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Canadians know and accept the need to move more, so why don’t they?

The ParticipACTION Pulse Report powered by MEC gauges what physical activity means to Canadians to help better understand their inactivity

TORONTO (ONTARIO) April 11, 2018 – According to the ParticipACTION Pulse Report powered by MEC, released today, Canadians know physical inactivity is a big problem that is putting their health at risk. In fact, 83 per cent of them rate it as the most serious health issue facing society – even worse than tobacco and alcohol use. Furthermore, they take responsibility for the issue (84 per cent), and they believe physical activity is worth the effort (86 per cent) and need more of it (87 per cent). So, why are one in eight Canadians still not active enough? This new report takes a “pulse” on Canadians’ perceptions of physical activity to help better understand the inactivity problem.

“The findings tell us that Canadians are getting the message: they know they need to move more, and they feel a personal responsibility to do so,” said Elio Antunes, President and CEO of ParticipACTION. “The fact that they take responsibility and enjoy being active is an important step to getting us moving more.”

Three quarters (74 per cent) of Canadians enjoy being physically active. Although more than half (57 per cent) say they need to psych themselves up to get moving, they don’t feel like being more physically active is unattainable (66 per cent). In addition, a large majority of them (88 per cent) believe that individuals are responsible for solving the physical inactivity problem in Canada, more so than other factors beyond an individual’s control, such as parents (75 per cent), schools (52 per cent) or government (24 per cent).

“Although there’s no doubt individuals must take responsibility for their health, we know that physical inactivity is a complex issue better understood in a broader context,” says Antunes. “People ultimately must make the active choice, but collectively as a society, we must make that choice easier. With support from governments, schools and workplaces, there is a higher likelihood of success. It’s time to do more than just tell Canadians to get active because they already know that. We need to start a movement to make physical activity the daily norm in Canada.”

In fact, the Pulse Report found Canadians largely support public policy to encourage physical activity. For example, there needs to be: accessible spaces that support active living and transportation, increased training of physical education specialists, and further program funding that encourages sports participation and supports more active workplaces.

“Day in, day out at MEC we see the mental and physical benefits that come from leading an active lifestyle and being outdoors,” said MEC CEO David Labistour. “There are so many fun and approachable activities for people to do to get off the couch and moving. We wholeheartedly agree with ParticipACTION – the not-for-profit, public and private sectors need to come together to give Canadians the opportunities to move more, and support them to do it.”

Other findings from the ParticipACTION Pulse Report powered by MEC include:

- 61 per cent said they wouldn’t need to change very much to be more active
- 60 per cent think that they have enough time to be physically active
- 88 per cent said they wouldn’t need a gym membership or to be thin (85 per cent) to be physically active
- 82 per cent think the only way to be physically active is for it to become a habit
“We are happy to support ParticipACTION in their efforts to better understand how Canadians feel and think about physical activity,” said Jacqueline Campbell, Director of Public Affairs at Maru/Matchbox. “Based on the results we are seeing from the data we collected via our premier national panel, we know that a majority of Canadians agree that the only way to be physically active is for it to become a habit, and the evidence from this report supports the fact Canadians are primed to move more.”

To download the ParticipACTION Pulse Report powered by MEC, please visit: ParticipACTION.com/pulsereport

About the ParticipACTION Pulse Report powered by MEC survey
ParticipACTION partnered with Maru/Matchbox to conduct an online survey among a total of 2,519 adults from January 19 to 24, 2018. To qualify for this survey, respondents had to be 18 years of age or older and reside in Canada.

About ParticipACTION
ParticipACTION is a national non-profit organization that helps Canadians sit less and move more. Originally established in 1971, ParticipACTION works with its partners, which include sport, physical activity, recreation organizations, government and corporate sponsors, to make physical activity a vital part of everyday life. ParticipACTION is generously supported by the Government of Canada. For more information, please visit www.participACTION.com.

About MEC
MEC (Mountain Equipment Co-op) is Canada’s go-to place for outdoor gear, know-how and inspiration. Combining high-quality apparel and equipment with expert advice and firsthand experience, MEC supports a wide range of activities including camping, snowsports, watersports, cycling, climbing, hiking, running, yoga and travel. Established in 1971, MEC is Canada’s largest consumer co-operative with more than 4.5 million members across the country. A lifetime membership is available for $5. A strong backer of community initiatives, MEC has invested $37 million and counting into non-profit organizations that support outdoor recreation and conservation. For more information, visit www.mec.ca, follow @mec or visit one of our 22 stores nationwide.

About MARU/Matchbox
Maru/Matchbox has been pushing the boundaries of customer intelligence since 2000, when they began disrupting the market research industry as the research arm of Vision Critical. Since then, their insight communities have broken new ground, adding depth and richness to clients’ understanding of what motivates their customers and influences their markets. Now, as part of the Maru Group, they operate many of the hundreds of insight communities that they implemented then, while also providing sector-specific consulting and research and in-depth qualitative insights.

Maru/Matchbox’s Public Affairs practice provides organizations with the tools and insights to connect with the people that matter most so clients can build and maintain a competitive advantage. They partner with not-for-profits, member associations, government agencies, and public-facing organizations to develop holistic strategies to ensure that stakeholders are included in the strategic decision-making process.

Maru/Matchbox’s online panel is the premier Canadian online panel with many features that differentiate it from traditional online access panels. Consisting of over 150,000 Canadians, it is well represented across numerous demographics and consumer attributes.
For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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