

Track One: Getting Started

Ideas in this area are simple and easy to implement. This is the place to start if you are new to implementing physical activity or wellness activities in your workplace.

- ➔ Promotional information.
- ➔ Brown bag lunch sessions.
- ➔ Active Breaks
- ➔ Individual goal setting.

“For all individuals, some activity is better than none. Physical activity is safe for almost everyone, and the health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks.”

- 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

Steps to Physical Activity - Step 4: Implementing

Promotional Information

How it works: Employers serve as a resource for employees. Provide information about the benefits of physical activity. Share the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* and the amount of recommended physical activity per week. Provide information about any upcoming programs and what employees can look forward to. And share community resources that may be available.

Whom it affects: All employees

Why it works: Employees may not have the information they need to decide to become or stay physically active. If this type of information is easily available in the workplace, employees may be willing to use it and ultimately become more physically active. Employees may also believe that the company prioritizes this issue and, thus, they may take it more seriously.

What it takes: Depending on how your company is structured, this information may be posted on a bulletin board, intranet, Web page, or made available in employee lounges, break rooms, or human resource or manager offices. Use the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans At-A-Glance* in the **Resources** section or adapt your own.

Types of information to include:

- Benefits of physical activity: <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/health/index.html>
- Physical activity guidelines for adults: <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html>
- Adding physical activity to your life: <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/getactive/index.html>
- Local resources and classes

Evaluation: A comment or suggestion box to allow feedback from employees.



Brown Bag Lunch Sessions

How it works: Invite speakers in for a brown bag “lunch and learn” session.

Whom it affects: All employees or a specific group, depending on the topic.

Why it works: Employees may not have the information they need to decide to become or stay physically active. These sessions provide the information for why it is important to be physically active and can provide ideas about how to get started or how to incorporate new activities into an existing routine.

What it takes:

- Choose a topic.
- Choose a speaker.
- Plan a date and select a location.
- Promote.

If you do not have staff in your company who can present a topic, consider someone from the community. Speakers can come from the local health department, a hospital, a fitness center, the parks and recreation department, YMCA, or other health or fitness resource in your community.

Some topics to consider:

- Introduction to the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*: Use information provided in the **Resources** section to share the recommended levels of physical activity with your employees. Be sure to include all areas of the Guidelines.
- Quick and easy fitness: How to get small bouts of physical activity throughout the day. Examples might be to park at a remote lot and walk further to the office, take the stairs instead of the elevator, or hold a walking meeting. A sample session “Quick and Easy Ways to be Physically Active” is outlined here; use the materials included in the **Tools and Templates** section to host a brown bag session or create your own.
- Physical activity and weight loss: Explain how physical activity can help employees lose weight. Examples can be the amount of physical activity needed for weight loss, activities that burn significant amounts of calories, ways to maintain weight loss, and how physical activity combined with calorie reduction is the most effective strategy for weight loss..
- Highlights of activities: Demonstrates several types of activities to help employees choose one that is right for them. Examples might include yoga, kickboxing, Zumba, or Pilates.

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Evaluation: When providing a brown bag lunch session, most of the time is spent sharing information. You can evaluate this type of activity in several different ways.

- You might be interested in the effect of the presentation. An example question might include: “What did you like best about the presentation?” or be tailored the questions for specific materials to determine if anything was learned.
- Consider asking about the materials and whether they were useful, or if the presentation was easy to understand.
- If you want to evaluate how the meeting worked, you might ask “Was the time allotted for this information too much, too little or just right?”
- You may also want to ask about the meeting space: “Was the location convenient? Was there enough space? Was the room temperature comfortable?”
- Consider tracking how many people participated, or how well they liked the information on a scale from 1 to 5. All of this information could be obtained through a 1-page feedback form completed during the last 5 minutes of the presentation. An example feedback form can be found in the *Resources* section.

Active Breaks

Implementing active breaks in your workplace is a way to incorporate some physical activity into the workday. It is also easy to do during work hours. For companies where employees may feel “chained to their desks” it can be a way to get them moving during work hours.

Encouraging active breaks can be customized for your work environment. Employers can encourage employees to take a 10-minute walk outside during their lunch hour or coffee break. Promoting the use of public transportation can result in daily walks to and from transit stops.

Employees with disabilities or medical or mobility issues should be encouraged to take active breaks that are suitable for them. For example, employees who use wheelchairs can go around the block at lunch with co-workers.

Encourage employees to team with co-workers in supporting fundraising events, such as a run or walk for charity. Employees can train daily or weekly during their breaks. This approach leads to team-building in the workplace.

Consider developing a Lunch Hour Physical Activity program. Or choose two or three times that work for several groups of employees, such as right before or after work. Try to choose an activity that employees can do on their own time as well.

Components of Physical Fitness

According to the *Physical Activity Guidelines*, physical fitness is the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue, and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and respond to emergencies. Physical fitness includes a number of components, including aerobic or cardiorespiratory endurance, skeletal muscle endurance, power and strength, flexibility, balance, speed of movement, and body composition. Aerobic activity is when the body's large muscles move in a rhythmic manner for a sustained period. Examples are walking, running or bicycling. Aerobic activity improves cardio-respiratory fitness.

Strength is an aspect of physical fitness that is the ability of a muscle or muscle group to exert force.

Flexibility is an aspect of physical fitness that is the range of motion possible at a joint. Flexibility exercises enhance the ability of a joint to move through its full range of motion.

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EXAMPLE

Quick and Easy Ways to be Physically Active at Work

Time: 30 minutes

Supplies needed: PPT Presentation

Rationale: Lack of time is one of the reasons many people are not active on a regular basis. This session will show employees quick and easy ways to fit physical activity into their day.

- 1) 5 minutes: Give a brief overview of the benefits of regular physical activity and provide the 2008 *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* key guidelines for adults. Introduce the idea of meeting the guidelines each week, in part by activities that can be done at work. Highlights the following:
 - 2 ½ hours per week of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity or 1 ¼ hours of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both. These can be spread out throughout the week and should be in bouts of at least 10 minutes at a time
 - Muscle strengthening activities for all major muscle groups at least 2 days per week
- 2) 10-15 minutes: Continue to build the idea of accumulating physical activity throughout the day to a total of 2 ½ hours per week. Distinguish between doing at least 10 minute bouts of physical activity and simply beginning to move more throughout the day, which does not count toward meeting the guidelines. Depending on where your wellness program is, you may provide examples of both types of activities, but keep the benefits clear to your employees.



To move on a more regular basis:

- Print to a different printer. Try printing to a printer located further away from your work area. Consider printing one floor up or down and take the stairs.
- Take the stairs rather than the elevator. Every time you change floors, use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Park at a remote parking lot and walk to the office. The further away you park, the more activity you can include in your day.
- Walk and talk. Have a walking meeting or step in place while talking on the phone.
- Start meetings with 5-10 minutes of stretching or activity, or add in stretch or activity time mid-way through long meetings.
- Do 60 to 90-second standing breaks for every hour you sit.
- Keep a set of hand weights by your desk. Use them 3-4 times a day for muscle strengthening.

To accumulate at least ten minutes of physical activity to help meet the Guidelines:

- Organize walking meetings – keep a brisk, walking pace for at least 10 minutes
- Get off one stop early. If you take public transportation to or from work, get off one stop early and walk the rest.
- Use your breaks – take a 10-15 minute walk with a colleague during your break or lunch time
- Consider a lunch hour physical activity program.

- 3) 5-10 minutes: Allow participants to add additional ideas of how to fit physical activity into their day. Encourage employees to add to both lists. Show that leadership is supportive of their ideas.
- 4) 2-3 minutes: Evaluation. Have participants fill out the 1-page feedback form. Ask them to recall the physical activity recommendations.
- 5) Follow up: Post a copy of the Physical Activity Guidelines At-A-Glance in a well traveled area in your office. Also post the list of recommended activities your employees can do during the workday, highlighting the ones the employees have identified.

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Get Moving with an Active Break

Below are some ideas that employers can suggest to employees for active breaks. Remember just 10 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity counts toward meeting the guidelines.

Take an active break: During your regular or impromptu breaks, go for a short walk outside or indoors, every day. Try to increase the distance you walk over time.

In an afternoon slump? Get up and get moving! Go for a walk during your coffee break. If you can take a 10-minute brisk walk, it will help clear your head and help you meet the physical activity recommendations.

Many of your co-workers probably feel the afternoon slump too. Get together with your co-workers to come up with strategies to increase your activity levels. Not all activities will count toward your recommended weekly level of activity, but remember, some activity is better than no activity. Here are two easy ideas to get you started:

- A group walk around the office building (including taking some stairs) to liven things up.
- A walk-and-talk meeting in place of a sitting meeting. Instead of sitting in a meeting room, walk around the block to discuss your business

You may not be able to meet the recommended levels all at once. It may take some small adjustments to increase your daily level of physical activity. So if you need to, start out slowly, but remember each small step adds up.

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Individual Goal Setting

How it works: The company provides information about how employees can create individual physical activity goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-oriented (SMART).

Whom it affects: All employees who actively participate.

Why it works: Employees receive basic health coaching and are able to receive tools to help them make healthy and informed decisions around physical activity, nutrition and general wellness.

What it takes: A series of classes with either internal resources (e.g., company nurse, occupational therapist) or external resources (e.g., local health department official, Red Cross/Y trainer, etc.) for creating individual wellness goals. The first session focuses on SMART objectives. Subsequent sessions can focus on physical activity goal setting, nutrition goal setting, and other wellness goals. An *Individual Wellness Goal Setting* template is provided in the **Resources** section. If employees are willing to share their objectives, try to incorporate them in other company activities.

Evaluation: At the end of the program (e.g., 1 year), have the participants come together to share their successes. Share with the larger company audience.

