

## Let's boost our physical activity grades!

The 2021 ParticipACTION Report Card on physical activity for adults pulled together data and assigned grades to various indicators of physical activity. Here are some key findings for older Canadians and the grades we got:

### Total daily steps — C

- ♥ 39% of adults age 65 to 79 take at least 7,500 steps a day. That's the number of daily steps we need to be in the 'physically active lifestyle' category.

### Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity – C

- ♥ 28% of adults 65 to 79 get at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity in a week.

### Balance activities – D-

- ♥ Only 23% of adults 65 and older reported they had done things to challenge or improve their balance in the past week.

### Muscle-strengthening activities – D-

- ♥ Only 25% of adults 18 years or older exercise to strengthen their muscles at least twice a week.

### Let's bring our grades up in 2022

Being physically active helps us to stay independent and mobile. It boosts immune function and reduces the risk of chronic illness. That is why it is so important to do more to meet physical activity guidelines. Then we can reap the many benefits and age well.

Research shows that many factors support getting and staying active. These include:

- ♥ knowing and valuing the benefits of physical activity
- ♥ getting and staying motivated
- ♥ knowing what physical activities are best for you
- ♥ knowing how to do your activities safely and with the most benefit
- ♥ getting more confident.

All of these factors are part of what is called 'physical activity literacy'.<sup>1</sup> It means we have the capacity for a healthy, active lifestyle. It speaks to how we learn to get more active and stay that way as we age.<sup>2</sup>

A great resource to promote physical literacy is "Physical Activity for Older Adults" that tells older Canadians how to engage in safe, successful physical activity. It was developed by our partners: the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology and Exercise is Medicine® Canada.

You can download Physical Activity for Older Adults from Active Aging Canada's website: <https://www.activeagingcanada.ca/participants/get-active/active-agers-in-canada.htm>.

### References

1. Stathokostas L, Gotz A, and Clark, P. *What Exactly is Physical Literacy? Perspectives from older adults and those who work with older adults*. Report prepared for Active Aging Canada. DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.12517.63209. 2020.
2. Jones R, Stathokostas L, Young BW et al. *Development of a physical literacy model for older adults — a consensus process by the collaborative working group on physical literacy for older Canadians*. BMC Geriatrics 18:13. 2018.