



Don't Skip Out Toolkit:
How to Guide

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Welcome to your guide about how to use the *Don't Skip Out* Toolkit offered by the Physical Activity Resource Centre (PARC). This guide outlines the pieces contained in the toolkit and how to best leverage them in promoting your organization's events and programs. These items are designed to support your organization in promoting physical activity in your community via media and community outreach using traditional and social media. The goal of *Don't Skip Out* is to educate and motivate, and this toolkit will help you do just that.

What's in the Toolkit?

1. Media Release Template
2. Matte Article
3. Social Media Content and Images
4. Fact Sheet

1. Media Release Template

This media release is customizable and can be used to promote your activity or event. There are highlighted fields to indicate where you can add details about the event and how it supports the ongoing promotion of physical activity. There is also a section where you should include a quote from your organization's spokesperson.

There is space to include your organization's boilerplate as well as your media contact name and details. You can also add your organization's logo into the header.

You can share this media release with local media to promote your event or activity. As well, you can include it on your website to keep visitors up-to-date on your initiatives. It's also a useful document to share with event volunteers or participants to let them know about your event.

For traditional news media, send the news release via email to your media list, which should include health reporters and general news reporters. Make sure to follow-up with a phone call one day after the release is sent. This should be done 3-5 days before the event or the launch of an activity. It is also useful to post the news release to a wire service such as [CNW](#); however, there is a fee.



2. *Matte Article (Story)*

The matte article includes almost the same information as the media release, except that it is pre-formatted for easy publication. To that end, you will need to fill in the same information as the media release for this piece.

The matte story can be shared with local publications as it serves as a ready-to-go article featuring your initiative. It can also be included in your organizational newsletters or posted on bulletin boards. Matte stories are often enhanced by an image, if one is available for which image release waiver forms has been obtained.

Matte stories should be shared with the editors of local and community papers, usually via email. Check with the particular publication to find out how far in advance they like to receive such items before the event day or the beginning of the program. It's also worth asking the publication how they like to receive stories and if they prefer photographs.

Throughout the promotion of your event, if you are planning to publish images of individuals (versus crowd shots), you need the subjects to complete an image release form, even if the image is just going to be posted on the website.

3. *Social Media Content*

The tweets and Facebook posts provided are suggestions as to the type of social media content you can create to promote your initiative. You do not need to merely copy and paste these posts - make them your own! Here are some tips on maximizing the potential of social media:

- Consider tagging social media influencers who are known to or affiliated with your organization by including their handles in the posts or asking them to share or retweet to amplify the posts.
- Social media posts often gain more viewers if they include a relevant and high-quality image. If you don't have any of your own, consider using one of the images provided in the sample posts.
- Make sure to include a link in your posts about events or activities. The link could point to the PARC *Don't Skip Out* webpage as illustrated in the sample social media



posts, but you could also link to the customized media release posted on your webpage, registration page or event page.

- Be diligent about monitoring your posts and accounts to respond to questions and comments, or to follow-up on threads that seem to spark interest.
- Posts that highlight exceptional work by employees or volunteers are popular.
- Remember to use the [#DontSkipOut](#) hashtag, but also include any hashtags that you tend to use or that apply to your specific event or activity to make it easier for more people to find your posts. For example,
 - #physicalactivity
 - #fitness
 - #walking
 - #goals
 - #active
 - #healthy
- Remember that if you are translating posts, the French copy takes up about 20% more space so these need to be shorter.
- Images also take up space in tweets. Make sure that you craft original tweets with this in mind. Tweets normally allow for 140 characters, however a tweet with an image allows only 120 characters.
- Shorten your links using [bitly](#) or the shorten link function on your social media publishing software.
- Don't overload your followers with information heavy posts! Mix it up with a few fun posts on a related topic to keep people interested and coming back.

4. Fact Sheet

The fact sheet is designed to provide statistics and facts on a variety of physical activity topics. This information can be used in a variety of ways, including:

- Social media posts
- Bulletin boards
- Newsletter tip sections
- Presentations



You can also find more facts and stats by going to parc.ophea.net or the Public Health Agency of Canada website.

***Don't Skip Out* Materials to Support the Toolkit**

Postcard

The *Don't Skip Out* postcard is an easy way to help remind people to incorporate more physical activity into their daily routines. Consider making them available at events or including them in promotional packages that are sent out to promote your activities.

To order the free postcards, please visit parc.ophea.net/dont-skip-out.

Posters

In earlier phases of the *Don't Skip Out* project, PARC developed posters that can be put up in workplaces or public spaces to promote physical activity. Consider posting them in popular areas to raise awareness of your activity and of the importance of physical activity in general.

These posters are available to order in a downloadable electronic format or as hardcopies while quantities last.

To order the free posters, please visit parc.ophea.net/dont-skip-out.

Conclusion

An effective communications strategy is multi-pronged. Everybody listens differently and it's important to reach out using varied methods to make sure that your message is heard. Using the different pieces provided by PARC will help make your program or activity more successful and get your message out to a wider audience. Our shared goals are to increase physical activity and to make sure that Ontarians *Don't Skip Out* on their health. To help to achieve those goals we need an engaged and informed community.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do to assist you in your programming. Good luck on your physical activity initiatives!