policy, please contact (name) at (email and/or phone number).

Adapted with permission from Vermont Health Department, September, 2023

REFERENCES:

1. Clarke, J., Colley, R., Janssen, I. and Tremblay, M.S. Accelerometer-measured moderate-to-vigorous physical activity of Canadian adults, 2007-2017. (Released August 21, 2019). Statistics Canada Available from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/82-003-x/2019008/article/00001-eng.pdf?st=gYu1FGul>
2. Canadian Mental Health Association (March 16, 2023). Understanding Brain Health and Its Connection to Mental Well-being. Retrieved September 27, 2023 from: <https://cmha.ca/news/understanding-brain-health-and-its-connection-to-mental-well-being/>
3. Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, (2021) 24 Hour Movement Guidelines. Available from: <http://csepguidelines.ca/>