



CREATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Health
at Work 4 All!

For more information, please contact
the Healthy Workplace Coordinator
519-663-5317 extension 3333

ML BUREAU DE SANTÉ DE
MIDDLESEX-LONDON
HEALTH UNIT
www.healthunit.com

Acknowledgements



For more information on Creating a Healthy Workplace
contact the Health at Work 4 All! coordinator at
519-663-5317 ext. 3333



Information is for general informational purposes and is subject to change. Although our goal is to provide current and accurate information, the Middlesex-London Health Unit is not responsible for any damages resulting from incorrect or out-of-date information. (Revised 2015)

Introduction

Physical Activity and the Workplace

Employees who are more active benefit the workplace! A workplace that supports physical activity will help employees achieve optimal health and success at work! It also makes good business sense because a healthier workforce is associated with:

- Improved productivity with energized employees
- Reduced health care costs
- Decreased rate of turnover
- Lower injury rates
- Lower employee absenteeism due to illness



Physical Inactivity:

- Is a recognized public health issue in Canada and globally
- Is one of the five leading global risk factors for mortality and is estimated to cause 2 million deaths per year
- Is a major contributor to chronic disease and health care spending in Canada. Specifically, 15% to 39% of the seven chronic diseases examined were attributable to physical inactivity. (CAD, stroke, hypertension, colon cancer, breast cancer (women only), Type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis)

The bottom line: Physical Activity is essential to good health!

Making positive changes and supporting **physical activity** in the workplace can lead to improved employee health and well-being. This leads to improved employee satisfaction and commitment, and contributes to a more productive workforce.

‘Creating Physical Activity in the Workplace’

provides:

- ❖ Physical Activity recommendations for adults, 18-64 years
- ❖ Suggested activities to assist employers to support active workplaces
- ❖ Resources for both the employer and employee

Policy

Commitment to physical activity is best demonstrated to employees by establishing a physical activity policy. For support with modifying an existing workplace policy to include physical activity or to create a new physical activity policy contact the Middlesex-London Health Unit Workplace Program phone line at 519-663-5317 Ext. 3333.



For other workplace wellness resources, visit <http://www.healthunit.com/workplace-health>

For information on the [Canadian Physical Activity Guideline Scientific Statement for Adults-18-64 Years](#) including the definition of “apparently healthy adult” visit http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CanadianPhysicalActivityGuidelinesStatements_E%203.pdf

For information that supports the Business Case visit:

[Alberta Centre for Active Living- Physical Activity @ Work](#) @ <http://www.ualberta.ca/~active/workplace/beforestart/benefits-bottom-line.html>

[Public Health Agency of Canada-Healthy Living Unit](#) @ <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/hlu-umvs/index-eng.php>

Facts

Physical Inactivity:

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Obesity

- Obesity is costing Ontario \$4.5 billion a year or about \$313 per person each year
- 1 in 4 Canadian adults are obese (estimates range from 24.3%-25.4%)
- According to the Canadian Health Measures Survey, only 15% of Canadian adults get the recommended levels of 150 minutes of moderate –to-vigorous activity (MVPA) per week

Physical Activity

Any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure increasing heart rate and breathing (CSEP)

Being physically active has so many benefits...

- Better health
- Improved endurance/aerobic ability
- Stronger muscles and bones
- Improves energy levels
- Improves mental health

- Maintain mobility
- Improves ability to be independent as one ages
- Improves mood and self-esteem
- Helps to cope with stress
- Helps maintain a healthy body weight
- And provides enjoyment

According to the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, regular physical activity can improve health by lowering the risk of developing...

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Certain types of cancer (such as breast cancer, colon cancer)
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Osteoporosis



Resources

For more information and/or copies of the [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines](http://www.csep.ca/english/view.asp?x=804), visit <http://www.csep.ca/english/view.asp?x=804>

The [Health at Work 4 All!](#) manual provides a model and framework, and outlines the process for employers to create and implement their own workplace wellness program.

How much Physical Activity is Enough?

Physical Activity is important throughout the lifespan. In 2011, the [Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology \(CSEP\)](#) released the [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines](#) for the early years (0-4 years), children (5-11 years), youth (12-17 years), adults (18-64 years) and the older adults (65 years & older). These physical activity guidelines are relevant to all apparently healthy individuals.

Copies for your employees and members of their family, can be downloaded for free from the [Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology](#) website.



Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults (18-64 years)

The [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Adults - 18 to 64 Years](#) identifies the amount, intensity and types of physical activity for health benefits.

- To achieve health benefits, adults 18-64 years should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity per week in bouts of 10 minutes or more.
- It is also beneficial to add muscle and bone strengthening activities using major muscle groups, at least 2 days per week.
- More daily physical activity provides greater health benefits.

NOTE: It is recommended that everyone consult a health professional prior to starting any physical activity program. If you have never been active or have been inactive for a while, complete a Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire.

Any amount of physical activity is considered better than no physical activity at all!

Resources

- Copies of the [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines and the Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines](http://www.csep.ca/english/view.asp?x=804) can be found at the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology at <http://www.csep.ca/english/view.asp?x=804>
- The [Physical Activity Resource Centre](http://parc.ophea.net/resource/adult-physical-activity-guidelines-poster) has developed an Adult Physical Activity Guideline poster that can be downloaded and used in your workplace. <http://parc.ophea.net/resource/adult-physical-activity-guidelines-poster>
- The Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology (CSEP) has [physical activity readiness questionnaires](#) available (such as the PAR-Q & You)
- [Pregnancy and Physical Activity Resources](#) are available on the Middlesex -London Health Unit website at <http://www.healthunit.com/physical-activity-pregnancy>

For information about the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines visit [Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology](#)

Pregnancy and Physical Activity resources are available at the [Middlesex-London Health Unit](#) website at <http://www.healthunit.com/physical-activity-pregnancy>

For more information on Physical Activity and tips/community resources visit

1. [Middlesex-London Health Unit](#) website @ <http://www.healthunit.com/>
2. **in motion**TM website @ www.inmotion4life.ca

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines

FOR ADULTS - 18 – 64 YEARS

Guidelines



To achieve health benefits, adults aged 18-64 years should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.



It is also beneficial to add muscle and bone strengthening activities using major muscle groups, at least 2 days per week.



More physical activity provides greater health benefits.

Let's Talk Intensity!

Moderate-intensity physical activities will cause adults to sweat a little and to breathe harder. Activities like:

- Brisk walking
- Bike riding

Vigorous-intensity physical activities will cause adults to sweat and be 'out of breath'. Activities like:

- Jogging
- Cross-country skiing

Being active for at least **150 minutes per week** can help reduce the risk of:

- Premature death
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Certain types of cancer
- Type 2 diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Overweight and obesity

And can lead to improved:

- Fitness
- Strength
- Mental health (morale and self-esteem)

Pick a time. Pick a place. Make a plan and move more!

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Join a weekday community running or walking group. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rake the lawn, and then offer to do the same for a neighbour. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Go for a brisk walk around the block after dinner. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Train for and participate in a run or walk for charity! |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take a dance class after work. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take up a favourite sport again or try a new sport. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bike or walk to work every day. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be active with the family on the weekend! |

**Now is the time. Walk, run,
or wheel, and embrace life.**



Now is the time to get up and get moving!



Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines For Adults – 18 - 64 Years



To achieve health benefits, adults aged 18-64 years should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate – to vigorous – intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.



It is also beneficial to add muscle and bone strengthening activities using major muscle groups, at least 2 days per week.



More physical activity provides greater health benefits.

PAR-Q & YOU

(A Questionnaire for People Aged 15 to 69)

Regular physical activity is fun and healthy, and increasingly more people are starting to become more active every day. Being more active is very safe for most people. However, some people should check with their doctor before they start becoming much more physically active.

If you are planning to become much more physically active than you are now, start by answering the seven questions in the box below. If you are between the ages of 15 and 69, the PAR-Q will tell you if you should check with your doctor before you start. If you are over 69 years of age, and you are not used to being very active, check with your doctor.

Common sense is your best guide when you answer these questions. Please read the questions carefully and answer each one honestly: check YES or NO.

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition <u>and</u> that you should only do physical activity recommended by a doctor?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. In the past month, have you had chest pain when you were not doing physical activity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Do you have a bone or joint problem (for example, back, knee or hip) that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Is your doctor currently prescribing drugs (for example, water pills) for your blood pressure or heart condition?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Do you know of <u>any other reason</u> why you should not do physical activity?

If
you
answered

YES to one or more questions

Talk with your doctor by phone or in person BEFORE you start becoming much more physically active or BEFORE you have a fitness appraisal. Tell your doctor about the PAR-Q and which questions you answered YES.

- You may be able to do any activity you want — as long as you start slowly and build up gradually. Or, you may need to restrict your activities to those which are safe for you. Talk with your doctor about the kinds of activities you wish to participate in and follow his/her advice.
- Find out which community programs are safe and helpful for you.

NO to all questions

If you answered NO honestly to all PAR-Q questions, you can be reasonably sure that you can:

- start becoming much more physically active — begin slowly and build up gradually. This is the safest and easiest way to go.
- take part in a fitness appraisal — this is an excellent way to determine your basic fitness so that you can plan the best way for you to live actively. It is also highly recommended that you have your blood pressure evaluated. If your reading is over 144/94, talk with your doctor before you start becoming much more physically active.

DELAY BECOMING MUCH MORE ACTIVE:

- if you are not feeling well because of a temporary illness such as a cold or a fever — wait until you feel better; or
- if you are or may be pregnant — talk to your doctor before you start becoming more active.

PLEASE NOTE: If your health changes so that you then answer YES to any of the above questions, tell your fitness or health professional. Ask whether you should change your physical activity plan.

Informed Use of the PAR-Q: The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, Health Canada, and their agents assume no liability for persons who undertake physical activity, and if in doubt after completing this questionnaire, consult your doctor prior to physical activity.

No changes permitted. You are encouraged to photocopy the PAR-Q but only if you use the entire form.

NOTE: If the PAR-Q is being given to a person before he or she participates in a physical activity program or a fitness appraisal, this section may be used for legal or administrative purposes.

"I have read, understood and completed this questionnaire. Any questions I had were answered to my full satisfaction."

NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT _____
or GUARDIAN (for participants under the age of majority)

DATE _____

WITNESS _____

Note: This physical activity clearance is valid for a maximum of 12 months from the date it is completed and becomes invalid if your condition changes so that you would answer YES to any of the seven questions.

Sedentary Behavior (Inactivity)

Sedentary behavior (inactivity) is defined as low intensity activities. There are quite a number of jobs that include sedentary behaviors such as: sitting at a desk or during meetings; standing in the same spot for long periods of time; commuting in a vehicle or transit while working; or commuting in a vehicle or transit to get to and from work.

It is important to keep moving throughout the day!



Consider promoting these types of Activities in your Workplace to Reduce Sedentary Time:

- Promote stand up stretches or taking a stand up break preferably once an hour
- Walking a slightly longer route to do routine activities (e.g. going to the photo copy machine, lunch room, delivering a message to a colleague)
- Encourage a quick, short, walk during breaks
- Encourage using stairs
- Promote standing up while talking on the phone
- Encourage parking at the far end of the parking lot to get some extra walking time
- Encourage active commuting - walk, run, or cycle to work
- Promote taking the bus, getting off several stops earlier and walk the rest of the way to work
- Co-ordinating workplace fun activities and challenges
- Encourage delivering a message to a colleague instead of using the phone or email



Resources

For more tips visit [ParticipACTION](http://www.participaction.com/get-informed/lifestyle-tips/) at <http://www.participaction.com/get-informed/lifestyle-tips/>

For more information on sitting, visit [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/sitting/sitting_overview.html) at http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/sitting/sitting_overview.html

Easy Ways to Stretch It Out!

Here are some supports to disseminate to employees to decrease sedentary activity. These can be performed at the employees work area or as an activity break during a meeting.

A. On-Line Video-Resources for Stretching and Fitness at Work

1. [Alberta Centre for Active Living](#)

- [Exercising your Hands and Wrists @ Your Desk](#)
- [Stretching @ Your Desk - Stage 1a: Introducing the Exercises](#)
- [Stretching @ Your Desk - Stage 1b: Introducing the Exercises](#)
- [Stretching @ Your Desk - Stage 2a: Stretching in Your Office](#)
- [Stretching @ Your Desk - Stage 2b: Stretching in Your Office](#)
- [Stretching @ Your Desk - Stage 2c: Stretching in Your Office](#)
- [Yoga @ Your Desk - Part 1: Introducing the Exercises](#)
- [Yoga @ Your Desk - Part 3a: Varying the Exercises](#)
- [Yoga @ Your Desk - Part 3b: Varying the Exercises](#)



<http://www.ualberta.ca/~active/workplace/trr/tools/stretch-at-desk.html>

2. [A-B-E for Fitness](#) is an evidence –based program that offers 3-8 minute videos for office, work or waiting area. They are short videos that provide activity bursts that you can fit into your workday to break up sedentary behavior.

<http://abeforfitness.com/index.html>



B. The Stretch Station

No matter how well a workstation is designed, problems may arise if attention is not paid to ergonomics and taking stretch breaks. Working at a computer or on the assembly line often involves very few changes in body position over a period of time. This lack of movement can lead to muscle pain and strain.

To relieve stress, refresh the mind and increase productivity, a short break is often the answer. But, sometimes employees cannot leave the office or plant to go for a walk. Creating a Stretch Station may be the answer.

Materials:

- Yoga mats, basic equipment i.e., stretch bands, light weights etc.
- Stretching guides /posters/CD's (refer to the CCOHS web-site)
- Room dividers for privacy

Provide employees with:

- a corner where they can distress and stretch
- stretching guides/posters to provide direction
- yoga mats and elastic bands for stretching

Use room dividers if your stretch station is not enclosed by walls to ensure privacy. Please note, some employees may feel comfortable doing stretches at their own workstation and not require privacy.

[Criteria for an effective stretching program](#) (PDF 425 KB)



The Stretch Station

Criteria for an effective stretching program:

- Warm-up before stretching
- Exercises should be tailored to commonly performed job duties (e.g. for those who work at the office, focus on stretches that involve the neck, shoulder and upper extremities)
- Stretch regularly
- Perform stretches correctly:
 - Hold each stretch for about 15-30 seconds
 - Try to do each stretch 2 or more times
 - Stretch bilaterally, emphasize tight muscles
 - Intensity should be to a gentle pull on muscles, it should not hurt
- Trained instructors could provide a baseline instruction session with employees to teach proper use of the equipment
- Compliance and use of the stretch station should be monitored
- Stretch at appropriate work times throughout the day



Stress and Physical Activity

According to the Middlesex - London Community Health Status Report, 29.7% of people age 20 to 64 reported that most days at work were quite or extremely stressful in 2009/10.

Being physically active at work is a strategy for reducing the effects of stress. Being physically active for at least 150 minutes per week can lead to improved mental health (morale and self-esteem).

Take a stress break; include these physical activities into the day:

- Take regular stretch breaks
- Take a short brisk walk
- Do a physical activity with a colleague or friend at lunch

The [Canadian Mental Health Association](http://www.cmha.ca/) provides a [Stress Index](#) that employees can do to find out what their stress level is at the present time. This resource can also raise awareness about healthy lifestyle habits.

<http://www.cmha.ca/>

The [Take Your Break](https://workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/) section of the website [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](https://workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/) provides healthy break activities. Using breaks to improve mental health can have a positive effect on wellness and productivity. [Take Your Break](https://workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/) provides a new idea each week. Activities can be done individually or as part of a team.

<https://workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/>



Section 2 - Workplace Activities

Since it is important to decrease sedentary behaviour and to include some form of physical activity throughout the day, this section will provide simple, different examples of activities that can be encouraged in the workplace. Information and instructions for implementing activities in the workplace are provided.

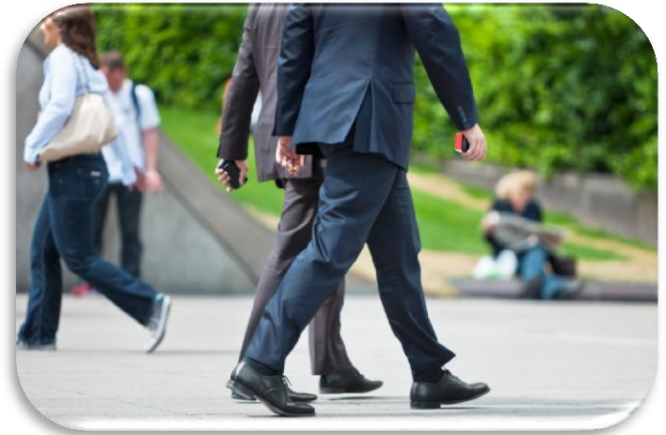
I. Walking

Walking is a great way to be less sedentary and get more active. To get the required 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity per week, include bouts of walking for 10 minutes or more. Walking is a great way to reach this goal!

Strategies to incorporate Walking into the Workday

Encourage employees to:

- Bring and leave supportive footwear (i.e. sneakers) to work
- Walk during their break and lunch time
- Park at the far end of the parking lot
- Take the stairs
- Start a walking group: promote a 10-15 minute brisk walk with colleagues, map out a safe route and increase the time gradually. Challenge each other and/or other departments to keep everyone motivated
- Have walking meetings



Resources available for Workplaces

- The [Physical Activity Resource Centre](http://parc.ophea.net/walkthisway) has **Walk This Way Kits** that can be ordered for free to assist with a walking program at your workplace. [Walk this Way](http://parc.ophea.net/walkthisway) is a free resource to promote walking and to support healthy walking habits. The kit includes a calendar to record your minutes and information on how to get started, tips and stretching.
<http://parc.ophea.net/walkthisway>
- [City of London Bike and Walk Map](#) can be downloaded to identify walking paths near the workplace
- [Middlesex County Trails Guide](#) lists trails around the county



Sample E-mails

To inform and raise awareness of the importance of including some physical activity throughout the work day; here are a few sample e-mails that can be used.

Fitting Physical Activity into your Work Day!

Did you know? According to the [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines](#), adults aged 18-64 years should accumulate at least **150** minutes of moderate to vigorous –intensity physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

Here are some **physical activity tips** to help you get active during your work day

- Take the stairs
- Go for a brisk walk with colleagues during your lunch or coffee break
- Deliver messages in person to colleagues-take a walk to their desk
- Promote active breaks during meetings

By fitting physical activity into your daily life; you will feel better, increase your energy level, and improve your self-esteem.

For more information on physical activity visit the [Middlesex-London Health Unit](#)

Time to Get Active!

Did you know? Yes, you have time...Make **Physical Activity** part of your day! Add 10 minutes of physical activity here, and 10 minutes of physical activity there. It can begin to add up to 30 minutes or more a day and you will be on your way to leading a more active lifestyle that will benefit your health.

By fitting physical activity into your daily life, you will feel better, increase your energy level, and improve your self-esteem.

For more information on the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines visit the [Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology](#)

For more information on physical activity visit the [Middlesex-London Health Unit](#)

II. Physical Activity Challenge

A **Workplace Physical Activity Challenge** is a great way to support employees to be more physically active. Employees track their physical activity minutes over a 30 day period (or whatever time frame your workplace establishes) and then submit their minutes for prizes. Prizes offer great incentive and make it fun! Participation can be as an individual or in teams. Physical activity minutes are tracked during and/or after work hours. Encourage employees to ideally work towards at least 150 minutes per week as per the [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines](#) to achieve health benefits.

When starting a **Workplace Physical Activity Challenge**, consider the following:

- Striking a committee to run the Challenge
- Promotion (communications, posters, pay stubs, workplace newsletter, e-mail)
- Employee registration
- Method to tracking minutes electronically or paper
- Prizes and incentives
- Strategies to keep everyone motivated during the entire Challenge
- Evaluation/learning about successes for next time!

A **Workplace Physical Activity Challenge** can motivate employees to increase their personal level of regular, daily physical activity. It will also enhance the workplace culture with the achievement of mutually achieved goals.



Something to consider...

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CHALLENGE LOG SHEET

Write your weekly goal: _____

MONTH:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____
Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____	Activity: Time: _____
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The Annual October *in motion*™ Community Physical Activity Challenge

Every October Middlesex- London *in motion*™ a Community Partnership plans and supports the *in motion*™ Physical Activity Community Challenge to promote and celebrate healthy and active living. The overall goal of the challenge is to motivate everyone in our community to increase their level of regular, daily physical activity everyday (even just a little bit). Any increase in activity is encouraged, and celebrated!

This community event can be easily used by workplaces to encourage employees to be active, contribute to community spirit and participate in making this community event a success. The Challenge is a fun and exciting way for the entire family to get active!

At the end of October, the Community Partnership will announce the final total minutes tracked. In 2013, 2 million minutes were tracked! In 2014, over 4.7 million minutes were tracked! Who wouldn't want to be a part of this great community event!

For details go to www.inmotion4life.ca and find resources, posters, and forms such as a tracking calendar which can all be downloaded and used in the workplace.

Tracking Minutes – Free App



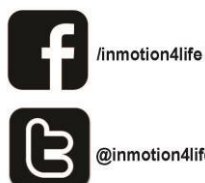
Specifically for the *in motion*™ Physical Activity Challenge, a FREE app was created and is available for everyone to use during and after the month of October. The app can be used by individuals and/or provides the option for creation of teams (e.g. human resources team or finance team). The app keeps track of physical activity minutes and progress.

Canada's Healthy Workplace Month

Every October is [Canada's Healthy Workplace Month](#)! Since the *in motion*™ Physical Activity Challenge is held in October, take this opportunity to use the Challenge as a way to celebrate Healthy Workplace month. The Middlesex-London *in motion*™ Physical Activity Challenge can be used as a team building activity. The challenge is easy, fun and social!

Any increase in activity is encouraged, and celebrated! Join the *in motion*™ Physical Activity Challenge, by visiting www.inmotion4life.ca

For **free resources** or promotional items visit www.inmotion4life.ca



Sample E-mails

To assist in motivating employees and raising awareness of the **Workplace Physical Activity Challenge**, here are a few sample emails that can be used:

Did you know?

We will be starting our **Workplace Physical Activity Challenge** the month of _____. It is simple and fun.

Track your daily physical activity minutes (during and/or after work). Enter your daily minutes for the 30 days of the **Workplace Physical Activity Challenge** and you will have the opportunity to win a great prize.

Activities can include: Brisk walking, bike riding, dance class, taking the stairs, participating in a sport, raking the lawn,

For more information or questions on the **Workplace Physical Activity Challenge**, connect with _____ (name of person in charge of this activity at your workplace; possibly a member of the Health and Wellness Committee/Workplace Coordinator)

Good Morning Everyone

Did you know?

Being active during the workday can be easy and fun! Remember to track your minutes as part of the **Workplace Physical Activity Challenge**;

- **Walk or Bike to Work**
- **Take Active Breaks** (go for a short, brisk walk, do some stretches, move around in the meeting room)
- **Take the stairs**
- **Go for a walk on your lunch** (take a colleague and you'll both collect minutes)

Remember, according to the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, to achieve health benefits, adults aged 18-64 years should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate –to vigorous –intensity aerobic activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more”.

III. The Incredible Chase

A fun, physical activity initiative that involves staff forming teams, solving clues to secret locations and completing a physical activity before moving to the next secret location!

How to Organize “The Incredible Chase!”

The idea is to have teams of individuals solve location clues correctly, leading them to “secret locations”. Teams must successfully complete a site activity before moving to the next site and returning to the finish line.

Pre – Incredible Chase Planning

- Form a committee to organize the event
- Decide if the event will be over the lunch hour or after work
- Decide on the number of ‘secret locations’ (if choosing the lunch hour, a maximum of 4 secret locations is recommended to stay within the hour)
- Recruit community businesses/agencies as the secret locations. Consider approaching hotels, theatres, public places such as libraries, etc.
- Choose locations that allow space for physical activity
- Plan activities at each location that are achievable in a reasonable amount of time, and flexible enough to accommodate all team members
- Work with the contacts at the secret locations to develop clever clues that will lead the *Teams* to their location
- Add the clues to the [Incredible Chase Passport](#) (PDF 412 KB)
- Promote one-month prior to the event with a [poster](#) (PDF 295 KB)
- Set a deadline for *Teams* to register and select a starting time. Set start times in 10 minute intervals to avoid congestion at the secret locations
- Provide a [set of rules](#) (PDF 183 KB) to each team either at registration, at the start of the Chase or post them on line
- One week prior to the Incredible Chase, do a run-through at all locations to iron out any problems and ensure that the event can be completed in a reasonable amount of time

Day of “The Incredible Chase”

- Post a flag (a bright coloured “flag” with wellness committee/organization logo and colours) at each secret location so that it is visible to participants
- Establish a “Chase” check-in/starting location (also use as the finish line) at the workplace with one or two staff assigned
- Distribute passports with clues to all team members as they arrive to check-in
- Provide teams with verbal reminders regarding specific rules/safety reminders/time limits, etc.
- Two identifiable “location leads” are recommended at each site. Consider having all “location leads” wearing the same brightly coloured t-shirt
- “Location leads” distribute the site activity once the entire *Team* arrives
- Each member of the *Teams* must successfully complete the activity (if only 3 members, one member must do activity twice)
- Once activity is completed obtain the signature of a “location lead” on the passport prior to moving to the next location.

Other Suggestions

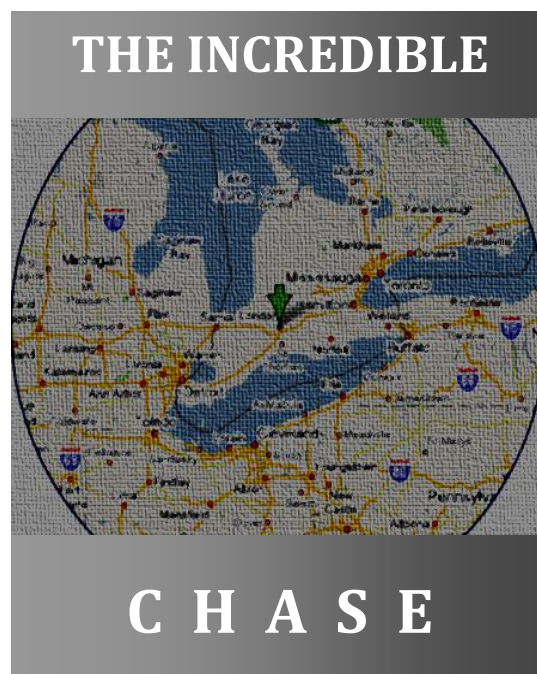
- If the work facility is large enough consider having an internal “Incredible Chase” where the secret locations are spread out throughout the facility and include the outdoor property if possible
- Have Teams dress in costume, have a name and/or theme
- Offer prizes based on
 - fastest time
 - best spirit
 - best costumes
 - or other great ideas!

Some things to consider...

- Have water and snacks available to employees at the start/stop location
- Don't forget to thank "secret location" hosts afterwards, preferably with a card or letter
- Have each "location lead" bring along a digital camera to capture the *Teams* in action. Upload these onto your workplace intranet or newsletter for all to see
- Ask each participant to complete a simple evaluation after the event

Questions

Give the Middlesex-London Health Unit Healthy Workplace phone line a call at 519-663-5317 ext.3333



Incredible Chase – Rules

SAMPLE

General Guidelines:

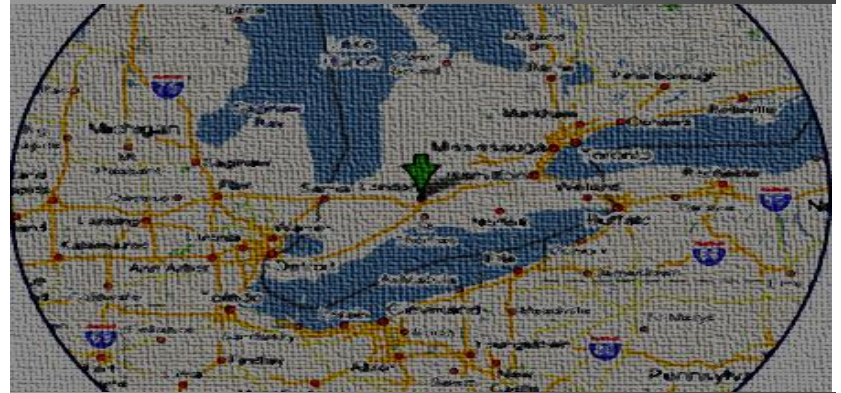
- Teams will be made up of 4 members maximum. (3 members are acceptable but one member will need to repeat location activities to ensure fairness. Groups of 2 will be paired up with another group of 2).
- Teams are encouraged to come up with an official team name and can decide if they would like to dress up. Make it fun and creative!
- Be safe! (Obey traffic rules, know your physical limits, wear appropriate clothing and comfortable shoes, etc.)

Process for the event:

1. Teams will meet (LOCATION) any time between (Time Frame) on (Date)
2. The Wellness committee representative will review the rules, give teams their “clue sheet” and record their start time.
3. Team members will determine the locations they have to go to by solving the clues they are given. You can start with any of the locations in any order that you choose.
4. The locations will be marked with an identifier and a Wellness Committee member will be at each location to inform you of the activity that you must complete.
5. Your clue sheet must be initialed by the Wellness Committee member once your team completes the task at each location. (All team members must go to each location together and each member must complete the task.)
6. Once all locations have been visited and all tasks have been completed, the team must quickly return to the courtyard and stand on the blue mat to have their end time recorded.
7. All tasks should be completed within an hour or less.
8. Prizes will be rewarded to teams with the best spirit, fastest time, runners up as well as 4 individual draws at the end of the race.
9. Bring your water bottle! In order to help save the environment, the Wellness committee will be providing jugs of waters, so bring your water bottle to fill up.

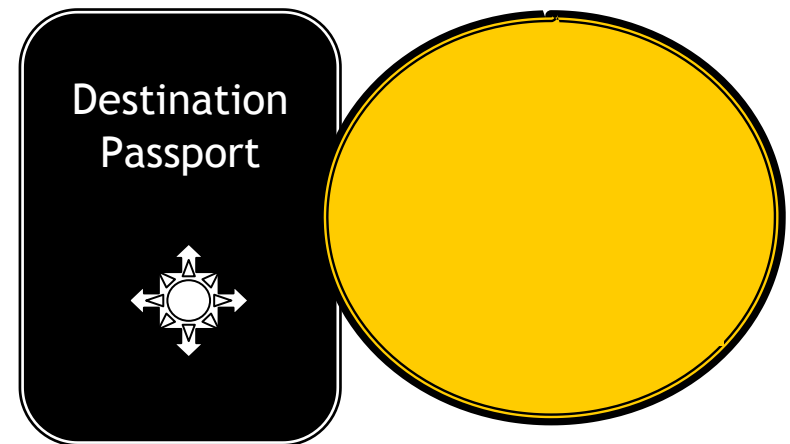
Workplace Wellness Committee
(Slogan or logo)

THE INCREDIBLE



C H A S E

WORKPLACE WELLNESS
COMMITTEE



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

WORKPLACE WELLNESS COMMITTEE

_____ INCREDIBLE CHASE

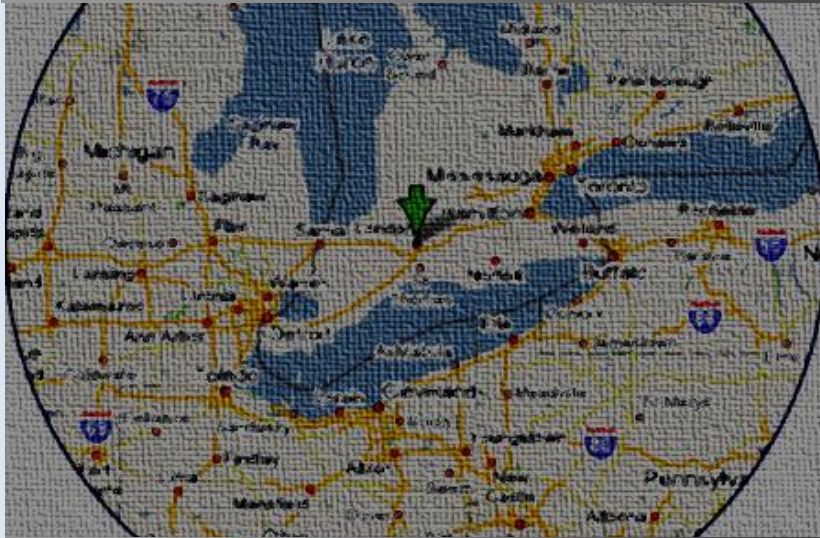
Process for the event:

1. Teams will meet in _____ any time between _____ and _____ on _____.
2. The Wellness committee representative will review the rules, give teams their “clue sheet” and record their start time.
3. Team members will determine the locations they have to go to by solving the clues they are given. (You can start with any of the locations, in any order that you choose).
4. The locations will be marked with an identifier and a Wellness Committee member will be at each location to inform you of the activity that you must complete.
5. Your clue sheet must be initialed by the Wellness Committee member once your entire team completes the task at each location.
6. Once all 4 locations have been visited and all tasks have been completed, the team must quickly return to _____ and stand on the blue mat to have their end time recorded.
7. All tasks should be completed within an hour or less. Prizes will be rewarded to teams with the best spirit, fastest time, best costume as well as 4 individual draws at the end of the race.

Remember to be safe and have fun! Obey traffic rules, know your physical limits, and dress appropriately...

Destination Clue		Completion of Task (signature required)

THE INCREDIBLE



CHASE

COME AND JOIN THE FUN!

- Make a team of 3-4 colleagues
- Lots of prizes including:
 - Fastest time
 - Best spirit,
 - Best costumes and much more!

For more information and registration, contact your
Wellness Committee Representative_____

Another Great Way to Promote Physical Activity

IV. Point-of-Decision Prompts - Take the Stairs

Research has demonstrated that when signs are posted near elevators prompting employees to take the stairs, employees consider this option and **do it!** Taking the stairs is an easy way to get physical activity during the day without even knowing it.

Every step counts!

Benefits of the Stairs

- It makes you feel good
- Improves your heart and lung health
- You can add it into your physical activity minutes for the day/week
- It becomes part of your everyday routine and gets easier the more you do it
- You can make it part of a Physical Activity Workplace Challenge

Something to consider:

Employers can consider making the stairs more appealing by ensuring that the stairwells are clean, well-lit and accessible to employees. Consider doing a stairwell makeover to make it a more appealing place to promote physical activity. A fresh coat of bright coloured paint, wall murals, motivational posters and even music have been used in workplaces to encourage the use of stairs.

Download these signs to post at elevators or use them to develop workplace specific signs. Make it fun and attractive!



(PDF 661 KB)



(PDF 17.6 MB)

**DON'T
ESCAPE
YOUR CUBICLE
FOR ANOTHER**

TAKE THE STAIRS!

FREE WORKOUT NEARBY

TAKE THE STAIRS!

**NO TIME
TO EXERCISE
TODAY?**

TAKE THE STAIRS!

SNEAK
ACTIVITY
INTO YOUR
DAILY
ROUTINE

TAKE THE STAIRS!

**STEP UP
—TOA—
HEALTHIER
LIFESTYLE**
TAKE THE STAIRS!

SMALL STEPS
CAN MAKE A
BIG
DIFFERENCE

TAKE THE STAIRS!

GET ACTIVE

One step at a time...



TAKE THE STAIRS!

GET ACTIVE

One step at a time...



TAKE THE STAIRS!

GET ACTIVE

One step at a time...



TAKE THE STAIRS!

GET ACTIVE

One step at a time...



TAKE THE STAIRS!

Section 3 - Policy

Policy development is an important part of any Comprehensive Workplace Health Program.

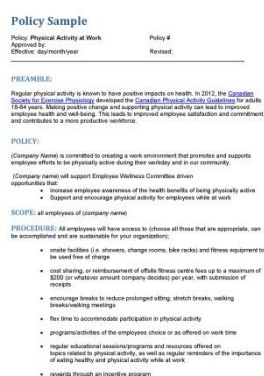
Commitment to physical activity is best demonstrated to employees by establishing a Physical Activity Policy. Establishing a policy reflects a long term commitment to employees and can boost the workplace culture!

Sample policies can be found in the attached pages. Use these to start integrating physical activity into the workplace and create a positive, active culture!

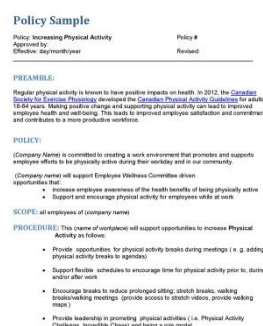
Suggestions:

- Flexible working hours
- Active living facility subsidy program
- Promotion of active breaks
- Installing shower facilities
- Promotion active transportation to work
- Fitness space and equipment
- Active living education sessions or library resources

Download these samples to assist with policy development for physical activity in the workplace.



PDF (133 KB)



PDF (121 KB)

For support with developing a comprehensive workplace program, modifying an existing workplace policy or to create a new physical activity policy contact the Middlesex-London Health Unit Workplace Program phone line at 519-663-5317 Ext. 3333

Resources

For more information on Workplace Health-Policy Development including samples of policies, visit [Workplace Health –Policy Development](#)

<http://www.healthunit.com/workplace-policy-development>

The Physical Activity Resource Centre (PARC) has created a Policy Workbook called the [Workbook for Influencing Physical Activity Policy](#) and follows The Health Communication Unit's (THCU) eight-step policy development model.

<http://parc.ophea.net/resource/policy-workbook>

The [Alberta Centre for Active Living- Physical Activity @ Work](#) provides information on how policies can support an active workplace and can help keep everyone active.

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~active/workplace/ideas/policy.html>

Policy Sample

Policy: **Physical Activity at Work**

Policy #

Approved by:

Effective: day/month/year

Revised:

PREAMBLE:

Regular physical activity is known to have positive impacts on health. In 2012, the [Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology](#) developed the [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines](#) for adults 18-64 years. Making positive change and supporting physical activity can lead to improved employee health and well-being. This leads to improved employee satisfaction and commitment, and contributes to a more productive workforce.

POLICY:

(*Company Name*) is committed to creating a work environment that promotes and supports employee efforts to be physically active during their workday and in our community.

(*Company name*) will support Employee Wellness Committee driven opportunities that:

- increase employee awareness of the health benefits of being physically active
- Support and encourage physical activity for employees while at work

SCOPE: all employees of (*company name*)

PROCEDURE: All employees will have access to (choose all those that are appropriate, can be accomplished and are sustainable for your organization);

- onsite facilities (i.e. showers, change rooms, bike racks) and fitness equipment to be used free of charge
- cost sharing, or reimbursement of offsite fitness centre fees up to a maximum of \$200 (or whatever amount company decides) per year, with submission of receipts
- encourage breaks to reduce prolonged sitting; stretch breaks, walking breaks/walking meetings
- flex time to accommodate participation in physical activity
- programs/activities of the employees choice or as offered on work time
- regular educational sessions/programs and resources offered on topics related to physical activity, as well as regular reminders of the importance of eating healthy and physical activity while at work
- rewards through an incentive program

Policy Sample

Policy: **Increasing Physical Activity**

Policy #

Approved by:

Effective: day/month/year

Revised:

PREAMBLE:

Regular physical activity is known to have positive impacts on health. In 2012, the [Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology](#) developed the [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines](#) for adults 18-64 years. Making positive change and supporting physical activity can lead to improved employee health and well-being. This leads to improved employee satisfaction and commitment, and contributes to a more productive workforce.

POLICY:

(*Company Name*) is committed to creating a work environment that promotes and supports employee efforts to be physically active during their workday and in our community.

(*Company name*) will support Employee Wellness Committee driven opportunities that:

- increase employee awareness of the health benefits of being physically active
- Support and encourage physical activity for employees while at work

SCOPE: all employees of (*company name*)

PROCEDURE: This (*name of workplace*) will support opportunities to increase **Physical Activity** as follows:

- Provide opportunities for physical activity breaks during meetings (e. g. adding physical activity breaks to agendas)
- Support flexible schedules to encourage time for physical activity prior to, during and/or after work
- Encourage breaks to reduce prolonged sitting; stretch breaks, walking breaks/walking meetings (provide access to stretch videos, provide walking maps)
- Provide leadership in promoting physical activities (i.e. Physical Activity Challenge, Incredible Chase) and being a role model

Other Resources

Being physical active is part of living a healthy active life. Below is a list of some additional websites that provide information to support healthy living.

Healthy Eating

EatRight Ontario

The [EatRight Ontario](http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/default.aspx) website provides nutrition related information from registered dietitians. You can browse by topic, e-mail or call a dietitian with your questions at 1-877-510-520-2 (toll free in Ontario).

<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/default.aspx>

Middlesex –London Health Unit

The [Food and Healthy Eating Workplaces](http://www.healthunit.com/workplaces-and-healthy-eating) section offers lots of information on the workplace nutrition environment, shift workers, mindless eating at work, packing lunches and the benefits of healthy eating to employers and employees.

<http://www.healthunit.com/workplaces-and-healthy-eating>

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

The [Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse](http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/topics/alcohol/drinking-guidelines/Pages/default.aspx) provides information on the Canadian Low Risk Drinking Guidelines. These guidelines were developed to help individuals moderate their alcohol consumption and reduce their immediate and long-term alcohol-related harm. They also provide information on other drugs.

<http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/topics/alcohol/drinking-guidelines/Pages/default.aspx>

Middlesex-London Health Unit

The [Workplace Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs](http://www.healthunit.com/workplace-alcohol-and-other-drugs) section of the website discusses the impact of alcohol and other drugs on the workplace and provides resources to address concerns. A video on [Understanding Canada's Low –Risk Drinking Guidelines](http://www.healthunit.com/workplace-alcohol-and-other-drugs) can also be viewed by your workplace. Information and guidance is also provided on policy development.

<http://www.healthunit.com/workplace-alcohol-and-other-drugs>

Mental Health

Canadian Mental Health Association

The [Canadian Mental Health Association](http://www.cmha.ca/mental-health/your-mental-health/stress) provides information and resources on stress, work/life balance, and resilience which can be helpful to an employer and employees. They also have a stress index to find out your current stress level.

<http://www.cmha.ca/mental-health/your-mental-health/stress>

Middlesex-London Health Unit

The [Workplace Health](http://www.healthunit.com/promoting-culture-wellness) section offers information and resources to employees on promoting a culture of wellness in the workplace. The Middlesex-London Health Unit's [Health at Work 4 All!](http://www.healthunit.com/promoting-culture-wellness) provides a variety of resources and presentations including an interactive presentation on stress and work-life-family balance which can be given at your workplace.

<http://www.healthunit.com/promoting-culture-wellness>

Tobacco

Health Canada

Health Canada's [Smoking Cessation in the Workplace: A Guide to Helping Your Employees Quit Smoking](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/tobac-tabac/cessation-renoncement/index-eng.php) outlines reasons why employers should get involved and support their employees to quit smoking. It provides information, tools and resources that employers can use to support their employees to quit smoking.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/tobac-tabac/cessation-renoncement/index-eng.php>

Canadian Cancer Society

[Smoker's Helpline](http://www.smokershelpline.ca/) is a free, confidential service that offers support and information about quitting and tobacco use.

<http://www.smokershelpline.ca/>

Middlesex-London Health Unit

The [Smoke Free Workplaces](https://www.healthunit.com/smoke-free-workplaces) section of [Workplace Health](http://www.healthunit.com/promoting-culture-wellness) provides information for both the employer and employees regarding tobacco, tools and resources which can support employers to help employees to quit smoking, tools to assist employees to quit smoking and second –hand smoke. There is also a section on [Workplaces and Public Places](http://www.healthunit.com/promoting-culture-wellness) and the [Smoke -Free Ontario Act](http://www.healthunit.com/promoting-culture-wellness).

<https://www.healthunit.com/smoke-free-workplaces>

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