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The Corporate Challenge — a novel approach to health

Picture the scene: a park crowded with teams of enthusiastic competitors, screaming cheerleaders and excited spectators. Is this a track and field event? Look more closely. One team is composed of a husky young woman barely out of her 'teens, a slim man in his Twenties, and a slender woman who could be anywhere from 30 to 40. They are all shouting encouragement to the fourth member of the team, a stout man in his Fifties, as he dives under a cargo net held down by four large tires. He is almost finished running an odd obstacle course which included running up ramps, dodging poles and hopping through tires. The scene is from a project, winning enthusiastic and growing support across Canada, that encourages employees to take the first step toward a healthier lifestyle and have fun doing it. It is...

The Corporate Challenge is an initiative of Health and Welfare Canada's Operation Lifestyle program, sponsored in co-operation with provincial and territorial departments of health, recreation and culture.

The mandate of Operation Lifestyle is "...to increase the number of Canadian companies which provide health promotion services to their employees and their customers". Its goal, ultimately, is to

encourage Canadians to make positive lifestyle changes — to help them to eat better, get fit, develop better health habits and lead more satisfying, productive lives.

To reach that goal, the Corporate Challenge promotes and co-ordinates a series of Corporate Challenge Events in communities throughout Canada. For each event, teams of ten to 15 members,

