



Physical Activity in the Workplace  
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## 101 LOW COST IDEAS FOR WORKSITE WELLNESS

The following ideas for worksite wellness were developed by a group of employees brainstorming about how to integrate worksite wellness into their companies with limited resources. Many of these ideas have been found to help employees of all physical abilities maintain their health.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

1. Encourage employees to walk to a specific location and log individual miles for incentive prizes.
2. Participate in community walks (i.e., Heart, Cancer, March of Dimes). Ask company to sponsor employee participants or to match employee contributions.
3. Develop indoor and outdoor wellness trails accessible to employees of all abilities. Convert stairwells to walking areas by increasing the lighting and adding colorful posters.
4. Develop walking maps. Measure the distance in halls and around the building for setting walking goals.
5. Repair and maintain sidewalks and paths around the worksite.
6. Encourage managers to hold walking meetings when meeting with a small number of employees.
7. Offer flexible lunch periods/breaks to encourage individual, group or “buddy” walks.
8. Offer incentives for distance parking and for employees who walk or bicycle to work.
9. Promote a stair climbing competition.
10. Conduct an “Avoid the Elevator Campaign.”
11. Suggest that employees stretch for one minute before work each day. Announce a one minute stretch on the PA system.
12. Encourage physical activity breaks during long meetings and conferences.
13. Identify places within the worksite or around the building for physical activities.
14. Start a running club, biking club, in-line skaters club, or line dancing club.
15. Encourage employer-sponsored youth athletic teams, along with employee volunteer coaches.
16. Have a Goal of the Week or Month (i.e., I will exercise every day for a week). Keep a chart of weekly or monthly exercise goals in the office.
17. Negotiate corporate discounts for health club memberships.
18. Place physical fitness bulletin board(s) in strategic area(s).
19. Advertise exercise equipment swap.
20. Purchase cassette players and tapes to be borrowed by employees.
21. Invite shoe consultants from retail shoe stores or shoe manufacturers to be on site for a day.
22. Promote a bike helmet fitting day.
23. Provide bicycle racks or fenced-in area for bicyclists in well-lit section of the property.

### NUTRITION

24. Ask vending machine company to add healthy foods.
25. Use vending machine commissions to help fund wellness programs.
26. Work with vending machine company and cafeteria to post calories and nutrient contents and amounts on vending machines, lunchroom tables, etc.
27. Place incentive stickers on low fat items in vending machines and on healthy choice selections in cafeteria.
28. Develop a cookbook of employees’ low fat recipes, exchange recipes, and feature healthy employee recipe periodically on cafeteria menu.
29. Hold recipe contests.
30. Celebrate “free fruit day” – give apples away.
31. Have a home grown fruit and vegetable exchange.
32. Request that cafeteria vendors serve low fat, low cholesterol, nutritious foods.
33. Encourage fruit and vegetable day in the cafeteria.
34. Identify one heart healthy snack idea daily in the cafeteria.
35. Add healthy snacks to snack cart (i.e., fruit, granola bars).
36. Request that cafeteria foods be made from 1% milk instead of whole milk.
37. Hold low fat cooking demonstrations in cafeteria.
38. Suggest that employees keep a list of healthy, low fat snacks in their cars.
39. Encourage employees to bring yogurt, fruits and no fat toppings to work.
40. Change a donut break to a bagel and low fat topping break at meetings. Plan company functions with heart healthy eating choices in mind.
41. Conduct support group for weight management. Sponsor company weight reduction programs.
42. Offer information on packing healthy brown bag lunches.
43. Hold employee luncheon – bring a healthy lunch to pass, and share the recipe.
44. Encourage employees to bring crock pots of heart healthy soup and share with others.
45. Promote “eat your greens” on St. Patrick’s Day.
46. Share mocktails (non-alcoholic beverages) recipes.
47. Offer kitchen area accessible to all employees.
48. Offer reasonable prices for healthy snacks (i.e., fresh fruit, yogurt), meals and salad bars.
49. Put up food pyramid charts in break room/cafeteria areas.
50. Have office water coolers readily available.
51. Offer videos, books and brochures that can be borrowed and exchanged among employees.

## **STRESS MANAGEMENT**

(Exercise and good nutrition are great stress-busters.)

52. Offer chair massages at health fairs.
53. Take stress relief breaks (i.e., meditation, walking, close the door). Encourage employees to take time out for themselves.
54. Suggest that employees volunteer to take a pet from a shelter for a walk.
55. Encourage laughter to reduce stress at the worksite.
56. Provide employees with relaxation tapes.
57. E-mail computer break tips.
58. Address emotional and spiritual concerns with self-help books that can be borrowed or exchanged.
59. Get involved with community volunteer activities.
60. Encourage employees to mentor a child.
61. Encourage staff to take meal breaks.
62. Encourage self-confidence and positive outlooks.
63. Promote a "Call-A-Friend" campaign. Provide social support.
64. Hold a secret pal drawing. During the month, each employee is encouraged to do nice things for his or her secret pal (i.e., e-mail messages, fax messages with directions to a healthy snack, secret message left on a chair, special gifts, such as fat free candy or home grown flowers).

## **TOBACCO**

65. Subsidize nicotine patches.
66. Promote smoke-free buildings/meeting rooms.
67. Lower health insurance costs for non-smokers.
68. Provide health information focused around monthly or seasonal events (i.e., Great American Smoke Out).
69. Provide on-site smoking cessation programs.
70. Reimburse employees for enrolling in smoking cessation programs.
71. Give a \$50 U.S. Savings Bond to expectant mothers who agree to not smoke and avoid alcohol during pregnancy.

## **PROGRAM SUPPORT**

72. Provide incentives: T-shirts, caps, aprons. Arrange paid time off.
73. Hold contests: "Wellness Project of the Month" or "Set Your Goal" competition, employee/management and interdepartmental challenges, health trivia game on computer with prizes to the winners, and other fun worksite competitions.
74. Set up displays in the reception area/lobby. Display health posters in employees' lunch/meeting rooms.
75. Provide bulletin boards for health information exchange and for people to write milestones they have achieved in health (i.e., New Year's resolution, miles walked, pounds lost).
76. Announce and publicize a monthly health theme.
77. Conduct recognition activities for employees making efforts at healthier lifestyles (i.e., bulletin board listings, healthy incentives, discounts to health clubs). Send employees personally-signed letters from CEO congratulating their healthy behaviors. Promote success stories/employee of the month. Recognize the coordinator of wellness activities.

78. Kick off "lunch and learn" programs. Use videos and guest speakers on various health topics at lunchtime. Urge employees to bring healthy brown bag lunch.
79. Include children of employees in a drawing contest with health as the theme.
80. Provide child care so that parents can participate in wellness activities.
81. Have company health practitioner set a time (weekly/monthly) to check blood pressures, body fat and weights.
82. Provide flu shots at the worksite or make schedules of community clinics available.
83. Provide one-on-one counseling for high risk employees and people with disabilities by establishing wellness mentoring programs.
84. Develop a brainstorming team for ideas and to help with wellness activities.
85. Conduct survey to assess what topics employees want to pursue.
86. At meetings:
  - Start with a stretch, and take a relaxation break in the middle.
  - Conduct a wellness activity.
  - Recognize an employee birthday or other special event.
  - Vary meeting formats. Include surprises for good ideas.
  - Allow staff members to occasionally lead a meeting.
87. Provide information on back care (i.e., correct way to lift, stretch and exercise for strength).
88. Partner with other local organizations to sponsor an event. Share expenses and other resources. Network/ collaborate with other businesses for discounts at health clubs.
89. Obtain book company discounts.
90. Rotate departmental responsibility, and utilize college interns to assist with wellness projects/events.
91. Gain senior management support by showing a good example.
92. Create a wellness newsletter. Highlight healthy lifestyle success stories.
93. Conduct employee health fairs with wellness giveaways (i.e., gift certificates to farmers market, fruit stand).
94. Provide health information (i.e., fact sheets) for employees to take home. Distribute safety information before long holiday weekends.
95. Conduct retirement seminar – wellness for retirement.
96. Conduct "Wash Your Hands" campaign.
97. Insert health information in paychecks (payroll stuffers).
98. Publish weekly health tips on internal e-mail.
99. Attend classes on positive management styles.
100. Change and clean filters on air conditioners more frequently.
101. Track illness in a department, and alert employees by providing precaution and prevention tips.