# The Benefits of Physical Activity and Proper Nutrition

**The Benefits to Employees:**

Employees of all physical abilities who engage in moderate levels of physical activity and have healthy eating habits tend to be healthier, more productive, feel better, have a higher level of self-esteem and appear more vibrant! Furthermore, after experiencing these positive results many employees quit smoking, drinking and improve their economic status. Also, the risk of developing such chronic health problems as heart disease, diabetes and some cancers is significantly reduced among employees who become physically fit.

**Key benefits to employees are:**

- Weight reduction
- Greater stamina, strength, endurance and co-ordination
- Increased joint flexibility
- Reduced risk for lifestyle related diseases (heart disease, stroke, osteoporosis, cancer, chronic back pain, etc.)
- Reduced tension and feelings of stress
- Reduction in chronic fatigue
- Improved well-being
- More productivity
- Greater task focus
- Enhanced self-image and self-esteem
- Improved physical function

**The Benefits to the Company:**

By incorporating an employee wellness program, you will contribute to the overall health and well-being of your employees, their families and the economy, while also better containing your company's health care costs and protecting your greatest asset - your employees. In recent years, much research has been conducted to assess the promotion of healthy lifestyles in the workplace and its benefits to the company. The benefits reported in these studies include:

- Reduced health care costs
- Reduced illness and injuries
- Reduced absenteeism
- Enhanced recruitment and retention of healthy employees
- Improved employee relations and morale

**Supporting Evidence:**

- On the average, sedentary employees in Canada were absent a total of 38.9 days, while active employees were absent only 12.5 days. A study conducted over 10 years by the Canadian Life Assurance Company (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 1999).
- A five-year review of Prudential Life's physical activity program noted a 20 percent reduction in disability days for active employees. (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 1999).

- After Canada Life in Toronto began an employee wellness program they showed a return on investment of $3.40 on each corporate dollar from reduced turnover, productivity gains and decreased medical claims.
- Dr. Roy Shephard found corporate wellness programs returned a cumulative economic benefit of $500 - $700 for each worker per year.
- BC Hydro employees enrolled in a work-sponsored fitness program had a turnover rate of 3.5% compared with the company average of 10.3%.
- Connors (1992) reported that GE Aircraft employees who were members of the fitness centre for three years lowered their average annual health care costs from $1044 to $757 per individual. In contrast, non-members increased their average annual health care costs from $773 to $941 per person.

? ***The majority of Canadian companies state that health promotion programs will result in such things as increased productivity, improved morale, decreased absenteeism and improved health and wellness.***

***(National Workplace Survey, Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 1992)***

**The Forecasted Benefits to the Economy:**

Conservative estimates suggest that reducing the prevalence of physical inactivity in Canada by 10% would save $150 million annually. This savings does not include indirect costs such as lost productivity due to illness, premature death, or a range of other health conditions, including mental illness and poor quality of life. (Katzmarzyk, Gledhill, & Shephard, 2000)