

Helping your clients practice healthy movement behaviours during COVID-19

Please note that the information published here is based on current recommendations. However, the situation surrounding COVID-19 is constantly evolving and recommendations may be subject to change. For updated information, please check with your local public health authority.

Canadians are being asked to practice physical distancing to decrease the spread of COVID-19 in their communities. These new restrictions have the potential to affect the physical and mental health of Canadians. Now more than ever is the time to encourage your clients to adhere to healthy lifestyle behaviours, including getting a good night's sleep, engaging in regular exercise, and moderating sedentary time. Engaging in healthy lifestyle behaviours over the whole day helps to [maintain a healthy immune system](#), build a strong immune system, and [combat feelings of depression and anxiety](#) that may come with reduced social interactions and the uncertainty faced during this pandemic.

The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

As you know, CSEP has published 24-Hour Guidelines for the [early years](#), [children and youth](#), and Physical Activity Guidelines for [adults](#) and [older adults](#) that are freely available on CSEP's website. Note that while there are guidelines on sleep and sedentary time for the early years, children, and youth, CSEP is currently in the process of putting together sleep and sedentary behaviour guidelines for adults. The best available evidence recommends that adults should accumulate [7-9 hours of sleep per night](#) and should accumulate no more than [7.5-9 hours of sedentary time per day](#), though less is better.

A few ideas of what adhering to a healthy lifestyle looks like while respecting physical distancing measures

Daily physical activity recommendations (for adults or children) do not have to be met in a single bout.

Encourage clients who are trying to get a full day's worth of work done while at home to take small physical activity breaks throughout the day. This can be done alone or with a partner, roommate, or kids.

Don't forget about the other lifestyle behaviours! Some clients may be comfortable maintaining their physical activity but they don't get adequate sleep or spend long periods being sedentary.

Now is a great time to remind clients about the importance of the **whole day**. Encourage clients to get a consistent bedtime routine with sufficient sleep duration. To help with sleep and anxiety, there are a number of [emotional wellness](#), and [meditation](#) resources available online.

There are also a number of apps available to help reduce sedentary time.

During these somber, uncertain times for which we have little control, we do have control over our behaviours. **Getting active, moderating screen time, and ensuring a consistent bedtime routine with sufficient sleep duration while adhering carefully to public health guidance can help cope, contain, and combat COVID-19.**

Physical distancing can also be practiced outdoors. Unless your client has been told to self-isolate, they should still be encouraged to be active outdoors while respecting physical distancing and good hygiene (e.g., staying 2m apart when passing other people, coughing into elbows, washing hands when back inside).

That said, large groups doing these physical activities, such as walking or cycling groups, is discouraged or may be forbidden. Suggest to your client that they take a walk around the block, or use driveways, backyards, sidewalks, cul-de-sacs, and forests to be physically active.

Note, several cities have closed playgrounds and limited access to neighbourhood parks – obey these decisions. Encourage your client to go to parks that remain accessible, ideally at off-peak times to avoid crowds.

Resistance training can take many forms. It's time to get creative! Consider body weight exercises like push-ups or pulls-ups or find things around the house to lift like milk jugs or laundry baskets.

Share your creative ideas online with fellow certified members using the hashtag #CSEPCEP and #CSEPCPT.

Don't forget to check out [CSEP's Telehealth Guidelines for Certified Members](#). This document outlines key considerations when using technology to connect with clients.