



OPINION LETTER

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WHETHER WORKING FROM HOME, BACK AT THE OFFICE OR AT SCHOOL, NEW KINESIOLOGY GUIDELINES CAN HELP CANADIANS MAINTAIN OPTIMAL HEALTH THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

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The confinement restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly changed our lifestyles and as a result Canadians face many challenges. How we work, daily living, and physical activities all changed, and our capabilities and abilities to successfully accomplish these activities safely also changed. As we continue through the pandemic and COVID-19 restrictions are gradually lifted, we need to consider how we can safely return to our more active previous lives to maintain optimal health. Being physically active is more important than ever as recent research suggests that not meeting physical activity guidelines on a regular basis may increase the risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes.

To help, the Canadian Kinesiology Alliance has created the *MOVING FORWARD WITH COVID-19 - KINESIOLOGY GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING OPTIMAL HEALTH*. These practical recommendations focus on six fields of practice: ergonomics, cardiorespiratory health, functional abilities, weight gain and obesity, safe return to sport, and cognitive capacities including mental health. With these recommendations, Kinesiologists want to help Canadians return to a more active lifestyle safely.

For example, as we return to work or to school, we now need to consider many workstation challenges as these began last year and are still present today. We all thought this situation was temporary, however many are still working from less-than-ideal workstations at home, leading to poor posture, increased pain and decreased focus. According to Statistics Canada, an inadequate physical workspace was a barrier to productivity for one in ten Canadians working from home.

For others, the shift to in-person work again may be difficult. Getting back to standing for longer periods of time or lifting more, will have both physical and mental impacts. Many Canadians may require accommodations or adjustments and solutions.

Since better ergonomics can lead to higher productivity, increased product quality, improved engagement and better safety culture, everyone can benefit from these Kinesiology Guidelines. Unfortunately, not everyone can have easy access to a Kinesiologist.

In this time of continued change, recovery and a safe return to work or school are paramount for all Canadians. Since prevention and rehabilitation done by Kinesiologists are key to keep Canadians active, healthy and productive, we can only hope that one day their support will be as universal as seeing your family doctor.

The CKA also longs for the day when prevention will be valued by governments as an investment and offer measures such as helping employers provide ergonomic support when employees are working from home or reducing financial barriers to active living.

Kinesiologists across Canada makes the following recommends to increase physical activity at work (home or office:

- Extend the fitness tax credit to adults: a non-refundable tax credit has been available for eligible fitness expenses paid to register a child in a prescribed program of physical activity – make it available for adults;
- Include fitness memberships and services as a medical cost on personal taxes: this medical tax deduction would help Canadians as more than 80 percent do not get the recommended 150-minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise weekly
- Eliminating sales taxes on kinesiology services, as they are solutions to many health conditions like any services by other healthcare providers.
- Provide incentive to Corporations that:
 - Create a worksite environment that promotes physical activity
 - Provide on-site gyms or other physical activity facilities
 - Allow flexible work time or breaks for participation in physical activity
 - Promote “active transport” (bicycling or walking to work), such as by offering bicycle storage
 - Provide showers and/or changing facilities

As human movement experts who can help Canadians through all phases of life, Kinesiologists can provide scientific advice and physical activity treatments that improve recovery, health and well-being. They can help workers set up workstations, recommend set-ups and provide the proper tools and training to minimize overuse injuries, and improve safety and productivity. They can also propose ways to become more active and break the sedentary state that many are experiencing because of the pandemic restrictions.

To see all the Kinesiology Guidelines, visit cka.ca.