



## RPAW Active Workplace News

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Many of us spend most of our waking hours sitting in front of a computer at work. It has never been easier to lead a sedentary lifestyle and to eat poorly. Chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer are the leading cause of death and disability in Canada. Obesity among Canadian adults increased from 9.7% in the 1970's to almost 15% in 1998 (Health Canada 2005).

### \$ Employees Paid to Walk to Work \$

Even automakers have caught wind of this "growing" trend in body size: seats in some vehicles now have longer rails to slide on, allowing for more space between driver's bellies and the steering wheel.

An extreme example of what some workplaces are doing to promote both physical and environmental health, is the auto manufacturer Mazda. They have announced a plan to pay up to \$14.50 per month to employees in their Japanese plants who walk to work. Employees living more than 2 kilometres from the workplace must walk 4 or more kilometres round-trip on 15 or more workdays per month.



#### Workplace Health Links

[Business Case for Active Living](#)

[Alberta Centre for Active Living](#)

[Canadian Council for Health and Active Living at Work](#)

**Active Edmonton is a new promotional strategy that is trying to make Edmonton Canada's most active city. Their website, [www.activedmonton.ca](http://www.activedmonton.ca) is full of information and resources and is worth a visit.**

Since we're in the throws of winter here in the Yukon, some of Active Edmonton's tips on how to keep you "in motion" may come in pretty handy right about now!!

1. Skiing is a great winter activity. However, skiers should dress to prevent frostbite, be sure boots are not too tight, dress in layers, wear a hat and wear a scarf or neck warmer to protect your face. Sunglasses or goggles with UV protection will guard against the reflection of the sun off the snow. Don't forget to wear sunscreen to protect against sunburns, even in the winter!
2. When skiing or snowboarding, put on two pairs of socks. They will rub together, taking the friction away from your foot so you don't get blisters. Plus your toes will stay toasty warm! This will help you stay on the slopes longer.
3. Winter is a busy time for families. Kids are back to school and activities have started up again. Try to set aside some "family time. Have you ever tried an activity jar? Have everyone in the family jot down a few ideas of activities to do as a family. Place the ideas into the jar and take turns drawing an activity to do for "family time".

4. Encourage your children to be active after school and before dinner, especially in the winter months when the weather will get too cold after dark. You want to ensure that your children's play environment is a safe one!
5. It's time to make a fresh start and put your resolutions for a healthier lifestyle into action! Be realistic with your goals and make sure your plan will fit into your schedule and that you don't have to make too many adjustments to fit into your life. Set short term goals at first so that you can experience success!
6. When "in motion" this winter, keep dry! When being active outdoors, perspiring heavily may give you a chill in the winter. Get out of wet or damp clothing as quickly as you can and wear clothing that is wind resistant and or made of fabrics that wick water away from the skin.
7. It's always lots of fun to ski, walk, skate, snowshoe, cross country ski or snowboard with other people. However, if you do go out alone, tell someone where you expect to be. Exposure to the cold can be dangerous. It is always a good idea to keep some emergency supplies with you in a pocket or a waist pouch.
8. Get out and build a snow fort with friends and family. Challenge your group to build the highest wall, the strongest fort or the "coolest" (brrrr). Keep a lookout for flying snowballs! For safety reasons, remind children to keep off the roof of the fort and discourage tunnels.
9. Shovelling is a great winter activity! However, it can cause strain in the muscles between the shoulders, lower back and legs. To prevent those muscles from aching afterwards, do some warm up stretches before you grab the shovel. When you do shovel, bend with your knees letting the muscles in your arms and legs do the work, not your back. Avoid sudden twisting and turning movements and remember to stop if you feel any pain.
10. Don't let temporary illness stop your activity level permanently. If you have a cold or the flu, you just can't exercise as hard as you usually do. But do return to exercise when you are ready. Give your body time to recover from your bout of illness by starting slow. Exercise for two days at a lower intensity for each day you were sick. For example, if you were sick for 3 days you need to make your activities easier for the first 6 days back.
11. Along with winter comes inactivity and excessive eating. Two thirds of Canadians aged 25-55 are not active enough to meet the recommended guidelines set by Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Healthy Active Living. So what are you waiting for, get up and get active!
12. Don't let the winter weather stop you from walking outdoors. Walking on ice gets tricky and you may need to make a few changes to the way you walk. When stepping down, put your entire foot down to gain full foot traction, you may also want to shorten your stride to help you get the most traction. With these few small changes, you can still enjoy walking outside this winter.

13. Frostbite is a serious threat from exposure to cold weather. Frostbite occurs when you lose so much heat that the water in the tissues close to your skin freeze. Signs and symptoms to take note of are: tissue that is waxy, white, numb, tingly and cold. Common sites for frostbite include the ears, face, fingers and toes. So make sure you bundle up before heading outside this winter.

14. With outdoor winter fun comes the potential danger of exposure to cold and the risk of hypothermia. Hypothermia is a condition where the core body temperature falls below 37°C. Look for numbness in the hands and feet and slight shivering. If not removed from the cold and warmed, a person will develop more intense shivering, slurred speech, drowsiness and even a feeling of exhaustion.

15. To protect yourself from hypothermia, it's important to take a few precautions. Beware of the wind; if you are walking outdoors, plan a route so that the wind is at your back near the end of your walk. When your activity is finished, come in from the cold and change into dry clothing as soon as possible. You may also want to pack a thermos with something warm to drink along the way.

16. Dress for the weather. Wear layers of comfortable clothing that won't restrict movement. Soft fabrics like breathable nylon are best. Wool's great for cold weather. Wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen on bright days.

17. Active indoor chores provide a great opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. You get a moderate workout and the house gets clean. Do indoor chores that let you move your arms and legs

such as window washing, tub scrubbing, vacuuming or re-organising your closet.

18. Keep your water bottles from freezing in your pack by putting them in a wool sock or insulated bottle cover (which you can make by taping cell foam around the bottle). Water mixed with something such as Gatorade, lemonade, etc will freeze at a lower temperature than plain water.

19. Drinking enough water is critically important. REMEMBER: When you are outside in the cold and breathing hard, you lose a lot of your body's water through your breath and you may not always get the obvious signs of perspiring, but you are. An average person exercising in dry cold needs at least one quart of water per hour to avoid dehydrating.



For more ideas on how to be active in the Yukon this winter visit [www.rpay.org](http://www.rpay.org) or call our Active Living Coordinator at 668-2328.