

ACTIVE WORKPLACE AUDIT TOOLKIT



Alberta Health
Services

Centre for
Active Living

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Welcome!

Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Centre for Active Living (CAL) worked in partnership with support from health, wellness, and workplace professionals to develop this evidence-informed toolkit. The key purpose of this toolkit is to provide an audit tool for workplace champions, human resource professionals, and health and wellness promoters to identify how to support office-based employees to move more and sit less.

This toolkit is organized into four key parts:

Part 1: Get started - Build the case for an active workplace

- Explore information to help with organizational engagement to initiate interest and support for active living in your workplace.

Part 2: Assess - Audit your workplace

- Use the audit tool to help identify physical activity and sedentary behaviour influences in your workplace.

Part 3: Explore - Find resources for action

- Link to resources and tools that can help promote active living.

Part 4: Go - Plan for change, maintenance, and continuous improvement

- Use your audit tool scores (Assess) and the resources (Explore) to build active living initiatives.

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It can be hard to make changes to create an active workplace when you are not sure about where to start, what your colleagues want to do, and what your options are.

This toolkit can provide you with guidance on:

WHO

- can benefit from an active workplace?
- can champion and lead the effort?

WHAT

- can you do to support an active workplace?
- is already being done?

WHERE

- to start?
- to look for support?

WHY

- do you want to do this?
- is an active workplace important?

HOW

- does my workplace score?
 - to make my workplace an employer of choice?
-

The Active Workplace Audit Toolkit focuses on supporting office-based employees to move more and sit less. Physical activity and sedentary behaviour are only two of many health behaviours that can impact the health of employees and the workplace. To learn more about a comprehensive approach to workplace health, visit [Healthier Together Workplaces](#).

How was this toolkit developed?

This toolkit builds on the [Increasing Physical Activity and Decreasing Sedentary Behaviour in the Workplace Systematic Review](#),¹ developed by CAL in 2015; the [Workplace Physical Activity Framework](#),^{2,3} developed by CAL in 2003; and an environmental scan of workplace physical activity and sedentary behaviour audit tools. The environmental scan followed a systematic review protocol and included audits, checklists or questionnaires for office workplace settings related to either physical activity or sedentary behaviour. Many of the tools identified did not include physical activity and sedentary behaviour as two distinct behaviours. The audit tool was developed to fill this gap by addressing physical activity and sedentary behaviour separately.

This toolkit includes an evidence-informed audit tool with links to resources that can support reducing sedentary behaviour and increasing physical activity in the workplace. A practitioner working group guided and supported the audit tool development. Then office-based workplace champions piloted the audit tool in workplaces of varying sizes across Alberta. Practitioners then used the AGREE II tool⁴ to assess the completeness and transparency of the tool development.

The toolkit will be reviewed annually to ensure links are functional, and the content will be reviewed every three years.

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PART 1:

GET STARTED



**BUILD THE CASE FOR
AN ACTIVE WORKPLACE**

Get Started

The **Get Started** section can help you build the case for an active workplace. This section includes information about why workplaces and employees want to move more and sit less, the areas of influence workplaces have on physical activity and sedentary behaviour, and the first steps to engaging a workplace in an active living initiative.

What are physical activity & sedentary behaviour?

Physical activity and sedentary behaviour are two separate health behaviours that workplaces can influence.

Any movement with a substantial increase in resting energy expenditure that lasts 10 minutes or longer counts as physical activity.^{1,2} The [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines](#) recommend that adults engage in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week.² Walking, wheeling, cycling, and participation in sport and recreational activities are some of the most common types of physical activity. For the purpose of this toolkit, physical activity is any moderate-to-vigorous physical activity lasting 10 minutes or more.

Sitting or lounging activities while awake are considered sedentary behaviour.^{3,4} This is distinct from being physically inactive as it is possible to meet physical activity guidelines and still spend a large amount of time sitting. No national guideline for adult sedentary behaviour exists in Canada. For the purpose of this toolkit, reductions in sedentary behaviour refer to decreasing the amount of time spent sitting, by replacing it with standing and changes in posture, light forms of physical activity, or bouts of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity that last less than 10 minutes.⁴

Why move more and sit less at work?

Only 16.4% of Canadians get enough physical activity to meet the Canadian recommendations.⁵ Also, Canadians spend an average of 9.6 hours of their waking day in sedentary behaviours as part of their work, commuting, leisure, and lifestyle.⁶

Physical inactivity and excessive sedentary behaviour increase the risk of:^{7,8}

- Cardiovascular disease,
- Some forms of cancer,
- Stroke,
- Type 2 diabetes,
- Depression and anxiety,
- Osteoporosis, and
- Premature death.

Workplaces are an ideal location to implement initiatives to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour,⁹ as Canadians spend a substantial amount of time at work, and most of this time is sedentary for office-based employees.

Benefits of an Active Workplace

Both employees and employers can benefit from making positive changes to support a more active and less sedentary workplace.

According to the Willis Towers Watson 2015/2016 Staying@Work Report, lack of physical activity is the second greatest workforce issue for Canadian employers.¹⁰

Benefits for the employer can include:¹¹⁻¹⁷

- Improved employee relations, productivity, creativity, and job performance;
- Improved work environment, staff morale, and staff attitudes towards the organization;
- Reduced costs associated with absenteeism (casual absence and long term disability), occupational accidents, work-related injuries, and occupational conditions or diseases;
- Improved human resources management through better recruitment, better retention of quality staff, and lower employee turnover;
- Enhanced business reputation, relationships between management and unions, and customer loyalty.

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- Canadian examples:

- Presenteeism (being at work but performing below expectations due to a health issue) improved by 50% at Standard Life with the implementation of a physical activity program including various initiatives that were incorporated as part of a comprehensive health and wellness program.¹⁶⁻¹⁷
 - Higher revenues per employee, lower medical costs per employee, and fewer lost days due to unplanned absence and disability compared to their peers were observed at Chevron Canada.¹⁷
-

Benefits for the employee can include:^{15,16,18}

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health benefits, • Greater awareness of personal health and wellness, • Enhanced ability to cope with stress, • Improved concentration, • Fewer occupational accidents, injuries, and diseases, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased quality of life, morale, and job satisfaction, • Increased motivation and commitment, • Improved working relationships, • Improved mental wellness and ability to balance high demands and stress, and • Reduced sick leave and absences. |
|---|---|

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- Canadian example:

- 57% of employees reported reduced stress levels from the physical activity and 33% reported increased productivity levels at work at Standard Life.¹⁷
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How workplaces can influence physical activity and sedentary behaviour

Workplaces can support their employees to move more and sit less through increasing employee awareness and education, programs and policies, community assets and partnerships, social support, and organizational support. This toolkit explores the following five categories of influence on workplace active living.

A) Employee awareness and education

This area looks at how the workplace influences employees' knowledge and awareness of physical activity and sedentary behaviour. To support being more active, workplaces can:

- Provide information about the benefits and risks;
- Offer skills development and programs; and
- Develop supportive policies.



B) Social support

Employees, management, and top management can also influence employees' physical activity and sedentary behaviour. Social support comes in many forms in the workplace and can include assistance employees receive from others, such as:

- Demonstrating care for others;
- Enhancing others' self-worth;
- Providing information;
- Offering tangible forms of help (e.g., childcare support while one exercises); and
- Role modeling positive behaviours.



C) Organizational support

Organizational support is reflected within internal workplace structure and operations that impact employee behaviour. Organizations can support employees through leadership, capacity, and infrastructure.



D) Community assets and partnerships

Workplaces have opportunities to leverage community assets and develop partnerships. Examples can include organizations, people, local facilities, funding, regulations, etc.



E) Programs and policies

Workplaces can support employees through implementing programs and policies. Programs can include activities and opportunities designed to support employees. Policies are rules or principles that help guide managers and employees.



How to start building your case and get your workplace engaged

Engaging both leadership and employees are key to the success of your actions. Each workplace is different and may be starting from a different place when it comes to active living. It is important to tailor your approach to where your workplace is at.

Leading organizational change to support active living in the workplace may require organizations to change their organizational values, management practices, and work systems.¹⁹ To do this, leadership will need to believe in the vision, see alignment with organizational goals, see what is needed to transition, and model active living in the workplace. Different leadership groups and organizations will require different information to do this. Use the information provided here in **PART 1** and other relevant sources of information to customize an approach specific to your workplace context. For example, some leaderships groups will need a business case or a return on investment calculation to prove value, while others will value improvements to workplace culture. Initiatives can also be integrated into a larger organizational plan for comprehensive workplace wellness. To learn more, see [Healthier Together](#).

For more information to help build a case for active living in the workplace, see the following resources:

- [Australian Government - The Business Case for Reducing Sedentary Work Practices](#)
- [Conference Board of Canada - Moving Ahead: Workplace Interventions to Reduce Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour](#)
- [Workplace Health Research Network - Physical Activity in the Workplace: A Guide for Employers](#)

Employee engagement is also crucial for change. Workplace champions, human resource professionals, occupational health and safety professionals, and health and wellness promoters can all lead change. To plan active living in the workplace, develop a champion's team or committee that include individuals from all employee groups. The committee would be responsible for consulting with employees to identify and plan initiatives that employees are interested in.

For more information to help develop a workplace committee, see the following resources:

- [BC Recreation & Parks Association - ActNowBC: Active Communities Workplace Workbook](#)
- [New Brunswick - The Wellness Movement: Establish a Committee Structure](#)

The next step is to assess your workplace (see **PART 2**). The audit tool will help identify what supports for increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary time are currently available in your workplace and where improvements can be made. To explore resources to help guide actions based on your workplace's audit tool results, see **PART 3**. For more information on planning and implementing initiatives, see **PART 4**.

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PART 2:

ASSESS

**USE THE ACTIVE
WORKPLACE AUDIT TOOL TO
ASSESS YOUR WORKPLACE**

Overview of the Active Workplace Audit Tool

The Active Workplace Audit Tool is **PART 2** of this 4-part toolkit to support employees to move more and sit less. You can use it to plan and implement initiatives tailored to the needs and interests of your workplace, along with the other parts of the toolkit.

This audit tool provides workplace champions with a resource that can identify the current physical activity and sedentary behaviour supports available and areas for improvement in the workplace. It can be used for large or small office-based workplaces. Within larger organizations, the tool may be used to assess the entire organization or specific departments across the organization. It is meant to provide information about the specific workplace. However, it is not meant to be used to compare against other workplaces or between departments.

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This resource can be used as a:

- baseline measure to identify ways to improve workplace active living before starting a new initiative;
- follow-up on the progress of an initiative (i.e., pre- to post-assessment); or
- status report on the state of physical activity and sedentary behaviour support in the workplace.

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When using this tool, increasing physical activity refers to increasing the amount of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, accumulated in bouts of 10 continuous minutes or longer, to contribute to meeting the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines. Reductions in sedentary behaviour refers to decreasing the amount of time spent sitting, by replacing it with standing and frequent changes in posture, light forms of physical activity, or short bouts of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.

The audit tool is categorized into five types of influence on workplace active living. These influences include:



A) Employee awareness and education,



B) Social support,



C) Organizational support,



D) Community assets and partnerships, and



E) Programs and policies.

Optimally, to help employees to move more and sit less in the workplace, initiatives should include factors from each of the five categories. However, focusing on at least one behaviour (i.e., physical activity or sedentary behaviour) and one of the five types of active living influences is a great way to get started.

How to complete the tool:

- Identify a workplace champion, human resource professional or health and wellness promoter to lead the tool completion.
- Respond to each question by either selecting yes/no or check all that apply. If you are not sure of the most accurate response, we suggest answering “no” as this will allow you to investigate the area further as part of your next steps.
- It should take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete the tool.
- To complete all the audit tool questions, you may need to refer to organizational resources (e.g., website, onboarding documents, business plan, etc.) or consult with others in the workplace.
- The more information you provide, the more accurate the results will be. When completing the audit tool, you may skip the sections that are not of interest or complete them to get new ideas on potential initiatives for the workplace.
- The audit tool scores will automatically be tabulated at the end of the tool. For manual scoring instructions, see the Active Workplace Audit Toolkit page on the [Centre for Active Living website](#).
- See **APPENDIX A** for a glossary of terms.

Active Workplace Audit Tool

Workplace: _____

Department audited (if applicable): _____ Number of staff: _____

Audit performed by: _____ Date: _____

**Information for workplace records only*



Section A: The Influence of Employee Awareness and Education

Section A of the audit tool assesses factors supporting **employees' knowledge and awareness** of physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

Aspects that influence employees' knowledge and awareness are: information about the benefits and risks associated with **physical activity and/or sedentary behaviour**, the skills needed to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour, and the programs and policies available at the workplace related to **physical activity and/or sedentary behaviour**.

A1: Messaging

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
1. Does the workplace share messages about <i>physical activity/ reducing sedentary behaviour</i> with employees?				
2. Do workplace active living messages include: <i>A call to action for physical activity / sedentary behaviour (e.g., "take the stairs", "make your one-on-one meetings a walking meeting")?</i>				
<i>Appropriate language and literacy level for physical activity / sedentary behaviour?</i>				
<i>Appropriate content for various levels of readiness to engage in physical activity / sedentary behaviour (e.g., new to physical activity, athlete)?</i>				

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
Positive messaging for <i>physical activity / sedentary behaviour</i> (e.g., avoid making physical activity about weight loss, shaming people into moving more, or focusing on appearance)?	YES	NO	YES	NO
Information that is relevant, interesting, and relatable to employees about <i>physical activity / sedentary behaviour</i>?	YES	NO	YES	NO

A2: Communications

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
3. Does the workplace communicate information about active living or have a campaign that uses the following communication methods and channels?				
Electronic communications (e.g., emails, intranet / web portal, newsletter articles, social media)	YES	NO	YES	NO
Hard copy communication (e.g., internal office mail, newsletter articles, posters)	YES	NO	YES	NO
In person opportunities (e.g., counselling, face-to-face meetings, employee orientation, wellness committee, events, classes)	YES	NO	YES	NO
4. Does the workplace have a communications plan to promote <i>physical activity / reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time?	YES	NO	YES	NO

A3: Education

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
5. Does the workplace provide employees with education or personal development to: Learn about the benefits of <i>physical activity</i> / <i>reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time?	YES	NO	YES	NO
Develop organizational skills (e.g., planning, scheduling) and a behavioural plan for <i>physical activity</i> / <i>reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time?	YES	NO	YES	NO
Develop physical skills and practices in <i>physical activity</i> / <i>reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time (e.g., ergonomic set up of standing desks, sit-stand breaks, exercise activities).	YES	NO	YES	NO
Maintain optimal levels of <i>physical activity</i> / <i>reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time?	YES	NO	YES	NO
Understand organizational programs and policies on <i>physical activity</i> / <i>reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time?	YES	NO	YES	NO



Section B: Influence of Social Support from Employees, Management, and Top Management

Section B of the audit tool assesses **social support from employees, management and top management** as factors that influence employees' physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

Social support refers to the various types of support or assistance that people receive from others. Social support includes things people do to demonstrate their care for others and enhances their self-worth, tangible forms of help (e.g., providing a babysitter to watch kids while one exercises), providing helpful information, or role modeling positive behaviours.

B1: Employees

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
6. Employees are supportive of others' participation in <i>physical activity/reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time (e.g., ask other employees to walk during breaks, accommodate standing during meetings).	YES	NO	YES	NO
7. Employees are actively involved in shaping practices, systems, or methods to engage others in <i>physical activity/ reduce sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO

B2: Management

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
8. Management is a role model for <i>increasing physical activity/ reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO
9. Management recognizes employees who adopt <i>physical activity/ reduce sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO

B3: Top Management

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
10. Top management communicates their commitment to a culture that supports <i>physical activity / reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO
11. Top management is a role model for <i>increasing physical activity/ reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO
12. Top management openly supports policies and programs to <i>increase physical activity / reduce sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO



Section C: Influence of Organizational Support through Leadership, Capacity, and Infrastructure

Section C of the audit tool assesses **organizational support through leadership, capacity, and infrastructure** as factors that influence employees' physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

Organizational support through leadership, capacity, and infrastructure is reflected in internal organizational structure and operations that impact employee behaviour.

C1: Staffing and Committees

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
13. The workplace has a wellness champion(s) supporting employees' <i>physical activity / reduction of sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO
14. The wellness champion is recognized for their work in <i>physical activity / reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO
15. The workplace has an established wellness committee that has a mandate to address <i>physical activity / reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO
16. The wellness committee has a budget for <i>physical activity / reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time (e.g., paid position for wellness coordinator; funding for equipment, programs, or services; etc.).	YES	NO	YES	NO

C2: Social Climate

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
17. An organizational plan exists that addresses <i>physical activity/ reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time.	YES	NO	YES	NO

18. Does the workplace consider the following in their organizational plans (select all that apply):

- active commuting to work
- active commuting to external meetings
- standing desks
- walking meetings
- standing meetings
- taking the stairs rather than the elevator
- use of on-site fitness/recreation centre or facilities
- physical activity during breaks, lunches or before/after work
- use of local recreation facilities
- participation in community physical activity events

19. The organization has developed a social climate that encourages (select all that apply):

- active commuting to work
- active commuting to external meetings
- standing desks
- walking meetings
- standing meetings
- taking the stairs rather than the elevator
- use of on-site fitness/recreation centre or facilities
- physical activity during breaks, lunches or before/after work
- use of local recreation facilities
- participation in community physical activity events

C3: Indoor Physical Environment

20. Does the workplace have the following facilities to support active transportation (select all that apply):
- safe bike lock up (e.g., bike room, bike racks or rails, bike cages, bike lockers)
 - shelters or covers if outside
 - shower and change room facilities for active commuters
 - lockers or storage facility
21. Does the workplace have the following physical activity supports (select all that apply):
- fitness equipment
 - variation in the types of equipment (e.g., different skill levels, body types, preferences)
 - affordable access fees to facility (e.g., free or low rate)
 - convenient hours of access to facility
 - shower and change room facilities
22. If the workplace has indoor stairs, are the stairs (select all that apply):
- easy to find with clear wayfinding signs
 - safe (e.g., no obstacles, well-lit)
 - unlocked and accessible on all or most floors
 - appealing to use (e.g., painted, decorated, utilities hidden, clean, ventilated)
23. Does the office layout support reducing sedentary behaviour time? Does the office layout have the following (select all that apply):
- printers placed in separate area from the desks (i.e., need to walk to printers)
 - office space that can be used for fitness classes
 - sit-stand desks available (e.g., shared desk or individual desk)
 - standing options in meeting rooms
 - a recreation room (e.g., room with table tennis, foosball, stretching area, etc.)



Section D: Influence of Community Assets and Partnerships

Section D of the audit toolkit assesses **community assets and partnerships** as factors that influence employees' physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

Community assets and partnerships include organizations, people, facilities, funding, regulations, etc. These can be leveraged to develop effective solutions.

D1: Outdoor Environment

24. The workplace is located in an area that (select all that apply):

- is safe from crime
- is safe from automobile traffic and active transportation commuters (e.g., speed, volume, driveways, crosswalks, etc.)
- has universally accessible sidewalks (i.e., ease of access for people with mobility impairments; sidewalks well paved and cleared of any snow or debris; trails well kept, no obstacles or construction in path, well lit)
- has enough sidewalk or other pedestrian walkways for a 10-minute walk
- provides and maintains an outdoor area to be physically active (e.g., playing fields, paths, open spaces)
- is aesthetically pleasant (e.g., trees, shrubs, interesting architecture, clean, graffiti-free, etc.)
- is accessible via public transit

D2: Partnership

	Physical Activity		Sedentary Behaviour	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
25. Does the workplace collaborate or have partnership with community-based facilities or services to provide opportunities for <i>physical activity / reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time (e.g., swimming pool, fitness centre, indoor walking track, community centre, wellness coach, fitness professional, etc.).				
26. Does the workplace use information from outside sources (e.g., ParticipACTION, MyHealth.Alberta, etc.) for promotion, programming or policies related to <i>physical activity / reducing sedentary behaviour</i> time.				



Section E: Influences of Programs and Policies

Section E of the audit toolkit assesses **programs and policies** as factors that influence employees' physical activity and sedentary behaviour.

Programs refer to coordinated health promotion strategies and/or activities designed to improve the health and wellness of employees.

Policies refer to rules or principles in the workplace that guide managers and employees.

E1: Programs

27. Does the workplace offer or support participation in the following programs provided within your organization or externally (select all that apply):

- Group exercise classes (e.g., cycling, fitness, swimming, dancing, yoga, etc.)
- Organized physical activity clubs, groups, sports team or events (e.g., run club, walking groups, hockey team, bike to work days, etc.)
- Programs supporting physical activity with family members
- Activities, competitions, and/or challenges focusing on physical activity (e.g., inclusive activities such as step challenges, etc.)
- Activities, competitions, and/or challenges focusing on reducing sedentary behaviour time (e.g., “stand when you are on the phone” challenge, stretch breaks, etc.)
- Active living counseling, online programs and/or professional exercise training support by qualified personnel targeting physical activity
- Active living counseling, online programs and/or professional exercise training support by qualified personnel targeting reducing sedentary behaviour time
- Programs that support employees with special needs, different skill levels, different ages and various interests in their participation in physical activity
- Programs that support employees with special needs, different skill levels, different ages and various interests in their participation in reducing sedentary behaviour time
- Tools to track personal physical activity progress and accomplishments (e.g., physical activity monitors, step logs)
- Tools to track personal progress in reducing sedentary behaviour time and achieving accomplishments (e.g., physical activity monitors)
- Prompts and reminders for physical activity (e.g., software to remind users to take an active break)
- Prompts and reminders for reducing sedentary behaviour time (e.g., software to remind users to move, signs by elevators to take the stairs)

E2: Policies and Practices

28. Does the workplace have the following policies?

- a) Managers are recognized for supporting physical activity (e.g., staff and team recognition)
- b) Managers are recognized for supporting reducing sedentary behaviour time (e.g., staff and team recognition)
- c) Employees are recognized for participating in physical activity (e.g., staff and team recognition)
- d) Employees are recognized for participating in reducing sedentary behaviour time (e.g., staff recognition)
- e) Workplace wellness benefits exist that financially support physical activity
- f) Workplace wellness benefits exist that financially support reducing sedentary behaviour time
- g) Status reports of physical activity initiatives are reported to top management
- h) Status reports of reducing sedentary behaviour time initiatives are reported to top management
- i) Policy statements exist supporting physical activity in the workplace (e.g., dress down, flextime)
- j) Policy statements exist supporting reducing sedentary behaviour time in the workplace
- k) The workplace has policies supporting inclusive and accessible physical activity opportunities
- l) Policies exist supporting inclusive and accessible opportunities to reduce sedentary behaviour time
- m) Physical activity policies address variations in employee work situations (e.g., shift work, work from home)
- n) Reducing sedentary behaviour time policies address variations in employee work situations (e.g., shift work, work from home)
- o) Financial and material resources are allocated for physical activity in the budget
- p) Financial and material resources are allocated for reducing sedentary behaviour time in the budget
- q) Sponsorship opportunities for workplace sports teams or events (e.g., walks, running races, or cycling challenges)
- r) Active transport initiatives (e.g., free or subsidized bus passes or tickets, bike share, etc.)
- s) Employees can engage in physical activity during paid time

Active Workplace Audit Tool Scores

Scores for your workplace are calculated separately for physical activity and sedentary behaviour. They are categorized into four progress levels: needs attention, fair, good, and outstanding.

The next few pages provide a complete summary of your audit tool scores and information to help interpret them. To explore ideas on how to support employees in the workplace based on the audit tool scores, see **PART 3**.

Overall Active Workplace Audit Tool Scores

** The total scores are derived by calculating the average of the scores from each of the five categories of influence for physical activity and for sedentary behaviour separately.*

Detailed Active Workplace Audit Tool Scores

	Physical Activity	Sedentary Behaviour
Overall Score		
 SECTION A Employee Awareness and Education	Total Score	Total Score
	A1: Messaging	A1: Messaging
	A2: Communications	A2: Communications
	A3: Education	A3: Education
 SECTION B Social Support	Total Score	Total Score
	B1: Employees	B1: Employees
	B2: Management	B2: Management
	B3: Top Management	B3: Top Management
 SECTION C Organizational Support	Total Score	Total Score
	C1: Staffing and Committees	C1: Staffing and Committees
	C2: Social Climate	C2: Social Climate
	C3: Indoor Physical Environment	C3: Indoor Physical Environment
 SECTION D Community Assets and Partnerships	Total Score	Total Score
	D1: Outdoor Environment	
	D2: Partnership	D2: Partnership
 SECTION E Programs and Policies	Total Score	Total Score
	E1: Programs	E1: Programs
	E2: Policies and Practices	E2: Policies and Practices

See next page for description of scoring progress levels.

Understanding the Active Workplace Audit Tool Scores

The four progress levels are described below.

NEEDS ATTENTION

Your workplace has few or no reported supports in place for this health behaviour (physical activity or sedentary behaviour).

Incorporating support for employees in this health behaviour can improve employee wellbeing, as well as their physical and mental health. Levels of workplace absenteeism, turnover, productivity, and effectiveness may improve by supporting positive health behaviours among employees.

You can start with small steps. Introduce a health initiative or a couple of initiatives that specifically target the health behaviour and include support from at least one of the five categories of influence. Explore the resources in **PART 3** of the toolkit for ideas on how to support employees in your workplace.

FAIR

Your workplace has some health supports in place for this health behaviour (physical activity or sedentary behaviour). Health promotion initiatives that include all five categories of influence provide the most comprehensive employee support. Check which specific categories are areas of strength for your workplace or are opportunities for improvement.

Incorporating support for employees in this health behaviour can improve employee wellbeing, as well as their physical and mental health. Levels of workplace absenteeism, turnover, productivity, and effectiveness may improve by supporting positive health behaviours among employees. It is important to consider all employees in health promotion initiatives. Employees will have various levels of confidence, skills, motivation, and experience in physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour. Using multiple approaches to support employees will help to reach more employees and reinforce healthy behaviour.

Explore ways your initiatives can support each of the five sections of influences. See the resources in **PART 3** of the toolkit for ideas on how to further support employees in your workplace.

GOOD

Your workplace demonstrates a foundation of support for this health behaviour (physical activity or sedentary behaviour). Broadening the approaches used could further support employees. Check which specific categories are areas of strength for your workplace or opportunities for improvement.

Further incorporating support for employees in this health behaviour can help more employees improve their wellbeing, as well as their physical and mental health. Levels of workplace absenteeism, turnover, productivity, and effectiveness may improve by supporting positive health behaviours among all employees. It is important to consider all employees in health promotion initiatives. Employees will have various levels of confidence, skills, motivation, and experience in physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour. Using multiple approaches to support employees will help to reach more employees and reinforce healthy behaviour.

Explore the resources in **PART 3** of the toolkit for ideas on how to further support employees in your workplace.

OUTSTANDING

Your workplace includes a variety of ways to support employees for this health behaviour (physical activity or sedentary behaviour).

Incorporating additional support for employees in this health behaviour may help more employees improve their wellbeing, as well as their physical and mental health. Levels of workplace absenteeism, turnover, productivity, and effectiveness may improve by supporting positive health behaviours among all employees. Using multiple approaches to support employees will help to reach more employees and further reinforce healthy behaviour.

Sharing your practices, experience and knowledge with other departments and organizations is one way to share your successes and help others. For new ideas, check out the resources in **PART 3** of the toolkit. Keep up the outstanding work!

A photograph of two men in dark blue suits and light blue shirts, smiling and clapping their hands. They are in an office environment with a glass wall in the background. The man on the left is looking down and clapping, while the man on the right is looking towards him and clapping. The overall mood is celebratory and professional.

PART 3:

EXPLORE

**FIND RESOURCES FOR
ACTION TO CREATE AN
ACTIVE WORKPLACE**

Explore

This is **PART 3** of the 4-part Active Workplace Audit Toolkit, developed to help workplaces support employees to move more and sit less. Use it along with your workplace's audit score (see **PART 2**) and the other parts of the toolkit to plan and implement initiatives tailored to the needs and interests of your workplace.

The objective of this section is to provide strategies that workplaces can use to support employees and create a more active workplace.

In this part, you can use your audit results and explore ways to support employees to move more and sit less. Ideas for action are provided with links to resources and tools to help your workplace act to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour at work, to/from work, and outside of work.

- Choose resources that match with your workplace's audit tool results (see **PART 2**). The audit tool scores identify areas for improvement based on the five categories of influence for either physical activity or sedentary behaviour. These influences include:



A) Employee awareness and education,



B) Social support,



C) Organizational support,



D) Community assets and partnerships, and



E) Programs and policies.

- The tables on the following pages show the categories of influence for various resources. Use the tables to select the appropriate resources for your initiatives and to support employees.
- You can start with small steps. Introduce a health initiative or a couple of initiatives that specifically target either physical activity or sedentary behaviour and include support from at least one of the five categories of influence.
- It is important to consider all employees in health promotion initiatives. Employees will have various levels of confidence, skills, motivation, and experience in physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour. Using multiple approaches to support employees will help to reach more employees and reinforce healthy behaviour.
- Every workplace is unique and may have different assets and different ability to influence their setting (e.g., your workplace may or may not own the building where you work). You may need to include other partners to create change.

Ideas to increase physical activity

Explore strategies for your workplaces to support employees in increasing physical activity. Each of the example activities include the categories of influence the resource focuses on. Choose resources that target areas you identified as opportunities for improvement in the audit tool. The strategies are divided into three areas: at work, to/from work, and outside of work.

Physical activity at work

Ideas to increase physical activity at the workplace during work time or breaks from work.

Legend:

 Employee awareness and education
  Social support
  Organizational support
  Community assets and partnerships
  Programs and policies

Activity	Link to tools and resources to support action	Category of influence				
						
Share physical activity information with employees through a variety of methods (e.g., electronic, hard copy, and in person).	Alberta Blue Cross – Physical Activity Resources BC Recreation and Parks Association – Active Communities Workplace Workbook (chapters 5.0 Awareness and Education and 6.0 Skill Development) Canadian Cancer Society – Physical Activity at Work (Educate section) Centre for Active Living – Increasing Physical Activity and Decreasing Sedentary Behaviour in the Workplace (see Summary 2: Information and Counselling) Centre for Disease Control – Physical Activity information Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology – Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines MyHealth.Alberta.ca – How to Start Being Active ParticipACTION – Physical activity information					
						
						
						
						
						
						
						

Legend:

 Employee awareness and education
  Social support
  Organizational support
  Community assets and partnerships
  Programs and policies

Activity	Link to tools and resources to support action	Category of influence				
						
Support walking at work. Provide information and routes, set-up walking groups, promote walking breaks and meetings, and advocate for a walkable surrounding area.	Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety – Walking fact sheets					
	ChangeLab Solutions – Walk This Way					
	Eat Smart, Move More NC – Move More Walking Map Guide					
	Feet First - Guide to Walking Meetings					
	Hamilton Public Health Services – A Practical Guide to Starting a Workplace Walking Group					
	Niagara Region – Comprehensive Strategies to Promote Walking in the Workplace					
	Online tools to create walking routes (e.g., Google maps , PlotARoute.com)					
	WalkBC – Workplace Walking					
Organize physical activity challenges and competitions for employees.	Canadian Cancer Society – Pedometer Challenge					
	Centre for Active Living – Increasing Physical Activity and Decreasing Sedentary Behaviour in the Workplace (see Summary 1: Challenges and Competitions)					
	UWALK – Free online resource for individuals to track physical activity and compete in group challenges.					
	York Region - Workplace Pedometer Challenge Toolkit					
Provide active living counseling or professional exercise training support by qualified personnel.	Centre for Active Living – Increasing Physical Activity and Decreasing Sedentary Behaviour in the Workplace (see Summary 2: Information and Counselling)					
	Find qualified exercise training support (e.g., Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology , Provincial Fitness Unit of Alberta)					

Legend:

-  Employee awareness and education
-  Social support
-  Organizational support
-  Community assets and partnerships
-  Programs and policies

Activity	Link to tools and resources to support action	Category of influence				
						
Provide tools to track physical activity or give reminders (e.g., physical activity monitors).	Centre for Active Living – Free Pedometer Loan Kits					
	UWALK – Free online tool for individuals to track physical activity and compete in group challenges					
	VicHealth - Healthy Living Apps Guide					
Provide on-site facilities, classes, events and/or other opportunities for physical activity at work.	BC Recreation and Parks Association – Active Communities Workplace Workbook (chapters 5.0 -7.0)					
	Find local events (e.g., SHAPE – Winter Walk Day)					
	Government of Canada – Calendar of Health Promotion Days					
Implement workplace physical activity programs.	ParticipACTION – UPnGO					
Implement workplace physical activity policies (e.g., flexible time, incentives, financial assistance, dress code).	Canadian Cancer Society – Physical Activity at Work (see Support)					
	Centre for Active Living – Workplace Physical Activity Policy					
	ChangeLab Solutions – Walk This Way					
	Hamilton Public Health Services – Investing in Physical Activity Through the Workplace: A Toolkit for Policy Development					

Physical activity to/from work

Ideas to increase physical activity to/from the workplace are focused on encouraging active transportation (using your own power to get from one place to another, e.g., walking or cycling) and public transit.

Legend:

 Employee awareness and education
  Social support
  Organizational support
  Community assets and partnerships
  Programs and policies

Activity	Link to tools and resources to support action	Category of influence				
						
Share active transportation information with employees through a variety of methods (e.g., electronic, hard copy, and in person).	Alberta Blue Cross — Active Commuting CAN-BIKE — Cycling Courses Centre for Active Living — Benefits of Active Transportation Fact Sheet Green Action Centre — Workplace Commuter Options					
Provide trip planning assistance .	Google Trip Planning					
Connect with local groups for information, maps, events, bike maintenance classes, etc..	E.g., Bike Calgary , Bike to Work Day Calgary , Edmonton Bicycle Commuter Society , City of Edmonton – Driving, Cycling & Walking					
Promote active transportation events and challenges .	Commuter Challenge					
Advocate for improvements to the outdoor environment and support for use of public transit .	ChangeLab Solutions — Walk This Way Victoria Transport Policy Institute — Transportation Demand Management Encyclopedia Urban Land Institute — Building Healthy Places Toolkit					
Provide facilities for active transportation (e.g., bike parking, shower and changing facilities).	Victoria Transport Policy Institute — Transportation Demand Management Encyclopedia Urban Land Institute — Building Healthy Places Toolkit					
						

Legend:

-  Employee awareness and education
-  Social support
-  Organizational support
-  Community assets and partnerships
-  Programs and policies

Activity	Link to tools and resources to support action	Category of influence				
						
Develop a workplace travel plan .	Calgary Region Airshed Zone – Commuter Connect					
	New South Wales Government – Workplace Travel Plan Resources					
	Transport Canada – Workplace Travel Plans: Guidance for Canadian Employers					
Implement policies that support active transportation (e.g., emergency ride home, financial incentives, flexible work).*	Windsor-Essex County Health Unit – Bike Friendly Workplace Policy (under example supportive policies)					

*For more workplace policies related to encouraging active transportation, see the Physical activity at work table.

Physical activity outside work

Ideas to increase physical activity of employees specifically outside of the workplace.

Legend:

 Employee awareness and education
  Social support
  Organizational support
  Community assets and partnerships
  Programs and policies

Activity	Link to tools and resources to support action	Category of influence
		    
Support employees to participate in local events and sports .	Alberta Blue Cross – Encouraging Employees to be Physically Active at Local Events	
Partner with community-based facilities or services to provide opportunities for physical activity.	Search your community for local facilities and services (e.g., City of Edmonton Corporate Wellness Program , Calgary YMCA Corporate Wellness Program)	
	Primary Care Networks (PCNs) – List of Alberta PCNs	
Implement policies that promote physical activity outside of the workplace (e.g., financial assistance)	For examples of workplace policies related to encouraging physical activity outside of the workplace, see the <i>Physical activity at work</i> table.	

Ideas to reduce sedentary behaviour

Explore strategies for your workplaces to support employees in reducing sedentary behaviour. Each of the example activities include the categories of influence that the resource focuses on. Choose resources that target areas you have identified as opportunities for improvement in the audit tool.

Legend:

 Employee awareness and education
  Social support
  Organizational support
  Community assets and partnerships
  Programs and policies

Activity	Link to tools and resources to support action	Category of influence				
						
Share sedentary behaviour information with employees through a variety of methods (e.g., electronic, hard copy, and in person).	Alberta Blue Cross – The Dangers of Too Much Sitting					
	Australian Government – Sedentary Work Practices Toolkit					
	Australian Heart Foundation – Workplace Wellness					
	ParticipACTION – Sedentary behaviour information					
Encourage active breaks and meetings (e.g., software to track and/or encourage breaks in sitting time, posters that prompt employees).	Alberta Blue Cross – Taking Active Breaks at Work					
	Canadian Cancer Society – Activity Bursts and Stretching in the Workplace					
	Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety – Stretching - At the Workstation					
	Northwestern Health Unit – Promoting Physical Activity at Work: A Toolkit for Workplaces					
	VicHealth – Healthy Living Apps Guide					

Legend:

-  Employee awareness and education
-  Social support
-  Organizational support
-  Community assets and partnerships
-  Programs and policies

Activity	Link to tools and resources to support action	Category of influence				
						
Encourage stair use . Provide education, promotion (e.g., point of decision prompts), or programs to increase use and improve stair design.	Centre for Active Design – Active Design Guidelines (Chapter 3)					
	Middlesex-London Health Unit – Creating Physical Activity in the Workplace (Section V: Point-of-Decision Prompts)					
	Urban Land Institute – Building Healthy Places Toolkit					
	UWALK – Free online stair climbing challenges					
	Work Well North Carolina – Move More Stairwell Guide					
Improve office layout . Set up office facilities to encourage breaks in sitting time (e.g., standing options for desks and meetings, location of work tasks and communication).	Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety – Sit/Stand Desk Fact Sheet					
	Centre for Active Design – Active Design Guidelines (Chapter 3)					
	Centre for Active Living – Increasing Physical Activity and Decreasing Sedentary Behaviour in the Workplace (see Summary 4: Access and the Physical Environment)					
Implement policies that encourage reduced sedentary time .*	Halton Region – Move More at Work & Sit Less Occupational Health Tool Kit (Sample Policy)					

*For more workplace policies related to encouraging active transportation, see the Physical activity at work table.

PART 4:

GO

**PLAN FOR CHANGE,
MAINTENANCE, AND
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**



Now what?

Now that you have completed **PART 1** — get started, **PART 2** — assess, and **PART 3** — explore; you are ready for **PART 4** — go create an active workplace.

The objective of this section is to learn about how to plan and implement initiatives that are tailored to the needs and interests of your workplace.

This information will help you:

- plan your initiative,
- get others excited about the initiative,
- engage employees in the initiative, and
- learn about the successes and ways the initiative could be improved.

Some keys to success for your initiative include:

- commitment from leadership and a positive vibrant culture,
- employee engagement and participation,
- integration of active living into business plans and strategies, and a comprehensive approach,
- regular communication with employees about the initiative, and
- mobilization of the lessons learned from the evaluation to improve the initiative.

Following a comprehensive workplace health approach, workplaces can include physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and other health behaviours, such as healthy eating, alcohol reduction, tobacco reduction, and UV protection. To learn more about this approach, see [Healthier Together](#).

Go

Plan for short-term change, long-term maintenance, and continuous improvement to make your workplace an active workplace.

Prioritize and plan

- Learn from your engaged leadership, workplace health committee, and employees.
 - Create and bring together a workplace health committee that includes people from various areas with different active living interests (see **PART 1**).
 - Listen to employees to learn about what types of initiatives that may be of interest to them. Consider doing multiple activities that are inclusive, fun, relevant, and relatable for all employees. For a survey example, see [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Worksite Physical Activity — Employee Physical Activity Needs and Interests Survey](#)

- Consider employee diversity. Be cognizant of the language being used, employee's ability to participate in the activities, and employee's readiness. For more information on employee readiness, see [Exercise is Medicine Australia - Physical Activity in the Workplace A Guide \(Stages of Change\)](#)
 - Engage workplace health and safety to support your initiatives and align with a larger comprehensive workplace wellness strategy.
- Identify priority initiatives
 - Review your workplace scores for each section of the audit tool (see **PART 2**— Audit Tool) to see where your organization is thriving and where gaps may exist.
 - Explore ideas for active living interventions (see **PART 3** — Explore) with the committee and/or via employee survey. Consider the resources that you have available both within the workplace and in the community.
 - Use a combination of active living programs, events, and policies to engage employees.
 - Develop short-term and long-term goals, and a plan that includes multiple active living influences, such as: social support from employees, management and leadership, providing support for their leadership, capacity and infrastructure, considering community assets and partnerships, and implementing policies and programs.
 - Consider how your initiatives contribute to a comprehensive workplace wellness strategy.
 - Anticipate potential barriers. For more information, see [Conference Board of Canada - Moving Ahead: Workplace Interventions to Reduce Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour](#)
 - For more information on prioritizing and developing goals to help make decisions on workplace physical activity and sedentary behaviour initiatives, see
 - [BC Recreation and Parks Association – ActNowBC: Active Communities Workplace Workbook](#)
 - Create an evaluation plan that can be used to measure success and initiative improvements.

Implement and communicate

- Implement your initiative. Put the plan into action to engage your workplace for change.
- Get the word out to make sure employees know about your initiative.
 - Develop a plan to clearly communicate and market the initiative to employees. Use multiple channels of communication to share information about the initiative (e.g., email, announcements in meetings or on notice boards, articles in newsletter, etc.).
 - Share the goals and objectives of the initiative with employees.
 - For more information on developing a workplace health promotion communication plan, see [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Workplace Health Promotion - Communications](#).
- Celebrate and recognize successes.

Evaluate and improve

- Learn about employees' enjoyment and experiences associated with the initiative.
- Review and reflect on initiative progress. Use these findings to inform continuous improvement and report back relevant outcomes to leadership to ensure continued buy-in.
- For more information on evaluating workplace initiatives, see
 - [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Workplace Health Promotion - Physical Activity Evaluation Measures](#)
 - [National Health Foundation Australia - Move More, Sit Less: A toolkit for evaluating physical activity programs in your workplace](#)

Celebrate

- Celebrate your success within and external to the workplace!

Thank you for using the Active Workplace Audit Toolkit!

Employees spend many of their waking hours in the workplace. Providing employees with a workplace culture that embraces active living helps the employee, the employer, and society.

This resource targets physical activity and sedentary behaviour associated with the workplace. If your workplace is ready to explore a comprehensive health approach, please see the [Healthier Together Workplaces](#) website to learn about how to support other health behaviours in the workplace.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Active living: a way of life that values and includes physical activity in everyday living. You can find ways to be active at work, school, home, and during leisure time. Active living means making physical activity part of everyday life whether you are taking the stairs instead of the elevator, participating in a standing or walking meeting, biking to work, yoga at lunch, gardening, taking the kids or dog to the park, walking to the other building at your facility, or swimming laps in the pool.¹

Active transportation: any form of human-powered transportation — walking, cycling, wheeling, in-line skating or skateboarding. There are many ways to engage in active transportation, whether it is walking to the bus stop or cycling to work.²

Community assets and partnerships: include organizations, people, facilities, funding, regulations, etc., from the community that can be leveraged to develop effective solutions for workplace wellness.

Employee awareness and education: knowledge, understanding, feeling, and perceptions that employees have. This can include information about the benefits and risks associated with physical activity and/or sedentary behaviour, the skills needed to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour, and the programs and policies available at the workplace related to physical activity and/or sedentary behaviour.

Management: leadership level who are responsible for direct supervision of employees.

Office-based workplaces: worksites where employees perform the majority of their work in an office setting.

Office layout: arrangement of office space (e.g., desks, printers, meeting rooms, etc.).

Organizational support: support provided through leadership, capacity, and infrastructure. This is reflected in internal organizational structure and operations that impact employee behaviour.

Outdoor environment: features of the built environment surrounding the workplace. This includes the buildings, parks, schools, road systems, and other walking or biking infrastructure.

Physical activity: any movement with a substantial increase in resting energy expenditure that lasts 10 minutes or longer counts as physical activity.^{3,4} The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults engage in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week.⁴ For the purpose of this toolkit, physical activity is any moderate-to-vigorous physical activity lasting 10 minutes or more.

Physical activity monitors: wearable devices that track physical activity (e.g., pedometer, Fitbit, mobile phone).

Role model: a person whose behaviour in a particular role is imitated by others.⁵

Policies: rules or principles in the workplace that guide managers and employees in how to behave at the workplace.

Programs: coordinated strategies and/or activities designed to improve the health and wellness of employees.

Sedentary behaviour: Sitting or lounging activities while awake are considered sedentary behaviour. For the purpose of this toolkit, reductions in sedentary behaviour refers to decreasing the amount of time spent sitting, by replacing it with standing and changes in posture, light forms of physical activity, or bouts of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity that last less than 10 minutes.^{6,7}

Social climate: perceptions of a social setting that are shared by a group of people.⁸

Social support: various types of support or assistance that people receive from others. This includes things people do to demonstrate their care for others and enhances their self-worth, tangible forms of help (e.g., providing a babysitter to watch kids while one exercises), instrumental support which is helping by providing information, or role modeling positive behaviours.

Standing desks: a stand desk (or sit-stand desk) that allows the user to alternate between sitting and standing by being able to lower or raise the work (desk) platform.⁹

Top management: leadership who are responsibility for strategic direction of the organization.

Wellness champion: a key person in the workplace who is committed to workplace wellness and supports the workplace either as part of their job or because they have interest in the area.

Wellness (health) committee: a group of individuals responsible for helping the organization plan, implement, and maintain workplace health initiatives.

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