



1.0 The Business Case

1.0 The Business Case

The economic burden of physical inactivity in Canada was \$5.3 billion in 2001. While \$1.6 billion was spent on direct health care costs (including costs associated with hospital, drug and physician care), the remaining \$3.7 billion went to indirect costs. Indirect costs included lost productivity due to premature death and lost activity days due to short-term and long-term disability. These indirect costs are often absorbed by businesses through absenteeism, injuries, staff turnover, disability compensation, extended health-care costs, life insurance costs, and decreased work productivity.¹

Promoting physical activity and supporting employees to be physically active is not just good for them, it is good for your business.

Canadians spend so much of their time at work, and lead busy lives outside of work that physical activity is often a healthy behaviour that takes a back seat to everything else. If they can't be active during their work day, they may not be active at all.

Canadian Fact

70% of working Canadians who currently receive support from their employers indicate that this support helps them be more active.

The majority of Canadian companies (81%) with 50 or more employees state that the physical activity behaviour of employees is a matter of interest and the responsibility of both the employer and the employee.

References: Cragg et al, 2007; Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute, 2008



When employees are physically active, your business becomes active in more ways than one.²⁻¹²

- Improved morale and job satisfaction
- Improved tolerance to stress
- Improved productivity
- Decreased absenteeism
- Decreased health benefit costs especially related to high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer
- Decreased workplace injuries
- Improved recruitment and retention

According to the World Health Organization, when workplaces invest in physical activity programming for their employees as part of a comprehensive workplace health strategy, the return-on-investment can be quite substantial – an average of \$5.81 (U.S.) for every \$1.00 (U.S.) invested.¹²

Success Story: BC Hydro

The Lifestyle Program is comprised of seven main products:

- Health Education Deliverables
- Incentive Program
- Sport and Active Events
- Health and Wellness Events
- 'Lunch-and-Learn' Sessions
- Resource Library and Internal Website
- Fitness Centres

After 12 years, 80 per cent of BC Hydro employees are registered in Lifestyle's Incentive Program with 40 per cent actively participating.

Data from a cost/benefit study in 1996 showed:

- \$1.2 million in reduced sick leave costs annually
- \$97,000 in reduced accident costs per year
- \$35,000 Workers' Compensation Board rate reduction
- Productivity gains of \$919,000
- Employee retention and corporate image gains

Return on Investment: \$2.74 benefit for every \$1 spent

For more information about this success story or to read more about what other Canadian companies have done, visit <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alw-vat/studies-etudes/canadian-eng.php>.