

Pedometer Challenge



Maintaining Motivation and Creating a Supportive Environment Post Pedometer Challenge

The workplace is an ideal setting to promote physical activity to adults. Business leaders have a unique opportunity to nurture an environment that supports active living which can benefit their businesses and their employees. As a leader within your workplace, you can raise awareness about the importance of physical activity through a variety of communication channels such as e-mail, posters, and newsletters or by organizing promotional events such as pedometer challenges. Several factors may help employees continue to maintain an active lifestyle. Consider the following:

Creating a Supportive Environment

- Develop policy to advocate for physical activity in your workplace.
- Laminate copies of Health Canada's Physical Activity Guide and post or use as placemats in the workplace lunch room or cafeteria.
- Post Physical Activity messages in the workplace cafeteria, gym and locker area, as well as on bulletin boards.
- Post a "physical activity at work tip of the day" on the company intranet.
- Find ways to promote and support your employees to be active on the way to work. For example, provide bicycle racks to encourage employees to cycle to work, or promote the use of stairs instead of the elevator.
- Place signs at main entrances and elevators showing the location of stairwells. Make sure stair wells are well lit and safe to use. Post signs by elevators where employees will see them with the message, "Elevate your health - take the stairs instead!"
- Consider having an inter-office physical activity challenge and see who has the most total minutes of activity in a given time period. Prizes offer incentive to participate and they don't have to be expensive.
- Encourage employees to put a physical activity graphic on their computer screensaver or post a personal contract at their work station as a reminder to be active daily.
- Survey for skills among your employees. Perhaps they could lead regular 15 minute activity sessions (i.e. yoga/Tai Chi weekly).

- Foster partnership/cooperation with employees, their associations and unions in developing active living at work strategies and projects. Generally speaking, corporate initiatives succeed best when there is a senior executive championing the initiative and a planning team comprised of workers from all levels and areas of the organization reporting to the champion. In a unionized environment, union leadership should be engaged.
- Provide employees with easy access to information and education on a wide variety of health and wellness topics. For example, invite guest speakers to present workshops on heart health, early detection of cancer, sunsense, etc. Have a variety of health resources on display in the health room, on resource racks or create a health bulletin board and update information regularly.
- Provide information on local opportunities for physical activity. This could include maps of local walking trails (i.e. a trail guide), information on sports and leisure facilities, classes and clubs. Publicize physical activity through notice boards and newsletters.
- Allow flex time for employees to participate in physical activity during the work day.
- Provide opportunities to try out an activity for just one day or for one event. Tap into existing provincial or national events for materials. For example, plan a “Ride your bike to work day”, a “Commuter Challenge” for national Clean Air Day. or plan a noon-hour walk for Summer Active.

Ideas for Promotional Activities

- “Take The Stairs” campaign
- Coffee and lunch time walks
- Fit breaks
- Walking club
- Physical activity picnic
- Workplace dances
- Yoga/Tai Chi classes
- Seasonal sports challenge (e.g. summer active campaigns/activities, ski days, golf days and team sports)

**For more information, call
York Region *Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653.**