

# Worksite Wellness Nuts and Bolts

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## Why Worksite Wellness?

Health promotion programs in the worksite can be an effective way to spread health, nutrition and physical activity messages. And, they make good business sense.

**Return on investment (ROI)** for worksite wellness programs is about, \$4 for every \$1 invested\*.

ROI usually includes absenteeism, medical and pharmacy costs, presenteeism, workers' comp, and disability time.

### **Employer Benefits Can Include . . .**

- Enhanced employee productivity
- Lowered health care costs
- Decreased rates of illness and injuries
- Reduced employee absenteeism
- Improved employee morale

### **Employee Benefits Can Include . . .**

- Less stress
- Improved well-being, self-image, and self-esteem
- Improved physical fitness
- More stamina
- Weight loss
- Improved health

Try this online ROI calculator: [http://www.welcoa.org/freeresources/pdf/aa\\_roi\\_calculator2.pdf](http://www.welcoa.org/freeresources/pdf/aa_roi_calculator2.pdf)

\* Aldana SG. American Journal of Health Promotion 2001; 15(5): 296-320.

# Getting Started

## Steps to Developing a Worksite Wellness Program

### Get Management "Buy In"

1. Get "buy in" from management – it's key to success. For more info, visit [www.welcoa.org/pdf/well\\_workplace\\_wkbook1.pdf](http://www.welcoa.org/pdf/well_workplace_wkbook1.pdf).

### Start a Wellness Committee

2. Develop a worksite wellness committee. This step is optional and may not be necessary in small worksites. However, this is a great way to get help with planning and implementing worksite wellness programming. See the next page for details.

### Research Options

3. Research your options – learn about available resources.
  - Your insurance company may offer screenings, education session, and more.
  - Begin your online research with these sites:
    - NH Department of Health and Human Services [www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/worksite](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/worksite)
    - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Healthier Worksite Initiative [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi)

### Conduct a Needs Assessment

4. Collecting information is critical to starting a good wellness program. Be sure to assess the needs of your worksite and employees. This step can be as simple or elaborate as your administration chooses.

Review this Welcoa link to appreciate the scope of possibilities.

<http://www.welcoa.org/wellworkplace/index.php?cat=2&page=9>

Possible options to consider include:

- Survey employees regarding interests.
  - NOTE: Some wellness activities may not need to be included on the wellness survey – for example, stair prompts, email messages, electronic newsletters, and paystub messages.
  - Obtain administrative approval for a worksite survey.
  - Develop the survey.
  - Use existing surveys or create your own. Try this Welcoa link: [www.welcoa.org/freeresources/index.php?category=11](http://www.welcoa.org/freeresources/index.php?category=11).
  - Be sure to leave a section for suggestions.
  - If all employees have Internet access, consider using an online service (such as SurveyMonkey) that uses electronic surveys and automatic tabulation.
  - Tabulate the results.
- Administer health risk appraisals – commonly offered by insurers who will share aggregate data with management.
- Review disability data, safety/accident reports.
- If you conduct a worksite health fair, screening data can be gathered.

## Make a Plan

5. Make a plan for the next 6 to 12 months.
  - Review the survey results with your committee.
  - Select two to three projects and prioritize them.
  - Start with an easy project. It's great to have early success and, it quickly communicates to employees that you are listening to their survey responses. This will also give you time to plan more complicated projects.
  - Report your findings and plans to management.
  - Announce survey results and your decisions to the employees. This is a good time to recruit wellness committee members.

## Market Your Program

6. Marketing is most successful when multiple channels are used. Possible channels include:
  - Announcements at staff meetings.
  - Flyers – post on bulletin boards, in restrooms and the cafeteria.
  - Emails – be sure to provide hard copies for employees that do not have email.

## Monitor Progress

7. Monitor progress and make needed changes. Utilize different techniques – from the formal (such as follow-up surveys) to the informal (such as conversations with employees).

# Develop a Wellness Committee

A Wellness Committee can be a real asset in the planning, implementation, and assessment of a worksite wellness program (WWP) – especially in large worksites. If the committee is established early, it can provide guidance on all phases of the WWP and ongoing support to the WWP manager. Small organizations might consider linking with other small businesses, government agencies, or local nonprofit organizations to form a health promotion council. To start a committee at your worksite:

- Visit [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/program\\_design/wellness\\_committees.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/program_design/wellness_committees.htm)
- Obtain management approval to develop a wellness committee.
- Determine the commitment needed from committee members so that you are prepared to answer such questions.
- Recruit committee members through print and electronic communications.
- Aim for representation from all departments of the worksite.

# Worksite Wellness Strategies

The table below illustrates the wide variety of possible strategies. They are listed in order of time/cost commitment – from low to high. Each one is discussed in detail on the following pages.

Strategies that involve policy change and/or changes to the physical work environment can bring lasting changes to the worksite and the lives of employees. In most cases, upkeep is minimal. In comparison, some one-time events can be more labor intensive.

- **Worksite wellness policies** are procedures or rules that have been adopted by a business or organization to guide individual and collective behavior at the workplace. They may be voluntary or mandatory.
- **Changes to the work environment** provide opportunities for employees to practice healthy behaviors such as physical activity or discourage unhealthy behaviors such as smoking.

Strategies	Time/Cost Commitment
Health Promotion Emails	Low
Healthy Potluck and Recipe Sharing	
Newsletters	
Paystub Messages	
Stair Prompts	
Benefit Package Option: Flexible schedule to allow time for physical activity, flu clinics, checkups, breastfeeding/pumping, etc.	Moderate
Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite	
Bulletin Board	
Green cleaning to reduce irritants and improve air quality	
Guest Speakers	
Vending Changes	
Walking Maps	High
Benefit Package Option: Reimbursement or discount for fitness equipment, gym membership, wellness classes, lactation support services, etc.	
Bicycle Parking	
Cafeteria Changes	
Conferences That Include Physical Activity and Healthy Food	
Employee Kitchen and Appliances	
Flu shot clinic	
Healthy Foods and Beverages for Meetings and Events	
Smoke-Free Workplace/Campus	
Walking Club	
Wellness Events	

# Strategies: A Guide to Implementation

This is an alphabetical list of possible strategies. A list of these same strategies appears on page 4 in order of time/cost commitment – from low to high.

## Benefit Package Options (moderate to high)

Options to consider and research:

- Flexible schedule to allow time for physical activity, flu clinics, check ups, breastfeeding/pumping, wellness classes, etc. Check this link for a sample policy:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/policies/Alternative%20Work%20Schedules.pdf>
- Reimbursement or discount for health club membership, fitness equipment, wellness classes, lactation support services, etc.
- Incentives/prizes for doing physical activity
- Your health insurance company may offer wellness/prevention options such as:
  - Health risk appraisals
  - Health screenings
  - Reimbursement for health education courses such as: Stress, Quit Smoking, Golf, T'ai Chi, Yoga, Breastfeeding
  - Round-the-clock access to registered nurse
  - Health/nurse information line
  - Discounts on laser vision correction, weight management, smoking cessation and more

## Bicycle Parking (high)

- Obtain management approval to conduct a survey.
- Survey employees to determine interest in this option.
- Obtain administrative approval to provide bicycle parking for employees. Suggest where the parking could be located.
- Create the new parking area.
- Promote bicycle parking with print or electronic communications.
- This link provides practical information about bicycle parking:  
[www.portlandonline.com/TRANSPORTATION/index.cfm?a=fieaj&c=deibd](http://www.portlandonline.com/TRANSPORTATION/index.cfm?a=fieaj&c=deibd)
- The Bike and Walk Alliance may also be helpful: [www.bwanh.org](http://www.bwanh.org)

## Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite (moderate)

Supporting breastfeeding mothers who return to work is a cost efficient strategy. Breastfed infants are sick less often. That means breastfeeding mothers often have less absenteeism due to taking fewer days off to care for a sick child and health care costs are reduced. Supporting a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace can include:

- Educate all employees on why the company supports breastfeeding
- Encourage managers and supervisors to support employees who breastfeed
- Establish a worksite breastfeeding policy (sample available)
- Provide a clean, private room with electric outlets for women to pump milk for their babies
- Offer breastfeeding mothers:
  - Flexible hours
  - Job sharing or part-time work
  - Scheduled breaks
  - Resource list of breastfeeding support services

To learn more, go to:

[www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/LIBRARY/Fact+Sheet/worksite-breastfeeding](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/LIBRARY/Fact+Sheet/worksite-breastfeeding)

## Bulletin Board (moderate)

- Select topics such as Physical Activity, Sun Safety, Asthma Education, Food Safety, Diabetes Prevention, Sugar Content of Foods, Whole Grains, Fruits and Veggies, etc. Check here for topic ideas linked to national health observances:  
<http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/default.aspx>
- Provide theme-related healthy recipes.
- Update the bulletin board every 4 to 6 weeks to keep messages fresh and appealing.

## Cafeteria and Vending Changes (moderate to high)

- Research your options. This link provides guidelines and a survey [www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/LIBRARY/Fact+Sheet/worksite-food](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/LIBRARY/Fact+Sheet/worksite-food)
- Research vending or cafeteria options with vendor or food service manager. Identify cost differential to ensure that higher prices will not create a barrier to success and that the food service will not suffer economic consequences. Possible changes might include:
  - In vending machines, increase water to soda ratio in machines; exchange low fat popcorn and pretzels for full fat popcorn or other salty snacks; exchange dried fruit and nuts for candy or bakery items.
  - In the cafeteria, try adding whole wheat bread, low-fat, and low-sodium soups, low fat mayonnaise, veggie burgers and a wide variety of salad choices.
- Obtain administrative approval to conduct a survey to determine employee interest, either electronically or manually.
- Develop a survey (seek assistance if necessary) to determine interest in replacing a portion of the current offerings with healthier choices.
  - Distribute the survey with a two-week deadline.
  - Be sure to include a question regarding changes – such as, “are you interested in having healthier choices available in the cafeteria and/or vending machines?”
- Tally survey results.
- Work continuously with cafeteria staff to take small steps toward a healthier food environment. A small change such as switching from full-fat microwave popcorn to 94% fat-free popcorn can be a huge success. Other vending changes may include switching some candy/cookie selections to granola bars, trail mix and baked chips.
- Market healthy options:
  - Provide point-of-purchase signs in cafeteria or vending area promoting.
  - Provide discounted pricing for healthy choices.

## Conferences That Include Physical Activity and Healthy Food (high)

- Review these links for ideas for healthy food options :  
[www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc\\_content/colleges/sph/sph\\_news/Nutrition.pdf](http://www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc_content/colleges/sph/sph_news/Nutrition.pdf)  
[http://diabetesatwork.org/files/Healthy\\_Worksite\\_Food.pdf](http://diabetesatwork.org/files/Healthy_Worksite_Food.pdf)  
<http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/HealthyMeetingGuide/HealthyMeetingGuide.html>
- Include physical activity. For ideas, download the fact sheet, *Add Physical Activity to Your Conferences* at [www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/worksite.htm](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/worksite.htm) .

## Flu Shots and Flu Shot Clinics (Moderate)

- Flu shots reduce individuals' chances of getting the flu. That can mean reduced absentee time throughout the flu season.
- Employers can either host an onsite flu clinic or help employees locate an existing flu clinic. Flu shots are also available through health care providers or a local VNA.
- Contact the NH Immunization Program at 800-835-4452, Ext.4482 or [www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/IMMUNIZATION](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/IMMUNIZATION). They can help you either
  - Locate existing flu shot clinics
  - Set up an onsite flu shot clinic

## Green Cleaning (moderate)

- Green cleaning is a new approach to janitorial services that reduces irritants and improves air quality. When done correctly, "cleaning power" is not sacrificed.
- Learn more at: <http://www.ofee.gov/janitor>

## Guest Speakers (moderate)

- Select the topic. It could be: stress management, healthy cooking, asthma education, etc.
- Identify a speaker you wish to invite.
  - Remember, your speaker could be a chef that does a healthy cooking demo.
  - Download the fact sheet *Wellness Speakers for Worksites* at [www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/worksites.htm](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/worksites.htm)
  - Research prices, audiovisual equipment the speaker will need, time needed by the speaker to present the topic, maximum and minimum attendees required by the speaker, etc.
- Determine if a special format will be used:
  - For "Lunch and Learn," employees can bring their own lunches or management may decide to provide lunches.
  - Consider inviting a chef and providing a taste test.
- Obtain management approval for the speaker, topic, timing, and format.
- Schedule event. Reserve room.
- Develop promotional materials: email, flyer, and newsletter article.
- Use an RSVP to help forecast the number of attendees.
- Order food – if any will be provided.
- On the day of the event, set up the room and food.
- Afterward, send a thank you note to the speaker.
- Share with management the number of attendees and how the event was received.

## Health Promotion Emails (low)

- Obtain management approval for department-wide email.
- Approval may be required for each email; do not assume approval for one email means approval for all emails, unless this is confirmed.
- Provide alternate distribution for employees without email.
- Every 6 to 8 weeks, distribute a company-wide universal health-themed email to all staff. Topics can include special events such as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Bike/Walk to Work Day, Diabetes Awareness Month, National Farmers' Market Week, National Fruits & Veggies—More Matters™ Month, Tobacco Cessation Month.
- If you want an email response (e.g. survey response, etc.), be sure to allow at least two weeks for respondents to reply. This communicates openness to new ideas and comments.

## Healthy Foods and Beverages (high)

- Identify healthier choices from local caterers.
- Draft a proposal including requested changes for agency food policies. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' booklet, "Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings and Events," includes a sample policy (p.11): <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/HealthyMeetingGuide/HealthyMeetingGuide.html>
- Submit proposal to management for review and approval.
- Distribute final guidelines to staff. Include an introduction that explains changes and the reason(s) for the new policy.
- Provide staff with a list of suggested healthy substitutions for current foods.
- Optional: Offer a taste test of the new foods.
- Include policy in new-hire information
- Gather information regarding healthier choices and share with staff.
- Review the University of Minnesota booklet, "Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars and Catered Events": [www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc\\_content/colleges/sph/sph\\_news/Nutrition.pdf](http://www.ahc.umn.edu/ahc_content/colleges/sph/sph_news/Nutrition.pdf)
- "Choosing Foods and Beverages for Healthy Meetings, Conferences, and Events" was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [http://diabetesatwork.org/files/Healthy\\_Worksite\\_Food.pdf](http://diabetesatwork.org/files/Healthy_Worksite_Food.pdf)

## Healthy Potluck and Recipe Sharing (low)

- Craft your sign-up list to suggest healthy options and avoid a menu that's all desserts and no entrees. Create categories such as:
  - Salads
  - Soups
  - Vegetables
  - Side Dishes
  - Entrees
  - Vegetarian Dishes
  - Fruits
- When you invite people to sign up, encourage them to bring colorful foods as this often puts an emphasis on fruits and vegetables. Suggest they explore the recipes at these sites:
  - <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-recipes/RE99999>
  - <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov>
- Encourage employees to bring copies of their recipes to share.
- Consider prizes for the "Most Colorful," the "Best Veggie Dish," the "Most Creative Use of a Whole Grain."

## Newsletters (low)

- Worksite wellness newsletters can be in hard copy or electronic format. If an electronic newsletter is issued, hard copies should be made available to employees that do not have email.
- Download free copies of Health Promotion in Motion at this link: <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/LIBRARY/Fact+Sheet/healthyeating.htm>

## Paystub Messages (low)

- Obtain administrative approval for paystub message and content.
- Determine date message will be sent. Consider how the timing will impact holidays, other messages, etc.

## Smoke-Free Workplace/Campus (high)

- A toolkit and technical assistance are available through the NH Department of Health and Human Services, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program at 800-852-3345, ext 8949 and <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/ATOD/TPCP.htm>

## Stair Prompts (low)

- Download a different stair prompt for each stair entrance at [www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/LIBRARY/Fact+Sheet/worksite-stairs.htm](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/LIBRARY/Fact+Sheet/worksite-stairs.htm)
- Provide sample stair prompts to management for approval to post.
- Obtain approval from management.
- Contact building maintenance regarding your plans.
- Explore CDC's StairWELL to Better Health at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/stairwell>

## Walking Club (high)

- Download the fact sheet, *Start a Walking Club at Your Worksite*, at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/NHP/worksite.htm>.

## Walking Maps (moderate)

- Obtain administrative approval to encourage employees to walk on their break time and to provide walking maps of the worksite campus and surrounding streets.
- Develop the map. Include routes of varying length. Provide mileage for each route. This link will be helpful: [www.communitywalk.com/](http://www.communitywalk.com/).
- Copy maps and place near building exits.

## Wellness Events (high)

- Obtain administrative approval to hold the special event. Examples include Bike/Walk to Work Day or Wear Red Day.
- Schedule date and time. Decide if outdoor events should be "rain or shine." Secure a location.
- Create announcement and distribute by hard copy and/or electronically.
- See **Healthy Foods and Beverages** above.
- Consider offering a group walk or other physical activity options.
- Afterward, prepare a short report and share it with management.