

Track Two: Building Momentum

Ideas in this track are more complex, but still easy to implement. The focus is on helping individual employees increase their level of physical activity by creating more opportunities to be active during the day.

- ➔ Partner with a local fitness center.
- ➔ Healthy stairwells.
- ➔ Bicycling commuter program.
- ➔ Promote local walking paths or trails.

“Adults gain most of these health benefits when they do the equivalent of at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity (2 hours and 30 minutes) each week. Adults gain additional and more extensive health and fitness benefits with even more physical activity. Muscle-strengthening activities also provide health benefits and are an important part of an adult’s overall physical activity plan.”

- 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

Partner with a Local Fitness Center

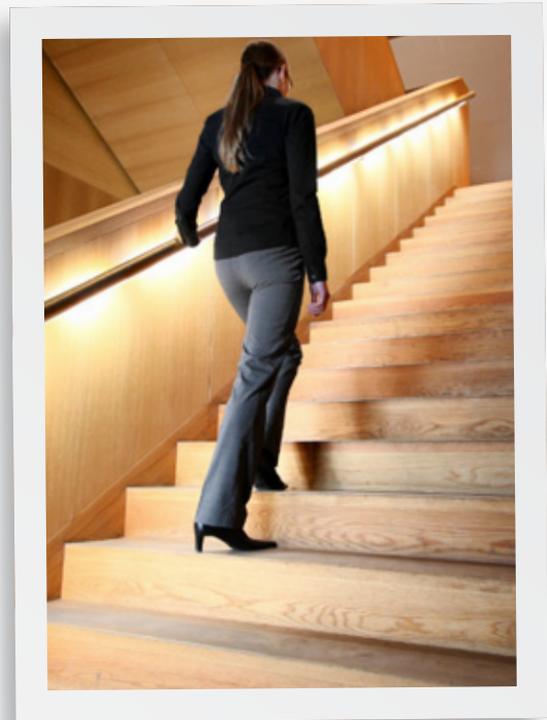
How it works: The company negotiates a discount for employees (and perhaps dependents) at one or more local fitness centers.

Whom it affects: All employees and possibly dependents

Why it works: Employees have the opportunity to use a fitness center for a reduced rate and this gives employees an opportunity to be more physically active outside the work environment.

What it takes: Depending on the size of the company, the fitness center may not charge the company for providing a reduced rate. If the company can guarantee a certain number of employees will sign up, the fitness center may provide a group discount. However, if that is not possible, the company may have to subsidize the reduced rate use for employees. Consider a sliding scale reimbursement to reward those who actively attend the fitness center (*e.g.*, 50 visits per year = 50% of the cost covered). Additional resources are available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/fitnessclub/index.htm>

Evaluation: After a set period (*e.g.*, 1 year), determine how many employees used this program. This information can be gathered from the fitness center(s). Re-evaluate this program on a regular basis to see if it is still being used or if additional centers need to be added to keep up with demand.



Steps to Physical Activity - Step 4: Implementing

Healthy Stairwells

How it works: Stairwells are opened and made safe and attractive to make them more accessible and appealing for employees to use. Then, by using a simple marketing plan, employees are encouraged to use the stairwells.

Whom it affects: All employees

Why it works: Taking the stairs is one easy way to be more physically active. At work, employees are often presented with a choice between taking the stairs and taking an elevator or escalator. Choosing the stairs instead of the elevator is a quick way for people to add physical activity to their day. Although it may not count toward the 10-minute bouts of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity, it still gets individuals to think about choices they can make to become more physically active.

What it takes: One reason employees may not use the stairs at work is because they perceive them as unattractive or unsafe or they have just become accustomed to using elevators. Depending on the current state of the stairs in your building, several actions may be needed. However, before implementing anything, be certain to work with the building management to ensure you are able to use the stairwells.

One way to make the stairwells more appealing is to use artwork that matters to your employees. Consider having a rotating gallery of artwork created by your employees' children. Indicate the name and age of the child as well as the employee's name. Rotate the art every few months and hold a "gallery opening" with each set of new artwork.

In addition, consider partnering with a local school to have students create artwork for the stairwells. Each stair landing or floor can have artwork from a different grade (first graders on first floor, second graders on second floor, etc.). Invite the students for the opening of the "gallery." Invite the local media to cover the event, focusing on both the community partnership with the school and your company's promotion of the arts, as well as your company's commitment to employee wellness.

- Unlock all stairwell doors. Make sure no one can get locked in or out of the stairwell. If for some reason one or more floors need to be locked or have restricted access, post this information clearly so employees know which floors they can access.
- Make sure the stairs are in a safe condition. If the stairs are damaged, repair them. If the surface is uneven, make alterations such as adding carpet to the stairs. Consider adding rubber treads or another surface that will increase the safety of the stairs. Ensure there is adequate light in the stairwell.
- Paint the walls and add artwork or motivational signs. This makes the stairs more appealing for employees. Motivational signs can be found at: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/motivational_signs.htm#MessageIdeas
- Consider adding music to the stairwell. This also makes taking the stairs more appealing for employees.

Evaluation: Once changes are made to your stairwell, a simple way to judge the effectiveness of the project is to evaluate the use of the stairwell. You may be interested in how many employees have started to use the stairs because of the changes, compared with before you made the improvements. If you want to compare, be certain to track usage prior to the changes to the stairwell so you can make a more accurate comparison. For ideas on tracking use visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/tracking.htm>

For more information on healthy stairwells, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/index.htm>

Steps to Physical Activity - Step 4: Implementing

Bicycling Commuter Program

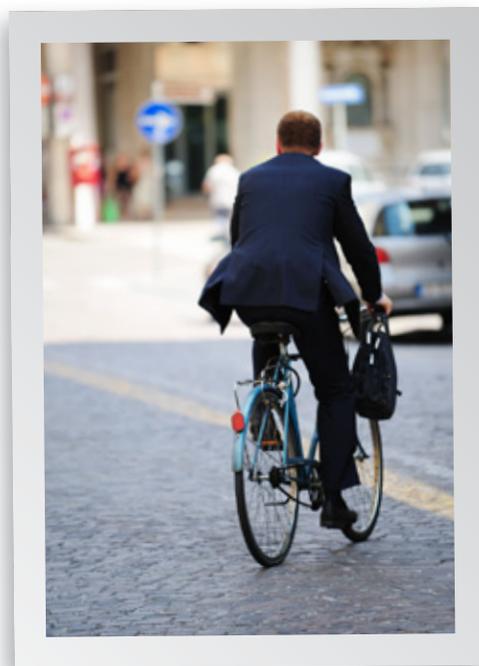
How it works: A Bicycling Commuter Program encourages employees to ride their bikes to work. It should provide information on cycling and health. The program can provide tips on safe routes to work and how to ride in bad weather. It can also teach roadside bicycle maintenance.

Whom it affects: All employees who own bicycles.

Why it works: A Bicycling Commuter Program allows employees to fit a workout into their busy workday. The program also allows for decompression after a full day of work. It also allows the employee to avoid parking hassles and costs. It is a low cost, environmentally friendly, and physically beneficial means of transportation.

What it takes: The program requires convenient, secure, well-lit, bike parking located near a main entrance. Ideally this area is covered, but this is not always a possibility. Accessible changing facilities, showers and lockers are also helpful, if possible. Your company can partner with a local bike shop to offer bicycle proficiency training, cycle maintenance workshops, and bike rentals. Incentives can help promote participation among employees. Rewards can include helmets, reflective vests, and other cycling items, as well as discounts at local bike shops. Competitions can be created for individuals or between groups such as divisions, departments, or floors.

Evaluation: Survey employees who participate in the program to see if the physical changes made were appropriate and if additional changes are needed. Ask them to record number of hours, miles, or days they ride per week to and from work, and use this information to promote the program to others.



Steps to Physical Activity - Step 4: Implementing

Promote Local Walking Paths or Trails

How it works: Locate walking paths or trails that are near the company and promote the use of the trails to employees.

Whom it affects: This activity has the potential to impact all employees as well as the company's image as the local community sees the company using local resources.

Why it works: Encouraging employees to walk regularly helps to get them in the habit of regular physical activity. Providing a resource for where they can walk near the worksite takes it one step further and allows them to know where to go.

What it takes: Find local parks close to your office or call the local municipal parks department to find parks nearby or if there are specific trails or paths for walking. Request maps if available or use free mapping software (*e.g.*, Google Maps or Map My Run) to create maps of safe walking routes around your worksite. With the Wellness Committee, walk the paths with the maps before sharing with employees and others to ensure accuracy and safety. Ensure distance is indicated on the maps, especially if there are different routes. In addition, consider rating trails on level of difficulty (if appropriate). Share the map with employees through e-mail or posting on a bulletin board. If close to your building, promote use of path for "Walk and Talk Meetings." Encourage use during lunch or breaks. Host a monthly or quarterly company walk on the path, and provide trail maintenance and clean up during these walks.

If pre-existing paths are not available, use a Walkability Assessment to find an appropriate place for your employees to walk:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/walkability/index.htm>

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/ped/walkingchecklist.pdf>

Evaluation: Twice a year, poll employees to gauge how many use the maps and paths and how often.

For more information on walking paths:

http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/WalkingMapGuide/Texts/WalkingMapGuide_lowrez.pdf

