



Healthy Workplace Toolkit

The WorkWell Program
of Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
is made possible
with support from the US DHSS Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention
Steps to a HealthierUS Cooperative Agreement Program
and Office on Women's Health ASIST2010 Program

April, 2008



ABOUT THIS PACKET

This packet was designed to give employers tested ideas, resources, and guidelines for workplace health promotion programs. Questions about this resource or the **WorkWell Healthy Workplace Designation Program** can be directed to Kateri Wimsett at 360-867-2516 or wimsetk@co.thurston.wa.us

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Workforce Health Promotion:

- Employee Health Advisory Group or Action Team Page 3-4

Physical Activity at Work:

- Active Commuting Page 5
- Accessible and Inviting Stairwells Page 6
- Benefits, Incentives and Gym Use Page 7
- Flexible Work Hours Page 8
- Physical Activity Breaks Page 9
- Physical Activity Outdoors Page 10

Healthy Eating during Work Hours:

- Brown Bag Meals and Snacks Page 11
- Beverage Alternatives Page 12
- Fruit and Vegetables at Employee Gatherings and Celebrations Page 13
- Cold Vending Page 14
- Meeting and Event Food Page 15
- Healthy Vending Criteria Page 16

Additional Resources:

- Other Toolkits Page 17
- Links to Workforce Health Information Page 18

WORKFORCE HEALTH PROMOTION

Idea: Employee Health Advisory Group or Action Team

Cost: \$

Time/Effort: 

Employers should strongly consider using a workgroup to plan and implement changes that impact employee health. Employer-supported workgroups can take many forms. In some workplaces, the group is used to plan change but delegates key tasks for carrying out changes to other employees. Other workplaces benefit most by using a group that plans change and coordinates employee health-related programs or activities. Workgroups can be short-term or more permanent. The group may focus on a specific initiative/health topic or be more general in nature.

Guidelines to consider when forming a group focused on workforce health include:

- **Appoint members.** When leadership or senior management makes membership appointments, even if participation is voluntary, this shows the employer's commitment to change.
- **Have a clear purpose.** Leadership or senior management should work with members to develop shared expectations about the role and responsibilities of the group. Members need to clearly understand what they are helping the employer achieve.
- **On the clock, during work hours.** Employees who are allowed to serve on the group should be paid for time spent in meetings or coordinating activities. The group should be encouraged to hold meetings during normal work hours, if possible.
- **Diverse membership.** Try to recruit members for the group that represent different types of employees working for the organization. If there are several buildings or locations where people work, attempt to also include members from these worksites.
- **Require progress notes.** Meetings should be recorded in notes or minutes. This provides a way for leadership to stay informed of activities and provides a record for members to review.
- **Regular meetings.** Meetings should be held regularly, no less than once a month for longer-term or more permanent groups. A regular meeting schedule increases the ability of members and their supervisors to plan ahead to allow attendance.
- **Focus on shorter-term success.** Groups should understand what the ultimate outcome of their effort will be, but projects or activities should be broken down to what can be accomplished within 3-6 months. Too often, employers and groups attempt to implement changes that take more time or effort than they have to give. Setting goals that are reasonable or modest can improve chances of success and show employees and leadership that positive steps are being taken.

- **Develop a Plan.** Preparing an action plan is one way to outline priorities and tasks necessary for accomplishing them. Action plans often include the objective or goal that the group is trying to obtain, steps that need to be taken to reach the goal, a listing of responsibilities, associated costs or resource needs, and expected results from the effort.

Resources

Committee Workbook

HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Toolkit

North Carolina State Health Plan

www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Resources/wwtoolkit/committee.html

Absolute Advantage Magazine – Free Issue

The Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA)

See Free Reports Section

www.welcoa.org/freeresources/

Healthy Workforce 2010: An Essential Health Promotion Sourcebook for Employers, Large and Small

See Section IV and Resource List

Partnership for Prevention

www.prevent.org/content/view/29/40/

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DURING WORK HOURS

Idea: Active Commuting

Cost: \$\$\$

Time/Effort: 1-3

Studies have shown that people who exercise in the morning are more alert when they get to work. Active commuting (by bus, walking, or bike) allows people to accumulate physical activity within their work hours. Promoting active commuting can be inexpensive and can help address multiple objectives like parking limitations or requirements of CTR. Providing adequate shower, locker, and/or storage facilities supports all employees who wish to actively commute. Providing secure bike racks at worksites supports employees who wish to bike rather than drive to work.

Things to consider:

- Provide all employees with information on active commuting choices within the community.
- Incorporate active commuting information into employee orientation programs.
- Whether local government requires a specific type of bicycle rack or if there are specific locations where bicycle racks must be installed.
- Find a convenient location to place the bike rack(s). Ideal locations are visible, well lit and located near building entrances.
- Provide no-cost or low-cost helmets and/or reflective gear to bicycle commuters.
- Provide storage areas for active commuters and, if possible, on-site shower facilities.
- Recognize employees who use active commuting to get to work by promoting and participating in commute trip reduction programs.
- Form an employee walking or bicycle club.
- Organize walk-to-work or bike-to-work days.
- Consider establishing a workplace active commuting group that can encourage and coordinate information and training for interested employees.

Resources

Bikes on Buses

Intercity Transit

www.intercitytransit.com/page.cfm?ID=bikesOnBuses

Commuting to Work

City of Olympia

www.olympiawa.gov/cityservices/transportation/commuting/

What is CTR? (Commute Trip Reduction)

Thurston Regional Planning Council

www.trpc.org/programs/transportation/commutes/

Idea: Accessible and Inviting Stairwells

Cost: \$\$\$ **Time/Effort:** ⚠️-⚠️⚠️

Taking the stairs is a quick way for people to add physical activity to their day. Taking the stairs requires no wardrobe change, minimal effort, and no special skills. Posting signs that cue people to use the stairs has been shown to be a very effective, yet simple change. Some workplaces have gone even further, adding music and artistic designs to their stairwells to make them friendlier for employees and visitors. More comprehensive approaches may increase use of the stairs for physical activity breaks.

Characteristics of appealing stairwells:

- Pleasant, positive visual appearance
- Posted motivational signs
- Music
- Good lighting and air quality
- Safe and free of obstacles

Guides, Signs, Certificates, Competition Forms

Move More Stairwell Initiative
Eat Smart, Move More... North Carolina
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/programs_tools/worksites/stairwell_guide.html

StairWELL to Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/

Healthy Stairwells Tool
Fit Business Kit, The California 5 a Day—Be Active! Worksite Program
California Department of Health Services
www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/worksite/FitBusinessKit.htm

Stairway to Health
Public Health Agency of Canada, Healthy Living Unit
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sth-evs/english/

Idea: Benefits, Incentives and Gym Use

Cost: \$\$\$

Time/Effort: ⚙️-⚙️⚙️

Providing employer-paid benefits that promote physical activity can be a powerful way to impact health. Subsidizing costs associated with health club/gym membership or negotiating lower fees for employees can increase interest in physical activity.

Offering reduced-cost or paid club memberships alone is not enough to assure that employees will engage in regular physical activity. Combining membership benefits with other incentives, encouragement, and a supportive workplace culture can improve employee participation. Incentives for regular gym use can range from implementing flex- time schedules to paying a higher proportion of monthly membership costs for employees who go at least twice a week.

The availability of membership benefits and associated incentives should be promoted in the work environment. Ways to do this include:

- Incorporating information into all New Employee orientations.
- Regularly providing reminders about the benefit/incentive (such as bi-annually).
- Posting up-to-date lists of participating health clubs, fitness centers, and gyms in visible, accessible locations.

Example

Reimburse Prevention – American State Bank
From Building Healthy Texans Toolkit
ENACT Workplace Strategies, Strategic Alliance, Prevention Institute
www.preventioninstitute.org/sa/enact/workplace/preventive_1a.php

Idea: Flexible Work Hours

Cost: 💰

Time/Effort: ⌚

Implementing and promoting a flex-time approach for employee schedules may increase the chances that they engage in physical activity before, during or after work hours. Employers who wish to support employees in their pursuit of more active lifestyles may do so by establishing a policy or organizational practice that allows flex-time or flex schedules. If work schedules and demands do not allow flexible work hours, consider ways to change the work environment so that physical activity can occur on or near the worksite, such as in on-site fitness rooms or at on-ground walking trails.

Success Story

Flextime Policy

Physical Activity Success Stories, Good Work! Resource Kit

Healthy Maine Partnerships

www.healthymainepartnerships.org/MCVHP/resource_good_work_manual.aspx

Policy Example

Alternative Work Schedule

Healthy Worksite Initiative

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/policies/

Idea: Physical Activity Breaks

Cost: 💰

Time/Effort: ⌚ - ⌚ ⌚

Many jobs are not physically active. Some employees routinely attend meetings where they sit for long periods of time. Encouraging activity breaks, also known as stretch breaks, micro breaks or mini breaks, can help reduce tension caused when muscles remain static or fixed in one position for too long. Providing short breaks during meetings and encouraging physical activity during breaks can help employees accumulate daily physical activity, as well as impact productivity by improving their ability to concentrate. Changing the work environment and providing incentives, such as establishing an on-site umbrella stand (to encourage walking breaks during rainy season) or flexible break schedules, can also support employees who wish to engage in activity breaks.

Guides

Move More Workbook

HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Toolkit

North Carolina State Health Plan

www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/programs_tools/worksites/wesmm/

Physical Activity Guidelines for Meetings and Conferences

Healthy Workplaces, ActNowBC

www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca/EN/healthy_living_tip_sheets/healthy_workplaces/

Worksite Resource Toolkit

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

www.cdph.state.co.us/pp/COPAN/resourcekits/resourcekits.html

Example

Good Work! Resource Kit, Physical Activity Success Stories

Healthy Maine Partnerships

www.healthymainepartnerships.org/MCVHP/resource_good_work_manual.aspx

Related Program Idea

Take Action!

10 Week Physical Activity and Nutrition Program

California 5 a Day – Be Active! Worksite Program

www.takeactionca.com

Idea: Physical Activity Outdoors

Cost: \$-\$\$\$ **Time/Effort:** 1-4

Providing or improving places for physical activity outdoors by adding walking paths on-site or enhancing other venues for activity (plazas, campuses) encourages more physical activity during work hours. Increasing access to information about physical activity opportunities and destinations near work can make walking during breaks and before or after work more appealing to employees.

Things to Consider:

- Do a walkability audit to discover safe and desirable walking routes near work.
- Identify and publicize routes to walk near the office or on the campus of your workplace.
- Provide walking maps to nearby locations that might be of interest to employees who need to run errands (such as restaurants or the post office).
- Make it easy, provide supports (like umbrellas and pedometers) for employees to use when they go out walking.
- Start an ongoing walking club for employees and allow a small amount of staff time to coordinate and promote the effort.

Guide

Walkability near Worksites
Guidance on assessing/auditing environment for walking at worksites:
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/walkability/

Project Example

Good Work! Resource Kit, Physical Activity Success Stories
Health Maine Partnerships
www.healthymainepartnerships.org/MCVHP/resource_good_work_manual.aspx

Information

Walking Information
Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
www.walkinginfo.org

HEALTHY EATING DURING WORK HOURS

Idea: Brown Bag Meals and Snacks

Cost: \$\$\$

Time/Effort: 1-3

Many employees purchase meals and snacks during their work hours. Food purchased away from home, whether from a food service establishment or vending machines, is more likely to be unhealthy. Supporting employees who wish to 'brown bag' beverages, snacks or meals is a very basic, yet critical way to support healthy eating.

To appropriately store and prepare food, some essential appliances and room features need to be available at no-cost to employees, ideally, in an easily accessible location. These can include:

- Refrigerator
- Microwave
- Space for food preparation
- Sink for washing food, kitchen utensils and hands

Private and public employers have justified the expense of equipping an 'at-work' kitchen in numerous ways. Some examples include: microwaves allow employees to stay at the job site, thereby reducing the number who return late from lunch; kitchen appliances are a benefit to the organization because nutrition affects productivity; and refrigerators help employees with health conditions like hypoglycemia (which can be connected to diabetes) store foods that suit their unique nutritional needs.

Activity Example

Brown Bag Day

Eat Smart Workbook

HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Toolkit

North Carolina State Health Plan

www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/programs_tools/worksites/wesmm/

Idea: Beverage Alternatives

Cost: 💰

Time/Effort: ⏰-⏰⏰

Liquid calories, those coming from the beverages we drink throughout the day, can have a major impact on maintaining a healthy weight. Many people are unaware of the total number of calories they consume daily as a result of what they drink which in some cases equals the total calories found in an entire meal. Making healthier beverage choices available at work, in addition to promoting these alternatives can help employees achieve a healthier body weight.

There are many approaches employers can take to promote beverage alternatives.

- Provide cold or bottled water at no charge to employees during work hours and at employer-sponsored meetings or events (regardless of time of day).
- Increase the number of lower calorie beverage options available for purchase at work (e.g., diet lemonade or water). Ensure those beverages containing calories have nutritional value (e.g. 100% fruit juice or low-fat milk).
- Consider raising the cost of less healthy beverage options, so that healthier options are viewed as a better deal.
- Conduct an educational campaign about liquid calories to help employees identify the role beverages play in their daily diet. Post information in areas where employees congregate so they can learn more about beverages and healthy weight.
- Work with vendors who serve beverages at your worksite to develop a labeling system to mark the healthiest drink choices, so employees can easily choose alternatives.

Learn More:

Rethink Your Drink, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/nutrition_for_everyone/healthy_weight/drinks.htm

Drinking Water -Eat Smart Workbook, HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Toolkit
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/programs_tools/worksites/wesmm/

Idea: Fruit or Vegetables at Employee Gatherings and Celebrations

Cost: 💰

Time/Effort: 🕒 - 🕒 🕒

Including fruit or vegetables at employee gatherings and special celebrations can support making healthier choices. Exposure to different ways of preparing and serving fruit or vegetables can increase interest in this important source of nutrition. Adding healthy alternatives can reduce temptation or pressure to eat unhealthy foods. The continuous presence of fruit or vegetables at employer-sponsored events can demonstrate that your workplace values healthy eating among employees.

There are numerous creative and innovative ways to include fruits or vegetables. These can range from:

- Asking employees to bring fruit/vegetable-related appetizers or salads to potlucks.
- Serving fruit plates or low-calorie smoothies at birthday celebrations.
- Hosting special events at restaurants that offer a high-quality salad bar as an alternative/addition to the lunch or dinner menu choices.
- Implementing guidelines that encourage or require employees who order event food to include fruit or vegetables as substitutes for less healthy menu options.
- Selecting a catering company experienced with nutrition-conscious workplaces and product lines.

Resources

5 A Day Recipe Database
Produce for Better Health Foundation
www.5aday.com/html/recipes/onthemenu.php

Fruit and Veggies Matter Recipes
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnparecipe/recipesearch.aspx

Related Program Idea

Take Action!

10 Week Fruit and Vegetable Consumption and Physical Activity Program
California 5 a Day – Be Active! Worksite Program
www.takeactionca.com

Idea: Cold Vending

Cost: \$\$\$

Time/Effort: ⚠️⚠️

Healthy and not so healthy options can be available in vending machines, but over time the selection should shift toward more healthy options. Cold vending is a promising way to provide new, tasty snack and beverage options for employees. Cold vending machines can provide a way to make yogurt, salads, reduced-fat milk, 100% fruit juice and other food items available at work.

Things to consider:

- Employee input on products stocked.
- Nutritional content to make sure new options are truly healthier.
- Promoting availability of new healthy options.
- Taste testing to demonstrate that the new options taste good.
- Replacement of not so healthy options over time.
- Care in selecting vendor, including product options and whether sales data will be available to monitor efforts.

Example

Cold Vending Machine

Nutrition Success Stories, Good Work! Resource Kit

Healthy Maine Partnerships

www.healthymainepartnerships.org/MCVHP/resource_good_work_manual.aspx

Idea: Meeting and Event Food

Cost: 💰

Time/Effort: ⌚

Creating a healthier environment at work can take many forms. Workplaces can show their commitment to health by serving healthy food choices at meetings and events. Substituting healthy food and beverage for at least some, if not all, of the items offered can expose employees and other meeting participants to tasty alternatives they may not have otherwise considered.

Guides

Energize Your Meetings (PDF)

Washington State Department of Health

www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/NutritionPA/pdf_files/Energize-Your-Meetings.pdf

Eat Smart Workbook

HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Toolkit

North Carolina State Health Plan

www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/programs_tools/worksites/wesmm/

Food and Physical Activity Guidelines for Healthy Meetings

Public Health – Seattle and King County

www.metrokc.gov/health/nutrition/meetings.htm

Meeting Well - A Tool for Planning Healthy Meetings and Events

American Cancer Society

To request a copy of the Meeting Well™ guide call 1-800-ACS-2345

www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/meetingwell.asp

Guidelines for Healthy Meetings

New York State Department of Health

www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/prevent/guidelines.htm

Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars and Catered Events

University of Minnesota, School of Public Health

www.sph.umn.edu/about/news/pubs/nutritionguide.html

Healthy Meeting Policies

Healthy Dining Menu Guidelines

Fit Business Kit, The California 5 a Day—Be Active! Worksite Program

California Department of Health Services

www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/worksite/FitBusinessKit.htm

Idea: Healthy Vending Criteria

Cost: 💰

Time/Effort: ⌚ - ⌚ ⌚

It is not always easy to tell which packaged foods or beverages are healthier than others. Adopting criteria that identifies which options your organization wants placed in vending machines makes healthy choices easier. Criteria can be based on a range of nutritional concerns like portion/serving size, calories, sugar, fat or sodium content. A healthy vending approach can be adopted by employers by developing a list of preferred products, establishing a written guideline or company policy, or by contracting with a vendor who offers a healthy product line.

Criteria

Healthy Vending Guidelines (PDF)

The Health Collaborative, YMCA of Greater San Antonio

www.healthcollaborative.net/assets/pdf/vendingcriteria.pdf

Vending Machine Food and Beverage Standards

Fit Business Kit, The California 5 a Day—Be Active! Worksite Program

California Department of Health Services

www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/worksite/FitBusinessKit.htm

Product Options based on Criteria

The A-List (Acceptable Vending Items Listed by Product and Manufacturer)

Framingham State College, John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition

www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/vending%20project/healthysnacks.htm

Healthy Snacks List

No Junk Food

www.nojunkfood.org/vendors/healthy_snack_list.html

Policy Examples

Healthy Vending Machine Toolkit

Additional Resources – Sample Policies

www.banpac.org/healthy_vending_machine_toolkit.htm

ENACT Local Policy Database: Promising Practices in Nutrition

Strategic Alliance, Prevention Institute

www.preventioninstitute.org/sa/policies/

WORKFORCE HEALTH PROMOTION

Other Toolkits:

Cost: \$-\$\$\$\$

Time/Effort:  - 

Different approaches, strategies and programs are needed to create a healthy workplace and meet the needs of differing workplaces and diverse workforces. Review the workbooks and toolkits referred to below to identify projects that will fit your resources, interests and employee needs.

Guides

Move More Workbook (Physical Activity)
Eat Smart Workbook (Healthy Eating)
Quit Now (Smoking Cessation/Secondhand Smoke Exposure)
Manage Stress
HealthSmart Worksite Wellness Toolkit
North Carolina State Health Plan
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Resources/wwtoolkit/

Worksite Resource Kit
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
www.cdph.state.co.us/pp/COPAN/resourcekits/resourcekits.html

Employment Based Prevention of Chronic Disease in Washington State (PDF)
University of Washington, Health Promotion Research Center
arcnw.org/docs/re_wa_emp_05.pdf

What Works at Worksites
Wisconsin State Department of Health and Family Services
www.dhfs.state.wi.us/health/physicalactivity/Sites/Worksite.htm

Success Story Examples

Good Work! Resource Kit
State Resources Section
Healthy Maine Partnerships
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/other_healthy_choices.htm

Toolkit Resource List

Healthier Worksite Initiative
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/

LINKS TO WORKFORCE HEALTH INFORMATION

National Organizations:

- WELCOA
Wellness Councils of America
www.welcoa.org

- Healthy Worksite Initiative
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/

- Worksite Health
Partnership for Prevention
www.prevent.org/content/view/29/40/

- HealthierUS
United States Department of Health & Human Services
www.healthierus.gov

State Organizations:

- Washington Wellness Works
State Government Resource Website
www.wellness.wa.gov

International Organizations:

- Workplace Health Promotion Project
The Health Communications Unit
University of Toronto
www.thcu.ca/workplace/workplace.html

- European Network for Workplace Health Promotion
The Health Communications Unit
University of Toronto
www.enwhp.org