



mothers *in* motion

Physical Activity Guidelines for Mothers in Motion

www.caaws.ca/mothersinmotion

Active

Mothers who are active and lead a healthy lifestyle are role models for their families. Their desire to keep moving and be involved in sport and physical activity motivates their children to do the same. Active mothers are a mentor throughout their children's early and teenage development and sometimes even longer.

The top reasons for inactivity for Canadian women, outside of lack of time, include: lack of sports or physical activity partner; the need for more resources within the community; the need for financial assistance to participate in physical activities; and a lack of awareness of local community sports and activities. The goal of Mothers in Motion is to provide a resource that helps break down these barriers and gives women and their children the incentive to get active.

Whether you are a Mom of a newborn or 10 year-old, you can visit Mothers in Motion to gather information on Physical Activity Guidelines, Nutrition, Breast Feeding, Coping Strategies, Exercise & Equipment Safety Advice and Resource Links. The Mothers in Motion web site presents information for three target groups, Mothers of New Babies and Toddlers, Mothers of Preschoolers and Mothers of School-Age Children.

The site offers *Where to Play*, a web-based resource that provides a comprehensive guide to activities, groups, clubs and sport teams available to moms across Canada. *Ask the Registered Dietitian and Exercise Specialist* is a forum on the web site where Mothers can ask questions on nutrition, physical activity and sport. Mothers in Motion aims to provide resources and inspiration for Canadian women and their families in their pursuit of healthy, active lifestyles.

The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS), the organization that initiated the Mothers in Motion site, encourages girls and women to participate and lead in sport and physical activity. A not-for-profit organization, CAAWS offers a number of services, programs and resources to a variety of clients, including sport and physical activity organizations, teachers, coaches, health professionals and recreation leaders. CAAWS works in close co-operation with government and non-government organizations across sectors and jurisdictions on activities and initiatives that advocate for positive change for girls and women in sport and physical activity in Canada.



Canadian Association
for the Advancement
of Women and Sport
and Physical Activity

For more information Contact Us

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Moving Mothers, Motivating Mothers, Mentoring Mothers

Are you ready to get physically active?

If you are a healthy woman with an uncomplicated healthy term pregnancy with a vaginal delivery you can begin to integrate daily physical activities with your baby as soon as you feel up to it. Common sense prevails!

YES	NO	QUESTION
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Before becoming pregnant were you participating in physical activities at least 3 times per week for a minimum of 30 minutes at moderate intensity (intense enough to make you breathe harder, elevate your heart rate, and make you sweat)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throughout your pregnancy were you participating in physical activities at least 3 times per week for a minimum of 30 minutes at moderate intensity (intense enough to make you breathe harder, elevate your heart rate, and make you sweat)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did you have an uncomplicated pregnancy and childbirth (i.e. regular term birth, vaginal delivery, no medical complications)?

If you answered NO to any of these questions then you should talk with your healthcare provider by phone or in person BEFORE you start becoming much more physically active or BEFORE you have a fitness appraisal. After your postnatal examination (6-8 week check-up) your health care provider will give you the okay to begin with activities that are safest for you. You may be able to do any activity you want – as long as you start slowly and build up gradually.

If you answered YES to ALL of these questions than you can begin to include physical activities after giving birth as soon as you feel ready to. Assess your condition and abilities. Be honest and realistic. Begin slowly and build up gradually. Monitor your progress with the included physical activity log.

FREQUENCY	INTENSITY	TIME	TYPE
<p>Most new mothers can do low level physical activities such as walking within a few days of giving birth.</p> <p>If you want to begin an exercise program in addition to your physically active lifestyle, begin with activities 3 times a week and progress to 4-5 times per week over the next few months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start SLOWLY and build up gradually. Listen to your body. If you feel comfortable doing what you're doing, you're on target You can begin to increase the intensity of your physical activity sessions 6 weeks after giving birth – take your heart rate or use the Level of Intensity table to monitor your efforts! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt 15 minutes at a time, even if it means reducing the intensity to a light/weak effort. Rest intervals may be helpful in the first few weeks of a physical activity or exercise program. 	<p>Do continuous large muscle group activities such as walking, cycling, swimming, rowing, skating, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Activities that require sitting or those in the water may only be appropriate AFTER tissues in the pelvic region have healed from giving birth.</p> <p>The activities you choose should match the goals of your lifestyle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If an active lifestyle is new for you it is important that you choose physical activities that are fun and easy for you to do. If you are a recreational or competitive athlete focus on your chosen sport and it's specific needs.

(PAR Med-X for PREGNANCY, Prescription for Aerobic Activity, adapted with permission from the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology)

LEVEL OF INTENSITY

INTENSITY OF EFFORT	WALKING PACE
Nothing	Standing
Very, very weak effort	Very, very easy pace
Very weak effort	Very easy pace (slow walk)
Weak effort	Somewhat easy pace
Moderate effort – can walk and talk and sing a song!	Somewhat hard pace (fast walk)
Somewhat strong effort	Hard pace (fast walk pumping arms back and forth to increase pace)
Strong effort – can walk and talk but can't sing a song	Somewhat harder pace (as fast as you can walk on flat ground, pumping arms back and forth to increase pace)
Stronger effort	Very hard pace (fast walk up a gentle slope)
Very strong effort	Very hard pace (fast walk up a steep hill)
Very, very strong effort – can say only a few words at a time	Very, very hard pace (fast walk up stairs)
Maximum effort	As hard as you can go!



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