

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: YOUR BEST ALLY DURING THE PANDEMIC TO CONTROL ANXIETY AND SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE LEADING TO WEIGHT GAIN

As part of the 2020 National Kinesiology Week, Kinesiologists want to help Canadians develop strategies to *move better, live better* for their mental and physical health.

OTTAWA, November 23, 2020 – As part of the **2020 National Kinesiology Week, presented by Hexfit** taking place from November 23 to 29, the **Canadian Kinesiology Alliance** is reminding Canadians that staying physically active is more important than ever during this COVID-19 pandemic. As many Canadians have experienced, the first wave took everyone by surprise and for many led to increased stress, anxiety, depression, sedentary lifestyle and weight gain. Knowing that happiness can improve the immune system and that obesity is one of the main factors leading to complications related to the corona virus, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is key to surviving this pandemic, and kinesiologists can help support both physical and mental health.

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

In these stressful times, many are tempted to fall into old patterns to relieve anxiety such as overeating, bingeing on television series, or increasing use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs. All of these represent attempts to take your mind off your worries, or in some instinctual way to alter the brain chemistry. However, there is one strategy for reducing stress and improving mood that also yields positive long-term effects more conducive to happiness: physical activity. However, data shows that half of Canadians affected by a mood or anxiety disorder do not exercise on a regular basis¹.

People who walk, run, bike or engage in some other form of physical activity, generally feel happier and less anxious. In addition to increased energy, physically active people get a sense of accomplishment in meeting personal fitness goals and pride in improved physical appearance produced by hours in training. Moreover, getting outdoors to train on a nice day is also known to stimulate the mind.

“Knowing the intense emotions we are experiencing in time of the COVID-19, we urge Canadians to put in place strategies to make time for physical activities in their daily routine,, mentions the president of the Canadian Kinesiology Alliance, Mrs. Kathie Sharkey RKin. Exercise is accessible to everyone and has health benefits that go beyond mental health.”

CONTROLLING WEIGHT GAIN

A recent study from the United Kingdom demonstrated that about a third of people surveyed had gain weight during the first confinement², and many indicators show that Canadians are probably following in the same path. This should be a major concern as on top of putting people at heightened risk for type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease, hypertension, and a number of other health issues. But obesity is among the underlying conditions that can put people at a higher risk of developing a more severe case of COVID-19.³

CAN EXERCISE HELP?

Testing and vaccines are not in our control. How we eat, how we move, and how we easily fall back to old personal habits, is. However, with the current coronavirus pandemic comes increased challenges to maintaining a

¹ www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/reports-publications/health-promotion-chronic-disease-prevention-canada-research-policy-practice/vol-37-no-5-2017/self-management-mood-anxiety-disorders-physical-activity-exercise.html

² covid.joinzoe.com/post/lockdown-weight-gain

³ www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html

physically active lifestyle. Now that winter is coming and that many gyms will be less accessible across the country, many are concerned that their level of physical activity will drop significantly.

“Since moderate-intensity physical activity is associated with better immune health, lower levels of anxiety and weight control, kinesiologists can play a key role in supporting their clients in these stressful times, adds Mrs. Sharkey. They can also help develop a personalised plan that will take into consideration public health restrictions linked to COVID-19.”

CHALLENGE YOUR BODY AND YOUR BRAIN

The *2020 National Kinesiology Week* is the perfect time to be active and to discover how a kinesiologist can help:

- Participate in the [eMentalFitChallenge](#) to find mental health strategies through physical activity;
- Take part in the [MoveBetterChallenge!](#) Log your exercise minutes and/or kilometres to be part of a national cumulative challenge;
- Enter our contests to have a chance to win amazing prizes;
- Share the “*A day in the life of a Kin*” posts series on Facebook ([@CdnKinesiology](#)) to know what a Kinesiologist does for clients and how they can help you;
- Follow the daily webinars broadcast on Facebook ([@CdnKinesiology](#)) where you will find answers to “*All you wanted to know about kinesiology*” and how to increase their physical activity level;
- Find events happening near you by visiting www.nationalkinesiologyweek.ca. Kinesiologists in each province are also organizing webinars and other activities.

TAKE ON WAYS TO STAY ACTIVE

- Fit in 2, 5, 10 or 20 minutes of activity in your schedule. Every active minute counts!
- Use telecommuting to your advantage by converting travel time into a brisk walk in your neighborhood.
- Use interval training to get an effective workout when you are short on time.
- Follow an exercise or strength training video or download an app.
- When watching TV, get up during every commercial to climb stairs or do an active chore.
- Dance to your favourite music when cleaning dishes or play a game of Just Dance with your family.
- Take a walk, instead of your car, when running errands close to home.
- Ask a kinesiologist to develop a program specifically designed to fit your lifestyle and interests. You can start with a simple conversation to see how they can help. If you decide to engage with a program, know that most insurance companies will cover your health investment.

ABOUT THE CANADIAN KINESIOLOGY ALLIANCE

Kinesiologists are human movement specialists. As trained health professionals, kinesiologists apply the science of exercise and movement to promote health and well-being; prevent, manage and rehabilitate chronic conditions; restore function and optimize human performance in the workplace, clinical settings, sport and fitness. They work with people of all ages and with physical abilities, in many settings, to improve the quality of life by often using interventions that include physical activity.

The Canadian Kinesiology Alliance (CKA) is a non-profit corporation that advocates and promotes the advancement of the profession of kinesiology in Canada. The CKA strives to be recognized as the unifying voice for the profession of kinesiology in Canada, and to have a positive impact on Canadians. On a national level, the CKA represents nine provincial kinesiology associations (PKAs) that are member associations and over 4,300 affiliated kinesiologists. The CKA establishes and promotes the standards of the profession across Canada.

To find a kinesiologist, visit www.cka.ca.

To schedule an interview or for more information, contact :
Sophie Allard, APR, AH!COM at 514-499-3030, ext. 771 or sa@ahcom.ca.