

Winter
Active!

**A Warm
Winter's WELCOME!**





A Warm Winter's Welcome!

As they say in the Canadian north, Chimo¹!

Canadians know all about cold weather. Most live through snow, sleet, slush and rain, not to mention cold temperatures, for a good portion of the year. We have become a hardy lot. As a result, many Canadians remain physically active throughout the year.

In fact, many Canadians look forward to the changing seasons. They see winter not as an inconvenience, but as an opportunity for varied and exciting physical activities. However, being active in the cold has its own unique challenges. But with respect for the environment, proper knowledge about winter activities and how to dress for them, most people of "the great white north" can enjoy the benefits of being active in winter, both outdoors and indoors.

When participating in physical activity, whether indoors or outside, safety is an important issue at any time, but especially during winter. Because GET WINTERACTIVE! does not include information about safety, you're encouraged to seek out other safety information to ensure your winter activities and events are safe and enjoyable for everyone.

¹ Chimo is an Inuit word which over time has come to be a greeting. It originated as a way the Inuit greeted the Hudson Bay Traders.

Introducing GET WINTERACTIVE! Tips, Tools and Cool Ideas for Leaders

Why a leader's resource about physical activity in winter? Because Active Living Canada works on behalf of the active living community in Canada. Part of that responsibility includes sharing information to help leaders, particularly community leaders, to increase opportunities for individual Canadians to become more physically active. And because winter in Canada poses unique challenges, leaders like you said they wanted help in motivating Canadians to be active in winter.

GET WINTERACTIVE! is the result. It's packed with "tried and tested" program ideas, along with contact information and practical tools collected from your colleagues across Canada. It was developed based on the results of a comprehensive survey of the active living community. This cross-Canada research

discovered that the most important thing that community leaders want and need is a selection of winter physical activity programs and event ideas created and used by other leaders, along with a contact name and telephone number for follow-up.

But that's not the only way GET WINTERACTIVE! can help. One of the biggest challenges for program leaders is how to encourage inactive people to join in. This is especially true during winter, a season when some Canadians find it difficult to get outside and get moving. GET WINTERACTIVE! offers ideas and examples from leaders, for leaders, that can help you to reach this group.

In short, GET WINTERACTIVE! contains practical information and ideas to help you motivate community members to become more active in winter.





Who Will Use GET WINTERACTIVE?

Fitness leaders, parks and recreation leaders, employers, program coordinators, school administrators, community health workers, coaches, teachers, parents, student leaders, youth volunteers; anyone whose interest or responsibility includes providing opportunities for community members to be more active in winter - at home, work, school, during leisure or cultural activities, or as part of recreation programs in your community or neighbourhood. Whatever the setting in which you promote and encourage physical activity in winter, you and your community residents, employees, students, club members or friends will benefit by the tips, tools and ideas contained in GET WINTERACTIVE!

What's Inside GET WINTERACTIVE!:

1. HELPFUL RECOMMENDATIONS, to consider when planning winter physical activity projects and events.

2. COOL IDEAS, which are winter activity examples from across Canada; programs, events and games submitted by community leaders who work to promote physical activity in different sectors.

Cool Ideas include:

'Long and short stories' about creative outdoor and indoor winter activities and events that leaders have used to encourage physical activity in winter, including contact information for follow-up;

'Carnival Capers' about activities which can be included in carnivals or other winter events comprised of more than one activity;

'Games People Play' including descriptions of outdoor and indoor winter games and activities; and

'Quick Thaws' which are simple one-line ideas to spark your imagination and help create your own winter activities.

3. RESOURCES AND CONTACTS, provides a list of additional winter-related resources, as well as people, agencies, organizations and government departments to contact for more information about local, regional or national winter programs.

4. WINTERACTIVE TOOLS, including reproducible information for use as handouts when promoting winter activity or events.

Tools include:

'Wintery one-liners' to use on posters, as event names or in your promotions;

'A guide' to cold weather dressing;

'Handouts' about hypothermia, frostbite and wind-chill;

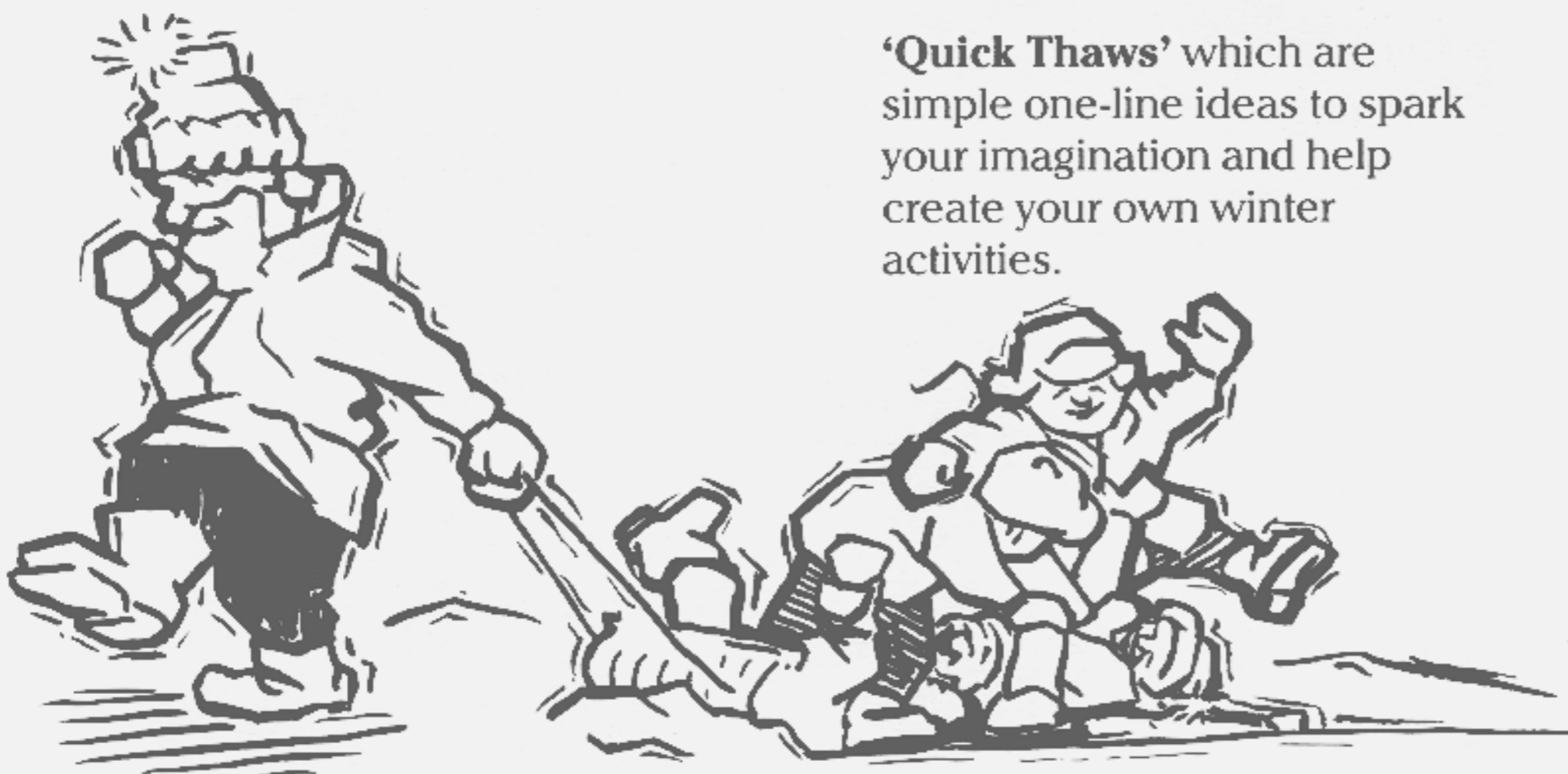
'Fun winter word games' to copy or modify for your own use;

'Information' on creating a WINTERACTIVE photo contest;

'A poster/flyer template' for use with your specific promotions;

'Ice Cubes' a place for you to record your own COOL IDEAS;

'Camera Ready' GET WINTERACTIVE! and Active Living logos and winter clip art graphics for you to cut and paste into other resources.



Promoting Active Living in Winter, Too!

What Is Active Living?

A growing number of Canadians are beginning to recognize and use the term “active living.” They’re beginning to understand what active living means to them, as well as to leaders and communities.

Active living is a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily life.

This means that we try to incorporate physical activity into the things we do each day. Like taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Or walking the kids to school, instead of taking the car. How about ice skating, cross country skiing and snowshoeing in winter? Making angels in the snow with your friends or family, or shoveling

your walk and the neighbour’s, too! All of these examples of active living can be fun, not to mention good for your health!

Active living is catching on. It helps create important social networks. It encourages all people to be active, regardless of age, gender, ability, education or cultural background. What’s more, it doesn’t demand that you participate in any one activity. It recognizes the value of all forms of physical activity, such as walking in the snow to more vigorous activity, like cross-country skiing. People decide for themselves what activities they like best and how to integrate these into daily life.

In short, active living is a concept for everyone, anytime during the year. And a growing number of leaders, like you, have been successful at applying the concept in their communities.

The Benefits of Active Living

Most people know that active living can deliver benefits to our physical health. But did you know that the benefits of an active lifestyle go well beyond physical well-being to include mental, social and spiritual benefits, as well? In fact, mounting scientific and medical research shows that people of all ages can improve the quality of their lives through regular, moderate physical activity, regardless of the season! Here are some of the key benefits you can expect from active living:

- Physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general, and of coronary heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer and diabetes in particular.
- Physical activity reduces anxiety, depression and stress.



A
CTIVE LIVING®

- Participation in physical activity encourages social interaction, builds friendships and promotes fellowship.
- Physical activity improves overall well-being and quality of life.

You don't have to participate in vigorous physical activity to improve health. Moderate physical activity, such as a brisk walk, on most, if not all, days of the week can help improve your health. But the more activity, the better!

Accumulating short bouts of physical activity - say, three, ten minute bouts - over the course of the day can deliver health benefits similar to one thirty minute session. Besides, a little is better than none at all!

The Community Benefits From Active Living, Too!

Active living is social and doesn't exclude anyone. It's a concept that leaders working in different settings find valuable. They use it to create healthy, active neighbourhoods, workplaces, schools, etc. Below is a list of reasons submitted by leaders that describe how and why they use active living.

- Active living can be used as an entry point to reach out and develop partnerships with other sectors. Health, justice, housing, transportation, urban planning and other sectors share a common goal to improve the health and quality of life of Canadians.
- Active living builds on what people and communities are already doing. The growing emphasis on healthy lifestyles

and the importance of moderate physical activity, such as walking, in maintaining good health makes active living attractive.

- Active living is a broader perspective on physical activity. In other words, it's not just achieving a high level of fitness; it includes all forms of physical activity. For leaders, active living presents an opportunity to reach a greater number of people, especially those who did not "buy into" the fitness message of the 1970's and 1980's.
- Active living can help leaders and organizations to do more with less financial resources. Active living involves self-directed activities that do not, necessarily, require a lot of money or facilities.
- Active living brings community members together, promotes fellowship, helps maintain cultural traditions, fosters goodwill and builds community spirit.
- Active living can help address other important issues facing the community; social isolation, youth crime, the need to reach out to disadvantaged groups and increased tourism for example.
- Most importantly, active living is fun. It's a positive behaviour that one chooses to add to one's lifestyle.



participation in more active pursuits, such as alpine and cross-country skiing.

In short, Canadians are realizing how easy it can be to integrate physical activity into daily life, whatever the season. However, people face different barriers to physical activity in winter. As a result, we are less active in winter than during other seasons. And that's one reason why GET WINTERACTIVE! was created - because leaders like you are looking for unique and innovative programs and activities designed to help people overcome winter's barriers. GET WINTERACTIVE! helps share some of those unique ideas.

Reaching The Inactive: Tips and Examples From Leaders

TIPS Although participation in physical activity has increased, thirty-five percent of Canadians are still either sedentary or just somewhat

active. Inactivity is spread across all segments of the population. So, reaching the inactive in your community, especially in winter, can be a challenge.

Unfortunately, there are no magic answers. However, we found that leaders like you have some great ideas! As part of our effort to develop GET WINTERACTIVE!, it became clear that there are four common things to consider when planning winter programs, activities and events that can help to reach inactive people.

1. Support from family, friends and peer groups is an important factor in encouraging participation. Planning activities and events for the entire family helps to stimulate both interest and activity.
2. Making facilities or the physical environment accessible, safe, clean and conducive to winter physical activity is important in

attracting participation. It can also mean taking action to preserve natural spaces or ensuring equal access to all in arenas, gyms, workplaces, schools and recreation facilities. Maintaining outdoor ice surfaces or lighting cross-country ski trails are examples.

3. Whatever the setting for your winter activity — school, work, the community or elsewhere — check out local policies to ensure they encourage and enhance healthy participation in physical activity in winter. For example, clearing of snow from sidewalks soon after a snowfall can encourage walking and other activities.
4. It's important to create a broad awareness of your activity or event. Provide practical information to as many people as possible. This includes all forms of campaigns, the use of broadcast and print media and word of mouth.



EXAMPLES

Leaders have submitted the following examples to help you encourage inactive people to skate, slide and ski this winter!

- Involve potential participants in the planning of activities so that their needs and their expertise are included.
- Invite inactive people to submit ideas for winter activities.
- Plan activities for family participation. The support of others can make it easier for some people to get involved.
- Host a winter social event that includes a physical activity element that is low-key, like a family ice skate. Social activities provide enjoyment and variety and are more effective than ones that include only physical activity.
- Emphasize participation, not competition.
- Design the activity(ies) so that participation is not seen as being “silly” or embarrassing.
- Encourage your active participants to bring a friend or family member who is not active in winter. Consider offering a special prize for those who bring a guest or for those who come for the first time.
- Keep the costs low and the fun factor high! Seek out sponsors and other partners to help reduce participant costs.
- Advertise quality draw prizes for participation. This can motivate some people. Others appreciate small tokens like buttons, certificates, pins, etc.
- Plan multi-component activities, so that active people can “do their thing,” while newcomers have the choice to participate in activities that are less demanding physically.
- Plan activities that don’t require a lot of athletic skill, special equipment and/or special clothing.
- Offer “learn and try” clinics. This allows participants to try an activity before committing to lesson fees or equipment costs.
- Provide opportunities for inactive people to volunteer first, then ease them into active participation.
- Assist a newcomer in setting realistic, achievable winter physical activity goals.
- Choose activity and event names that are appropriate for the participant group. For example, some older adults don’t like the term “seniors” or “golden agers.”
- To encourage fair play and equity, down-play competition and skill level. Invite participation by men, women, boys and girls.
- Modify activities to accommodate the level of health and fitness of the group.
- Ensure that the physical environment is safe, clean and accessible.
- Establish permanent settings, services and opportunities. This will help to encourage participation over the long-term.
- When possible, take the activity to the participants, instead of waiting for them to come to you. A mobile van containing winter sports equipment for trial use is an example.
- Encourage or help develop policies that support and increase opportunities to be active in winter.
- Plan and promote activities that can easily fit into a normal, daily routine.
- Choose activities that don’t require a lot of extra time away from family or work.
- Don’t force or cajole people into doing things they would prefer not to do. Make sure their participation is fun and a positive experience.
- Promote the physical, social, psychological and spiritual benefits of being active.
- Provide specific information on how to get involved in winter activity. Tell people exactly what and where winter activity opportunities exist in the community.
- Use varied ways to get your winter activity message out.
- Use a variety of activities or services to reach your community residents. Success results from a combination of approaches.

