# rediscover the STAIRS

Workplace ToolKit

Promoting Stair Use in the Workplace

# activeTO ca >

416 338 7600 toronto ca/health M TORONTO Public Health



The content of the Rediscover the Stairs Workplace Toolkit including text, graphics and other topics is for informational purposes only and has been produced as a convenience to assist individuals to establish a stair program or improve one that already exists. You may need to adapt the content of this information package to suit your organization/workplace. The information provided is not and should not be construed as legal advice. Please consult a lawyer if you need legal advice. Reference to or mention of specific products or services in the package does not constitute recommendation or endorsement by Toronto Public Health.

We recommend that you advise individuals to use their own judgment and/or consult with their health care provider(s) prior to participating in any physical activity, including stair use. We also recommend that individuals complete the Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q & You) available at csep.ca.

The City of Toronto disclaims any and all liability arising from injuries incurred by individuals participating in any physical activity, including stair use.

© City of Toronto, Toronto Public Health, 2014.

# Rediscover the Stairs – A Program for Workplaces

Rediscover the Stairs is a Toronto Public Health program that encourages individuals to take the stairs rather than the elevator or escalator. Taking the stairs is an easy way for busy people to build physical activity into their day. Toronto Public Health can provide you with the support and resources needed to implement this program in your workplace. It is easy to do and the research shows it works!<sup>1</sup>

# Why should your workplace Rediscover the Stairs?

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommends that adults do at least 2.5 hours (150 minutes) of moderate-to-vigorous aerobic physical activity per week.<sup>2</sup> Currently, only 15% of Canadians are achieving these guidelines.<sup>3</sup>

Adults are not only getting limited amounts of physical activity, but they are increasingly becoming more inactive. On average, they are spending about 9.5 hours a day or 69% of their waking hours in sedentary behaviours.<sup>3</sup> For many employees, commuting in the car, sitting during meetings, and long hours at their desks or at their computers contributes to this sedentary behaviour. Since people spend a great deal of time at work, it only makes sense to create environments that can support building physical activity into an employee's work day.

## What are the benefits?

There are many great reasons to encourage regular stair use with your employees.<sup>2,3,4,5,6,7</sup>

Stair climbing is considered to be a moderate-to-vigorous aerobic physical activity depending on how fast a person climbs the stairs.

#### Regular stair use:

- Improves heart and lung health
- Reduces risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers
- · Improves blood cholesterol levels
- Strengthens muscles and bones
- Improves energy levels and helps to decrease stress

#### There are additional benefits for your workplace/building. Encouraging employees to use the stairs can:

- Lower the building's energy use and carbon footprint<sup>6</sup>
- Reduce elevator repairs
- Relieve congestion at elevator areas
- Save employees time, as taking the stairs can be faster
- Increase employee morale employees meet colleagues/friends in the stairwell
- Promote impromptu meetings
- Help familiarize employees with the location of emergency exits

# How to get started? It is as simple as...

# 1. Calling Toronto Public Health and asking for our Rediscover the Stairs program. Our staff will:

- · Consult with you on how to get started
- · Help you think of strategies to promote your program
- · Provide you with the Rediscover the Stairs resources

Toronto Public Health has the following resources free of charge that can be utilized in your workplace to encourage employees to make a healthy choice and take the stairs rather than the elevator.

- · Wayfinding signage indicating the location of the stairs
- · Elevator decals
- · Posters for outside of the elevators

#### 2. Discussing the Idea

 Discuss the Rediscover the Stairs program with management and/or the building owner. Consider others who could partner with you to run this program.

#### 3. Finding a Stair Climbing Champion

- Find a champion at your organization to lead the program.
- Presidents, CEOs or senior managers make great champions.

#### 4. Checking the Stairs

- Prior to implementing the Rediscover the Stairs program, we recommend you consult with the appropriate people to assess the stairwells to identify potential safety concerns.
- Consider any maintenance issues that may need to be addressed.

#### 5. Setting a Date to Launch the Program

#### 6. Posting the Rediscover the Stairs Materials

If you have more time, your workplace can be creative and have fun promoting a number of activities that encourage your employees to get involved. Please refer to the appendices for more information and suggested activities.

# Call Toronto Public Health at **416-338-7600** or visit **activeTO.ca** and get started today!





# Wayfinding Signs

11″ x 17″



# **Elevator Decals**

3.5″ x 1.5″





# Posters

#### 8.5″ x 11″







#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Soler, R.E, Leeks, K.D., Brownson, R.C., Heath, G.W., and Hopkins, D.H. (2010). Point-of-decision prompts to increase stair use: A systematic review update. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 38 (2 Suppl), S292–S300.
- <sup>2</sup> Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (2010). Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Adult 18-64 years. Retrieved from http://csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP\_PAGuidelines\_adults\_en.pdf, July 22, 2014.
- <sup>3</sup> Colley, R.C., Garriguet, D., Janssen, I., Craig, C.L., Clarke, J. and Tremblay, M.S. (2011). Physical activity of Canadian adults: Accelerometer results from the 2007 to 2009 Canadian health measures survey. *Health Reports*, 22(1), 7-14.
- <sup>4</sup> Owen, N., Sparling, P.B., Healy, G.N., Dunstan, D.W., and Matthews, C.E. (2010). Sedentary Behavior: Emerging Evidence for a New Health Risk. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 85 (12):1138-1141.
- <sup>5</sup> Eves, F.F., Olander, E.K., Webb, O.J., Griffin, C. and Chambers, J. (2012). Likening stairs in buildings to climbing a mountain: Self-reports of expected effects on stair climbing and objective measures of effectiveness. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 13(2), 170-176.
- <sup>6</sup> City of New York (2010). Active design guidelines: Promoting physical activity & health in design. Retrieved from http://centerforactivedesign.org/dl/guidelines.pdf, July 22, 2014.
- <sup>7</sup> Meyer, P., Kayser, B., Kossovsky, M.P., Sigaud, P., Carballo, D., Keller, P.F., Martin, X.E., Farpour-Lambert, N., Pichard, C. and Mach, F. (2010). Stairs instead of elevators at workplace: cardioprotective effects of a pragmatic intervention. *European Journal* of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation, 00(0), 1-7.

The following suggestions can help make Rediscover the Stairs successful in your workplace.

#### 1. Discuss the Idea

- Discuss the Rediscover the Stairs program with management and/or the building owner.
- Consider others who could partner with you to help run the program.

#### 2. Find a Stair Climbing Champion

 Presidents, CEOs, Senior Managers, Occupational Health and Safety and Human Resource Professionals make great champions. Involving management and recruiting champions increases employee buy-in and commitment.

#### 3. Check the Stairs

- Prior to implementing the program, we recommend you consult with the appropriate people to assess the condition of the stairs and identify any potential safety concerns. For example:
  - Are the stairs well lit?
  - Are the stairs free of debris?
  - Are the stairs clean and dry?
  - Are the railings, stairs and landings in good condition?
  - If the stairs are covered with slip resistant treads, are any missing, loose or in need of repair?
- Consider any maintenance issues that may need to be addressed.

#### 4. Designate a Central Location

• Have a display table or post information on bulletin boards in main traffic areas where employees can learn about and access program information.

#### 5. Set a Date to Launch the Program

- Schedule a time and place for employees to meet and have a fun celebration (e.g. breakfast/lunch).
- Alternatively, you can launch the program electronically (e.g. worksite intranet or Facebook page).

#### 6. Promote, Promote, Promote

- Use internal communication channels to promote the program. This may include:
  - · Weekly e-mails or e-blasts
  - E-newsletters
  - · Posting information to your worksite's intranet, Facebook page or other social media

#### 7. Post the Rediscover the Stairs Resources

- Place the educational posters near elevators and stairs.
- Attach the elevator decals/stickers beside the buttons on the inside and outside of the elevator.
- Post directional signage indicating the location of the stairs (e.g. entranceway, hallway).

#### 8. Consult with the Experts

- Encourage employees to consult with their health care provider(s) before engaging in any stair climbing
  or other forms of physical activity.
- Schedule a speaker who has an active lifestyle or a fitness specialist.
- Invite Toronto Public Health staff in to offer a presentation to get employees motivated.

#### 9. Rebrand your Stairs

- Hold a grand "reopening" of a staircase. Ensure your stairwell appeals to the senses by:
  - Adding artwork
  - Consider decorating the door to make it look inviting. Double check to make sure it meets the building/fire safety codes.
  - Having bright or natural lighting
  - Ensuring it is clean and safe

#### 10. Consider a Stair Climbing Event or Challenge (see Appendix B)

- Determine the type of event. Is it to be an individual or team event/challenge?
- Consider a virtual climb (e.g. an iconic landmark, or a mountain). You can pick a landmark/mountain ahead of time or see what the highest landmark/mountain is an individual/team has climbed at the end of the event (see Appendix C).
- Track stair use on the Daily Log (see Appendix D).

#### 11. Launch the Program

#### 12. Send Reminders (see Appendix E)

• Send motivational e-messages related to stair usage.

#### 13. Visit activeTO.ca

• Encourage staff to visit activeTO.ca and watch the videos.

#### 14. Rediscover the Stairs and Have Fun!



A stair climbing event or challenge is a fun way to motivate employees to use the stairs.

### Type of Event/Challenge

Pick one or all that works for your workplace.

#### 1. Individual Points

- The individual who gets the most points at the end of the challenge wins.
- The individual who climbs the highest virtual landmark/mountain wins (see Appendix C).

#### 2. Department/Team Points

- The department/team that gets the highest average points wins the challenge.
- The department/team that reaches the highest virtual landmark/mountain wins (see Appendix C).

#### 3. Number of Participation Days

• Individuals or a team that has the most participation days wins. This type of event works well as it encourages everyone's participation not just those who are already physically active.

#### Duration of the Event

The recommended length of time for a stair climbing event is 3-6 weeks. The event needs to be long enough to make the activity into a habit, but not long enough for employees to lose interest. Be sure to set a clear start and end date.

#### Suggested Guidelines for the Event

- Open to all employees. Consider designing an event which is inclusive of employees with physical limitations.
- Determine if you are able to provide incentives for participation.
- Decide if you want to award a prize for the winners of the event, have a draw for a prize or have a wrap-up event.
- Depending on the nature of your workplace, you may want to run the event every day of the week to accommodate shift and part-time employees.
- Decide what type of event you are going to have. Inform employees.
- Employees can use the Rediscover the Stairs Daily Log to record their stair use. Stair activities can be repeated throughout the workday (see Appendix D).
- At the end of each week, ask employees to add up their total number of points/flights of stairs.
- At the end of the event, have employees submit their total points/flights of stairs.
- Ask the employee to return the Rediscover the Stairs Daily Log to the Event Co-ordinator.

#### **During the Event**

- Send an e-mail notification weekly to remind staff to log their activities.
- Send out a "Tip of the Week" inspiring message on the benefits of stair use (see Appendix E).

### At the End of Event

• Report the results of the event. Announce names of the winners (e.g. most active, greatest participation) by e-mail, newsletters or at meetings.



### Virtual Climbs

For individual climbs, select a landmark with less than 15 flights per day. For landmarks of more than 15 flights per day, consider a team event.

Image	Landmark	Number of feet/metres	Number of flights of stairs	Number of flights per day for 30 day challenge
	CN Tower	1,776 stairs	148 flights	5 flights/day
	Blue Mountain, ON	1,483ft/452m	212 flights	7 flights/day
	Cape Breton White Hills, NS is the highest elevation	1,755ft/535m	251 flights	8 flights/day
	Western Brook Pond, Long Range Mountains, NFLD The Cabox is the highest peak	2,671ft/814m	382 flights	13 flights/day
	Mont Tremblant, QC	2,871ft/875m	410 flights	14 flights/day



Image	Landmark	Number of feet/metres	Number of flights of stairs	Number of flights per day for 30 day challenge*
	Grouse Mountain, BC	4,039ft/ 1231m	577 flights	19 flights/day
	Cascade Mountain, AB	9,836ft/ 2,998m	1,405 flights	47 flights/day
	Mt. Fairweather, BC	15,325ft/ 4,671m	2,189 flights	73 flights/day
	Saint Elias Mountain Range, Mt. Logan, Yukon's highest peak	19,551ft/ 5,959m	2,793 flights	93 flights/day
Carlos Carlos	Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, Africa	19,341 ft/ 5,895m	2,763 flights	92 flights/day
	Mt. Everest, Nepal and China	29,029 ft/ 8,848m	4,147 flights	138 flights/day

 $\ast$  Calculations are based on the average flight of stairs having 12 steps.



Name:	Department:	Phone No:	
Landmark/Mountain:	Minimum No. of Flights/Da	ay to Reach Top:	

**Instructions:** Award yourself two (2) points for going up each flight of stairs. For example, you would earn eight (8) points for going up four (4) flights of stairs in a day. Award yourself one (1) point for going down each flight of stairs. For example, you would earn two (2) points for going down two (2) flights of stairs. Your total for this day would be 8 points (up) + 2 points (down) = 10 points. For the virtual challenge, record only the UP flights of stairs. One flight of stairs is approximately 12 steps. Do not complete the other columns on the chart.

Date	No. of Flights Up	<b>Total Points Up</b> (Multiply by 2 for each flight up)	No. of Flights Down	Total Points Down (Multipily by 1 for each flight down)	<b>Total Daily</b> <b>Points</b> (Up and down)
Example	4	8	2	2	8 + 2 = 10
w					
E					
к					
1					
Weekly Tota	1				
W					
E					
К					
2					
Weekly Tota	1				
w		1			
E					
к					
3					
Weekly Tota	1				



### Need Motivation to Keep Going?

Visit activeTO.ca and watch the Rediscover the Stairs video to learn more about the health benefits of taking the stairs!

	Date	No. of Flights Up	Total Points Up (Multiply by 2 for each flight up)	No. of Flights Down	Total Points Down (Multipily by 1 for each flight down)	<b>Total Daily</b> <b>Points</b> (Up and down)
w						
E E						
К 4						
V	Veekly Total					
W E						
E E K						
5						
V	Veekly Total					
W E						
E K						
6						
0						
V	Veekly Total					
	Grand Totals					

### Appendix E **Rediscover the Stairs**



These messages can be used as a "Tip of the Week" or part of an e-mail, text message or newsletter.

- **1.** Adults need at least 2.5 hours (150 minutes) of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity a week. Taking the stairs is considered a moderate-to-vigorous activity.
- 2. Taking the stairs is an easy way for busy people to increase their physical activity.
- 3. When you take the stairs, your body releases endorphins (hormones) that make you feel good!
- **4.** Regular physical activity can improve your mood, energy levels, mental health and reduce your stress. Try taking the stairs!
- **5.** Regular stair climbing can improve your cholesterol levels. It increases the amount of "good" cholesterol and lowers the "bad" cholesterol in your blood. Rediscover the Stairs!
- **6.** Stair climbing can help you build and maintain healthy bones and muscles. This is especially important for women as it helps prevent osteoporosis.
- Climbing 3 to 4 flights of stairs at a moderate pace works for your heart and lungs similar to a 10 minute walk.
- Reducing the use of elevators is good for the environment. Elevators routinely account for 3% 10% of a building's energy use. Reduce your carbon footprint – Rediscover the Stairs.

Notes	۰
	1
	_

Get Started Today activeTO.ca ►

416.338.7600 toronto.ca/health