



CANADA



HEALTHY
LIVING
INITIATIVE

Physical Health

Resources for 4-H Members

Introduction to the Healthy Living Initiative



What is the Healthy Living Initiative?

4-H Canada's Healthy Living Initiative has been developed to support the health and well-being of rural youth across Canada. Resources are designed to equip volunteers and families with the knowledge to help recognize youth in distress and provide the access to support they need.

This initiative includes:

- Resources and activities for 4-H youth members, 4-H volunteer leaders, and families and youth new to 4-H.
- Webinars and workshops for volunteer leaders, who are critical mentors and role models in adult-youth partnerships.



What is healthy living?

Healthy living at its core focuses on taking care of the 'whole you'. It means making positive choices in your mental health, physical health, nutritional health, and overall well-being.

Why is healthy living important?

Healthy living awareness is important for everyone because it is a holistic approach to taking care of yourself. All aspects of yourself are interconnected and making a change in one area of your health will affect other areas of your health. For example, changes in our mental health can lead to changes in our body reactions.

Why is 4-H Canada developing this initiative?

4-H Canada's Healthy Living Initiative is in response to the critical needs of youth in communities across Canada. Young people living in rural and remote communities are at a greater risk of experiencing issues related to their mental and physical well-being. They also lack the resources and services that might be available to those in more urban areas.

What will I find in this initiative?

The Healthy Living Initiative is presented in three programs, called focus areas, each centered on a different aspect of healthy living. These areas are:



What's included in the focus areas?

Mental health and physical health focus areas

- Tip sheets with important and useable information.
- Activity guides to assist leaders in using the resources.
- Webinars and workshops to assist leaders.

My Plate and the Planet

- Activity book with background information about the food we eat, with instructions for exciting hands-on activities that build upon learning.

How are these resources developed?

4-H Canada has teamed up with knowledgeable and youth-focused organizations to develop the resources and materials for each focus area of this initiative. All organizations have expertise in their area of focus to ensure the accuracy, relevancy and rigour of the information provided through this initiative.

Thank you to the strategic partners who have assisted in developing these resources.

How is this initiative made possible?

4-H Canada's Healthy Living Initiative is made possible thanks to the generous support of these partners:



Each of these partners believes in the importance of healthy living in Canadian youth and adults, and has partnered with 4-H Canada to ensure they are receiving the support they need through the development of this initiative.

For more information on the Healthy Living Initiative, visit 4-h-canada.ca/healthyliving

Introduction to Physical Health



Physical health and physical activity

Physical health means having good cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, body composition, [and] eating healthy foods.¹

When we think about physical health, we generally think about physical activity. **Physical activity is defined as any movement of your body that results in an increased use of energy.**²

Factors that may impact our physical health include:

- sleep
- personal hygiene
- regular medical check-ups
- avoiding harmful habits including smoking and consuming alcohol



Why is physical activity important?

Physical activity is a crucial aspect of being physically healthy, as it helps us build strength throughout our body, increases our endurance, helps us remain active for longer, and improves our flexibility.

Physical activity can also be good for:

- **your brain** - it helps with concentration and being focused on the task at hand.
- **your mental and emotional wellbeing** - it releases endorphins that can help decrease anxiety, can be a new fun way to make new friends, become part of a team, or meet people who share your interests.
- **your body** - it helps your digestion, blood flow, heart health, and even helps you to recover from injuries more quickly.

The 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

Research tells us that kids in Canada are spending the majority of their time in front of screens, and therefore, do not get enough physical activity.³

The 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth – developed by The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology – recommend for ages 5 to 17:⁴

- 60 mins of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day
- no more than two hours of recreational screen-time per day

- 8 to 11 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night depending on the child's age
- several hours of light physical activity per day.

For more information or to check out the other Canadian 24-Hour Movement and Canadian Physical Activity guidelines, go to csepguidelines.ca.

4-H Canada's physical health resource

In this resource, you will find tip sheets for both yourself as a 4-H leader, and for your 4-H members. You will find that these tip sheets complement each other and share important information that connect to all aspects of healthy living!

Tip sheets for youth:

- Healthy Body, Healthy Mind
- Get Active, Be Productive
- Taking Control of your Physical Literacy
- The Importance of Sleep
- Leading Through Physical Activity

Tip sheets for leaders:

- Healthy Body, Healthy Mind
- Physical Activity and Productivity
- Physical Literacy 101
- The Importance of Sleep
- Leading through Physical Activity

As a companion to the tip sheets for 4-H leaders, you will also find an Activity Guide that outlines ways to incorporate physical health into your 4-H meetings.

4-H Canada's accompanying webinar presentation will introduce you to the Healthy Living Initiative by walking you through the activities, to further assist you in using this resource and help you feel confident putting them into action!

This webinar and all the above resources are available at 4-h-canada.ca/healthyliving.

4-H Canada's Healthy Living Initiative is made possible thanks to the generous support of these partners:



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Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

FOR MEMBERS



Physical activity helps support healthy living and is a great form of self-care. But what makes physical activity so great for our mental health?

Getting active can help our body release all the feel-good chemicals – including dopamine, serotonin and endorphins – thus decreasing levels of the stress hormone cortisol circulating in our body. It can also help us all unwind, breathe better and happy better!

Happy Better

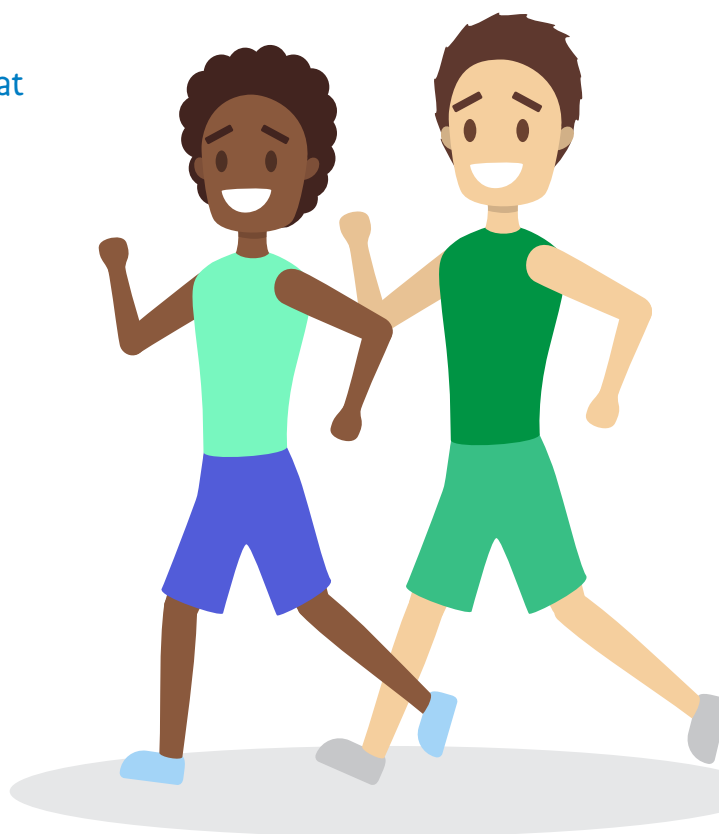
The feel-good chemicals play an important role in how we feel.¹ When we're active, our body releases these chemicals, thus impacting our mood.

Unwind Better

Finding some time to unwind after a tough day at school or a busy 4-H activity can be helpful. Getting into heart-pumping activities like biking or running may work by releasing your body's stress hormones and stimulating those feel-good chemicals.²

Breathe Better

Breathing is one of our body's most important functions. When we are stressed, we hold tension that can cause us to breathe rapidly, shallowly or erratically.³ By being active, we can work to increase the strength of our respiratory muscles, and do more with less breath. You can choose to use breathing techniques for everything; from public speaking, to remaining calm in the show-ring.



DID YOU KNOW?

ParticipACTION's Everything Gets Better campaign highlights 23 areas to work on to get closer to our health and fitness goals, including Happy Better, Unwind Better and Breathe Better. In their own words, "Being physically active is about more than weight loss. It's about living Better!"⁴

Here is a deep-breathing exercise you may want to try at your next 4-H meeting:⁵

- 1. Breathe in slowly and deeply, pushing your stomach out so that your diaphragm is put to maximum use.**
- 2. Hold your breath briefly (approximately 5 seconds).**
- 3. Exhale slowly, while relaxing every muscle in your body.**
- 4. Repeat the entire sequence five to 10 times, focusing only on your breath.**

Consider trying some of these activities:

Not sure where to start? Here are some activities to help you get active and release those feel-good chemicals:

- ✓ **Walking** – regardless of fitness ability and in almost any location.
- ✓ **Yoga** – it stretches muscles to help feel calm and relaxed.
- ✓ **Running** – a great way to incorporate a little cardio into your meeting.
- ✓ **Pilates** – simple movements help build strength and improve breathing.
- ✓ **Tai chi** – helps us feel calm and in control.
- ✓ **Swimming** – calm and relaxing as you splash around and move through the water.
- ✓ **Weight-lifting** – lifting light weights can help build muscle, feel strong and blow-off steam!

If you prefer getting physically active with a group, these activities can all be done in a team setting. Getting outside and enjoying nature can improve mental health.

Did you know physical activity is linked to happiness and having a positive mood? Those who are physically active are more satisfied with their lives as well.⁶ **What activities do you like to do that help you unwind or feel less stressed?**

It is recommended that young people between the ages of 6 and 17 get at least 60 minutes of heart-pumping physical activity per day.⁷

**For more information, check out the Happy Better, Unwind Better
and Breathe Better pages at
participACTION.com**



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Get Active, Be Productive

FOR MEMBERS



Do you sometimes have a hard time concentrating at school or during your 4-H meetings? Or struggle to retain and recall new content? Regular physical activity can improve brain function and help be more productive, in and out of the classroom!

One important part of our brain is the hippocampus, which is the core of our brain's learning and memory systems. By regularly participating in physical activity, our hippocampus can actually grow in size and make new connections.¹ This then improves our ability to:



Think

the more we sweat, the easier it will be to think clearly when we need to make a big decision.²



Create

physical activity can help fire up the right side of our brain, which is responsible for creativity.³



Focus

the brain works harder to resist distractions when we are physically active, by releasing a protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which acts as a booster to our concentration and memory.⁴ Having trouble focusing? Grab a friend and consider going for a walk at lunch time.



Learn

physical activity can help improve long-term memory.⁵ It can also help you be a better learner, and benefit you when taking your 4-H club quiz at the end of the year.

Other benefits of physical activity include:

✓ more energy⁶

✓ less stress⁷

✓ better organization⁸

Ideas for adding more physical activity into your routine:

- ✓ Walk or bike to and from school or your 4-H meeting.
- ✓ Carry a ball, skipping rope or yoga mat around and use it in your free time.
- ✓ Join a team sport.
- ✓ Help your parents shovel the driveway or rake the leaves after school.
- ✓ Work with your 4-H animal – it can get you walking and running.
- ✓ Try biking! It helps you build your cardio and gets you outside to enjoy the fresh air.
- ✓ Grab a friend and go for a run!

The 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth recommend that young people between the ages of 5 and 17 get a minimum of 60 minutes of heart-pumping physical activity each day.⁹ Does 60 minutes a day sound like a lot? Try breaking it up into two 30-minute sessions!

Need some help getting physically active? Start by brainstorming a list of ways to get active and rank them from most to least favourite. Then ask yourself: are your top three activities something you can do often, or every day?

300
minutes per week



60
minutes per day

For more information, check out the
Think Better, Create Better, Focus Better and Learn Better pages at
participACTION.com



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Taking Control of Your Physical Literacy

FOR MEMBERS



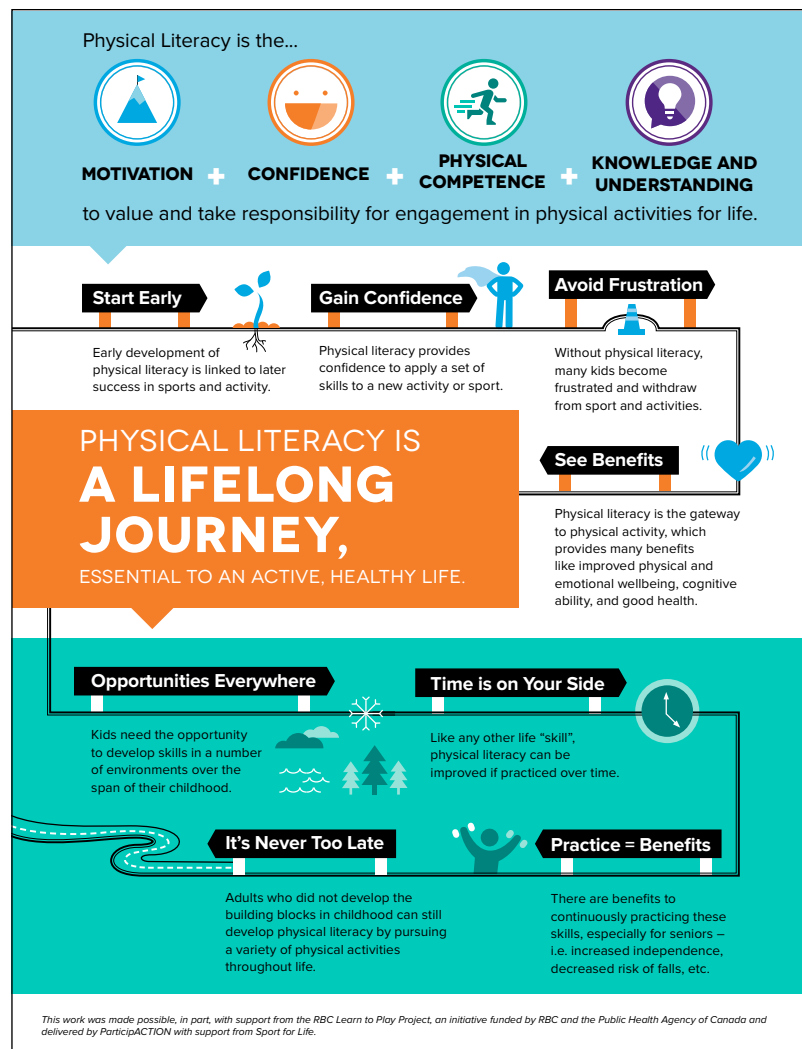
Have you ever heard of physical literacy? The term ‘physical literacy’ has only become widely popular in the past 10 years. Physical literacy is defined as the motivation, the confidence, the physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.¹

The best way to think about physical literacy is that it’s just like learning how to read and write. It’s all about developing a movement vocabulary.

Understanding physical literacy is a lifelong journey, and it can help lead an active and healthy life. Just like learning a skill, it can take time and practice.

Physical literacy is important in all aspects of our life because:²

- ✓ It is the gateway to physical activity, which benefits many other areas of our life, such as an improved physical and emotional wellbeing.
- ✓ It provides the confidence to apply our skills to a new activity or sport.
- ✓ It opens up the door to a wealth of opportunities in physical activity, sports and daily life.



Source: ParticipACTION

Physical literacy has four main elements:³

Motivation and confidence – It is possible to enjoy being physically active; the more we do it, the more it is likely to play a key role in your life.

Physical competence – This is achieved when we develop different movement skills and patterns, including the ability to complete movements in a range of intensities and for different durations.

Knowledge and understanding – Understanding the benefits of having an active lifestyle can help trigger the desire to lead one.

Engagement in physical activities for life – That's when you choose to be active on a regular basis.

Physical literacy starts with fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, kicking, catching or throwing a ball,⁴ and these skills are further developed through the ABCs of physical literacy:⁵

A Agility: the ability to change the body's position quickly and efficiently.

B Balance: the ability to maintain body equilibrium

C Coordination: the ability to build up more and more complicated movements and perform them in a smooth way.

For example:

If you can → **RUN**, you can take part in → Soccer, basketball, volleyball, track and field, squash, badminton, rugby and tennis

If you can → **THROW**, you can take part in → baseball, soccer, football and bowling

If you can → **JUMP**, you can take part in → gymnastics, volleyball, diving and triple jump



Do you have a physical activity or sport you love to do?
Talk to your 4-H leaders about starting a 4-H club
that's all about being physically active!



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The Importance of Sleep

FOR MEMBERS



Do you sometimes have a hard time falling asleep at night or staying awake during the day? Could the quality of your nightly slumbers improve? This could be due to stress, a late bedtime, or lack of physical activity during the day.¹

We all have an internal body clock that helps regulate our sleep/wake cycles, and works closely with the hormones in our body, like cortisol.² When we are stressed, cortisol is released and makes it harder for us to fall asleep. Staying physically active can help balance our hormones.

It is commonly believed that physical activity makes you more tired. However, it can help you sleep better because:³

- ✓ It helps use up more energy during the day so that you get a better-quality sleep.
- ✓ It improves the mood, and reduces chances of experiencing anxiety.
- ✓ It reduces stress levels and allows to relax at bedtime.
- ✓ It helps break the cycle of being too tired to be active, but too alert to sleep.
- ✓ It can help build a routine of being active, getting a good night's sleep, and feeling energetic.



Here are some tips on how you can sleep better:⁴

- ✓ Take a screen break before bed.⁵ Try reading a book or having a conversation with a family member or friend instead.
- ✓ Exercise for at least 30 minutes during the day.
- ✓ Avoid working-out or doing other strenuous activity directly before going to bed.
- ✓ Switch it up and try to relax with yoga or tai chi before bed.
- ✓ Avoid spicy food or caffeine before bed.
- ✓ Start a relaxing bedtime routine that includes reading or having a warm drink (without caffeine) before bed. By establishing a routine, it will let your body and brain know that it's time to go to sleep.
- ✓ Take a walk outside before bed to clear your mind.
- ✓ Stick to a sleep schedule, even on the weekend.

Are you getting good quality sleep?



✓ Check out the factors below to find out:⁶

<input type="radio"/>	Sleeping most of the time you're in bed (at least 85 percent of the total time).
<input type="radio"/>	Falling asleep in 30 minutes or less.
<input type="radio"/>	Waking up no more than once per night.
<input type="radio"/>	Being awake for 20 minutes or less after initially falling asleep.

If you struggle with the above factors, consider starting a regular physical activity.

The Sleep Foundation recommends the following number of hours you should sleep each night:⁷



Children
(6 to 13 years)
9 to 11 hours



Teenagers
(14 to 17 years)
8 to 10 hours



Young adults
(18 to 25 years)
7 to 9 hours

The 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth recommend that young people between the ages of 5 and 17 get a minimum of 60 minutes of heart-pumping physical activity every day. Can't seem to fit 60 minutes a day? Even 10 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity a day can help improve your sleep.

**For more information, check out the Sleep Better page at
participACTION.com**



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Leading Through Physical Activity

FOR MEMBERS



Learning to lead is a key experience for all 4-H'ers. Leadership can come in the form of taking on an executive role in your club, becoming a provincial ambassador, or taking the lead at a 4-H event or local fair. It could also mean you are working hard behind-the-scenes.

Whatever your leadership style looks like, someone is following you and looking up to you along the way. Believe it or not, being physically active can help you become the best leader you can be!

Feeling tired or stressed can impact our leadership style, and friends, family or fellow 4-H members can pick up on it. By being active regularly, you may be able to:

- ✓ sleep better (check out The Importance of Sleep tip sheet)
- ✓ have more energy
- ✓ handle stress
- ✓ have a more positive mental health (check out the Healthy Body, Healthy Mind tip sheet)

Studies show that being physically active can also help us:

- ✓ boost self-esteem¹ and increase confidence – check out the Taking Care of Yourself tip sheet from the Mental Health Resource
- ✓ be more creative²
- ✓ be more productive³ – check out the Healthy Body, Healthy Mind tip sheet

The key to being a better leader through physical activity is consistency through routine. Getting a routine to become a habit takes time and hard work, but it eventually pays off!

The 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth recommend that young people between the ages of 5 and 17 get a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day.⁴ And don't forget to aim for strength-bearing activities, ideally two times a week!



Here's an example of how to fit 60 minutes of physical activity into your day, every day:

Monday – Bike ride → 60 minutes

Tuesday – After school, practice for a team you've joined or another extracurricular that is physically active → 60 minutes

Wednesday – Pickup game of hockey → 60 minutes

Thursday – Work with your 4-H calf → 60 minutes

Friday – Go bowling with friends → 60 minutes

Saturday – Hike with your family → 60 minutes

Sunday – Go for a run → 60 minutes

What activities would you add to your week?

If your fellow 4-H members see that you are prioritizing being physically active, they are more likely to do the same.



**For more information, check out the Lead Better page at
participACTION.com**



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Notes

Notes



**Learn
To Do
By Doing**

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