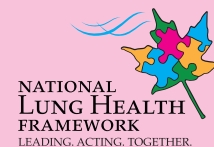


# Featured programs for physical activity and lung health



## Featured Programs

Unique and innovative respiratory health programs are happening across Canada, in all jurisdictions and dealing with a variety of respiratory diseases. This *Featured Programs* information sheet describes five programs that show examples of physical activity aiding individuals' respiratory health. These programs are in various locations in Canada and are targeted at different audiences.

### RRC database

The programs highlighted in this *Featured Programs* sheet have been selected from the Respiratory Resources Canada (RRC) database. RRC is a bilingual database of programs that show "who is doing what, where" in respiratory health in Canada. Programs in RRC promote strong partnerships, develop and apply best practices, and may be replicated in other situations

### What is the National Lung Health Framework?

The RRC database is one of the resources available through the National Lung Health Framework. The Framework is a comprehensive, strategic plan of action to improve respiratory health for all Canadians. Developed by and for stakeholders across sectors, disciplines and jurisdictions —with the vital support of the federal government— the Framework ensures the coordinated development and implementation of policies, programs and services across the country. It guides investment by highlighting successes and gaps, and identifies opportunities for maximizing results. The Framework operates under the guidance of a volunteer Steering Committee and with the support of the Lung Association and the Government of Canada.

Previous *Featured Programs* information sheets, on other topics, are available from the National Lung Health Framework website.

## The Challenge

Many people find exercise difficult, for various reasons. Exercise is particularly challenging for people whose lungs aren't always working well. Often, people living with chronic lung disease may feel that just taking a breath is exercise enough.

But regular, appropriate exercise – involving aerobic activity, flexibility, balance, and strengthening—can actually improve patients' quality of life. Exercise helps to increase functional performance and exercise tolerance, and generally makes breathing easier so daily activities also become easier. Besides the physical benefits, activity programs can also provide a supportive social environment for participants.

One challenge is to ensure that exercise and physical activity options are available to those who would benefit from them. Activities can be developed and presented to participants in ways that recognize their abilities and aspirations. Challenges of location and scheduling respond to innovative thinking by program organizers.

## The Response

The National Lung Health Framework is a Canadian initiative designed to improve lung health across the country by promoting collaborative and coordinated action among health care professionals, policy makers, researchers, clinicians, advocates and other stakeholders.

Stakeholders are able to work with their audiences to develop and promote innovative exercise and activity programs that meet the needs of participants who are living with lung conditions or who wish to improve their lung health.

Stakeholders promote exercise programs that:

- help people with chronic disease manage their condition
- support smokers who choose to improve their health by quitting
- encourage youth to develop an active, healthy lifestyle
- advise healthy people to prevent chronic illnesses and to slow functional decline

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## FEATURED PROGRAMS

Programs that encourage people to include physical activity in their lung health can be found locally and nationally. Often, these programs are developed for a specific audience. Here are some of the programs now underway, from the Respiratory Resources Canada database. These are examples only; check RRC for other programs!

### Project SPARK Saskatchewan

This project is a novel intervention based on research that suggests COPD patients perceive an improvement in their quality of life when therapeutic singing is added to their pulmonary rehabilitation program.

The 8-week program consists of one hour of singing each week, following a regular COPD rehabilitation therapy session. Led by music therapists, the group sessions include relaxation exercises for the neck and upper limbs, singing-related respiratory exercises, vocalization exercises, and singing of familiar songs. A physiotherapist or nurse is also present to watch for untoward physical effects. The group sessions also provide a social environment where participants talk about their music preferences and the role of music in their lives. Participants are tested before and after the program to determine their levels of dyspnea, perceptions of illness, exercise tolerance, and quality of life.

Future research is expected to include extended physical testing so results can be monitored better, and using technology for program delivery to patients less able to access existing rehabilitation services.

Similar projects are underway in other countries, reflecting an increased interest in this approach to COPD rehabilitation.

## Quit and Get Fit Ontario



Piloted in 2010 and expanded for 2011 and 2012, Quit and Get Fit encourages smokers to take up physical activity while they quit smoking. Participants in the program received a 2-month membership at GoodLife Fitness, and sessions with a personal trainer. A "Passport to Success" provides each participant with a record of their training, as well as tips and support.


Quit and Get Fit advertising on traditional and social media employs humour to suggest physical activity instead of smoking. A free sport-related iPhone app provides the target audience with a diversion during cravings. A December 2011 flash mob encouraged Toronto passersby to get involved.

Besides GoodLife Fitness, other organizations that partnered with the Ontario Lung Association include the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, Smokers' Help Line, and Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) evaluated the 2010 program, and found that participants were more active and smoking less, even if they had not quit completely.

[www.quitandgetfit.ca](http://www.quitandgetfit.ca)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsRoOGyBn7g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsRoOGyBn7g)

## Clean Air Achievers National



HSBC  Clean Air Achievers encourages students in grades 5–9 to understand the connection between their personal transportation choices and the impact those choices have on outdoor air quality, climate, and their own health. High performance athletes introduce the program in each participating school with inspirational stories that connect their experiences to real-world issues. Students use the Clean Air Achievers website as they track their travel activity over several weeks, then discuss their experiences and observations when the athlete returns for a second visit.

The program presents a consistent message in all types of schools: rural, urban, low-literacy, low socio-economic status, public, private. The methods of delivering the program are modified to suit each school and encourage students to look for ways of implementing their new knowledge in their own activities and communities.

[www.cleanairchampions.ca/programs/hsbc\\_clean\\_air\\_achievers.php](http://www.cleanairchampions.ca/programs/hsbc_clean_air_achievers.php)

## How You Can Make a Difference

If you would like to help make a difference and improve the lung health of Canadians there are things you can do.

Promote what is happening in your field and in your community. Share information about successful activities with others across Canada through the Respiratory Resources Canada database. The information will be seen by people across the country working in respiratory health.

Make it happen. Have you wanted to start a much-needed initiative in your community and were not sure where to get started or how to make it happen? Make use of Respiratory Resources Canada. It is a searchable database where you can find out what is happening all across Canada. You can also use the database to connect with individuals who can provide you with helpful information and share their own successes.

Go to [www.lunghealthframework.ca](http://www.lunghealthframework.ca) for more information on the database and what it can do for you.

## Active and Free National

Active and Free emphasizes the positive value of physical activity and presents physical activity as a positive and viable alternative to tobacco use for girls and young women. The program provides resources that sport and physical activity leaders can use to reinforce the message of preventing tobacco use and provide support toward quitting. It also challenges young women to think about their attitudes towards broader tobacco issues. The website was updated in 2011 with additional material for teen girls and young women, such as tips for resisting peer pressure and a cost-of-smoking calculator.

[www.caaws.ca/activeandfree/e/index.cfm](http://www.caaws.ca/activeandfree/e/index.cfm)

## Saskatoon Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program (SPRP) Saskatoon Health Region

SPRP provides an opportunity for patients with COPD and other chronic respiratory conditions to receive exercise training appropriate for their conditions. The physiotherapists on the SPRP team use their background in exercise science to prescribe appropriate exercise for participants in group sessions or in individualized exercise programs.

Patients are referred to the program by their health care providers, and usually begin with a series of education sessions that cover topics such as the benefits of exercise, and how to manage fatigue and shortness of breath. The exercise component of the program includes group sessions that emphasize strength, flexibility, balance, and cardiovascular exercise. Measuring shortness of breath, rate of perceived exertion, and oxygen saturation levels helps participants track their progress. Participants don't "graduate" from the exercise program; instead, they are welcome to continue attending sessions as long as they want.

The online COPD Toolkit used with the program provides resources for the staff who organize and present the program. The principles of exercise in the Toolkit are based on recommendations from the Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS), the American Council on Sports Medicine, and Health Canada.