



# *Physical Activity Counts!*

## **Implementation Guide**

Workplace Wellness Program  
York Region Community and Health Services  
[www.york.ca/workplacewellness](http://www.york.ca/workplacewellness)



April 2011

# Physical Activity Counts!

Making physical activity a regular part of the day is good for both the mind and the body. Participation in the **Physical Activity Counts! (PAC) Challenge** is an effective way to incorporate physical activity into the daily routine of your employees. The challenge introduced in this guide serves as a valuable component of a comprehensive physical activity program that may be effectively delivered in a workplace setting. It provides employees with encouragement, incentive, motivation and skill building opportunities to increase their physical activity levels and positively impact their overall health. Workplaces are encouraged to incorporate additional educational activities, develop policies and create supportive environments to sustain the behaviour changes their employees have initiated through this challenge.

## Using PAC to create a workplace challenge

Using the **Physical Activity Counts!** resource package to develop a workplace challenge is a great way to create excitement and engage employees in activities. The resources in the package can be customized to suit the needs and interests of your workplace. The PAC Challenge can be run either as an individual or a team event that can last one week or longer (see sample calendar below).

### Sample: Physical Activity Counts! Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 <b>WEEK 1</b> The Challenge Begins: start keeping score today!	3 Office team sport 7-8 pm	4 Yoga class: 12:30 – 1 pm or walking club (indoor)	5	6 <b>Week 1 ends: total your score and submit to coordinator by end of day</b>	7
8	9 <b>WEEK 2</b> * begin a new score sheet today	10 Office team sport 7-8 pm	11 Yoga class: 12:30 – 1 pm Or walking club (indoor)	12 Prize draw from <u>week 1</u>	13 <b>Week 2 ends: total your score and submit to coordinator by end of day</b>	14 Valentine's Day
15 National Flag of Canada Day	16 Family Day	17 <b>WEEK 3</b> * begin a new score sheet today Office team sport 7-8 pm	18 Yoga class: 12:30 – 1 pm or walking club (indoor)	19 Prize draw from <u>week 2</u>	20 <b>Week 3 ends: total your score and submit to coordinator by end of day</b>	21
22	23 <b>WEEK 4</b> * begin a new score sheet today	24 Office team sport 7-8 pm	25 Yoga class: 12:30 – 1 pm or walking club (indoor)	26 Prize draw from <u>week 3</u>	27 <b>Physical Activity Counts Challenge ends</b> <b>Grand prize draw from all score sheets!</b>	28
March 1	March 2					

A key component of any successful challenge is to market it. Ensure employees are aware of the challenge and offer incentives, if possible, to increase interest and involvement. Incentives can be provided in a variety of ways depending upon budget and challenge style. For example, some workplaces will offer a day off with pay to a winner of a challenge while others will provide a physical prize such as a lunch bag, or gift card. If you are running a team challenge, a paid lunch at a local healthy restaurant could be a wonderful option.

It's important to collect completed score sheets weekly and keep participants motivated with ongoing messaging utilizing email and voicemail or prize draws.

At the end of the challenge it is helpful to have employees complete the evaluation which will provide you with valuable feedback. Please distribute copies of the attached participants' evaluation form to employees and return completed forms to your workplace wellness representative.

York Region's Workplace Wellness team can offer suggestions and support to help make your **PAC Challenge** a success for both you and your employees. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us: Linh Lee, 905-940-1787, ext. 4228, [linh.lee@york.ca](mailto:linh.lee@york.ca) or Belinda Lui, 905-940-1787, ext. 4226, [belinda.lui@york.ca](mailto:belinda.lui@york.ca).

## Your Physical Activity Counts (PAC) package includes the following:

- Instruction documentation
- 8.5" x 11" **PAC** poster
- 2 **PAC** score sheet pads (50 score sheets per pad)
- Business card of your public health nurse
- Select York Region Physical Activity and Active Transportation resources

The appendix includes:

- Sample voicemail messaging
- Sample email messaging
- Sample "Stairway to Health" posters
- List of physical activity websites
- **PAC** evaluation

## Set-up and marketing the PAC Challenge

After reviewing the resource package, attach a pad of score sheets (included in your package) to the **PAC** poster in the designated space. Place the poster in a highly visible area where employees tend to meet or pass on a regular basis such as a lunch room, water cooler, printer or copier. Utilize the voicemail and email messaging to introduce employees to the *Physical Activity Counts! Challenge*, let them know where the poster

can be found and what they should do with the tear off score sheets. Another great idea is to include a single score sheet with pay slips to ensure that all staff are aware of the program.

The pad format of **PAC** makes score sheets readily available without creating pressure or obligation on the part of the employee. An employee may take three or more score sheets at different times before they actually record a point. This is normal and should not be discouraged, as it is part of the behavioural change process.

*(See sample poster below)*



**Physical Activity  
Counts!**

Walking, biking or playing a team sport, taking the stairs or doing active chores around the house are all physical activities – and they all count! So try a variety of activities. Start slowly and build up!

Speak with your workplace wellness representative now and take the

**Physical Activity  
Counts challenge!**

Any way you work it, **regular physical activity counts!**

Research has proven that regular physical activity reduces an individual's overall risk for heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, some cancers, depression and obesity.

Health Canada recommends accumulating 60 minutes of physical activity everyday to stay healthy.

  
York Region Health Connection  
1-800-361-5653 • TTY 1-866-252-9933  
www.york.ca

Adapted with permission from Simcoe County Health Department, IT: Workplace Wellness Program, www.simcoke-co.org/wellness. 1546\_11\_2010

## How to use the score sheets

The score sheet is designed to track physical activity (PA) in blocks of 10 minutes. Employees can participate in a number of physical activities that interest them (some suggestions are listed on the score sheet). The employee is to record one point in each square for each 10 minutes of an activity completed. At the end of the week, each number in a square is counted as 1 point for a possible 6 points in one day and added up to get a weekly point tally. A new score sheet is used each week.

(See sample score sheet below)



**York Region**

**Physical Activity Counts!**

**CHALLENGE**

# SCORE SHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Week #: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark daily activities down columns.

**Record 1 point for every 10 minutes of physical activity.**

Point **GOAL**

for this week

Activities	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

**TOTAL** points

for this week

*Record one point in each box for every 10 minutes of physical activity you complete. The new physical activity guidelines recommend accumulating 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week.*

*Examples of moderate intensity physical activities include:*

- **Easy walking** (5 km/h or about 1,000 steps, in 10 minutes)
- **Active cleaning chores**
- **Biking** (road, trail or stationary)
- **Stair walking**
- **Jogging**
- **Jumping rope or other in-place aerobics**
- **Active yard work** (shovelling, raking, gardening, etc.)
- **Active team sports** (soccer, basketball, squash, curling, etc.)
- **Swimming laps**

For replacement score sheet pads, please contact your York Region Workplace Wellness Team representative (see business card in PAC package).

# Appendix

## 1. Sample voice mail messaging:

*Sample voice mail reminder relating to start date*

### Physical Activity Counts! Challenge

Hi \_\_\_\_\_ (team/office),

This is (your name). I would like to remind everyone that the Physical Activity Counts! Challenge will begin next week starting on \_\_\_\_\_(date) and will end on \_\_\_\_\_(date). This is going to be fun and exciting! There will be prizes awarded for participation and the person who accumulates the highest score will win a grand prize - (example). So grab a score sheet and get ready to record your daily physical activities. Please feel free to contact me at ext. \_\_\_\_\_ if you have any questions or need more information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Coordinator's name

## 2. Sample email messaging:

*Sample email message on 1<sup>st</sup> day of the challenge:*

### Physical Activity Counts! Challenge

Today is the start of the Physical Activity Counts! Challenge!  
Here are some ways to get started:

- Take a walking break instead of a coffee break
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Bicycle to work
- Stretch at your desk

Remember to record your activities on the score sheet.

Every minute counts towards better health!

*Sample email message on subsequent days/weeks of the challenge:*

### Physical Activity Counts! Challenge

It's been a few days/weeks since the Physical Activity Counts! Challenge started. I hope everyone is doing well and enjoying the variety of physical activities you have been doing.

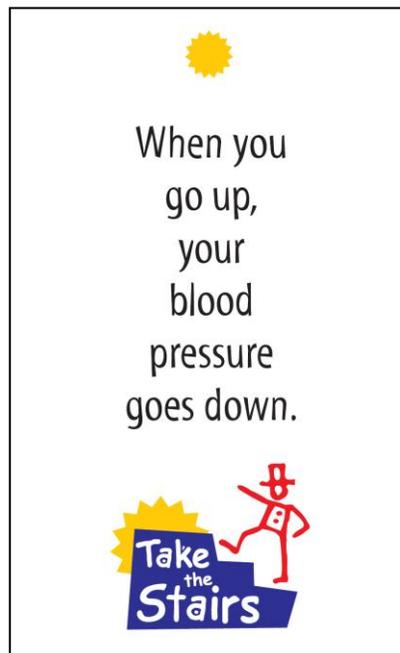
Here are some tips to stay motivated:

- Set realistic short term goals to help you achieve success
- Celebrate your achievements and reward yourself
- Be active with a buddy or colleague
- Select different types of physical activities such as walking, swimming, dancing or team sports
- Be flexible - if you miss a day or two, get back on track as soon as possible

Be active, be fit, and win the challenge!

### 3. Sample posters to encourage stair walking:

*Place posters at elevators and stairwells:*



For more posters, visit:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sth-evs/english/posters-eng.php>

## 4. Physical Activity Websites

### **Active 2010**

Provincial comprehensive strategy to increase participation in sport and physical activity throughout Ontario.

[www.active2010.ca](http://www.active2010.ca)

### **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety**

Provides information, tools and resources to help promote a healthy workplace.

[www.ccohs.ca/healthyworkplaces/practitioners.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/healthyworkplaces/practitioners.html)

### **Health Canada - Healthy Living - Physical Activity**

Includes information, resources and links on physical activity.

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/physactiv/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/physactiv/index-eng.php)

### **Hike Ontario**

Source of province-wide information and resources about hiking, walking and pedestrian based trail development and management in Ontario.

[www.hikeontario.com](http://www.hikeontario.com)

### **Public Health Agency of Canada- Active Living at Work**

Provides information on the benefits of being active in the workplace, summarizes the research that has been done, information on what works and how to get started.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/work/index.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/work/index.html)

### **Public Health Agency of Canada - Canada's Physical Activity Guides to Healthy Active Living**

A guide to help you make wise choices about physical activity - choices that will improve your health, help prevent disease and allow you to get the most out of life.

[www.paguide.com](http://www.paguide.com)

### **Smart Commute**

Helps local employers and commuters to explore different commuting choices like carpooling, teleworking, transit, cycling, walking or flexible work hours. The goal of Smart Commute is to help make commuting easier, healthier and more enjoyable.

[www.smartcommute.ca/](http://www.smartcommute.ca/)

### **Summer Active/Winter Active**

Encourage Canadians to adopt healthier lifestyles. Search for events in your community and record your participation and/or register your workplace challenge. Download information on how to lead a healthier lifestyle.

[www.summeractive.ca/en/default.aspx](http://www.summeractive.ca/en/default.aspx)

**World Health Organization - Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health**

Includes information sheets on the benefits and myths of physical activity as well as best practice documentation.

[www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/pa/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/pa/en/index.html)

**York Region – Workplace Wellness Program**

Offers many resources to help you put together a personalized comprehensive program for your company.

[www.york.ca/workplacewellness](http://www.york.ca/workplacewellness)

## 5. Evaluation



### Physical Activity Counts! Challenge Evaluation

In order to provide you with programs and resources that meet your needs, we need to hear from you. Please respond to the questions below to provide us with this valuable information.

1. Did the **Physical Activity Counts! Challenge** motivates you to be more physically active?

Yes       No       Other \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Did the **Physical Activity Counts! Challenge** poster grab your immediate attention (graphics, layout, colors, font)?

Yes       No

If no, please comment:

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3. Were the score sheets simple and easy to use?

Yes       No

If no, please explain:

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4. Prior to the **Physical Activity Counts! Challenge**, how often did you spend at least 30 minutes being physically active?

Never       1 or 2 times a week  
 Less than once a week       3 to 5 times a week

5. What I enjoyed most about the **Physical Activity Counts! Challenge**:

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6. Suggestions to improve the **Physical Activity Counts! Challenge**:

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7. After the **Physical Activity Counts! Challenge**, do you plan to continue being active for at least 30 minutes a day?

Yes       No       Unsure

8. Additional comments:

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**Thank you for your participation!**