

The Priceless Return on Prioritizing Outdoor Fitness

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University students are now moving and playing less at school (and in their communities) than before the pandemic, which has had immediate collateral consequences on their development, including their mental health.

But even before the pandemic, Canada's young adults were not faring well relative to other economically advanced countries in terms of mental health and happiness). For example, based off a 2020 UNICEF study, Canada ranked 31st out of 38 high-income countries on measures of well-being (defined as feeling positive and being in good mental health). Canada's ranking on physical health was also dismal—30th. In this blog post, discover how [Kinetic GPO](#) members can utilize [GameTime's](#) engaging outdoor fitness equipment to provide relief from these and other issues facing university students on a day-to-day basis.



Health Vulnerabilities of University Freedom

For many, going to university is said to be the best time of a young adult's life – More freedom, less parental supervision, and greater opportunity for exploration and adventure. However, the reality for many is that there is insufficient preparation for what it takes to care for one's own physical and mental health while juggling a new array of responsibilities. An unfortunate truth within the university setting is that a lot of time is spent sitting, whether it's while studying in the library, eating in the dining hall with

friends, or watching a hockey game, sedentary behavior is an alarming common denominator.

Based on a recent Campus Rec article, studies show that:

70% of students gain weight during university.

50% of students report their mental health to be below average.

64% of students stopped pursuing higher education due to poor mental health.

To remedy this issue, many universities invest in indoor fitness equipment. Unfortunately, these indoor gyms do not always meet the desired needs of students.



Gravitating to Outdoor Fitness Opportunity

When researching the realities of fitness, it is proven that **people are more likely to exercise longer and burn more calories when it is done in an outdoor setting.** According to psychologist Marc G. Berman, this is due to a positive physiological reaction that the body has when engaging in activity while outdoors.

As a bonus, outdoor spaces allow for vitamin D exposure from the sun, which can improve and help tackle mental health hurdles like anxiety and depression. Many students tend to spend an overwhelming majority of their days indoors due to class and other obligations, so outdoor activity is especially a benefit to children and even university students.

According to the CDC, students should get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate-intensity exercise and participate in muscle-strengthening activities at least twice a week. If you commonly hear university students say they don't have enough time for this kind of workout regimen – don't worry.

Here are some ways your campus can help incorporate more physical activity into an established daily routine:

Designate walking and biking paths throughout the campus to encourage more activity. Some colleges post signs with the distance between points or the number of steps between locations.

Set up an early riser walk or run group. Students who have early classes may be willing to get an earlier start to socialize with friends before their days gets started. Early morning exercises cause a release of endorphins which contributes to improved mood throughout the day.

Host a workshop, or class, on how to use study breaks as an exercise break. Evidence suggests some students have higher brain function when their body is in motion.

Make Healthy Habits Last

Forming consistent, healthy habits in a young adult's college years is often a difficult routine to set for oneself. That's why [GameTime](#) is working to make purposefully-designed outdoor fitness spaces based on best practice research with exercise in mind. This answers the common question of how to get more adults and students to be active outdoors, and it can increase the overall usage of outdoor recreation areas.

GameTime offers a complete outdoor fitness solution.

Eligible projects qualify for usage analysis to help college campuses determine the effectiveness of their space with real data. By using GameTime's cooperative contract, campuses now have access to a comprehensive portfolio of outdoor fitness products to improve the lives and health of its students and community alike.



Interested in seeing what outdoor gym equipment your campus can qualify for through a cooperative contract with GameTime and Kinetic GPO? Inquire with GameTime at: mark.chittock@gametime.com

ABOUT GAMETIME AND KINETIC GPO

Agencies who are registered through [Kinetic GPO](#) can use [GameTime](#)'s contract to access a breadth of products from play systems to park amenities. The contract includes top-notch playground equipment, outdoor fitness equipment, splash parks, water fountains, surfacing, bike racks, bleachers, site amenities and even installation. There is no limit and no minimum when it comes to utilizing [GameTime](#)'s competitively solicited and publicly awarded [contract](#) available through [Kinetic GPO](#)