

## Aquatic Sports and Canadians

If your community is thinking of building new sport facilities, but isn't sure if a swimming pool should be included, please seriously consider the following information – there is a need for aquatic facilities and they will be used! If your community has already decided to build a swimming pool, please use this information as well as the other fact sheets to ensure a sport friendly swimming pool is built.

### Did you know....?

- Swimming is the **third most popular sport** in Canada
- **Half of public registration** in municipal recreation is in aquatic programs
- Sport participation **benefits** health, skills development, social cohesion and economic performance
- Swimming is **the sport of choice** for female Canadians. Participation in other aquatic sports (for example, diving, lifesaving, water polo and synchronized swimming) are also collectively female dominant
- Women face many **barriers** in sport participation including discrimination and facility access (in Canada, the male sport of choice is hockey and arenas far outnumber swimming pools)
- Canadians are aging! In 1981 the median age of Canadians was 29.5; in 2005 it was 38.5. In 1981, seniors represented 9.6% of the population; this increased to 13.1% in 2005. These numbers will continue to increase as the baby boomers age
- Seniors look for **low impact, low injury** sports (which aquatic sports are)
- Participation in sport is **linked to** academic success
- Inactivity and obesity are becoming an increasing concern, especially in the younger generation. Aquatic sports provide a **fun** environment to engage in physical activity
- Leading an active lifestyle
  - slows physical decline by 50%
  - allows for **more rapid recovery** from serious illness
  - increases social networks
  - increases self confidence and independence in older adults
  - **significantly reduces** the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some forms of cancer (colon, breast and lung)
  - in childhood and adolescence, leads to increased bone mass and bone strength

For more information:  
Aquatic Sport Council – Ontario  
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- contributes to mental health – including reducing stress, depression and increasing emotional and psychological well being
- Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death in Canada for people 55 years of age and under
- 68% of drownings are associated with recreational activity in and around water
- Aquatic sport participation **provides confidence** for being in, on and around water
- Ontario drowning data suggests that **first and second generation Canadians** need aquatic training
- Aquatic sports are viewed as socially acceptable activities by new Canadians
- Aquatic sports **engage** new Canadians in their community and help them to develop relationships and feel a sense of belonging
- Fun and relaxation are ranked as the **most important benefit** of sport participation. Sport facilities provide fun and relaxation, physical health and fitness, new friends and acquaintances

Please review “Building a Case for Aquatic Sport Friendly Pools – A Guide” (accessible by visiting this link <http://www.aquaticsport.ca/case-contents.php>) for more information on the popularity of aquatic sport and the positive social impact aquatic sport has on communities.

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