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INSIDE AURORA: Even Better

By Scott Johnston

Based on the article on the
front page last week, it appears as if Aurora is once again hoping to be named Canada's most fit community.

This time around, it's
ParticipACTION's Community Better Challenge.
In this event, people across Canada are being asked to track their
minutes of fitness. These will be rolled
up within each community via postal code to see which municipality is the most active.

The winning community will
receive bragging rights, as well as $150k to be directed to local fitness needs.

In Aurora's case, I'm sure
$150k could go towards the inevitable annual repairs to the Leisure Complex's pool, skateboard park, or whatever else happens to be falling apart in the building when we receive the prize money.

It's a noble ambition for the
Town to be number one, and I know to some of you the effort required to participate may seem daunting, especially if you haven't stepped foot in Club Aurora since you took out your annual fitness membership in early January.

However, while it's assumed
participants in the Challenge will focus on traditional exercise like jogging, swimming and team sports, nowhere does it say specifically what activities are included or excluded, and there are many activities unique to Aurora that could give us an edge.

For example, repeated standing
up and sitting down burns calories. Therefore, by leaving your picnic table to pick up that third helping at Ribfest, you are doing your part for the Town. So count those minutes, including ones spent agonizing over the option of getting the barbeque or honey-glazed.

The lack of parking near the
GO station means that Aurorans walk untold extra kilometres each day to and from their cars. Citizens in other Canadian communities participating in the Challenge can only dream about the minutes of activity they're missing out on by their municipalities providing more than enough parking near their train stations. While one may think of this time as just commuting, let's take advantage of it.

Note that this
lack-of-parking-that-encourages-fitness-so-let's-count-those-minutes strategy
also applies to visits to the library and Cultural Centre.

There are many other things
you may not think to include in your Challenge minutes, but really should, as
collectively they consume a lot of time.

Just to name a few, these
include such things as employing erratic steering motions to dodge local pot
holes, trying in vain to eradicate your portion of Aurora's eight billion
dandelions from your yard, and chasing after your recyclables on windy pick-up
days, even if you are doing so in your pajamas and fuzzy slippers, rather than
proper athletic attire.

While not traditional, or even
intentional physical activities, the above examples do include an element of
movement. However, Aurora provides
opportunities to count minutes of activity when you're simply staying still.

Being angry and/or stressed is
not particularly healthy, but technically it does still burn calories. So make
sure you count those minutes you spend stuck forever behind people turning left
at Yonge and Wellington, or time spent fuming when you see your latest water
bill, or waiting endlessly in line at the polling station at the upcoming
Federal election, while those in front of you try to convince the polling clerk
that their old Blockbuster membership card qualifies as proper identification.

Based on the above ideas, even
the most devout couch potato should be able to contribute some minutes to the
Community Better Challenge.

If we all play our part, I
think Aurora's got this one in the bag.

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