

# National Indigenous Physical Activity Awareness Week



*show us your active spirit.*

**IPACC Toolkit**  
Indigenous Physical Activity  
and Cultural Circle

**June 21 to  
June 27**



The IPACC mission is to create a community of mentors, leaders, participants, and supporters who promote physical activity as a way to health and wellness.

# Introduction

The Indigenous Physical Activity & Cultural Circle (IPACC) is a registered non-profit organization and a network for Indigenous people who are involved in Sports, Recreation, Fitness and Traditional Activities.

**OUR VISION** is to establish and expand relationships between individuals engaged in physical activity by improving access to resources, and promoting exposure to health and wellness opportunities.

The IPACC mission is to create a community of mentors, leaders, participants, and supporters who promote physical activity as a way to health and wellness. Due to our work to address barriers and promote access to participation, IPACC has put forth the intent to hold a National Indigenous Physical Activity Awareness Week Campaign (NIPAAW), to be held annually, from June 21st to June 27th. The intent of the week is to promote physical activity within our urban and rural Indigenous communities through organizing several simple and fun initiatives. Please see the proclamation for more details in Appendix A.

IPACC would like to support your community or organization to “kick-off” the inaugural National Indigenous Physical Activity Awareness Week. Therefore, we have created this toolkit to support you throughout the 7-day campaign to be physically active across Canada.

The theme for NIPAAW’s campaign is:

*show us your  
active spirit.*

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# Purpose

**THE BARRIERS** that inhibit Indigenous people of all ages and genders from participating in sports, recreation, fitness and traditional activities have a negative impact on holistic health and wellness in urban and rural areas. The higher than normal presence of diseases and social issues within Indigenous communities is evidence that there are inadequate primary prevention activities such as physical activity being implemented.

The purpose of this national campaign is to promote physical activities, including sports, recreation, fitness, and traditional activities across Canada. This toolkit has been developed to support individuals, families, communities, and/or workplaces to be physically active.

# Background

On February 22, 2014 following the National Indigenous Physical Activity conference, hosted by IPACC and the Queen's University, 10 of the following organizations gathered for a signing of the National Indigenous Physical Activity Awareness Week Proclamation:

1. Indigenous Physical Activity & Cultural Circle
2. North American Indigenous Games
3. Native Women's Association of Canada
4. Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
5. National Association of Friendship Centres
6. Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
7. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
8. Truth and Reconciliation Commission
9. Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network
10. Heart & Stroke Foundation
11. Native Indian Football Association
12. Native Way Training Services
13. Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island
14. Alberta Indigenous Games
15. Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre, Queen's University
16. School of Kinesiology and Health Studies, Queen's University

The organizations that did not attend the event were sent the Proclamation by mail for their signature.



# Planning

**THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO BE INVOLVED** with National Indigenous Physical Activity Awareness Week (NIPAAW). The first day of NIPAAW is National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21st, which really supports a day in nature or the outdoors to connect with the land. IPACC encourages plans or outings that get the blood flowing and the body moving! It is important to have back up indoor physical activity plans as well, in case the weather does not cooperate.

In addition, when planning your 7 days of physical activity ensure that you do not

over do it! Alternate days with high intensity (hiking) and low intensity (yoga or stretching), or change the duration, such as 30 minutes riding your bike uphill, and then the next day ride your bike for 40 minutes on flat terrain. You can also try something new such as practicing tai chi, finding a new exercise routine on YouTube, or joining an Elder to harvest traditional foods.

Being active means being creative. The more fun you have the more likely you will do it again.




## Individual Participation

Some Indigenous people live away from family or community due to work, school, travel or other reasons. Therefore, it may be difficult to join a group for NIPAAW, however, no worries! You can join our 7-day event on IPACC's social media sites:

- Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/ab.pacc](http://www.facebook.com/ab.pacc)  
(see NIPAAW event page)
- Twitter:  
[www.twitter.com/IndigenousPACC](http://www.twitter.com/IndigenousPACC)
- Instagram:  
[www.instagram.com/indigenouspacc](http://www.instagram.com/indigenouspacc)

We ask that you share what you or your group are doing to be active from June 21<sup>st</sup> to June 27<sup>th</sup> on these social media sites to “show us your active spirit.” Sharing stories and photos of being physically active is inspiring for others and provides people with new ideas on how to be active.

It is ideal that you have support or join a group to be physically active for goal setting, motivation, safety, and mentorship. There are also a variety of fitness software applications. IPACC recommends using fitbit<sup>®</sup> or mapmyfitness<sup>®</sup> as great tools to support your training. In addition, there are a variety of resources available such as the World Health Organization's (WHO) Physical Activity Guidelines that are available for all ages.



Being active is the best medicine a family can share and practice.

## Family Participation

Being physically active with the family offers many opportunities to create memories, enhance bonding, and create lifelong family traditions. Families can meet and discuss trying out each other's favorite physical activity. When a child is active with their parents at a younger age they are more likely to stay active for the rest of their life. Physical activity prevents chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and arthritis. Being active is the best medicine a family can share and practice. Family physical activity outings can be as simple as a walk to Grandma's or could be paddling together to a picnic. Just remember to bring your camera to “show your active spirit” to your colleagues when you return to work.



## Community Participation

A physical activity “kick off” event for Indigenous communities are a must! First bring together the community sport and fitness leaders and sport teams to create ideas on how everyone can be involved. Make a list of the people you can invite to be part of the NIPAAW working group. The NIPAAW working group is then in charge of the organization, promotion and leading of activities for each of the 7 days that the community will be physically active.

Community members who are new to being active may need to be extrinsically motivated with prizes. It is valuable to plan incentives for community members to participate. However, the best motivation is not extrinsic but intrinsic (feel good), therefore ensure that the physical activities planned are also fun and not just entertaining for the spectators.

In the past, IPACC has planned a “kick off” sports day event which included:

- Potato sack race - singles
- Three legged race - pairs
- Relay Race – teams of 4
- Running race - singles
- Frog jumping race – teams of 4’s
- Water balloon throwing contest - pairs
- Obstacle course, with team relay – 4 teams
- Tug-of-war – 2 teams

The sports day targeted boys and girls, and had 2 different age groups, 6 to 10 years old and 11 to 14 years old. However, the age groups were flexible according to who was present at the National Indigenous Peoples Day. All participants received a ribbon.

**A NIPAA Week kickoff event is a great way to get involved and start being active.**

However, the kick-off event could even be a sports tournament which could include soccer, baseball or basketball. A community event could also have a recreational activity such as a canoe day trip or hiking.

Fitness activities are also fun to expose community members to yoga, tai chi, aqua fitness weight training etc. Nevertheless, on National Indigenous Peoples Day it would be fitting to create a community event that reflects your traditional past time of being physical active.

It is also reasonable to create physical activity events, workshops, or programs that target certain demographics, such as Elders, youth, children, women, families, or people with disabilities. Having physical activities for specific groups brings people together with related interests or needs.

Connect with your provincial / territorial Indigenous sports organization to see if there are any local events happening that your community could participate in. There is a list of the provincial / territorial Indigenous sports organization at the end of this toolkit. Overall, it would be appropriate to create a schedule of a variety of physical activity interests for the diverse community populations to participate in and show some active spirit!



## Organizational and Corporate Participation

It is great to be active with colleagues and to be supported in being active at the workplace. NIPAAW can be introduced at work with occupational health information sessions by local occupational therapists or kinesiologists. It is important for employees to be supported in their fitness journeys at work. This can be done by first creating physical activity policies for employees to support physical activity at the work place. National Indigenous Physical Activity Awareness Week is a great time to share new physical activity policies with employees.

Ideas on how to stay active in the workplace:

- Walk or ride your bike to work instead of driving or transiting
- Sign up as an office to compete in a sports tournament in your community
- Didn't pack a lunch? Take a brisk walk to your favorite grocery store or restaurant
- Get up and stretch for a few minutes every 45 – 60 minutes
- Participate in a run or walk for charity with your colleagues
- Go for a nature walk during your lunch break
- Start a friendly competition! Whoever takes the most steps in the week wins a prize
- Join a fitness (aerobics, yoga, Zumba, etc.) class with colleagues to attend together before or after work

A NIPAA Week kickoff event with the office is a great way to get involved and start being active. Get the whole office involved with a staff BBQ and sport event. Invite family, friends, and the community to participate and join in on the fun while staying physically active. See NIPAA Week Ideas in this toolkit for more inspiration.



# Physical Activity

In 2020, the the World Health Organization (WHO) updated their global physical activity guidelines. These recommendations are supported by the Indigenous Physical Activity and Cultural Awareness Circle. However, these guidelines are generally based on findings from non-Indigenous peoples. We have included culturally appropriate physical activity advice for Indigenous peoples in this document.

The new WHO guidelines support the strengths-based recommendations of Warburton and Bredin (2016, 2017; 2019; 2021) demonstrating the importance of simply being more physically active and limiting sedentary behaviour.

These guidelines also provide targets for Adults:

- **Adults (18-64 years olds) and Older Adults (older than 65 years)** – should do at least 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity; or at least 75–150 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity; or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity throughout the week, for substantial health benefits.
- **Adults and Older Adults** should also do muscle strengthening activities at moderate or greater intensity that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these provide additional health benefits.

This weekly goal can be achieved throughout the day. It is recommended that physical activity should be a mixture of endurance, flexibility and strength activities. This mixture helps to strengthen the heart and lungs, keep joints flexible and mobile, and maintain strong bones. Physical activity can also prevent injuries.

It is important to have a mixture of activities in your routine as a part of NIPAAW and for lifetime fitness. Here are some examples of different types of activities.

Endurance (aerobic) exercise helps improve the body's ability to use oxygen:

- Walking / Jogging / Running / Snowshoeing / Hiking
- Canoeing
- Corporate or organized events
- Golfing (without a cart)
- Cycling / Treadmill / Elliptical Trainer / Rowing
- Traditional Dancing
- Swimming
- Sports, i.e. Soccer, Basketball, Hockey

Flexibility routines help to maintain the body's ability to bend and stretch easily:

- Gardening / Yard work
- Harvesting berries, mushrooms, roots, cedar bark
- Yoga or Stretch classes
- Tai chi
- Stretches at your workstation or at the fitness centre
- Climbing
- Housecleaning

Strength training helps strengthen muscles as well as improving balance and posture:

- Climbing stairs
- Lifting and carrying boxes or young children
- Pulling in fishing nets, prawn or crab traps
- Lifting weights at the gym
- Work out at home using body weight
- Packing game through the forest
- Building a creek, restoring a trail

Overall, it is recommended that you discuss your physical activity goals with your doctor, community nurse, physiotherapist, or a qualified exercise professional. It is recommended that all people complete a **Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire for Everyone (PAR-Q+)** before starting a physical activity program. The form can be found on the website:

<https://www.eparmedx.com/>

# NIPAA Week Ideas

IT IS GREAT TO MIX UP your 7 days of being physically active. We would really like to encourage you to try at least one new thing during the 7 days of activity. Whether you are new to walking or you like to roll in a wheelchair, be creative on what activities you can perform to raise your heart rate.

The first day is on National Indigenous Peoples Day therefore it would be great to perform a physical activity that is traditional to your community. As well, National Indigenous Peoples Day is a day of celebration, therefore, it would be great to engage in activities that bring out gratitude and joy with your Indigenous or local community.

## Day 1

### National Indigenous Peoples Day - Celebrate

- Walk or Roll to a National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration
- Dance by moving your body at a National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration
- Play with children at the park, skip rope, play in the outdoor playground or waterpark
- Perform a traditional physical activity, such as, running, canoeing, playing lacrosse, gathering medicines, fishing, etc.



## Day 2

### Mother Earth - Nature

- Walk, Hike, or Roll in a forest or community trails with family, friends, horse or dog.
- Garden - it is a great way to stretch, lift, and nurture the soul
- Build a river bed, trail, rock fence, longhouse
- Swim in a lake, ocean or river



## Day 3

### Indoors

- Check out the local fitness centre, community or health centre for an exercise routine or a work out by a community health professional
- Visit a pool to see if there are aquasize, jointworks or lanes to swim in
- Perform walking or rolling laps in the mall, and keep track of your distance, time and heart rate
- Look up an exercise program you can do at home by using a book, DVD, or YouTube as your personal fitness instructor





## Day 4

### Sports or Recreation

- Try a new sport or recreational activity, such as: yoga, tai chi, rock climbing, skateboarding, etc.
- Organize a few families to come together to play a team sport such as volleyball with a beach ball, basketball, soccer, etc.
- Have a team practice and invite new comers to join you



## Day 5

### Active for Life

- Destination Walking - Walk to work, the park, or the school yard and keep track of your time and the distance
- Work out with weights at the fitness centre or home
- Perform calisthenics (work out with body weight) at home or the gym
- Play golf with some friends or head to the driving range
- Play racquet sports such as tennis, badminton, squash, or racquetball





## Day 6

### Family and Friends

- Participate in an activity that both you and your friends enjoy, such as a nature walk or a game of basketball
- Discover - Try one of your friends or families favourite sports or activities to discover additional ways to stay active while having fun with ones you love
- Discuss your fitness goals with your friends and family to keep each other accountable



## Day 7

### Pathway to Success

- Reflect on the past week, and choose activities that you felt were challenging, fun, and made you feel positive about your fitness goals – choose one of these activities to try again today
- Share your NIPAAW experience with others to inspire their own physical activity journeys
- Organize a community, family, or workplace run/walk to celebrate your successful NIPAA Week!



# Resources

IPACC has available a variety of walking journal templates to support individuals, families, and communities to create walking clubs or goals. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions. We would also like to share your ideas and resources on the IPACC website, please do not hesitate to pass on your ideas to the office.

# Indigenous Sport Organizations

Province/Territory	Organization	www
Canada	Aboriginal Sport Circle	<a href="http://aboriginalsportcircle.ca">aboriginalsportcircle.ca</a>
Alberta	Indigenous Sport Council	<a href="http://aboriginalsports.org">aboriginalsports.org</a>
British Columbia	Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation Council (ISPARC)	<a href="http://isparc.ca">isparc.ca</a>
Manitoba	Manitoba Aboriginal Sport & Recreation Council	<a href="http://masrc.com">masrc.com</a>
New Brunswick	Aboriginal Sport and Recreation New Brunswick	<a href="http://asrnb.ca">asrnb.ca</a>
Newfoundland	The Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Circle of Newfoundland Labrador	<a href="http://asrcnl.ca">asrcnl.ca</a>
Northwest Territories	Aboriginal Sport Circle Northwest Territories	<a href="http://ascnwt.ca">ascnwt.ca</a>
Nova Scotia	N/A	N/A
Nunavut	Government of Nunavut: Sports and Recreation	<a href="http://gov.nu.ca/sports-and-recreation">gov.nu.ca/sports-and-recreation</a>
Ontario	Aboriginal Sport & Wellness Council of Ontario	<a href="http://aswco.ca">aswco.ca</a>
Prince Edward Island	Prince Edward Island Aboriginal Sports Circle	<a href="http://mcpei.ca">mcpei.ca</a>
Quebec	N/A	N/A
Saskatchewan	SaskSport Inc. (Aboriginal Sport Development)	<a href="http://sasksport.sk.ca/">sasksport.sk.ca/</a> <a href="http://aboriginalSport.php">aboriginalSport.php</a>
Yukon Territory	Yukon Aboriginal Sport Circle	<a href="http://www.yasc.ca">www.yasc.ca</a>

# Appendix A: Proclamation

## NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AWARENESS WEEK

JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup> TO 27<sup>TH</sup>

**WHEREAS** June 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, is a national campaign designed to increase national, provincial & promote awareness of the significance of physical activity among Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, & Métis) people for health & wellness;

**WHEREAS** the campaign runs annually & is linked to National Indigenous Peoples Day to recognize the unique heritage, the diverse cultures & outstanding contributions of Indigenous peoples;

**WHEREAS** Indigenous communities can benefit by promoting health and preventing disease through physical activity;

**WHEREAS** physical activity can be promoted as sports, recreation, fitness or traditional activities by Indigenous communities on traditional territories, or in towns, cities & throughout the world;

**WHEREAS** Indigenous Physical Activity & Cultural Circle stands in solidarity with Indigenous organizations nationwide who desire to take part in this campaign to make positive changes for health and wellness;

**WHEREAS** it is through awareness of the Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action that physical activity will be promoted;

**THEREFORE** be it resolved that the signatories & Indigenous Physical Activity & Cultural Circle do hereby proclaim June 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 as the annual National Indigenous Physical Activity Awareness Week.

Given under our hand & seal of  
The Indigenous Physical Activity & Cultural Circle

On behalf of

- Aboriginal Physical Activity & Cultural Circle
- North American Indigenous Games
- Native Women's Association of Canada
- Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
- National Association of Friendship Centres
- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network
- Heart & Stroke Foundation
- Native Indian Football Association
- Native Way Training Services
- Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island
- Alberta Indigenous Games
- Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre, Queen's University
- School of Kinesiology and Health Studies, Queen's University

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WHO guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Do you need support with NIPAAW?  
Please do not hesitate to contact us at:

**INDIGENOUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & CULTURAL CIRCLE**

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