



122 LOW-COST OR NO-COST IDEAS FOR WORKSITE WELLNESS

The following ideas for worksite wellness can be implemented with limited resources. Many of these ideas have been found to help employees of all physical abilities maintain their health. However, each of the ideas must then be developed with your specific workplace environment in mind.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

1. Encourage employees to walk to a specific location and log individual miles (rewards and use of a wearable devices are optional but worth considering if you have the budget).
2. Participate in community walks (i.e., American Diabetes Association Step Out or walks for heart disease or cancer). Ask your company to sponsor employee participants or to match employee contributions.
3. Map out indoor and outdoor walking trails accessible to employees of all abilities. Measure the distance in halls and around the building to help employees set walking goals. Measure in both distance and in number of steps. See if you can get permission to stencil the measurements on the wall (or at least put a sign up to let people know).
4. Encourage managers to hold standing meetings when gathering with employees. With smaller groups, a walking meeting might be a great alternative.
5. Offer flexible lunch periods and breaks to encourage individual, group or “buddy” walks.
6. Offer incentives for distance parking and for employees who walk or bicycle to work.
7. Promote a stairwell climbing competition. Convert stairwells to walking areas by improving the lighting and adding of colorful posters.
8. Suggest that employees stretch for one minute before work each day. Encourage continued stretching every hour.
9. Encourage physical activity breaks during long meetings and conferences. If possible, set up one conference room with a taller table to encourage standing during the conference meeting (taller chairs can be added for those who choose not to stand).
10. Identify places within the worksite or around the building for physical activities. Then promote these to employees often.
11. Start a running, biking, walking, yoga, or dance group.
12. Encourage employer-sponsored youth athletic teams, along with employee volunteer coaches.
13. Have a goal of the week or month (i.e., “I will be more physically active every day for a week”). Keep a chart of weekly or monthly goals in the office.
14. Negotiate corporate discounts for health club memberships.



15. Place physical fitness bulletin boards in strategic areas.
16. Advertise an exercise equipment swap.
17. Purchase fitness videos that employees may borrow.
18. Invite consultants from retail shoe stores or shoe manufacturers to be on-site for a day.
19. Promote a bike helmet fitting day.
20. Provide bicycle racks or a fenced-in area for bicyclists in a well-lit section of the property.
21. Consider joining a corporate challenge or having electronic gaming competitions that encourage physical activity (think Wii Boxing or Dance Dance Revolution).
22. Add two times per month for 30 minutes in the middle of the day for recess. Have balls for 4 square, hula hoops, footballs to throw around, basketball and goal, etc.

NUTRITION

23. Ask your vending machine company to stock only healthier foods. Write it into contract when possible. They will try to push back. If unhealthy snacks are continued to be added, require higher prices and placement on the bottom section of the machine.
24. Use vending machine commissions to help fund wellness programs.
25. Work with your vending machine company and cafeteria to post calories and nutrient contents and amounts on vending machines, lunchroom tables, etc.
26. Place incentive stickers on low-fat items in vending machines and on healthy choice selections in the cafeteria.
27. Develop a cookbook of employees' low-fat recipes, exchange recipes and feature healthy employee recipes periodically on the cafeteria menu.
28. Hold recipe contests. Make these contests more about simple (3 ingredients), quick and healthy.
29. Celebrate "Free Fruit Day" and give away what is in season at that time.
30. Have a homegrown fruit and vegetable exchange.
31. Request that cafeteria vendors serve low-fat, low-cholesterol, nutritious foods.
32. Encourage "Fruit and Vegetable Day" in the cafeteria.
33. Identify one heart-healthy snack idea daily in the cafeteria.
34. Request that cafeteria foods be made from 1 percent milk instead of whole.
35. Hold low-fat cooking demonstrations.



36. Suggest that employees keep a list of healthy, low-fat snacks in their cars to use when shopping. Encourage employees to bring yogurt, fruits and fat-free condiments to work.
37. Have a healthy snack taste test.
38. Plan Company functions with heart-healthy eating choices in mind. When possible, make policy that company sponsored meals will be low calorie and heart healthy.
39. Conduct a support group for weight management. Sponsor company weight reduction programs.
40. Offer information on packing healthy brown bag lunches (good financial fitness program, too).
41. Hold an employee luncheon pitch in — bring a healthy lunch to pass and share the recipe.
42. Encourage employees to bring crock pots of heart-healthy soup and share with others.
43. Promote an “Eat Your Greens” campaign on St. Patrick’s Day.
44. Share mocktail (non-alcoholic beverage) recipes.
45. Offer a kitchen area accessible to all employees.
46. Offer reasonable prices for healthy snacks (i.e., fresh fruit or yogurt), meals and salad bars.
47. Place myplate.gov charts in break room and cafeteria areas.
48. Have office water coolers readily available. Put vending machines in remote areas.
49. Have employees keep track of their grocery list for two weeks and offer prizes for those who consistently buy healthy food options.
50. Offer nutrition-related movies, books and brochures that can be borrowed and exchanged among employees.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

51. Offer chair massages at health fairs. If budget allows, offer chair massage monthly to “top performers.”
52. Take stress relief breaks (i.e., meditation, walking or just closing the office door). Encourage employees to take time for themselves. 1-2 minutes every 20 minutes is recommended.
53. Suggest that employees volunteer to take a pet from a shelter for a walk.
54. Encourage laughter to reduce stress at the worksite.
55. Provide employees with relaxation music.
56. E-mail computer break tips.



57. Address emotional and spiritual concerns with self-help books that can be borrowed or exchanged.
58. Get involved with community volunteer activities.
59. Encourage employees to mentor a child.
60. Encourage staff to take meal breaks.
61. Send out daily quotes with encouraging messages and have employees share their favorites to use in the following days.
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 a secret message left on a chair or special gifts, such as fat-free candy or homegrown flowers).
65. Promote Employee Assistance Program, if you have one. EAP’s will also be willing to conduct onsite programs.
66. Know what are leading causes of stress and add programs to help employees reduce their stress levels or cope with them (top stressors are financial, legal, family issues, and time management).

TOBACCO

67. Promote smoke-free buildings and meeting rooms. Make a policy that does not allow for smoking on company grounds and in company vehicles.
68. Provide health information focused on monthly or seasonal events (i.e., the Great American Smokeout).
69. Provide on-site smoking cessation programs.
70. Reimburse employees for enrolling in smoking cessation programs.
71. Provide a tobacco savings calculator tool and have employees see what they could do with money they spend on tobacco each year.
72. Give small gift cards to those who agree to not smoke and avoid alcohol.
73. Utilize 1-800 QUIT NOW – a free program.
74. Utilize the Wellness Council of Indiana’s QUIT Now Tool!



PROGRAM SUPPORT

75. Provide incentives, such as T-shirts, caps or aprons. Arrange paid time off. Consider “Civil Service Days” to encourage employees to volunteer their time in the communities.
76. Hold contests: “Wellness Project of the Month” or “Set Your Goal” competition, employee/management and interdepartmental challenges, health trivia game with prizes, and other fun worksite competitions.
77. Set up displays in the reception area or lobby. Display wellness posters in employees’ lunch or meeting rooms. Consider adding newsletter to bathroom stalls and urinals (Potty Press).
78. Send health related e-cards (found on free sites like the Centers for Disease Control website). Topics include tobacco cessation, heart health, cold and flu, and other health related topics.
79. When hosting team competitions, have the winning teams’ supervisor or manager prepare a healthy meals or snack for employees.
80. Host a lunch and learn on disaster preparedness plan for the company in emergency situations like earthquakes, active shooter and other security measures.
81. Provide bulletin boards for health information exchange and for people to record milestones they have achieved in health (i.e., New Year’s resolution, miles walked or pounds lost).
82. Announce and publicize a monthly health theme or National Health Observance.
83. Conduct recognition activities for employees making efforts at healthier lifestyles (i.e., bulletin board listings, healthy incentives or discounts to health clubs). Send employees personally-signed letters from the CEO congratulating their healthy behaviors. Promote success stories or employees of the month. Recognize the coordinator of wellness activities.
84. Kick off “lunch and learn” programs. Use videos and guest speakers on various health topics at lunchtime. Urge employees to bring a healthy brown bag lunch.
85. Include children of employees in a drawing contest with health as the theme.
86. Provide child care so that parents can participate in wellness activities.
87. Have a company health practitioner set a time (weekly or monthly) to check blood pressure, body fat and weight.
88. Provide flu shots at the worksite or make schedules of community clinics available.
89. Provide one-on-one counseling for high-risk employees and people with disabilities by establishing wellness mentoring programs.
90. Develop a brainstorming team for ideas and to help with wellness activities.
91. Conduct a survey to assess what topics employees want to pursue.



92. 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 prizes for good ideas. • Allow staff members to occasionally lead a meeting.
93. Provide information on back care (i.e., the correct way to lift, stretch and exercise for strength).
94. Partner with other local organizations to sponsor an event. Share expenses and resources. Network with other businesses for discounts at health clubs.
95. Obtain company discounts.
96. See if there are ways to receive an employer price discount at restaurants nearby that serve healthier items than other restaurants.
97. See what opportunities are for grocery shopping discounts.
98. Have a grocery store shopping training. Learn how to shop healthy at a grocery store.
99. Rotate departmental responsibility and ask interns to assist with wellness projects and events.
100. Gain senior management support by showing a good example.
101. Create a wellness newsletter. Highlight healthy lifestyle success stories.
102. Conduct employee health fairs with wellness giveaways (i.e., gift certificates to a farmers market or fruit stand).
103. Provide health information (such as fact sheets) for employees to take home. Distribute safety information before long holiday weekends.
104. Conduct a retirement seminar focusing on wellness for retirement.
105. Conduct a “Wash Your Hands” campaign.
106. Publish weekly health tips via e-mail.
107. Attend classes on positive management styles.
108. Train your supervisors and managers on the benefit of employee health and its effect on employee performance. Make the health of their employees a part of their management performance review, if possible.
109. Change and clean filters on air conditioners more frequently.
110. Track illness in a department and alert employees by providing precaution and prevention tips.



BONUS IDEAS

111. Consider bringing a local estate attorney in to the office to speak to your employees about creating a will.
112. Your local bank or credit union will be able to speak to your employees on managing debt, paying off credit cards, school loans, how to buy a car, how to get a mortgage, balancing your bank statement, and best practices for using a health savings account.
113. Financial planners are available for retirement planning. Your retirement administrator would also be able to speak on this topic.
114. Other topics on financial fitness include managing child support and alimony, saving for Christmas all year, low cost ways to take a dream vacation, and paying for child care.
115. Consider having a dermatologist come in to discuss the effects of sun on your skin.
116. As you evolve, turn your challenges into longer events, like a six month or one year steps challenge for a larger prize drawing (if you want to go big – Walk to Hawaii with a trip as the prize!).
117. Have an expert come in to discuss mindfulness techniques to cope with stress.
118. Conduct an ergonomics analysis and provide solutions.
119. Offer “workstation workout” videos.
120. Conduct a TED Talk sessions and watch a TED talk video and discuss it as a group.
121. Align your corporate social responsibility (planned giving) to your wellness strategy.

