Workplace Activity Challenge

MOVE yourself to better health
Physical Activity in the Workplace

Canadians spend about half of their waking hours at work. The workplace is an ideal place for employees to fit activity into their day.

What is a Workplace Activity Challenge?

A workplace activity challenge is a way that employees can be more active at work. Employees can track their activity and aim to achieve a physical activity goal (e.g. I will be active for 150 minutes this week).

Hosting a workplace activity challenge can be part of a comprehensive approach to promoting physical activity in the workplace. Hosting an activity challenge shows employees that the workplace is interested in their well being.

Why physical activity?

Physical activity in the workplace provides many benefits for both employees and the workplace.

Benefits for the workplace include:

- improved productivity
- reduced absenteeism
- fewer job-related injuries

Physical activity benefits for employees include helping people:

- be more focused
- stay alert
- feel motivated
- have more energy
- have less stress

Many employees:

- sit for most of the day
- report more stress

Did you know that...

- being active at work can lower stress levels and boost energy levels
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Ways Employees Can Be Active At Work

- Active breaks at meetings (e.g. walking, stretching)
- Lunch time yoga or exercise class (or other fitness classes)
- Walking meetings at work
- Workplace sports team or intramurals
- Workplace social activities that include physical activity (for example a bowling or dancing night)
- Taking the stairs
- Walking on breaks and at lunch – you can start a walking group!
- Walking or biking to and from work

How Much Physical Activity Is Needed?

The Canadian physical activity guidelines state that adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity each week.

- Only 15% of Canadian adults aged 20-79 achieve the recommended amount of physical activity. (Statistics Canada, 2011) (Colley et al.)
- Bouts of 10 minutes or more count towards the weekly total.
- More physical activity provides greater health benefits (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, 2011).

About the Challenge

Employees:
- set a physical activity goal
- make a plan to meet the goal
- track their physical activity during the challenge time
- can track their physical activity during the work day or outside of work

Every week the employee reaches 150 minutes of physical activity, their name goes into a draw. A grand draw will be held for employees that achieve their goal.

Encourage employees to include any activities that meet the moderate physical activity level (example: activities that make your heart beat faster and your breathing increase a bit, such as brisk walking). Activities need to be in periods of 10 minutes or more at a time.
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## Types of Workplace Activity Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge Type and Workplace Goal</th>
<th>Key Features of the Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge Type:</strong> Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Workplace Goal:</strong> ________(#) or _____% of employees will participate in the activity challenge.</td>
<td><strong>Each employee:</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>• registers individually for the challenge.</td>
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<td>• receives a tracking form.</td>
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<td>• records their physical activity on their individual tracking form.</td>
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<td>• submits completed tracking forms individually.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• is eligible for individual draw prizes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge Type:</strong> Team or Group</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Workplace Goal:</strong> ______(#) of teams will enter the activity challenge. _____% of employees will participate.</td>
<td><strong>Each team or group:</strong></td>
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<td>• create their own group and register (as a group or individually and then assigned a group).</td>
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<td>• each employee tracks their physical activity individually.</td>
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<td>• gives the tracking forms to the group leader at the end of each week or at the end of the challenge.</td>
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<td>• The group leader adds up all the individuals' minutes and submits the tracking forms as a group.</td>
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<td>• The group is eligible for participation draw prizes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge Type:</strong> Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Workplace Goal:</strong> The workplace will achieve _______ minutes of moderate physical activity from all employees throughout the challenge with _____% of employees participating.</td>
<td><strong>Employees register individually for the challenge.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Each employee receives a tracking form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Each employee records their physical activity on their individual tracking form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Each employee submits completed tracking forms every week and is entered for draw prizes.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The organization adds up the minutes of physical activity from all employees weekly and posts the results for all employees to see. This lets employees see how close they are to reaching the workplace goal.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• The workplace celebrates when the goal is reached.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tips for Running a Workplace Activity Challenge

Plan:

- What type of challenge will the workplace do? (individual, team, or organization - Look at Types of Workplace Activity Challenges on page 6)
- Who will help with planning/running the challenge?
- How will you involve employees in the planning and give them an opportunity to provide input?
- When will meetings occur for planning?
- What prizes/recognition will be awarded for the challenge?
- When will the challenge start and end?
- How will registration work and who will track it? (Sign-up Sheet on page 9)
- How will you evaluate the challenge?
- Will there be a launch event and/or celebration at the end of the challenge?
- Will there be a theme to your challenge? (e.g. focus on active transportation)

Communicate:

- Update employees about what is happening.
- Workplaces can use posters, email, pay stub inserts, workplace newsletter, and other forms of communication to tell employees about the challenge.
- Sample emails are provided on pages 11-13.
Tips for Running a Workplace Activity Challenge cont’d

Implement:

- It is important to have support from management and it is even better if managers act as role models by participating in the challenge too.
- Encourage employees to be part of the planning and the running of the activity challenge. This can motivate other employees to take part.
- Consider prizes and recognition for challenge participants. Entering all participants who meet their goal into a draw can help to encourage participation. It can be discouraging if prizes or recognition only go to the person/team with the most time spent being active.
- A sample tracking form is on page 14.

Evaluate:

- Count the number of tracking form submissions for a measure of participation.
- If participation was low, ask employees what the workplace can do to make it better.
- Be sure to ask employees how they liked the challenge.
- Decide on the best way to get employee feedback. This could be informal feedback, a suggestion box, quick survey, or a discussion at a meeting.
- Review the summary of evaluations and plan for future activities.
- Sample survey evaluation on page 10.
## Activity Challenge Sign-up Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dept.</th>
<th>Phone Number &amp; Ext.</th>
<th>Tracking Form Received (✓)</th>
<th>Participant Entered in Draw (✓)</th>
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Evaluation for the Workplace Activity Challenge

Please rate the following statements as they apply to you, using the following scale:
1= strongly disagree    2 = disagree    3 = neutral    4= agree    5= strongly agree

1. The workplace activity challenge encouraged me to be more active: ____

2. I will continue to be more active at work: ____

3. I would like to participate in more workplace physical activity challenges: ____

4. I enjoyed the challenge: ____

5. Would you prefer an individual or team challenge for future workplace wellness challenges?
   (please circle) individual      team

6. Please provide any comments or suggestions about this challenge:
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

Please tear here and return your ballot for a draw prize.

Name: ______________________________  Date: ___________________________
Phone: ______________________________ Email: ___________________________
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Please rate the following statements as they apply to you, using the following scale:
1= strongly disagree     2 = disagree     3 = neutral     4= agree     5= strongly agree

1. The workplace activity challenge encouraged me to be more active: ____
2. I will continue to be more active at work: ____
3. I would like to participate in more workplace physical activity challenges: ____
4. I enjoyed the challenge: ____
5. Would you prefer an individual or team challenge for future workplace wellness challenges? (please circle)    individual          team
6. Please provide any comments or suggestions about this challenge:
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Please tear here and return your ballot for a draw prize.

Name: ______________________________  Date: ___________________________
Phone: ______________________________ Email: __________________________

Sample Emails

Email Inviting Employees to Participate in the Challenge

Hi Everyone,

We are offering employees a chance to participate in the Workplace Activity Challenge. This challenge will take place from ______ to ______ (insert dates). Participants will be asked to set an activity goal, make a plan to meet the goal and track how many minutes they are physically active each day.

All participants will be entered into a draw for prizes at the end of the challenge. Please see __________________ (insert contact) for more information and to register for the Activity Challenge.

Good luck everyone!

________________________________________ (Workplace Coordinator’s Name)

Reminder Email About the Challenge

Hello Everyone,

I would like to remind you to register for the workplace Activity Challenge! The challenge will run from ______________ (date) to ______________ (date). Join on your own or find a coworker to sign up with you.

Please contact me with any questions,

________________________________________ (Workplace Coordinator’s Name)
Motivational Email About the Benefits of Being Active

Hi Everyone,

Our workplace Activity Challenge is underway and I am happy to report people are making great progress.

Did you know that physical activity….
• helps you stay alert
• helps you feel motivated
• helps you keep a healthy body weight
• helps you feel good about yourself
• gives you more energy to tackle your day
• helps you sleep better
• can relieve stress and anxiety
• helps you fight off colds and other illnesses

It also helps to lower your risk of:
• Type 2 diabetes
• heart disease
• high blood pressure
• stroke
• obesity
• osteoporosis
• depression
• breast cancer
• colon cancer

Remember some physical activity is better than none, and more is better.

Keep up the good work and stay active!

_____________________________ (Workplace Contact)
Motivational Email with Tips for Success

Now is the time to move yourself to better health!

Being active can give your body and mind a health boost. Getting active with 150 minutes of physical activity each week can improve your attention and your mood.

You will set yourself up for success by following these tips:

1. Set a goal for yourself, for example “I will be active for 150 minutes this week”.
2. Plan when, where and how much activity you will do. Pick an activity to do that you enjoy.
3. Track your activities. Write down what you did and how much you did. This helps you to see your goals met and keeps you motivated.

Stay Active!

_______________________(Workplace Contact)

Reminder Email of the Challenge Ending

Hi Everyone,

The Activity Challenge will be coming to an end on ________________________(date). We will be meeting __________________ (date, time, location) to hear your feedback, collect evaluations, and give out the prizes. If you are unable to attend, please complete the attached evaluation and email to ____________________.

Be sure to keep up your activities. It really has been great to see everyone moving!

__________________________(Workplace Contact)
Physical Activity Planner

Step 1: Set a physical activity goal for each week.
Step 2: Make a plan to reach your goal.
Step 3: Track your activity by checking off “I did it” each day you complete your plan.

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>How long</th>
<th>I did it!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>lunch</td>
<td>at work</td>
<td>walk</td>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Week 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>How long</th>
<th>I did it!</th>
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Total physical time:
References


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Durham Health Connection Line
1-800-841-2729 or 905-666-6241
durham.ca/physicalactivity
Information available in accessible formats.