
Resources to support physical activity at work

Starting or expanding a workplace physical activity program takes support, funding, access to facilities, and information.

Build staff support

To build interest, meet employee needs and increase participation, involve staff in planning and carrying out physical activity programs. Allow staff time to do this during work hours. Learn what motivates staff to be active and what hinders them.

Offer incentives and rewards to staff who take part in physical activities, such as certificates, monetary rewards, time off work or draws for gift certificates related to physical activity.

Recognize employees' participation: at social events, with an "Active employee of the month" award, or mention them in a company newsletter or e-mail. Praise and encourage staff in person.

Find funding support

Access to grants, subsidies or interest-free loans can help build programs.

Keep costs low. Online tools can help you develop a successful program. Use existing programs such as the Stairway to Health Program

These programs give you ideas for budgeting, promotional materials, posters, and planning and evaluation tools.

Consider "outsourcing" physical activity programs to local groups such as the YMCA, Parks & Recreation, and other fitness providers.

Access facilities

Network with others who offer workplace physical activity programs. Get practical ideas for developing on-site facilities like showers, lockers or bike racks.

Use work spaces for physical activities:

- use hallways as "walking trails"
- climb stairwells at lunch
- use meeting rooms for yoga and the cafeteria for low-intensity exercises

If space is limited:

- Consider renting or negotiating staff's use of off-site facilities such as schools, community centres or church halls.
- Negotiate group discounts for employees and their families for membership, fees or lessons at local fitness, tennis or golf clubs.

Get more information

Online information can help you plan and implement a successful program.

Here are some ideas and a few places to start – click on the links or copy and paste into your browser:

- general information about setting up and running a program for example:
<http://www.healthyworkplacemonth.ca>
<http://www.healthyalberta.com/HealthyPlaces/206.htm>
- benefits of physical activity at work
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/work/case_template_e.html
- specific “how-to” implementation guides and templates
http://www.ophea.net/Ophea/PARC/upload/WTW_WorkplaceLeadersGuideFINAL_05OC07.pdf
- ways to encourage employees to be more active
<http://www.healthyalberta.com/AboutHealthyU/274.htm>
- best practice and success stories
<http://www.cchalw.ca/english/info/FinalColourEng.pdf>
- needs-assessment tools
<http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/publications/researchandreports/2003>
- staff training programs
<http://www.centennialcollege.ca/corporatetraining>
- evaluation tools
<http://www.thcu.ca/workplace/documents/EvaluationInfoPackFinalWeb.pdf>
http://www.nqi.ca/hwr/hwr2.aspx?name=hwr_eva

More suggested online resources:

National Quality Institute NQI - Tools for small business

http://www.nqi.ca/small_business/default.aspx

Alberta Centre for Active Living Physical Activity @ Work

<http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/workplace>

Health Canada and the Canadian Council for Health and Active Living at Work - Stairway to Health Program

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sthevs/english/>

Working to become active:

Increasing physical activity in the Canadian Workplace

Action steps from Bulletin 6 - April 2008

Available at www.cflri.ca/eng/statistics/index.php