



GET YOUR WORKPLACE ACTIVE

A GUIDE TO PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT WORK

Health Promotion & Improvement Department
HSE South West

A message from the Physical Activity Team, Health Promotion & Improvement Department, HSE South West

This resource has been developed by Health Promotion Officers for Physical Activity to support you and your workplace in becoming more physically active. We look forward to your feedback and experiences in using this Get Your Workplace Active guide. Should you have any queries or need further help please email hpdc.south@hse.ie

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We hope that this resource provides support, motivation and information to help get your workplace active.

Physical Activity Team, Health Promotion & Improvement Department, HSE South West.

FOREWORD

Welcome from
Ms. Gabrielle O'Keeffe
Head of Service, Health and Wellbeing



I am delighted to share with you the recently updated 'Get Your Workplace Active,' resource, which is dedicated to enhancing staff health and wellbeing within HSE South West. This guide aims to provide essential support, motivation, and information to help make your workplace a hub of physical activity.

Aligned to the latest physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines for Ireland, this resource is designed to integrate seamlessly with the '*Healthy Ireland Campus; Toolkit for Wellness at work Committees*'. It specifically targets individuals and workplaces striving to embed physical activity into the daily routines of their staff.

Incorporating more movement into our workdays is a straightforward yet effective way to boost physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour. According to the new guidelines, even small increases in activity levels can significantly benefit our health, foster collaboration amongst colleagues, and enhance social connectedness in the workplace.

I extend my gratitude to the Health Promotion & Improvement Physical Activity Team for creating this resource. Their work will undoubtedly inspire you to 'Get Your Workplace Active' and help our workforce experience the numerous benefits of a more active lifestyle. Let's embrace this opportunity to improve our health and wellbeing together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabrielle O'Keeffe". The script is fluid and cursive.

Gabrielle O'Keeffe
Head of Service, Health and Wellbeing





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SECTION 1

STAFF HEALTH & WELLBEING

INTRODUCTION

STAFF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION



INTRODUCTION

HSE South West has a staff of over 22,804 people spread across a large area with many different worksites. A large number of these staff work in complex, challenging and potentially distressing situations. HSE South West is committed to adopting measures to support health and wellbeing in the workplace for all staff.

There is strong evidence that much can be done to improve the health and wellbeing of employees. Workplace health promotion programmes have been identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as one of the 'best buy' options for prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and for mental health and wellbeing. A healthy workplace policy creates a supportive environment that protects and promotes the physical, mental and social wellbeing of employees. It includes developing health promoting policies; providing facilities conducive to healthy lifestyles while at work or getting to/from work; and actively promoting a culture of valuing staff health and wellbeing.

The Healthy Workplace Framework 'Healthy Ireland @ work' is the Government's strategy to enhance the health and wellbeing of Ireland's workers. The workplace offers an ideal setting and infrastructure to support the promotion of health to a large audience¹.

Working life is undergoing profound changes that are having significant effects on organisations and on the health of their employees. In many sectors; staff cuts, time pressures, and new working conditions such as part-time, tele-working, and working from home, are creating new challenges. People are also using car transport more than ever and technological advances mean that working lives are more likely to be inactive, such as sitting at a computer, using smartphones, working from tablets etc.² A growing body of research shows just how important it is to combat inactivity to reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity, diabetes and cancer. Fortunately, there are plenty of opportunities for staff to become more active and healthier by adjusting or altering their current routine.

This guide has been developed to;

- give an understanding of the importance of physical activity in the workplace;
- act as a resource for managers and staff to promote physical activity within their workplace;
- help implement physical activity initiatives within the workplace;
- support and improve staff health and wellbeing in their work setting;
- provide a toolkit of useful resources to support physical activity initiatives in the workplace.

The information contained in this resource is designed to provide support and motivation to help HSE workplaces to become more physically active. It does not claim to be a complete list and staff/committees may be aware of other local supports, resources, websites etc. that exist.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the contact details and information supplied are accurate. It is advised to check with appropriate resources for the most up to date information.

STAFF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Staff Health and Wellbeing is one of three strategic priorities identified by the Healthy Ireland Framework.³ Having a large workforce, a significant number of workplaces and operating across an extensive terrain provides HSE South West with a challenge. Healthcare professionals often work in complex, challenging and potentially distressing situations; therefore workplace health promotion is all the more critical in the Health Service Executive.

HSE South West is committed to adopting measures to support health and wellbeing in the workplace for all staff. HSE South West is currently implementing a number of national and local policies and programmes that encourage and enable staff to lead healthy lives and make choices that support positive wellbeing.

Furthermore, staff in all parts of the HSE South West area are taking on their own projects and initiatives. Best practice involves a partnership approach from the combined efforts of a number of departments to create a work environment that promotes positive health and well-being.

A 2016 literature review⁴ examined the impact of physically active health professionals on patient activity levels. It found that health professionals who were regularly active were not only more likely to; but were also more confident in raising the importance of being active to patients. The review also indicated that there is strong evidence to suggest patients are more receptive to physical activity advice from an active health professional. Championing an active workplace therefore, not only impacts positively on staff themselves, it also has the potential to create powerful role models for patients.

WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION

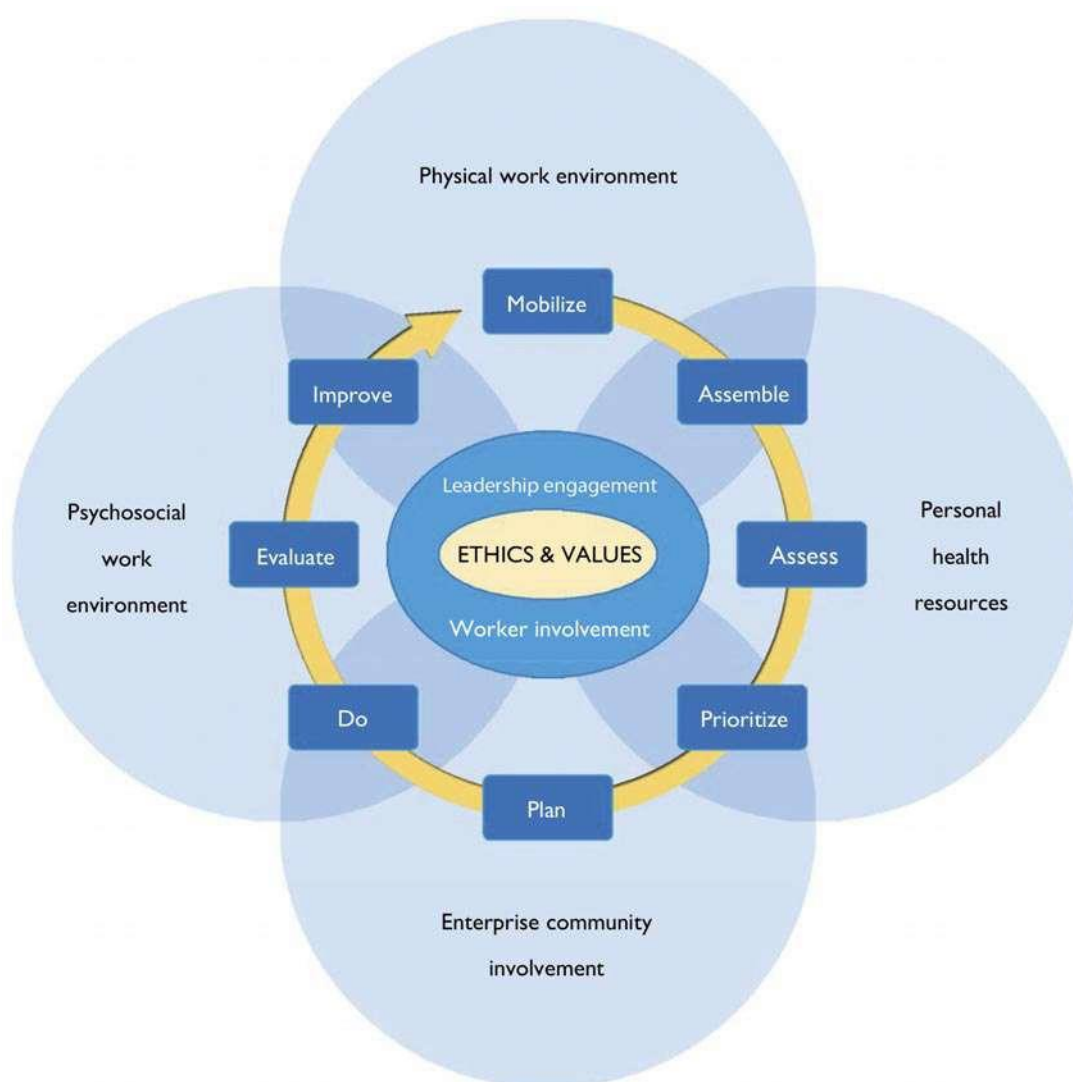
The workplace is well recognised as one of the most important settings affecting the physical, mental, economic and social well-being of workers, and in turn the health of their families, communities and society. The workplace furthermore is the place where most people spend up to a third of their life.

There is clear evidence that the promotion of health in the workplace results in positive outcomes for both staff and the organisation. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in England provides a wide range of evidence based guidelines for the workplace; one such guidance is **Physical Activity and the Workplace** (www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph13).⁵

The WHO Healthy workplace Framework and Model also recognises this and provides a flexible evidence-based guidance on how to effectively ensure success and sustainability of healthy workplace programmes.⁶

The model shown in figure 1 outlines four key areas of influence; **physical environment**, **psychosocial environment (culture)**, **personal health resources**, and **enterprise and community involvement** which are related to the content of the programmes. Each area intersects and overlaps with each other and are based on identified needs. Through the set-up of a workplace Staff Health & Wellbeing Committee (see Section 3 'Key Steps for Success' for setting up a workplace committee), a workplace programme may address some or all of these at any given time.⁶

Figure 1. WHO Healthy Workplace Model: avenues of influence, process and core principles⁶



The model also outlines a process to follow; all of which is under pinned by the core principals of leadership engagement, worker involvement, ethics and values. In this document, we will use this model as a guide to implementing a workplace physical activity plan.⁶

SECTION 2

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND THE WORKPLACE

BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT WORK

NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY AND SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR

BARRIERS TO BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE AT WORK

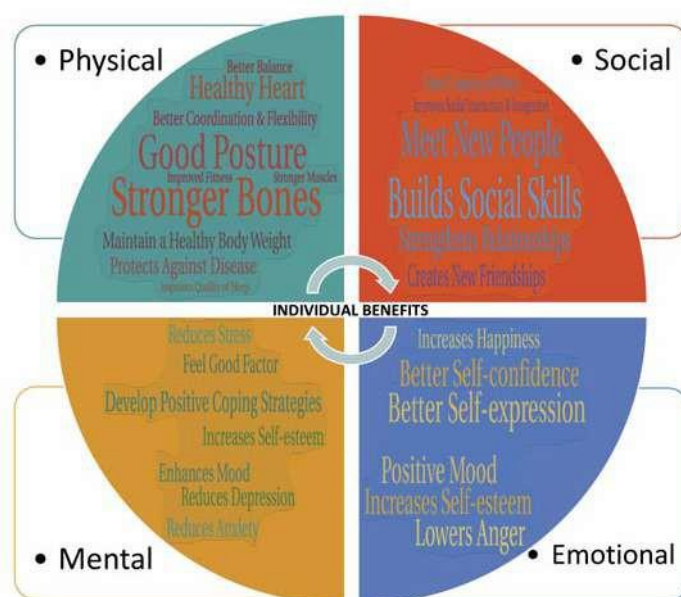
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND REMOTE WORKING

BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT WORK

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things an individual can do for their health.² Individuals can influence and change their own levels of physical activity themselves without medication or treatment and usually with very little cost.²

The National Guidelines for Physical Activity for Ireland highlight the strong evidence base for the health benefits of regular physical activity which are wide and varied encompassing physical, social, mental and emotional benefits.²

Figure 2. Health benefits of regular physical activity



As well as the many health benefits above in figure 2; with respect to the workplace, physical activity opportunities can bring benefits to staff and employers and the organisation as a whole (figure 3).

Figure 3. Benefits for staff and the HSE

BENEFITS FOR STAFF	BENEFITS FOR HSE
An Improved Sense of Well-being	Lower Levels of Occupational Stress
Improved Morale	Better Staff Retention
Improved Mental Well-being	May Increase Staff Productivity & Performance
Reduced Stress Levels	Cost Effective
Increased Level of Job Satisfaction	Improved Staff Morale
A Supportive Working Environment	Reduced Absenteeism & Quicker Recovery from Illness

NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

Ireland's National Physical Activity & Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommend that adults should aim to achieve at least 2 hours and 30 minutes to 5 hours of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity; or at least 1 hour and 15 minutes to 2 hours and 30 minutes of vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week. Additional muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups are recommended on 2 or more days a week.⁷

Older adults (aged 65+) and older adults living with a disability should do varied multicomponent physical activity that emphasises functional balance and strength on 3 or more days a week, to enhance strength and capacity to prevent falls.

Figure 4: Physical Activity Guidelines Infographic⁷



Every Move Counts

Being active regularly has significant health benefits for your heart, bodies and minds, whether you're walking, wheeling or cycling, dancing, doing sport or playing with your kids.

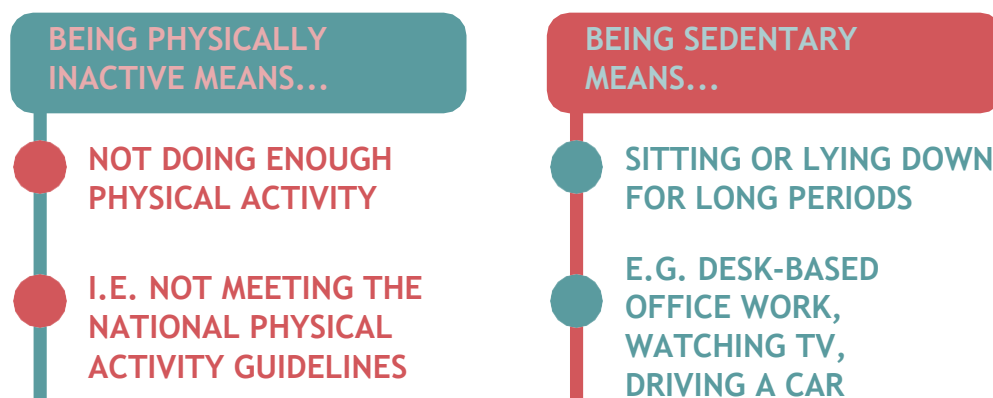
Figure 5: Physical Activity Guidelines Adults Key Messages⁷

Adults 18-64 Key Messages
If you are aged 18-64, you can improve your mental and physical health by taking part in at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking), or at least 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity (such as running) per week.
Taking part in activities that strengthen your muscles (such as resistance training or yoga) on 2 or more days each week brings important health benefits.
More physical activity is better and will bring additional health benefits.
You can make up your weekly physical activity when and how you want to.
We recommend trying to limit the amount of time you spend sitting still.
Breaking up and replacing some of your time spent sitting still with some movement can benefit your health.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY AND SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR

There is a difference between someone who is physically inactive and someone who is sedentary.

Figure 6. Definitions of Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour



It is possible for individuals to participate in the recommended amount of physical activity and also engage in high levels of sedentary behaviour.⁸

Many roles within the HSE are desk based and staff spend a significant proportion of the day sitting resulting in too little physical activity. Staff are living more sedentary lifestyles than ever before having implications for overall health and wellbeing.

A systematic review by the Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee (PAGAC)⁹ cited by WHO in their Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour document¹⁰ summarised the relationship between levels of sedentary behaviour and moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity; as shown in Figure 7.

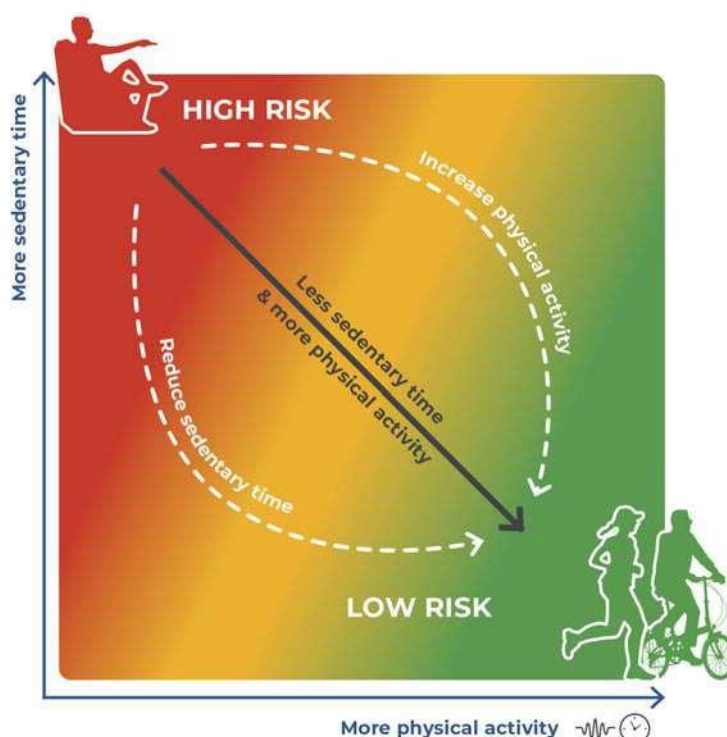


Figure 7. The Relationship between sedentary behaviour and physical activity¹⁰

Any approach to physical activity in the workplace must try to address both physical inactivity (through supporting employees to meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines) and sedentarism (through breaking up prolonged periods of sitting).¹⁰

WHO recommend that adults should limit the amount of time spent being sedentary (see figure 8).

Replacing sedentary time with physical activity of any intensity (including light intensity) provides health benefits.¹⁰

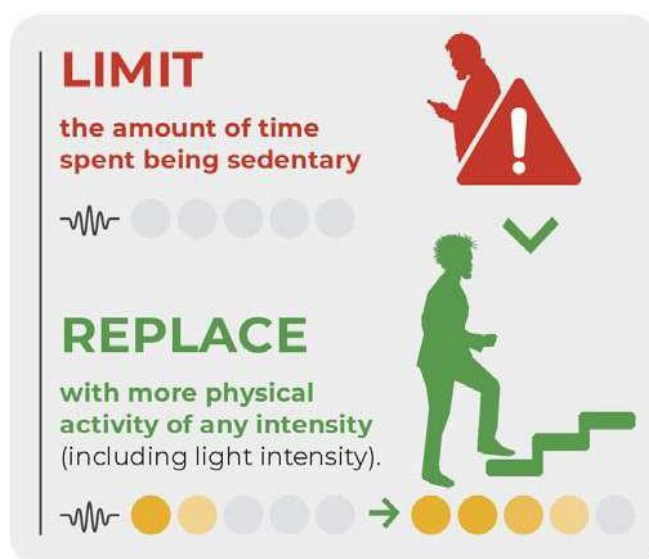


Figure 8. Limit the amount of time spent being sedentary.¹⁰

Key Messages:⁷

To help reduce the detrimental effects of high levels of sedentary behaviour on health, adults should aim to do more than the recommended levels of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity.

BARRIERS TO BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE AT WORK

It is important to acknowledge that there will be barriers both in terms of implementing an actual physical activity initiative and for the individuals themselves. Identifying and understanding what these barriers are is important so that when planning a programme or a campaign, strategies are in place to counter or at least reduce their impact on participation.

However, even with strategies in place, inevitably, there will still be staff who will not engage or participate and this could be down to reasons outside of the committee's control. Adopting a 'one-size **does not** fit all' approach and committing to a variety of initiatives can help.

Before committing to specific physical activity initiatives; committees should spend time consulting with staff to understand the types of barriers they currently experience

A useful tool for staff to complete and assess what their barriers to physical activity are; is **The Barriers to Being Active Quiz**¹¹ (see Section 4).

Table 1, overleaf, outlines some common perceived barriers to undertaking physical activity in general and in the workplace with possible solutions to overcome them.

Table 1. Perceived barriers and possible solutions

Perceived Barrier	How your workplace might address these barriers:
Lack of time/ Too busy	<p>Highlight that all physical activity counts!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active travel - includes walking, wheeling, cycling to/from work • Active at work; stair climbing, walking meeting, active breaks
Desk based job	<p>Design a campaign recommending the following to staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate daily movement breaks- walk, stretch, use online desk exercise videos or take an active class (morning/lunch time) • Stand or move about when possible – during phone calls, hosting physical/virtual meetings or watching online webinars
Lack of motivation or energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the benefits of physical activity in the workplace • Encourage staff to 'buddy up' or create team challenges • Relay the message that physical activity can help increase energy and productivity levels and reduce feelings of fatigue
Fear of being judged on appearance and ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a supportive workplace environment where physical activity is encouraged for all staff and all ability levels
Fear of injury	<p>When implementing any physical activity programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to complete a pre-screening tool i.e. Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire; see Section 4 • Choose activities involving minimum risk • Include warm up and cool down activities to prevent injury
Bad weather conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to bring a suitable wet weather kit to work • Identify suitable indoor space in the workplace for activities
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select low cost activities – walking, jogging, online classes • Identify local inexpensive resources and activities (parks, outdoor gyms, parkruns, etc.) • Promote the Bike to Work scheme, Corporate Leisure Centre Discounts for Staff etc.
Being 'sweaty' after activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the feasibility of providing showers in the workplace

Other potential barriers are those related to the physical environment of the workplace. These will vary from site to site and even season to season. Below are some common areas to investigate. Whilst it may not be possible to alter them, at least not without investment, having an awareness of them enables the committee to plan initiatives more effectively.

- Access to green spaces
- Access to safe walking areas/footpaths
- Lighting around campuses (especially during winter months)
- Provision of shower/changing facilities
- Provision of bike parking, lockers etc.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND REMOTE WORKING

Remote working can have both advantages and disadvantages for staff and workplaces. Sitting all day can be difficult; staff need to make time for and maintain a certain level of physical activity especially if working from home.

The human connection of coffee breaks or corridor discussions is largely lost when remote working. Physical activity can be a really effective tool to re-engage remote staff and re-ignite this connection that is paramount to staff social and emotional wellbeing. It is important that any physical activity programmes implemented in the workplace reach all staff; no matter where they work. Staff working remotely often cannot access or benefit from on-site changes. It may be useful to use additional strategies to further engage these staff members in improving their health while at work.

For more ideas on how to engage those working remotely in physical activity see Section 3.



Figure 9. Physical Activity Ideas for Working Remotely



SECTION 3

HOW TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ATWORK

KEY STEPS FOR SUCCESS

CASE STUDIES

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IDEAS AND INITIATIVES FOR THE WORKPLACE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WEBSITES

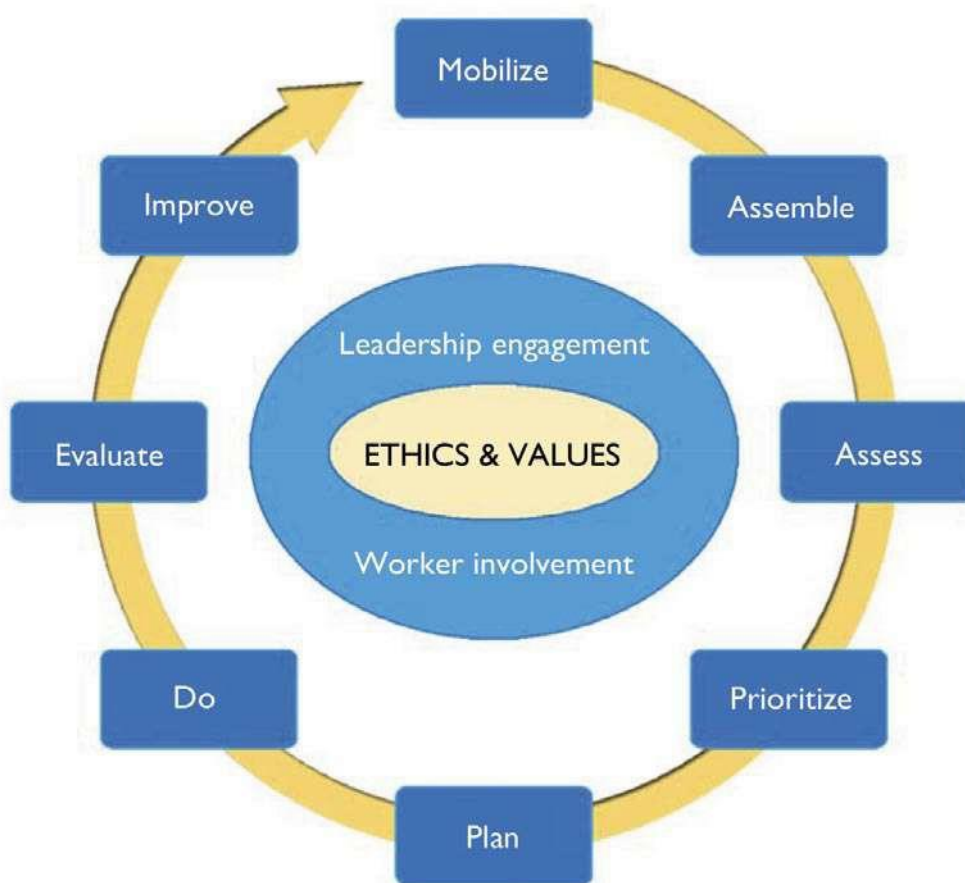
KEY STEPS FOR SUCCESS

The best way to encourage physical activity is to create a workplace culture that encourages and facilitates any form of physical activity. Every workplace is different so there is no one size fits all approach.¹²

Management commitment and staff participation are key to the success of any Workplace Health Promotion initiative.⁶ It should be needs based i.e. responding to identified wants and needs of staff which should be included in any proposed projects.¹²

WHO have identified key steps to help introduce effective and sustainable health promotion programmes in workplaces:⁶

Figure 10: WHO model of Healthy Workplace Continual improvement process⁶



1. Mobilise

Effective and sustainable programmes need to mobilise support from the outset. This involves management commitment to help with staff release, securing onsite access to indoor/outdoor spaces, allocating a budget and participation from staff at all stages in order for programmes to be acceptable to all staff and viewed as meeting their needs.¹³ Also knowing who the key opinion leaders and influencers are in the workplace and what issues are likely to mobilise them will be critical to building commitment around an action or initiative.⁶

2. Assemble

It is important to assemble a multidisciplinary committee with representation from all staff including those who have a brief for staff health and wellbeing.

Make sure to find out whether or not there is a Staff Health and Wellbeing Committee, e.g. Wellness at Work Committee or similar already in place within the workplace. For example, a Health and Safety Committee may currently exist within your workplace and perhaps its brief could be widened to include a focus on physical activity for the workplace⁶. Every workplace is different and can range from one building to multiple buildings on the one site. It is important to have representation from all buildings onsite so information can reach all staff working on site as well as those working remotely.

For further information on the committee roles and responsibilities, supports required and necessary documents e.g. sample Terms of Reference when forming a workplace committee obtain a copy of the *Healthy Ireland Campus: A Toolkit for Wellness at Work Committees* (see Section 4).

3. Assess

The first task of the committee is to assess the current situation within their workplace and to identify the needs of staff.

There are a number of methods and tools available to carry out this important step in the process:

- Workplace Assessment tool; “*What is currently happening in your workplace to help promote Physical Activity*” (see Section 4 for sample template);
- *Staff Needs Assessment questionnaire* (see Section 4 for sample questionnaire);
- Online survey tools*
- Focus groups*, one to one discussions, suggestion box;
- Discussion with existing groups representing employees.

**samples of these can be found in Healthy Ireland Campus: A Toolkit for Wellness at Work Committees (see Section 4)*

4. Prioritise

Prioritise the issues raised by staff from step 3; the staff needs assessment and develop appropriate solutions and actions.¹²

WHO recommends considering prioritising issues raised in terms of:

- Ease of implementing solutions, such as “quick wins” that may motivate and encourage continued progress;
- Possibility of making a difference;
- Likelihood of success.⁵

Once the solutions and actions have been identified, a workplace physical activity plan needs to be drawn up.¹³

5. Plan

The overall plan should have some long-term goals and objectives set in order to measure success. After developing the long-term plan, annual plans should be developed to address issues in order of priority.⁶ The purpose of an annual plan is to schedule when each activity will take place and to determine the proposed time scale of the project.¹³ A sample plan is provided in Section 4.

The workplace physical activity plan should also include the following;

- resources to be allocated;
- costs involved;
- named individuals responsible for specific actions,
- methods of evaluation;
- review.

It is also important at this point to remember the World Health Organisation's four avenues of influence when developing solutions.⁶ Some sample actions under each of the four avenues of influence are provided in Section 4 that may be of use when developing your workplace physical activity action plan. Another useful tool to use when planning is the *Physical Activity Calendar of Events (PACE)*, which highlights monthly themes, and national physical activity campaigns (see Section 4).

It might be useful to link with your local Health Promotion & Improvement Officer to get support and further guidance on your *Physical Activity Plan*.

6. Do

The next step is to implement your *Workplace Physical Activity Plan*. Ensuring commitment and support from everyone is essential during the implementation process to ensure assigned tasks are delivered on. Regular, effective communication among the committee members to update each other on progress, discuss achievements and to consider solutions to any barriers is very important at this stage. Management also needs to be updated on progress including problems and possible solutions.¹³

Communicate the plan to all staff; staff need to know which activities are planned for the near future and ways in which they can participate in these activities. It would be advisable to circulate a **Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PARQ)** to staff members prior to undertaking each activity. Regular exercise is associated with many health benefits, yet any change of activity may increase the risk of injury. Completion of this questionnaire is a first step when planning to increase physical activity. A sample PARQ can be found in Section 4.

7. Evaluate

Evaluation is crucial to ensure that the overall process and subsequent action plans are having the desired effect. It can also help to inform future planning. It is important that evaluation is built in from the start of any physical activity plans, initiatives and programmes that are implemented in the workplace.

Your evaluation needs to focus on two areas:

1. The Committee process – i.e. the experiences of the Committee through the key steps 1-6. See *Committee Reflection Tool* in Section 4.

Questions to be answered include:¹³

- What worked well?
- What needs further work?
- What could be done differently?
- What areas have yet to be addressed?
- What are the priority areas for next year?

2. The physical activity initiatives - i.e. whether the physical activity objectives and subsequent programmes/initiatives outlined in the *Workplace Physical Activity Plan* have been met and what the outcomes were for the participants. (See *Sample Post Initiative Participant Evaluation Questionnaire* in Section 4).

The overall effectiveness of the physical activity plan can be evaluated by comparing the outcomes achieved to the amount of time and resources invested.¹³

8. Improve

This last step is also the first in the next cycle of actions.⁶ The results of the evaluation will help the steering group to review the *Workplace Physical Activity Plan* and make changes. These changes can improve the programmes/initiatives that have been implemented, or add on the next components.⁶

Some notable successes may have been achieved. It is important to recognise successes, to appreciate the people who participated in achieving the successful outcome and to make sure that all stakeholders are aware of the achievement.⁶

Central to all of these steps is effective communication. If programmes are to be successful, effective two-way communication is essential. Staff must be actively involved in the programme and informed at all stages. Channels of communication that engage staff in dialogue, as well as providing them with information are necessary, for example, focus groups, needs assessment questionnaires, suggestion boxes etc.¹³



CASE STUDIES



I. Health and wellbeing in a HSE workplace. Learning from a two-year project in a medium-sized workplace

Authors: Edel McNamara, Senior Community Dietitian

Affiliation: Health Service Executive, Dublin

Location: The Nexus office building in Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 accommodates approximately 200 Health Service Executive and TUSLA staff from six departments, including the Health Promotion and Improvement Service.

Process: In early 2015, a multi-departmental 'Health and Wellbeing' committee was established in the building, led by a Health Promotion and Improvement staff member. The committee aimed to improve social connections and wellbeing within the building and to make it a 'happier place to work'. A preliminary survey of staff was completed to ascertain their views, needs and opinions on health in the workplace.

Outcome(s): Several events, activities and initiatives have happened during the two years since the group was established. These included: lunchtime Zumba classes, yoga, boot camps, a book club, mindfulness taster, cinema evenings, Christmas and summer parties, Operation Transformation initiatives, the development of a Slí na Sláinte Route in conjunction with the Irish Heart Foundation, Valentine's Day Walk, parkruns, nutrition workshops, and a supported Couch- to-5k programme. Audio-visual equipment was funded to help drive new initiatives in 2017. Shower facilities in the building were improved following requests by the group.

Follow-up/Review: The committee meets every 2-3 months to evaluate initiatives and progress new ideas. A second staff survey was carried out in 2016 to gather feedback and review activities.

Key learnings:

- A supported enthusiastic champion is essential to lead and drive the committee.
- Management support to allow staff to attend meetings is key.
- All departments need to be represented to get full buy-in.
- Key anchor staff (e.g. porters) are crucial to the promotion of events.
- The availability of useable space for lunchtime activities is a challenge.
- Some ideas will fail, but new initiatives happen organically when a culture is created within the setting.
- Staff engagement is challenging but social events are the most popular and can be used to promote or kick-start new activities.
- Administrative support is vital to support the project.



II. Audit of workplace walkability in an Irish healthcare setting

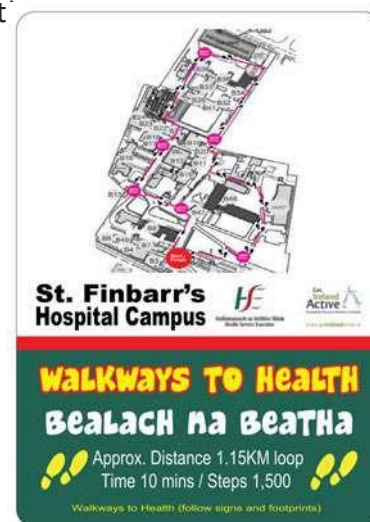


Authors: Judy Cronin, Department of Public Health

Affiliation: Health Service Executive, Cork

Location: St Finbarr's Hospital Campus (SFHC) is situated on a 26 acre site and is a large hospital-based administrative campus with a high proportion of health staff, circa 1,000, working in largely office-based roles.

Process: As part of a healthier worksite initiative, a worksite walkability audit and staff survey was conducted in 2014. The US Centre for Disease Control (CDC) Healthier Worksite Initiative Walkability Audit Tool was used to audit 20 walking segments. The second phase of this research involved an employee electronic survey to understand staff requirements from a workplace physical activity initiative.



The SFHC General Manager gave full support to the audit and proposed research. A SFHC Health & Wellness Workplace Initiative Group was set up with key staff across hospital maintenance, business services, nursing, community work, health promotion and other interested staff working on the campus to lend their support and advice. Following broad support from the group for the initiative, a sub-group met to walk the route and agree on the segments to be audited. A timeframe for completing the audit was agreed. The second phase of this research involved an employee electronic survey via Survey Monkey to understand staff needs and support for any proposed re-development of the walking path.

Outcome(s): Overall, the campus scored a medium risk to walkability on the CDC audit tool. This means that with some key minor alterations the walking route could be made safe and attractive for walking. The staff survey was circulated by e-mail to staff to complete over a one week period. There was a 20% (n = 151) response rate to the survey with 66% of respondents sitting at their desk for most of the day and the majority spending 5-7 hours a day sitting.

Common themes to emerge from the open-ended responses on the audit were the need to improve the aesthetical aspect of the walking pathway such as more flowers, more seating, historical facts on buildings and to record distance walked.

Key learnings:

- Management buy-in and approval of the audit is highly significant to its success.
- Asking staff what they want and need from a workplace physical activity initiative is important particularly if investment is to be made in upgrading facilities and ensuring that any planned initiatives are wanted/needed and will be used.
- Involving staff in the decision making around a walking route is likely to encourage greater participation, especially if staff have had the opportunity to influence the decision-making about the initiative.



III. How physically active are employees at University Limerick Hospital Group?

Authors: Curran, M., Quinn-McDonogh, J., Moran, B., Brady, H., Cowan, C. and Tobin, L.



Affiliation: Waterford Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB)

Location: Sites of University Limerick Hospital Group.

Process: The purpose of this study was to determine employees' current physical activity and active transport levels, readiness to change, the barriers to exercise, and to ascertain facilities required by employees to encourage an uptake of physical activity within the University Limerick (UL) Hospitals group.

A questionnaire was amended from the Active@Work campaign by the Irish Heart Foundation and was distributed online and onsite among all staff members of the UL Hospital Group (n=3422). Efforts were made in all five sites to encourage staff to participate. Response rate was 1006 (29.4%).

Outcome(s): Primary findings indicate that 27.3% of employees are not currently physically active. 88.3% of employees travel to work by private car while only 9.8% take active transport (walk/cycle). Readiness to change was reported by 95.8%.

Lack of time was highlighted as the primary barrier to exercise (65.3%). Employees identified that they would be 'extremely/fairly likely' to consider participation in physical activity should the following facilities be provided by the workplace: shower/changing facilities (87.9%), lockers/storage (88.4%), bicycle racks (57.9%) and running track around the hospital perimeter (86.3%).

Key learnings:

Consideration should be given towards developing initiatives within the UL Hospital Group that address employee physical activity levels and thereby result in promoting health and wellbeing, preventing disease and injury, improving productivity and promoting positive lifestyle behaviours.



IV. Promoting Health & Wellbeing in the Hospital Setting through implementing Running Programmes

Authors: Dr. Ailsa Lyons, Head of Department & Sinead Stynes, Health Promotion Officer



HE
DEPARTMENT OF
**PREVENTIVE MEDICINE
& HEALTH PROMOTION**

**Dublin City
Sport &
Wellbeing
Partnership**

Affiliation: Department of Preventive Medicine and Health Promotion, St. Vincent's University Hospital (SVUH), Dublin 4

Location: SVUH and Sandymount Strand, Dublin 4

Process: Staff in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Health Promotion in partnership with Dublin City Sport and Wellbeing Partnership (DCSWP) explored options of working together to deliver physical activity initiatives to SVUH staff. A survey was created and circulated electronically to all SVUH staff emails and in paper format outside the staff canteen to explore what could be offered and when would be the best time to deliver a programme.

- A Couch to 5km running programme was the most supported initiative and Tuesday's after work (4:30 – 5:30pm and 5:30 to 6:30pm) was the most popular times for delivery.
- DCSWP provided a running coach and sign up for the running group.
- A fee of €15 was charged to each participant to make the course long-term sustainable.

The course was promoted in several different ways including; a manned stand outside the staff canteen, all user e-mail's, posters throughout the hospital and to individual departments, word of mouth, Hospital wide Newsletter (E-News), staff Health Promotion newsletter (Healthwise), and at staff meetings.

Outcome(s): To date there has now been a total of 18 social running groups and 7 Couch to 5K running groups. There has been a huge interest from staff members to participate in both groups. The running groups are now sustainable. There has been one consistent coach delivering the sessions since the beginning. Staff enjoy social interactions with staff members from across the hospital as well as reaching their daily requirement of physical activity for the day. Many of those that attend have attended several of the groups over the years.

Follow Up/Review: Electronic surveys via Survey Monkey questionnaires are distributed to the participants after each course to determine whether the group met their expectation, how they rated the coach and the effort level, and whether they wish to continue the sessions.

Key learnings:

- Consultation with staff about their needs/ interests is key;
- Engaging support of relevant agencies/partners is important;
- A good promotion strategy resulted in good interest;
- The small fee charged resulted in good buy in and also ensured the initiative could be sustained (in this instance the fees charged cover the cost of the coach's time).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IDEAS AND INITIATIVES FOR THE WORKPLACE

There is strong evidence that multi-component interventions particularly those involving information and advice alongside opportunities to take part in activities have the best outcomes.¹⁴ Some of the most successful examples of workplace physical activity interventions are those which allow physical activity to become embedded into workplace daily practices and provide a variety of participation opportunities. Activities should also be tailored to meet the needs of different groups and levels of fitness.¹⁴

The following pages outline some practical physical activity ideas and initiatives that have been categorised into the following headings; **1.** Group programmes, **2.** Individual opportunities, **3.** Remote working engagement activities, **4.** Desk based activities, **5.** Physical activity trainings **6.** Developing on-site amenities.

1. Group programmes

1.1 Steps to Health Challenge

1.2 Lunchtime Walking Group

1.3 Walking Meetings

1.4 Smarter Travel Workplaces

1.1 Steps to Health Challenge:

The Steps to Health challenge is a five week national HSE walking challenge that supports staff to walk more. The aim is to get staff walking and counting their steps daily.

Most of us walk between 3,000 and 5,000 steps a day. The challenge is to try and make up the extra steps so that you reach the goal of 10,000 steps per day, which is the recommended number of daily steps for health benefits.

Steps to Health is for everyone, regardless of their fitness or ability levels.

A Participant Guide along with a Coordinators Guide are available.

For a copy of either of the guides shown and further resources log onto;
www.hse.ie/stepschallenge

For further information e-mail:
stepstohealth@hse.ie



1.2 Lunchtime Walking Group:

Increasing walking within the workplace is a realistic workplace activity as it is both low cost and relatively easy to implement. Setting up a lunchtime walking group does not need to be everyday but perhaps once a week e.g. “Walk on Wednesdays”, “Try it out Thursdays” etc. Incorporate nearby walking routes into the lunchtime walk. Make sure staff are aware of the start time, meeting point and approximate length of time that is proposed to walk. Ensure staff are aware they can walk at their own pace.

If getting together as a group is not possible, try to create a virtual walk around the world challenge. The idea behind World Walking is simple; you use the number of steps you walk each day and convert them into miles/kilometers (e.g. 1km = approx. 1312 steps) and complete virtual walks to different places around the world. Aim to walk to a capital city (perhaps choose countries where staff are from) each week (depending on your group size).

See examples below:

From	To	Distance between in Km	Distance between in Steps (multiply km x 1312)
Malin Head	Mizen Head	620	813, 440
Dublin	London	462.6	606, 931

1.3 Walking Meetings

Meetings do not always need to take place in a room. By getting out of the office, the change in environment can boost creativity and allow staff to be more focused while also providing a physical activity opportunity during their working day.

The Healthy Ireland Healthy Meeting Guidelines (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/93daf8-healthy-workplaces/>) encourage activity, and to plan activity breaks into meeting agendas, regardless of how long the meeting is. They recommend considering standing meetings for shorter, less formal meetings and walking meetings for meetings where only two people are taking part.



	STANDING BREAKS	STRETCH BREAKS	WALKING BREAKS
LESS THAN 2 HOURS	✓		
2 TO 4 HOURS	✓	✓	
ALL DAY	✓	✓	✓

Before arranging a “walking meeting” make sure there is management approval and that everyone has suitable footwear and rain gear (if required). It is best to set a time limit i.e. no more than 30 minutes and keep the participant numbers low i.e. no more than three participants to get more effective results.

Not all types of meetings are suitable but if the meeting is to generate new ideas, explore possible solutions or requires a discussion on certain decisions, then a walking meeting may provide the perfect platform to do this.

1.4 Smarter Travel Workplaces



Led by the National Transport Authority, Smarter Travel Workplaces is a national voluntary behaviour change programme

supporting employers to implement workplace travel plans. These plans focus on encouraging staff to walk, cycle, take public transport and carpool on their commute and beyond. Support is provided to initiate behaviour change interventions such as an annual step challenge and cycle challenge.

Further information is available on <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/smarter-travel-workplaces/> or by e-mailing info@smartertravelworkplaces.ie

2. Individual Opportunities

- 2.1 Calculate Daily Sitting Time
- 2.2 Corporate Leisure Centre Discounts for HSE Staff
- 2.3 Staff Campus Bike Scheme
- 2.4 Active Travel
- 2.5 Cycle to Work Scheme
- 2.6 National Transport Authority Public Bike Share

2.1 Calculate Daily Sitting Time

A useful tool for staff to measure their current sedentary behaviour is the Irish Heart Foundation's 'sitting calculator'. This can raise their awareness of the amount of time they spend sitting throughout the day and act as a good motivator to get active.

<https://irishheart.ie/campaigns/escape-your-chair/calculator/>

2.2 Corporate Leisure Centre Discounts for HSE Staff

HSE staff in Cork and Kerry can avail of reduced membership rates in certain leisure centres in their communities. To find out if a leisure centre near your workplace/home is offering a HSE staff discounted rate log onto;

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/healthy-ireland/community-healthcare-organisations/healthy-ireland-in-cork-kerry-community-healthcare.html#Staff%20Health%20&%20Wellbeing>

Select 'Staff Health and Well Being Resource Pack'. Click on 'Corporate Discounts for HSE staff'. To join one of the listed centres, staff need to contact the leisure centre directly and inform them that they are joining as part of the HSE (Cork & Kerry) scheme. It is advisable that staff confirm the most up-to-date HSE corporate rate before joining their chosen centre.

2.3 Staff Campus Bike Scheme

The Staff Campus Bike Scheme is a free initiative for staff. Local schemes usually consist of 2 bikes (1 male, 1 female), located in bike parking facilities on-site. In most instances, bikes may be reserved by contacting on-site Security. In order to access the scheme, users must first sign-up by completing a registration form, accepting terms & conditions and in some instances provide a copy of their HSE ID card.

Bikes have been located at the following campuses for staff use:

- The Erinville, Western Road, Cork
- St Mary's Health Campus, Cork
- St Finbarr's Hospital Campus, Cork
- Rathass Community Services/University Hospital Kerry Campus, Kerry
- Mount Alvernia, Mallow, Cork
- Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Cork

If setting up a bike scheme there are a number of elements to consider such as:

- procuring good quality bikes;
- secure bike parking;
- engaging with relevant workplace departments;
- setting out terms and conditions for the scheme;
- engaging Security staff regarding any commitment required on their part;
- liaising with HSE Estates Department (Insurance Section) regarding indemnity.

It would be a good idea to contact one of the sites listed above to enquire about the process they undertook to implement the scheme in their workplace or e-mail hpd.south@hse.ie

2.4 Active Travel

Active Travel is using walking, wheeling or cycling to make every day journeys to work, to school or the shops. Active Travel is an easy and accessible way for individuals to build physical activity into their daily life.

What staff do now...	What staff could do...
Drive to work 5 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive to work 3 days • Walk/cycle 2 days • Get bus/train and walk/cycle to/from home to bus/train station.
Park as close to the workplace as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park the car 10 minutes from the workplace & walk rest of the way.
Get the bus to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get off 1 or 2 stops earlier and walk the rest of the way.

It may not always be possible to choose active travel, but even small changes can have a positive impact on physical activity levels as well as helping the environment.

2.5 Cycle to Work Scheme

The Cycle to Work Scheme is available to HSE employees. It covers bicycles and equipment up to the value of €3000. The scheme is a tax incentive encouraging you to cycle to and from work. Under the scheme, the employer pays for bicycles and bicycle equipment for their employees from approved suppliers only. You pay your employer back through a salary-sacrifice arrangement not exceeding 6 months. As this scheme is a tax incentive, the benefit applies via a reduction in your current tax liabilities, i.e. PRSI & Universal Social Charges for the duration of the repayments. You can apply for the scheme only once in any 4 year period. There are 3 limits, depending on the type of bicycle you purchase:

- €3000 on cargo and eCargo bikes
- €1500 on e-bikes
- €1250 for standard bikes

The salaries of participating employees will be automatically adjusted so that net pay reflects associated tax and PRSI relief on the purchased item(s). Applications for the Cycle to Work Scheme will be processed only for applicants who adhere in full to the required procedure.

Log onto http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/benefitservices/Cycle_to_Work_Scheme/ for further details. All queries on how HSE South West staff can avail of the Cycle to Work Scheme can be emailed to Helen.Moloney1@hse.ie or phone 021 492 3638



2.6 National Transport Authority Public Bike Share

The National Transport Authority Public Bike Share scheme is a self-service bike rental service operating in Cork and other counties. It is open to all from 14-years old. Stations are conveniently located throughout the city making it easy to get around whether it is commuting to work and meetings or leisurely sightseeing.

The first 30-minutes of each hire is at no charge, for longer hires a service charge applies. An Annual Subscription is the easiest way to use the bike share scheme for just €10/year. Log onto www.bikeshare.ie for more information and to sign-up and/or download the Bike Share App.

3. Remote Working Engagement Activities

- 3.1 Set a Challenge
- 3.2 Walk & Talk
- 3.3 Online Exercise Class/Wellness Break
- 3.4 Exercise Buddy System

Where possible design initiatives that enable staff working remotely to also participate. Most of the sample activities outlined overleaf could be taken up by all staff irrespective of work location.

3.1 Set a Challenge

Workplace team challenges are available on a variety of online platforms and Apps; however, reaching out by telephone or email to take part in a team challenge can also be successful.

Example: Staff Virtual Cycle Challenge

- Invite staff to register by e-mail for the challenge
- Develop in-house challenge card (see www.cyclingireland.ie for examples)
- E-mail participants the details of the cycle challenge as well as a copy of the challenge card. Cycle safety information is also important (signpost participants to the Road Safety Authority <https://www.rsa.ie/> or Cycling Ireland www.cyclingireland.ie).
- Each challenge should be defined in terms of a length of time or distance. They should also specify details of a task, for example;
 - Staff could cycle as part of their commute or on their lunch break. Remote staff can use the time they would have used commuting to do their cycle.
 - Run an errand e.g. trip to the post office
 - Take a photo of something interesting in their locality/area near where they work
- Encourage sharing photos or details of the cycle with colleagues via social media groups to foster a sense of community.
- Participants return their completed challenge card by e-mail to be entered into a prize draw!

Another challenge example is the Irish Heart Foundation's (IHF) Escape Your Chair Challenge which is aimed at highlighting the importance of staying active when working from home to maintain a healthy heart. To find out more and sign up for the challenge log onto; www.irisheart.ie/campaigns/escape-your-chair/escape-your-chair-challenge/

3.2 Walk & Talk

Managers can encourage staff to move about during calls. A top-down approach will help empower colleagues to take a walking call on those meetings, which do not require visual aids. Research has shown there are numerous benefits to walking meetings; they can boost creative thinking, improve focus and increase productivity. It is a time-efficient way of doing some physical activity whilst also improving work performance.

3.3 Online Exercise Class/Wellness Break

Utilising technology, staff can be encouraged to work-out remotely by blocking set times during their working day for the same cohorts of staff to complete together. These events could also help instill a sense of community. There are an array of easy to follow exercise classes for all ages and abilities that can be accessed online. One such example is the **HSE's Health and Wellbeing Video Series**, suitable for most people and include; Yoga, Chair based yoga, Pilates and Strength & Conditioning <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/exercise-videos/exercise-videos.html>

3.4 Exercise BuddySystem

A simple check in with colleagues can sometimes be the most powerful catalyst. Developing an exercise buddy system where staff are paired up to check in with each other and/or exercise with each other not only creates a motivational support system but also can ensure accountability. For staff working remotely, it is a simple but effective way to stay connected to any workplace initiative and “buddies” can support each other by text, e-mail, telephone or video-chat.

4. Desk BasedActivities

- 4.1 Desk Exercises
- 4.2 ‘Minding Yourself’ Video Series
- 4.3 Active Lunch Break
- 4.4 Standing Desks

4.1 Desk Exercises

If staff are sitting for long periods of time; they should be encouraged to take regular movement breaks, for example, every 30 minutes. Our bodies are designed to move so sitting in the same position for long periods of time isn’t very good for us. It can lead to lower back pain, tense shoulders and neck and even headaches. Taking frequent breaks can alleviate this and also increase productivity.

There are numerous online desk based videos including the ‘Minding Yourself’ video series (see 4.2 below) and the Irish Heart Foundation desk based exercise video on the following link; <https://youtu.be/4UCr1WtJlUk>

4.2 ‘Minding Yourself’ Video Series

The ‘Minding Yourself’ series of 8 videos have been designed to help support staff in taking care of their health and wellbeing.

The following are the physical activity videos available:

- **Energising stretch break** (Video 1) - a fun easy set of exercises that can be done by taking 10 minutes at lunch break, between meetings or on a call <https://youtu.be/5tA4go3bUQM>;
- **Desk stretches** (Video 2) - some quick and easy stretches which staff can do at their desk, whether at work or at home <https://youtu.be/RMiJPYDMCxo>;
- **Strengthening exercises for the whole body** (Video 6) - demonstrates how to incorporate a simple strength routine into daily life <https://youtu.be/2AbmIFewTxM>;
- **Walking your Way to Fitness** (Video 7) - highlights the benefits of walking and how to easily incorporate it into daily life <https://youtu.be/n9Vq7f0G1Dc>;
- **How to Stay Motivated** (Video 8) - some helpful tips on how to stay motivated and how to start and sustain an exercise habit <https://youtu.be/DKomvAIUrk>

4.3 Active Lunch Break

An active lunch break does not need to be the whole lunch break it can be as simple as taking a 10-minute walk. Those 10 active minutes during a break time can be used to build up the recommended physical activity guidelines that are required throughout the week. Sunlight, fresh air and a little bit of activity are a great refreshing break!

Other activity ideas during lunch breaks could include attending regular exercise sessions either at the workplace or a nearby leisure facility, or cycling to a nearby shop to pick up lunch. Planning active breaks into the day can be great for staff to distress and for staff productivity.

4.4 Standing Desks

Standing desks can provide an alternative option to being seated all day at a desk and can also provide an easy solution to back pain related to sitting. When used properly they can also improve overall posture.

Just like an office chair, there are wrong ways and right ways to use a standing desk. When deciding to use a standing desk;

- start with small bouts of standing along with periods of sitting;
- gradually increase standing time over a period of time; rather than standing all day straight away;
- include movement breaks throughout the day.



5. Physical Activity Training

- 5.1 Walk Your Way Workshop
- 5.2 Desk to 5K Workshop
- 5.3 Be Active Be Well Programme
- 5.4 Move Your Mood Workshop
- 5.5 Active Healthy Me Training
- 5.6 Irish Heart Foundation's Create an Active Workplace Training

5.1 Walk Your Way Workshop

The aim of this workshop is to encourage individuals to walk more and more often and also enable them to get more health benefits from their walk. It is a 2-hour workshop delivered by Physical Activity Health Promotion Officers and has been adapted from an original workshop developed by the Irish Heart Foundation.



For further information on this workshop e-mail; hpd.south@hse.ie

5.2 Desk to 5K Workshop



The Desk to 5k workshop is designed to help staff progress from sitting at their desk to running 5km in 8 weeks. This 1-hour workshop aims to support staff on a walk to run programme that they can do before, during or after work. It offers a safe, realistic and achievable plan along with some extra supports e.g. weekly plan, guidance on getting started and staying on track, practical advice and motivational tips.

For further information on this workshop e-mail; hpd.south@hse.ie

5.3 Be Active Be Well

Be Active Be Well is a physical activity behaviour change programme that supports individuals to become more active. The aim of the programme is to support individuals to achieve the recommended National Physical Activity Guidelines.



The focus is on individual behaviour change by;

- exploring an individual's motivation to change;
- outlining why physically active is important;
- setting individual SMART goals;
- overcoming barriers;
- action planning, finding/gaining support;
- managing setbacks and maintaining change.



For further information on this programme e-mail; hpd.south@hse.ie

5.4 MoveYour Mood

This 2-hour workshop aims to support staff working in Mental Health Services in HSE South West to promote positive mental health and wellbeing through physical activity.



The workshop aims to;

- explore a consistent approach to physical activity promotion in Mental Health Services in Cork and Kerry;
- look at how physical activity can support positive Mental Health;
- ascertain what physical activity promotion/initiatives are currently happening in Mental Health Services in Cork and Kerry;
- increase awareness of existing resources, trainings, programmes and other sources of information to promote physical activity;
- explore opportunities for further support and support action planning to promote physical activity that may benefit Mental Health services and their service users.

For further information on this workshop e-mail; hpd.south@hse.ie

5.5 Healthy Active Me

This 2-hour train the trainer workshop aims to support staff working in adult day service locations to help them promote physical activity with their service users.



About Active Healthy Me:

Active Healthy Me is a health and wellbeing programme that is delivered directly to people with disabilities in adult day service locations. The programme was developed in partnership with the HSE to support the adoption of a positive culture and capacity among people with disabilities and adult day services towards the awareness and understanding of the health benefits of physical activity.

For further information on this workshop e-mail; hpd.south@hse.ie

5.6 Irish Heart Foundation - Create an Active Workplace training



The Irish Heart Foundation's "Create an Active Workplace" online training aim is to support staff to create a workplace physical activity plan so both employers and employees can reap the benefits without the cost. Discover why a physically active workforce is beneficial for both the employer and employee. Learn how to plan and implement a workplace physical activity plan. Access the support resources needed to achieve an active workforce. To register for this free training log onto; <https://irishheart.ie/courses/>

6. Developing On-Site Amenities

- 6.1 Bike Parking
- 6.2 Workplace Signage
- 6.3 Walkways To Health
- 6.4 Irish Heart Foundation slí@work programme

6.1 Bike Parking

Nowadays a lot of people are choosing to cycle to work because it's a more environmentally friendly and healthy mode of transport.

A workplace that has bike parking, encourages more staff to choose active travel to and from work.

Bike parking is an excellent way to improve the workplace environment. There are a variety of covered and secure bike parking spaces that workplaces can invest in.

When planning bike rack installation it is worthwhile to consider the following:



(Photo provided is an example of bike parking on St. Finbarr's Hospital Campus, Cork.)

Situation, Security & Safety (3S's)

1. **Situation** - where will the bike rack be located? Is it in an area that is accessible by all staff including those working early and late rosters? A reasonably central point is ideal, particularly on large campuses.
2. **Security** - In the proposed location, is there a potential risk of theft/damage? Will the location protect staff bikes from weather elements?
3. **Safety** - Is there any risk to staff accessing the bike rack, in particular those working early and late rosters? Is it in a well-lit area? Can staff safely cycle right to/from the rack i.e. no steps/hazardous muddy banks etc.

Link with the local maintenance team and/or technical services officer around any proposed locations. They can inform the committee of any planned maintenance that may impact on access as well as help the committee to identify any potential risks.

For further advice on types of bike racks enquire with the local maintenance team, the local bike shop, or a workplace site that has previously installed bike parking.

6.2 Workplace Signage

Signage is an important communication tool that helps to communicate various health messages and workplace physical activity initiatives that are being delivered. Signage greatly increases staff awareness and helps to encourage involvement and participation.

One of the key messages from the National Physical Activity Guidelines for Ireland is that people are most likely to respond to messages that promote social support or suggest ways to fit physical activity into daily life.² One idea would be to have a dedicated physical activity notice board that could act as a main point of reference and contact for staff.



Another idea would be to place posters near the stairs displaying messages such as “Use the stairs instead of the lift” or “built in exercise machine!” or other creative signage such as those displayed in the images shown. Hardcopies & PDFs of Get Your Workplace Active posters available at hpd.south@hse.ie.



Make Physical Activity A Part of Your Daily Life



Work



Travel



Home



Leisure

6.3 Walkways to Health

Walkways to Health/Bealach na Beatha is an example of a locally developed design for walking routes for HSE sites in Cork and Kerry. The design and implementation is supported by the Health Promotion and Improvement Department, Physical Activity Team.



Walkways to Health/Bealach na Beatha consist of colourful outdoor signage indicating direction and distance, with painted footprints and directional arrows on the ground. External and/or indoor mapboards can be developed to illustrate the walkway route.

Leaflets promoting the benefits of physical activity and showing the workplace walking route can also be designed and produced. The extent of walkway signage and structural development will depend on the budget available to the Committee.



Workplaces may wish to construct a new walkway, or re-vamp an existing walkway within the grounds of their HSE facility. In order to implement a walking route effectively and foster a walking culture, it is important that there is a strong support system in place. For further support in developing a Walkways to Health route and to receive a step-by-step guide e-mail; hpd.south@hse.ie

6.4 Irish Heart Foundation slí@work programme



Slí@work comprises of a series of indoor and outdoor motivational signage that inspire staff to add walking into their working day.

The workplace chooses what elements of the programme will suit their workplace, from a signposted outdoor walking route to some indoor motivational signage.

To find out more about the Slí@work programme, download the guide from www.irishheart.ie or e-mail; healthpromotion@irishheart.ie

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES



Get Active Your Way

This booklet provides information on how to be more physically active on a regular basis

www.healthpromotion.ie



Get Active On Your Way

This leaflet provides information on what active travel is, tips for getting started, and the benefits of active travel along with a travel swap shop.

www.healthpromotion.ie

Note: if this resource is out of print you can contact hpd.south@hse.ie to obtain a copy



Get Active Go Walking

This leaflet promotes walking through explaining the benefits of regular walking, providing tips on how to fit walking into daily living and motivational ideas to get walking

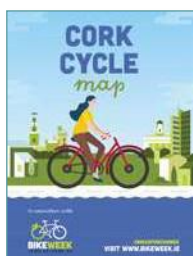
www.healthpromotion.ie



Move More Walking Challenge

An easy to follow six-week exercise programme aimed to help everyone move more for the good of their health.

<https://irishheart.ie/publications/move-more-challenge/>



Cork Cycle Map

This Map features the best cycle routes to popular destinations around Cork city and surrounding suburbs.

www.transportandmobilityforum.com

www.corkcyclingcampaign.com

www.corkcity.ie



Well@Home

This short guide gives some simple tips to create a healthy working environment at home.

<https://irishheart.ie/publications/wellhome-leaflet/>

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WEBSITES

www2.hse.ie/healthy-eating-active-living/

Provides healthy eating and active living information including the benefits of healthy food choices, being active, how to get started and tips to stay motivated.

www.healthpromotion.ie

This website provides access to a wide range of printed health leaflets e.g. tobacco cessation, healthy eating, physical activity, obesity, sexual health, mental health and alcohol.

www.healthyireland.ie

Healthy Ireland is a Government-led initiative which aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy positive physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society

www.thewellbeingnetwork.ie

The Wellbeing Network is a platform for community-based projects providing opportunities to improve adult health and wellbeing regardless of age or ability.

www.irishheart.ie

The Irish Heart Foundation is the national charity fighting stroke and heart disease. The website has a section dedicated to its health programmes.

www.corksports.ie

Cork Sports Partnership is an initiative of Sport Ireland which aims to create and promote Sport and Physical Activity opportunities for people of all ages and abilities in Cork.

www.kerryrecreationandsports.ie

Kerry Recreation & Sports Partnership (KRSP) works to encourage, promote and support the people of Kerry to participate in sport and physical activity. The Partnership implements, co-ordinates and supports a wide variety of programmes, activities and initiatives across the county.

www.getirelandwalking.ie

Get Ireland Walking is a national initiative which aims to maximise the number of people participating in walking; for health, wellbeing and fitness, throughout Ireland.

www.parkrun.ie

Parkrun is a collection of 5-kilometre events for walkers, runners and volunteers that take place every Saturday morning in parks around the country. Log onto the website to see where the parkruns are located and for information on the registration process.

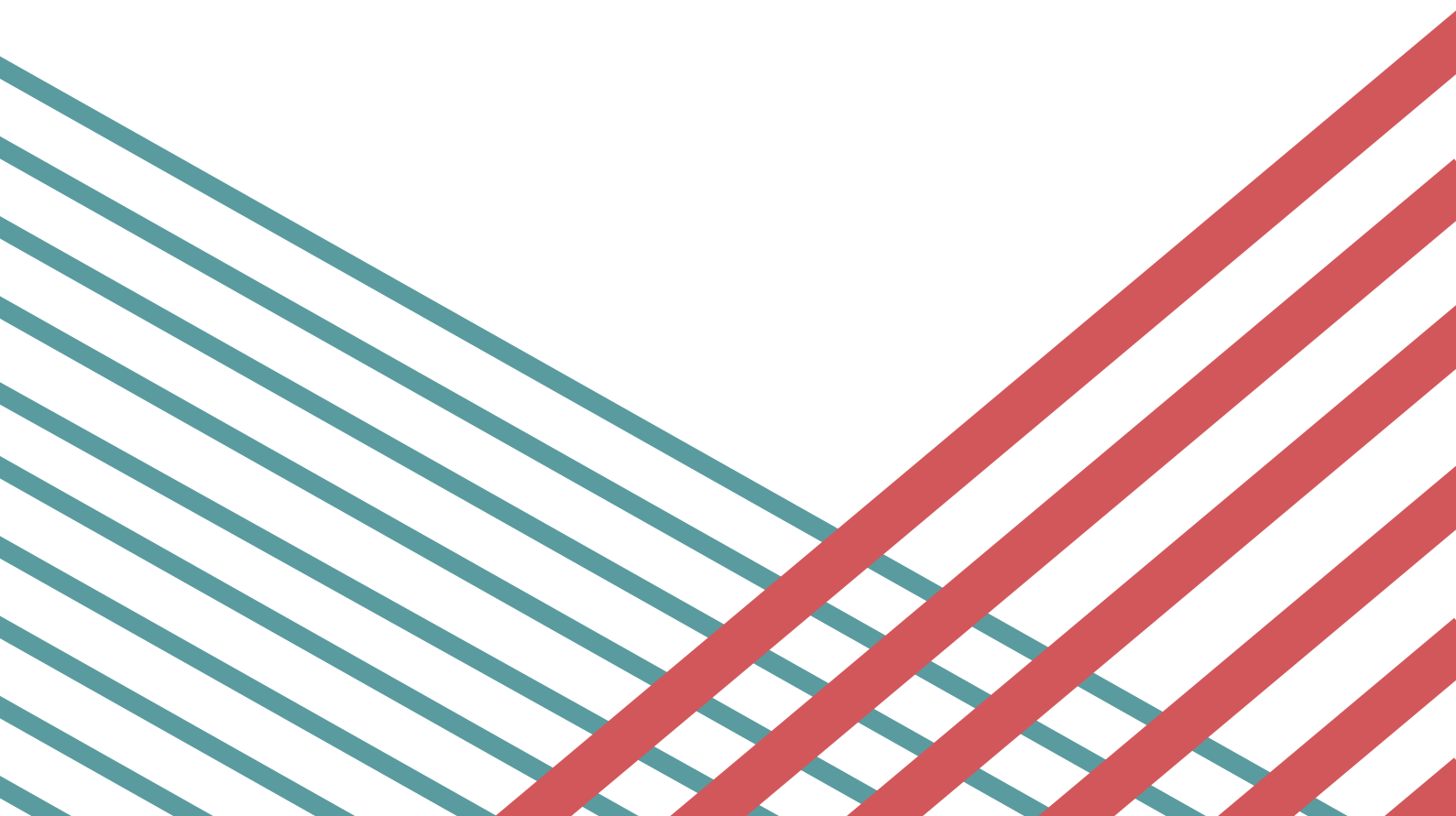
www.transportandmobilityforum.com

The Transport & Mobility Forum (TMF), Cork is a representative group of organisations who have a common interest in sustainable and active travel. TMF's mission is to increase the number of people travelling through sustainable and active travel in Cork.

SECTION 4

WORKPLACE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TOOLKIT

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR A HEALTHY WORKPLACE
WORKPLACE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TOOLS
REFERENCES



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

While this guide's main focus is the promotion of physical activity it is important to recognise the other important areas for consideration in a workplace health promotion programme. These may include healthy eating, alcohol, stress and mental well-being and smoking cessation. HSE South West is committed to supporting staff health and wellbeing across the region.

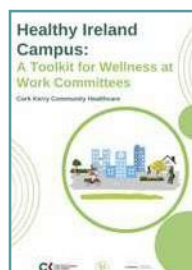
Resources available to support staff health and wellbeing include:



Wellbeing at Work Booklet

This booklet highlights some of the ways HSE South West staff can care for their health and wellbeing and the supports available to them.

www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/healthy-ireland/community-healthcare-organisations/healthy-ireland-in-cork-kerry-community-healthcare.html



Healthy Ireland Campus: A Toolkit for Wellness at Work Committees

This toolkit was developed to support Wellness at Work committees in HSE South West. It is a step by step guide which helps committees set up and run successful Wellness at Work programmes. It has a very practical focus and contains a range of ideas, case studies and resources. For more information e-mail; Ailis.Brosnan@hse.ie

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Staff health and Wellbeing - Resources for Adopting Healthy Behaviours:

HSE Healthy Ireland have developed these resources at a national level for all HSE staff to support their personal health and wellbeing, and to create supportive workplace environments. The resources are focused on evidence-based lifestyle behaviours that can help to reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases – being physically active, eating healthily, not smoking, avoiding harmful use of alcohol, and looking after our mental and sexual health and wellbeing.



Please find the link [here](#) to the online version, which provides active links to each resource. A limited number of printed copies can be ordered from www.healthpromotion.ie

WORKPLACE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TOOLS

The following section contains useful resources to use when implementing physical activity initiatives into the workplace. The table below outlines these resources/tools and highlights each key step in the process where it is relevant to use them.

Resource	Key Process Step
Sample Staff Needs Assessment Questionnaire	Step 3 - Assess (pg. 15)
Barriers to Being Active Quiz	Step 3 - Assess (pg. 15)
'What is currently happening in your workplace to help promote physically activity?' (Assessment Tool)	Step 3 - Assess (pg. 15)
Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q)	Step 6 - Do (pg. 16)
PACE – Physical Activity Calendar of Events	Steps 5 & 6 - Plan & Do (pg. 16)
Sample Workplace Physical Activity Plan Template	Steps 5, 6 & 7 - Plan, Do, Evaluate (pgs. 16 & 17)
Physical Activity Plan Sample Actions	Steps 5, 6 & 7 - Plan, Do, Evaluate (pgs. 16 & 17)
Sample Post Initiative Participant Evaluation Questionnaire	Steps 7 - Evaluate (pg. 17)
Committee Reflection Tool	Steps 7 & 8 - Evaluate & Improve (pg. 17)



GET YOUR WORKPLACE ACTIVE

A GUIDE TO PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT WORK

SAMPLE STAFF NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

CURRENT ACTIVITY (ASIDE FROM ACTIVITY RELATED TO YOUR ROLE)

While at work do you currently do any physical activity Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, what prevents you from doing any physical activity during your working day?

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

Would you like to see any of the following activities implemented in your workplace:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Walking challenge | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lunch break activities/classes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lunchtime walking group | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bike parking | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff campus bike scheme | <input type="checkbox"/> | Walking route | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Physical activity workshops | <input type="checkbox"/> | After work activities/classes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Workplace running group | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | |

ACTIVE TRAVEL

How do you usually travel to/from work for the majority of your journey?

- Car ☐
- Cycle ☐
- Walk/run ☐
- Public transport ☐

What keeps you from choosing an active travel option?

REMOTE WORKING

Do you work from home?

- Daily ☐
- Frequently (2-3 days/week) ☐
- Occasionally ☐
- Never ☐

What would help you to become active while working from home?

THE WORKPLACE

What adjustments could be made to your workplace environment to encourage staff to increase their physical activity levels?

Please provide your contact details if you are interested in becoming a member of the workplace health promotion committee:

.....

.....



A GUIDE TO PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT WORK

**GET YOUR
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BARRIERS TO BEING ACTIVE QUIZ

What keeps you from being more active?



Directions: Listed below are reasons that people give to describe why they do not get as much physical activity as they think they should. Please read each statement and indicate how likely you are to say each of the following statements:

How likely are you to say?	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely
1. My day is so busy now, I just don't think I can make the time to include physical activity in my regular schedule.	3	2	1	0
2. None of my family members or friends like to do anything active, so I don't have a chance to exercise.	3	2	1	0
3. I'm just too tired after work to get any exercise.	3	2	1	0
4. I've been thinking about getting more exercise, but I just can't seem to get started.	3	2	1	0
5. I'm getting older so exercise can be risky.	3	2	1	0
6. I don't get enough exercise because I have never learned the skills for any sport.	3	2	1	0
7. I don't have access to jogging trails, swimming pools, bike paths, etc.	3	2	1	0
8. Physical activity takes too much time away from other commitments—time, work, family, etc.	3	2	1	0
9. I'm embarrassed about how I will look when I exercise with others.	3	2	1	0
10. I don't get enough sleep as it is. I just couldn't get up early or stay up late to get some exercise.	3	2	1	0
11. It's easier for me to find excuses not to exercise than to go out to do something.	3	2	1	0
12. I know of too many people who have hurt themselves by overdoing it with exercise.	3	2	1	0
13. I really can't see learning a new sport at my age.	3	2	1	0
14. It's just too expensive. You have to take a class or join a club or buy the right equipment.	3	2	1	0
15. My free times during the day are too short to include exercise.	3	2	1	0

How likely are you to say?	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely
16. My usual social activities with family or friends do not include physical activity.	3	2	1	0
17. I'm too tired during the week and I need the weekend to catch up on my rest.	3	2	1	0
18. I want to get more exercise, but I just can't seem to make myself stick to anything.	3	2	1	0
19. I'm afraid I might injure myself or have a heart attack.	3	2	1	0
20. I'm not good enough at any physical activity to make it fun.	3	2	1	0
21. If we had exercise facilities and showers at work, then I would be more likely to exercise.	3	2	1	0

Follow these instructions to score yourself:

- Enter the circled number in the spaces provided, putting together the number for statement 1 (s1) on line 1, statement 2 (s2) on line 2, and so on.
- Add the three scores on each line. Your barriers to physical activity fall into one or more of seven categories: lack of time, social influences, lack of energy, lack of willpower, fear of injury, lack of skill, and lack of resources. A score of 5 or above in any category shows that this is an important barrier for you to overcome.

STATEMENT NUMBERS	SCORE FOR EACH STATEMENT			TOTAL SCORE FOR EACH SET	BARRIER CATEGORY
1, 8, 15					Lack of Time
2, 9, 16					Social Influence
3, 10, 17					Lack of Energy
4, 11, 18					Lack of Willpower
5, 12, 19					Fear of Injury
6, 13, 20					Lack of skill
7, 14, 21					Lack of resources

Adapted from Original - Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007) "Overcoming Barriers to Physical Activity." Physical Activity for Everyone. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep/pdfs/8-road-to-health-barriers-quiz-508.pdf>

WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN YOUR WORKPLACE TO HELP PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?



An assessment tool for workplace committees using the four key avenues of influence outlined by the WHO Healthy Workplace Model.

Psychosocial

Making adjustments to the atmosphere and or culture of the workplace to enhance physical activity

Physical Environment

Making adjustments to the physical environment that will enhance staff physical activity levels

Personal Health Resources

Staff are given the opportunity to attend virtually or in person, initiatives that develop their personal resources and skills for becoming or staying physically active

Enterprise and Community Involvement

Working with the local community to support physical activity

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY READINESS QUESTIONNAIRE (PAR-Q)



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Name: _____

Date: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Regular exercise is associated with many health benefits, yet any change of activity may increase the risk of injury. Completion of this questionnaire is a first step when planning to increase the amount of physical activity in your life.

Please read each question carefully and answer every question honestly: (Tick the appropriate answer)

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Do you have a heart condition and should only do physical activity recommended by a physician? | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 2. When you do physical activity, do you feel pain in your chest? | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 3. When you were not doing physical activity, have you had chest pain in the past month? | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 4. Do you ever lose consciousness or do you lose your balance because of dizziness? | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 5. Do you have a joint or bone problem that may be made worse by a change in your physical activity? | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 6. Is a physician currently prescribing medications for your blood pressure or heart condition? | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 7. Are you pregnant? | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 8. Do you know of any other reason you should not exercise or increase your physical activity? | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, talk with your doctor BEFORE you become physically active. Tell your doctor of your intention to exercise and which questions you answered 'yes' to. If at any stage your health changes, resulting in a 'yes' answer to any of the above questions, please seek guidance from a GP.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

PACE - PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Having a calendar of national events can help you schedule and plan workplace physical activity initiatives throughout the year.

MONTH	ACTIVITY	Example Activities for year ahead combined with National Activity Days where possible/appropriate
Launch Your Get Your Workplace Active Programme		<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute Needs Assessment to staff. • Display findings via posters in staff areas • Provide summary of Physical Activity Plan – more information on specific topics will follow throughout the year.
January	Swimming	<p>SWIM FOR A MILE CHALLENGE www.swimireland.ie</p> <p>Suggested activity: contact local swimming facility to try avail of discount fees/memberships for staff.</p>
February	Any	<p>WORLD CANCER DAY www.worldcancerday.ie</p> <p>Suggested activity: arrange a workplace group walk.</p>
March	Any	<p>INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY https://www.internationalwomensday.com</p> <p>Suggested activity: start a physical activity challenge or host a physical activity event to celebrate.</p>
	Walking	<p>MARCHATHON www.nationaltransport.ie</p> <p>Staff can form a team, register online, dust off their step counter (or download an app) and get walking in March!</p>
April	Any	<p>WORLD HEALTH DAY www.WHO.int</p> <p>Suggested activity: arrange a physical activity training for staff to avail of.</p>
May	Any	<p>NATIONAL WORKPLACE WELLBEING DAY www.wellbeingday.ie</p> <p>Suggested activity: devise a campaign to promote all the benefits of being physical activity active at work for staff health and wellbeing.</p>

MONTH	ACTIVITY	Example Activities for year ahead combined with National Activity Days where possible/appropriate
June	Cycling	NATIONAL BIKE WEEK www.dttas.gov.ie <i>Suggested activity:</i> bike maintenance workshop onsite with local cycling club/bike shop.
	Any	NATIONAL BEACTIVE DAY www.sportireland.ie <i>Suggested activity:</i> encourage staff to try alternative modes of transport to/from work.
July	Play	NATIONAL PLAY DAY www.gov.ie (Search National Play Day Ireland) <i>Suggested activity:</i> celebrate all things play with colleagues and families by joining in a community event.
August	Any	COMMUNITY GAMES www.communitygames.ie <i>Suggested activity:</i> choose a number of different activities and organise a 'Workplace Games' event.
September	Any	EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT www.sportireland.ie <i>Suggested activity:</i> Organise a sports day, family fun day, team building activity day etc.
	Any	NATIONAL FITNESS DAY https://nationalfitnessday.ie/ <i>Suggested activity:</i> link with local leisure centre to trial "Come & Try" classes for staff.
October	Walking	WALKTOBER www.nationaltransport.ie WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY www.yourmentalhealth.ie <i>Suggested activity:</i> lunchtime walk to mark World Mental Health Day – highlighting the importance of keeping active for positive mental health.
November	Any	INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY www.internationalmensday.com <i>Suggested activity:</i> use this day to kick-start a physical activity challenge or host a physical activity event to celebrate.
December	Any	CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE <i>Suggested activity:</i> 12 Days of 'Fitmas' Staff Challenge Staff Lunchtime Santa Dash NATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY www.volunteer.ie <i>Suggested activity:</i> make contact with a local parkrun event director and propose a 'volunteer takeover' from staff.

SAMPLE WORKPLACE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN TEMPLATE



Developing an action plan is an important step in making sure your workplace physical activity initiatives are a success. Once you have assessed the current physical activity situation in your workplace, consulted with staff and decided on the priorities for your workplace, an action plan will allow you to describe what you want to achieve and outline the steps you will take to achieve it.

Steps for Action Planning:

1. Identify the priorities from staff physical activity needs assessment;
2. Outline broad objectives that span a 3-5 year timeframe;
3. Develop these objectives by having yearly action plans.

1. Identified priorities from staff physical activity needs assessment:

2. Broad objectives for the next 3-5 years

Develop these objectives by having yearly action plans, outlining the year's proposed activities using the template on the next page.

A comprehensive action plan includes a programme goal, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound) objectives which will allow you to work towards that goal and achieve each objective.

Overleaf is an outline of how an action plan can be laid out. You can use your action plan to keep track of your programme's progress and success throughout the year.

The table below is separated into WHO's 4 key avenues of influence; workplace culture, physical environment, personal health and community involvement; in order to help implement a range of physical activity initiatives that address the broad workplace environment.

3. Sample Workplace Physical Activity Plan Template

	Goal/Objective	Action Required /Process	Communication Methods	Person/Team Responsible	Timeframe /Review Date	Cost/Equipment Required	Sustainability Plan	Evaluation
<i>Psychosocial work environment (Workplace Culture)</i>								
<i>Physical Environment</i>								
<i>Personal Health Resources</i>								
<i>Enterprise and Community Involvement</i>								

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN SAMPLE ACTIONS



Following the four key 'avenues of influence' outlined by the WHO Healthy Workplace Model below are some sample actions that may be of use when developing your workplace physical activity action plan.

KEY AREA	EXAMPLE ACTIONS
Psychosocial Work Environment - making adjustments to the felt sense/atmosphere and or culture of the workplace to enhance physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and encouragement is shown by management by for example; sending out an email/message to all staff encouraging their involvement. Effort/achievements are praised by highlighting them on staff noticeboard and through emails to all staff. Physical Activity opportunities are promoted as social interaction opportunities. Motivational messages/posters are displayed throughout the workplace to encourage active choices eg. walking during breaks, incidental activities such as taking the stairs instead of the lift. A physical activity team challenge opportunity(ies) is provided for all employees (voluntary participation).
Physical Environment - making adjustments to the physical environment that will enhance staff physical activity levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All existing facilities (indoor and/or outdoor) are reviewed for potential rooms/areas for physical activity use. Educational leaflets/resources on the health benefits of physical activity and health risks of inactivity are displayed and provided in common staff areas. A noticeboard displaying both workplace and local community physical activity information is provided and other communication channels such as staff newsletter and emails are used to highlight same. A walkability audit is conducted in order to select suitable walking route(s) on or near the worksite. The need and feasibility of providing facilities such as lockers/storage for staff members' personal belongings, standing desks, bike racks and showers is explored with staff through a staff needs assessment questionnaire.
Personal Health Resources - Staff are given the opportunity to attend virtually or in person initiatives that develop their personal resources and skills for becoming or staying physically active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interested staff are invited to participate in Walking Leader Training (Irish Heart Foundation online training). Staff are invited to attend a variety of lunchtime activities, e.g. yoga, walking group and exercise classes etc. Links to relevant online classes and/or appropriate videos are circulated to all staff e.g. Minding Yourself series of videos on HSE South West YouTube channel. Staff are invited to take part in the Steps to Health Challenge and other physical activity challenges.
Enterprise and Community Involvement - Working with the local community to support physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links are made with the local parkrun, staff are encouraged to get involved by both volunteering and participating. Links are made with local Cycling, Running clubs etc. to educate staff and support their involvement. Links are made with the Local Sports Partnerships and their programmes and events that they are delivering are promoted to all staff. Links are made with local Leisure facilities, facilities offering corporate discount rates for HSE staff are promoted to staff.

SAMPLE POST INITIATIVE PARTICIPANT EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE



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We hope you enjoyed participating in this initiative, we would greatly appreciate your feedback by completing this short questionnaire. This will help inform any future workplace initiatives.

Physical Activity Initiative Title:

Date:

How would you describe your activity levels as a result of taking part in this initiative?

Please tick one response only

- No change in my activity levels ☐
- I am more active and am happy with my current activity levels ☐
- I am more active but would like to increase my current activity levels further ☐

Do you think this initiative was effective at teaching you new ways to add physical activity into your daily routine?

Ineffective 2 3 4 5 Very effective

What were your motives for taking part in this initiative? (Tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| To feel healthier <input type="checkbox"/> | To get fitter <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To relieve stress <input type="checkbox"/> | To socialise with colleagues/friends <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To ensure you took your break <input type="checkbox"/> | For enjoyment <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Weight loss/weight maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> | To try something new <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To improve/help a specific health condition <input type="checkbox"/> | Other <input type="checkbox"/> |

If for any reason you were unable to fully engage in this initiative please let us know why?

(Tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| Not enough time <input type="checkbox"/> | No support from colleagues <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not enough energy <input type="checkbox"/> | It is too hard <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know what is stopping me <input type="checkbox"/> | Lack coordination/skill <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not motivated <input type="checkbox"/> | Not ready right now <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No support from Management <input type="checkbox"/> | Too stressed <input type="checkbox"/> |

What changes would you recommend to make future workplace physical activity initiatives more effective?

Where did you hear about the initiative?

- | | |
|---|--|
| Manager <input type="checkbox"/> | Staff Health & Wellbeing Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Colleague <input type="checkbox"/> | Wellness at Work Committee <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Internal Email <input type="checkbox"/> | Other <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Poster <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Please return your completed questionnaire to:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

COMMITTEE REFLECTION TOOL



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WHAT WORKED WELL?

WHAT NEEDS FURTHER WORK?

WHAT COULD BE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

WHAT AREAS HAVE YET TO BE ADDRESSED?

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITY AREAS FOR NEXT YEAR

REFERENCES

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NOTES



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A GUIDE TO PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT WORK

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