

# Physical Activity and Productivity

FOR LEADERS



Do you sometimes feel unable to focus at work or feel unmotivated to finish a task? Do you notice this with your 4-H club members too?

There may be lots of reasons for this, one of which is often a lack of physical exercise. Regular physical activity can improve your brain function, and help you and your 4-H'ers be more productive!

As we become physically active, the hippocampus – the part of our brain responsible for learning and memory – gets fitter with us.<sup>1</sup> When this happens, it improves the ability to:



## Think

the more you sweat, the easier it will be to think clearly, focus and even problem-solve!<sup>2</sup>



## Create

it's proven that physical activity is one way to fire-up the right side of our brain, which is responsible for enhanced creativity.<sup>3</sup>



## Focus

the brain works harder to resist distractions when we are physically active, by releasing a protein which acts as a booster to our concentration and memory.



## Learn

physical activity can help to improve our long-term memory.<sup>4</sup> It also enhances our potential to be the best learner we can be.



## Other benefits of physical activity include:

- ✓ more energy<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ better organization<sup>7</sup>
- ✓ less stress<sup>6</sup>
- ✓ better retention and recall of information

## Ideas for adding more physical activity into your routine:

- ✓ Walk or bike to and from work or your 4-H meeting.
- ✓ Carry a ball or a yoga mat around and use it in your free time.
- ✓ Join a team sport.
- ✓ Join your 4-H members in a pick-up game.
- ✓ Go on a run with a friend.
- ✓ Plan a dance party.
- ✓ Help out with household chores.
- ✓ Get outdoors - we move more (and at higher intensities) and engage in less sedentary behaviours when we're outside.
- ✓ Walk the family pet (or a neighbour's!).

### GROUP ACTIVITY

Have each 4-H member brainstorm a list of ways they already are getting active, and rank these activities from most to least favourite. Have them share their top three activities, and if one or two ideas pop out, consider doing that activity as a group.

The **Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines** for Adults recommend that adults 18 to 64 years get at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a week.<sup>8</sup> That's less than 30 minutes a day!

Children and youth (5 to 17 years) are recommended to get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day.<sup>9</sup> Physical activity doesn't need to occur all at once - it can be broken down into two 30-minute sessions or even six 10-minute sessions.



For more information, check out the  
**Think Better, Create Better, Focus Better and Learn Better** pages at  
**participACTION.com**



4-H Canada has partnered with ParticipACTION to develop this resource  
[participACTION.com](http://participACTION.com)



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