

Worksite Wellness Ideas



Conducting an Employee Fitness Challenge at your workplace is a fun and exciting way to raise awareness among employees about the importance of beginning and sustaining an exercise program. It is a concentrated effort in which to engage them in physical activity for a specific time period that, hopefully, will help them begin a healthy habit that will last a lifetime.

However, it is important to practice wellness year-round. This section of the Employee Fitness Challenge Contest Kit provides a comprehensive list of worksite wellness ideas that have been implemented by the Arkansas Department of Health or Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield in their worksite wellness programs. All ideas presented in this section have been successful for one or both of the entities. Each activity/idea can be used as a stand-alone event, even if you don't conduct a fitness contest, or can be held in conjunction with your Employee Fitness Contest.

You may want to choose some of the ideas you think will work for your employees or think of others ... and begin your journey with our own Governor Mike Huckabee and the Healthy Arkansas initiative to create a better state of health.





"LUNCH & LEARN" SESSIONS

These are learning sessions planned and organized by you to meet specific goals. Decide on a topic and select a speaker. Choose a site for the "Lunch and Learn" session, usually a lunchroom or break room. Depending on your budget and objectives, employees can brown bag the lunch or you could provide the meal. Meetings can be mandatory or elective, your choice. Experience tells us the most success will be achieved if these lunches are elective and if the employer provides lunch.

Goals for "Lunch and Learn" Sessions

Education on a specific health problem. You may want to choose one of your group's top diagnoses. Examples are:

- Diabetes — diabetes prevention and care by a certified diabetic educator
- Heart disease — cardiovascular health (individual counseling sessions with a nutritionist)
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Flu and pneumonia
- Breast cancer — breast health or breast self-exam sessions can be taught by a trained instructor

Education on plan benefits:

- Diabetes — what are the covered benefits, where to purchase diabetic supplies, support groups for employees with diabetes.
- Wellness Benefits, if applicable —
 - Well baby/child care.
 - Adult wellness benefits (male/female).
- Out-of-area/out-of-state care utilization (Blue Card), if applicable.

Education on the importance of enrolling in your health plan or local health department's health education programs or disease management programs. Example programs:

- Diabetes
- Respiratory
- Low-Back Pain
- Cardiovascular
- Tobacco use

Education on your health plan or the Arkansas Department of Health Web site:

- How to access site.
- Information available through the site.





Community Resource Speakers for “Lunch and Learn” Sessions

- Local health plan office
- Local ADH office
- Local heart association
- Local cancer society
- Pharmacies — many pharmacists are available to speak on pharmacy-related issues.
- Pharmaceutical Companies — many companies have standard presentations developed for employers that are provided free of charge to use at your own direction. Some examples are:
 - Know Your Numbers (high cholesterol) — Pfizer
 - Respiratory Wellness (flu and pneumonia) — Pfizer
 - Men’s and Women’s Health — Pfizer
- Local gyms/personal trainers/YMCA — can discuss walking safety, benefits of walking, swimming and aerobics.
- Yoga and/or Pilates instructors
- Running, cycling club representatives
- Local hospital nutritionists
- Stamp Out Smoking — Tobacco Coalition representatives



Topics for “Lunch and Learn” Sessions

- Bicycling — benefits and opportunities for cycling
- Nutrition and health (Heart Healthy lunch for all attendees)
- Cardiovascular health
- Women’s health issues
- How to recognize the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke
- National Employee Fitness Day within the office setting — Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness representatives can promote event
- Exercise tolerance and healthy heart issues
- Starting an exercise program — include the importance of seeing the doctor prior to the beginning of any new exercise program
- Self-defense
- Domestic abuse
- Safety in general
- Exercise safety
- Walking/running benefits and safety tips
- Tobacco dangers and avoidance





WELLNESS E-MAILS

These are short informational “Health Tips” in an e-mail format on many different health-related topics. You can appoint someone within your organization to find specific topics on the Internet from sites that are in the public domain or topics can be purchased from companies. Some qualified sources include:

- Hope Health
- Sound Ideas, Inc.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Institutes of Health



These e-mails can be sent daily, weekly or monthly. Our experience indicates weekly is the best frequency.

If the majority of your employees do not have e-mail, consider providing the information to them through:

- Bulletin boards
- Check stuffers
- Mailbox stuffers
- Newsletters





SAMPLE

Worksite Wellness E-mail Messages/ Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield

From: Wellness Works
 Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2004 3:59 PM
 To: Enterprise Employees
 Subject: Layering for Exercise

One way to help ensure enjoyment of a winter walk (or run) is to make sure you're dressed properly for the weather. And the secret to that, for a winter workout, is to dress in layers.

Layer 1 -- Avoid 100% cotton in the first layer, next to your skin. Cotton holds perspiration. Wear underwear made from manmade fabrics to wick perspiration away from skin.

Layer 2 -- A zippered sweatshirt and sweatpants will keep you warm. Just open the zipper if you get too warm.

Layer 3 -- If needed, over the sweatsuit, you can add a waterproof and windproof jacket. If it's very cold, you may want to wear a jacket made with goose down.

Hands -- Mittens will keep your hands warmer than gloves.

Feet -- Wear socks made from wool or manmade fabrics that keep your feet dry and warm. Avoid 100% cotton socks. Don't wear sneakers or boots that fit too tightly ... this will restrict blood flow and your feet will end up feeling colder.

Head -- About 40 percent of your body heat is lost through your head. Wear a hat and cover your ears.

Lips -- Don't forget lip balm with sunscreen ... even in winter!

From: Wellness Works
 Sent: Friday, March 12, 2004 4:38 PM
 To: Enterprise Employees
 Subject: Energy Boosts

Need an energy boost? Here are some ideas for tapping into your own energy sources -- and most require little effort.

- Get an extra hour of sleep. No surprise here -- it can make a big difference in your energy level the next day.
- Eat less more often. Have small, balanced meals or snacks throughout your day for a steady supply of fuel and energy. Make note of which foods seem to boost your energy level.
- Drink plenty of water. Dehydration contributes to fatigue, which you can offset by drinking water throughout the day.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine. Both can contribute to dehydration and fatigue. They also tend to disrupt sleep patterns.

Remember to log your exercise activity daily or at least weekly in the Arkansas Fitness Challenge! Go to *InsideBlue* and click on the Challenge logo, then follow the log-in steps. The contest is under way! Let's get movin'!

These daily health tips are brought to you by Wellness Works for health education purposes only. You should always consult your treating physician(s) for any medical advice or services you may need.



SAMPLE

**Worksite Wellness E-mail Messages/
Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield *continued***

From: Wellness Works
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2004 4:17 PM
To: Enterprise Employees
Subject: Healthy Recipe

Try this healthy recipe ... just right as the weather warms up!

- 1 cup salsa (any brand)
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 4 corn tortillas (6" diameter)
- 2 cans (16 oz) fat-free refried beans
- 8 oz sliced, grilled chicken breast or beef (2" strips)
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 1 can green chilies, diced
- 1 cup reduced fat cheddar or mozzarella cheese
- 3 cups cabbage, shredded

Blend salsa with cilantro and lime juice; set aside. Lay tortillas slightly apart on baking sheet; spread beans evenly on each, then top with chicken (or beef), onion and chilies. Bake at 400 degrees for about 8 minutes; then add cheese and bake until cheese melts. Transfer to serving plates, add cabbage and serve with extra salsa.

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MOTIVATIONAL EVENTS

These are fun and easy events that can be done within your organization to motivate healthy behaviors during a contest or during other times. The goal is to encourage employee participation. Some examples:

- Develop a sub-committee of enthusiastic employees who will help promote the fitness program by offering ideas, suggestions and encouragement to fellow workers.
- Create monthly mailbox flyers to promote a contest or provide fitness-related education/encouragement information.
- Send a weekly voicemail on each participant's telephone with encouraging wellness messages.
- Provide regular cumulative health progress reports.
- Offer low-fat or heart-healthy lunch selections once a week in your cafeteria or have employees bring a healthy snack to share, with a recipe book compiled at the end of the contest or specified time period (such as a National Nutrition Month in March).
- Distribute employee gifts (pedometers or other novelty item related to some aspect of your contest theme) as registration begins.
- Allow employees "Fitness 15-Minute Walk Breaks;" company time to walk, exercise, etc. If appropriate, you could use a space not currently used to set up a treadmill, elliptical bicycle, some free weights and meditation music.
- Hold a T-shirt design contest.
- Create posters to map contest (or fitness) progress and to serve as reminder of your goals:
 - Use push pins or other identifiers for each individual to put up in the office showing how they have progressed — employees can get very creative with this and design pins that reflect their personalities.
 - Use a bar graph to compare progress.
 - Use a "thermometer" type graphic and color in progress — consider a different, fitness-related graphic all together and color it in as you progress.
- Create or attend a health-and-fitness retreat or workshop.
- Hold a soup-and-salad luncheon followed by a hula-hoop contest!
- Use the mall as an alternate walking location during inclement weather.
- Designate "Move it Mondays" — allow employees to take an extra 10 minutes at lunch for exercise.
- Designate "Tasty Tuesdays" — provide employees with low-calorie treats/snacks.
- Designate "Walking Wednesdays" — allow employees to take an extra 10 minutes at lunch to walk, or "Wacky Wednesdays" that allow employees to explore new exercises.
- Designate "Thirsty Thursdays" — make healthy smoothies or juice drinks for employees.
- Designate "Fresh Fruit Fridays" for staff — offer seasonal fruit treats.
- Send weekly exercise tips to employees via the most effective communications vehicle in your workplace.
- Partner with another company representative for local media events coordinated through your advertising or communication department.
- Encourage departmental teams to challenge each other (examples: Customer Service, Marketing, Medical Support).
- Establish walking clubs with executive/supervisory leadership. Seek out local aerobic opportunities or classes through churches, community groups, college, YMCA, etc.
- Contact several local area fitness clubs and ask if they can or will offer group discounts for exercise programs, waive enrollment fees, or set up a 12-week program as opposed to signing an extended contract.
- Hold a Frozen Yogurt Social — "Reap the Benefits of Fitness."
- Map out a walking track around the building including the number of laps required for one mile.



- Offer aerobic dance or walking videos in your conference or break rooms.
- Compile a list of organized events in the community that offer opportunities to get employees exercising by participating as a team (below are just a few):
 - Race For The Cure
 - March of Dimes Walk America event
 - Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk to Cure
 - American Heart Association's Heart Walk
 - American Cancer Society's Relay for Life
 - American Lung Association's Lung Run
 - Local marathons or special community walks or runs



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WORKSITE RESOURCES

Health Web sites/ Toll-free Numbers that Contain a Variety of Health Topic Information

- Healthfinder
www.healthfinder.gov
— Site contains educational material to download or order.
- MEDLINEPLUS, National Library of Medicine
www.nlm.nih.gov?medlineplus
1-888-346-3656
— Site contains interactive education on-line and information to download, print or order.
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
www.nhlbi.nih.gov
1-800-575-9355 (toll-free number to order publications or ask for special topic information)
— Information in both English and Spanish. Also, click on “Special Web Pages” and “Interactive Applications” for interactive tools and Latin.
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) Aim for a Healthy Weight
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/patmats.htm
1-800-575-9355 or (weight control information) 1-877-946-4627
— Site includes risk assessment for weight and exercise using a body mass index calculator, exercise suggestions, diet counseling, including shopping lists, menus, recipes and a menu planner. English and Spanish versions available.
- The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
www.fitness.gov and
www.presidentschallenge.org
— Site contains information on beginning a fitness program, including a fitness log; tips on how to get fit for different age groups and varying beginning levels of fitness. Publications and videos on healthy living and activity are available for viewing on-line.
- American Academy of Family Physicians Patient Information
www.familydoctor.org
— Spanish version available.
- American Heart Association Fitness News
www.justmove.org
— Includes a fitness diary to track progress on-line, fitness resources, frequently asked fitness questions and tips on starting a fitness plan according to current activity levels.
- FirstGov for Consumers
www.consumer.gov/health.htm
— One-stop access to federal consumer information, including topics such as: diet and weight control, exercise and fitness, nutrition, or smoking and tobacco.
- Healthy Refrigerator
www.healthyfridge.org
— Consumer-oriented information about a healthy diet and other topics. Great site for kids.
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute Resource Library
www.nhlbisupport.com/chd1/tipsheets/resourceroom.htm
— Tip sheets and other resources and recipes.



- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
1-800-799-7233
— Hotline offers support and other resources to victims of abuse.

- Department of Human Services Health Information
www.os.dhhs.gov

- Healthy Arkansas Programs
www.arkansas.gov/ha/

Cardiovascular Health Information

- Delicious Decisions
www.deliciousdecisions.org
— American Heart Association on-line cookbook.
- Eating for a Healthy Heart
www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/hlyheart.pdf
— Tips on reading food labels and substitutions for healthier diets from the Federal Food and Drug Administration.
- American Heart Association
www.americanheart.org
— Click on Diseases and Conditions, Healthy Lifestyles, Publications and Resources, Heart and Stroke Encyclopedia, or enter your zip code for national and local information, or enter your specific medical information in the Heart Profiler interactive tool to receive information about your unique profile.

Diabetes Information

- American Diabetes Association, National Chapter
www.diabetes.org
1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)
- National Diabetes Education Program
www.ndep.nih.gov
1-800-438-5383
- National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases
www.niddk.nih.gov
— Spanish version available.
- Diabetes Control Network
1-800-326-5554
— Sponsored by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals: offers a 17-month program consisting of free bilingual books, newsletters, a pill box, toll-free health information telephone line, Web sites, journals and other information based on ADA standards.





Back Pain Information

- Medical Multimedia
www.medicalmultimedigroup.com/pated/back.html
— General information with animated pictures about the anatomy, causes, self-care and prevention of back pain.
- National Institutes for Health, Division of Safety
www.nih.gov/od/ors/ds/ergonomics/index.html
— Includes suggestions on correct body positioning for performing different types of work tasks and describes exercises to relieve strain on the spine.)
- McKinley Health Center, University of Illinois
www.mckinley.uiuc.edu
— Click on Health Information, then Health Promotion, Back and Neck Care Guide for general information on anatomy, causes of pain, self-care, resources and treatment options for back pain.

Asthma and Other Respiratory Health Information

- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology
www.aaaai.org
— Click on Patient/Public Resource Center and Media Information Center for tips, pictures and diagrams. In English and Spanish.
- National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Disease (NIAID)
www.niaid.nih.gov/publications
— Information on asthma, pneumonia, flu and colds in English and Spanish.
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)
1-800-7-ASTHMA (1-800-727-8462)
- National Jewish Medical and Research Center (NJMRC)
www.njc.org
1-800-222-LUNG (1-800-222-5864)
— Information and a toll-free support line.
- Better Breathers Club/Pulmonary Support Groups
 - Fayetteville (479-713-1181)
— WRMC Center for Health Education, second Tuesday/month, noon (Freedom from Smoking support groups scheduled monthly).
 - Fort Smith (479-785-8518)
— HEALTHSOUTH, second Tuesday/month, 1 p.m.
 - Hot Springs (501-622-1822)
— St. Joseph's Regional Health Center, first Wednesday/month, Magnolia/Dogwood Rooms, 3 p.m.



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- Jonesboro (870-972-4535)
— St. Bernards Medical Center, first Thursday/month (Lung School), 4:30 p.m.
- Little Rock (501-224-5864)
— American Lung Association, third Thursday/month, 1 p.m.
- Mountain Home (870-424-3054)
— Mountain Home Senior Center, second Friday/month, 2 p.m.
- Siloam Springs (479-549-2421)
— Moss House, third Thursday/month, 11:30 a.m.
- Springdale (479-751-5711, ext. 7-3600)
— Northwest Medical Center (Call for date/time.)
- Texarkana (501-224-5864 or 903-614-4409)
— CHRISTUS St. Michael Rehabilitation Hospital, first Monday/month, Dogwood Room, 4 p.m.

Pregnancy Information

- March of Dimes
www.modimes.org
— Offers information useful in improving the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality. Includes one-on-one information provided by a specialist, *Mama Magazine*, information on folic acid and much more.
- Happy Birthday Baby Book
1-800-235-0002
— Offers free money-saving coupons for you, your family and your baby.
- Baptist Healthline
www.baptist-health.com/women-children
— Offers access to “Woman to Woman,” a health club for women; “Ask a Nurse” helpline; “Expressly for You,” information for the nursing mom; and childbirth and parenting classes.
- Baby Center
www.babycenter.com
— Offers access to “Ask the Expert,” pregnancy calendars, “Dad’s Zone,” consumer reports, recall alerts and great gift ideas.
- Arkansas Department of Health — WIC Team
1-800-445-6175
— This help line offers nutrition and lactation consultation as well as education provided to nursing moms.
- Bayer Diagnostics
1-800-348-8100
— Offers educational material specific to diabetes management for mothers-to-be.