



Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council
Conseil Canadien des Distributeurs de Véhicules Hors Route

Atlantic Outdoor Magazine

Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV)

By Jo-Anne Farquhar

Proof that Off-Road Riding Can Contribute to Good Health

The Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV), and its funding partners, the All-Terrain Quad Council of Canada (AAQCC), the Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada (MCC) and the Government of Nova Scotia, in 2007, contracted Jamie Burr and his team at York University's Physical Activity and Chronic Disease Unit, Faculty of Health, to conduct a national health benefit study -- to characterize the physiological demands of recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding under typical riding conditions using habitual recreational riders.

The York University team, as a result of this three year Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Health Benefit study, have now confirmed what ORV riders have been saying for years! That off-road riding is not only physically demanding but enriches their quality of life!

In its first published report, Jamie Burr and his team determined that off-road vehicle riding was found to require physical exertion and can be associated with moderate-intensity cardiovascular demand similar to other self-paced recreational sports such as golf, rock-climbing and alpine skiing.

In the health benefit study's second publication entitled "Health-related Quality of Life of Habitual Recreational Off-Road Vehicle Riders" (Health & Fitness Journal of Canada, June 2010) it was determined through this same scientific data, that overall, habitual off-road riders had "higher levels of physical functioning than Canadian population norms" and that it was possible that the higher levels of vitality, general happiness and quality of life of recreational off-road vehicle riders is a consequence of participation in the sport.

It's a well-known fact that participation in traditional forms of physical activities (i.e.: jogging, swimming, resistance training) has the ability to increase health-related quality of life. Now, through the data derived from this in-depth study, ORV riding can be added to the list of activities that can contribute to a person's health-related quality of life.

We all recognize and agree that exercise and stress relief are key to our general health. We also know that not everyone likes going to a gym, running or an indoor environment of physical fitness. There are so many people who get their energy from the outdoors and we need to recognize that what one person enjoys should

not be discounted because it doesn't fit into another person's definition of physical activity.

This certainly applies to recreational ATV and off-road motorcycle riding. The reality is, non-traditional forms of physical activity such as ORV riding are becoming more popular and those living in rural and northern Canada are choosing ORV riding as an alternate choice because traditional forms of physical activity might be impractical, unavailable or just plain unappealing.

The social aspect to ORV riding is the other part of the equation. Most recreational ORV riders join local clubs and become involved in community activities, club activities, charity events and ORV safety education programs. These same people also become involved in trail development and refurbishment because they recognize that well maintained recreational trails are vital to the safe enjoyment of outdoor activities.

With health and exercise being top of mind for most families and for the health care system in Canada, this study proves that being out on the trails on your ATV or ORM is not only fun but contributes to individual and family emotional well-being and physical fitness.

COHV and its member companies believe that the results of this study are a great resource to be shared with those who question OHVs as a healthy recreational activity. Remember "Ride Safe and Ride Smart"!

Jo-Anne Farquhar is the Director of Communications & Public Affairs for the Motorcycle & Moped Industry Council (MMIC) and the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV) and can be reached at 416-491-4449 or toll-free at 877.470.2288 or by email at jfarquhar@cohv.ca or jfarquhar@mmic.ca.

The COHV and its member companies: Arctic Cat, BRP (*Can-Am*), Honda, Kawasaki, KTM, Polaris, Suzuki and Yamaha are committed to family recreation and healthy, active life styles. www.cohv.ca