

SCHOOL WELLNESS CHAMPION

START-UP KIT

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The Power of Partnership

A partnership between
Kaiser Permanente
and its coalition unions.

To become a Wellness Champion, start with small steps. Anyone can do it!

Included in this start-up kit are six examples of what you can do to create opportunities for wellness in your workplace and in your chapter. Find out how to:

1. **Start a walking group**
2. **Start a salad club with your co-workers**
3. **Create moments in the work day to pause for appreciation**
4. **Lead a short exercise break**
5. **Transform unused space into a break room**
6. **Pass a resolution to support healthy food at your union meetings**

TO GET STARTED:

- » Talk to your co-workers and see what they want to do.
- » Pick one small, doable thing from our examples, or try something of your own.
- » Just do it, even if it's just you and one or two co-workers. Learn what works, tweak it, and keep inviting others to join.
- » Incorporate these activities into your workday and your union meetings.
- » Let us know what's working and what you need.

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1. START A WALKING GROUP

The less you sit and the more you move, the longer you'll live. A recent study found that adults who walk at least 75 minutes a week live up to two years longer compared to those who don't walk. You can form a small or large walking group to get co-workers out of their seats and on their feet!

QUICK START GUIDE

Here are some tips to help get your walking club started:

» Coordinate

- Map out your walking route. Where and when will you walk?
- If you don't have time to leave the building, take a quick walk through the halls or climb the stairwell.
- Decide on a quick warm-up and cool-down exercise to accompany your walks. Be sure to include stretching.
- Determine how often your club will walk: multiple times a week, once a week, once a month?

» Announce and Invite

- Tell club members how to prepare for the walk. Remind them to drink plenty of water, wear comfortable shoes, and prepare for the sun (with sunscreen, UV-protective sunglasses, and hats).
- Encourage members to bring a friend.

» Report Out

- Acknowledge the group's milestones often. Celebrate your reaching a certain distance or amount of time walking.
- Talk about how many people have joined the club and have one or two give testimonials describing their experience

CHAMPION PROFILE

Booster Activity, California State Employee Workplace Wellness Pilot

Susan is a wellness champion, also known as a booster, at her job. Every day, she sends an email to her co-workers inviting them to join her for a walk. Walks take place at different times of the day: during breaks, during lunch, or after work. Susan and a group of two to six co-workers, on average, walk anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour a day.

"It's not hard to get people to go outside. You want to round them up and they'll go."

— SUSAN TOURLEY, SEIU LOCAL 1000 MEMBER & CA STATE EMPLOYEE

For more ideas go to: "Healthy Beverage Toolkit and Sample Wellness Policies" at <http://www.banpac.org>.

CREATING WALKING OPPORTUNITIES

There are many reasons to get up and walk. Whether you want to catch up with co-workers or you have a particular place to go, let your feet take you there.

Below are some ideas to get your co-workers walking. You can host a:

- Lunchtime Walk & Talk
- Walk to Lunch Wednesday (or any other day)
- Take the Stairs Thursday (or any other day)
- Walk to a nearby farmers market
- Walk around your worksite or through the halls of your building

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2. START A B.Y.O.S – “BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD” CLUB

Salads are easy, fresh, delicious, and filling. Building your own salad can also be a team activity. This guide will help you and your co-workers increase the amount of fruit and vegetables you eat each day, while having fun preparing and eating delicious meals together.

QUICK START GUIDE

Follow these easy steps to start your own B.Y.O.S. program:

» Coordinate

- The champion keeps the program going with enthusiasm for healthy eating and a few reminders along the way. You can rotate coordinators so no one feels overloaded.

» Schedule Frequency

- Many groups make B.Y.O.S. a weekly event, but it's up to you. Try it once and decide what your team prefers.

» Announce and Invite

- Send an e-mail invitation to your team to join B.Y.O.S., but also invite everyone face to face, or announce it at an all-staff or professional development meeting.

» Select Salad Bar Ingredients or a Recipe

There are a couple of ways to do this:

- Have everyone bring a favorite salad ingredient. Just make sure someone brings a yummy mix of lettuces and that someone brings a protein, so you can fill up.
- As a next step: Get creative with your favorite salad recipes. Use a sign-up sheet for each team member to bring one ingredient from the recipe.

CREATING A HEALTHY SALAD

Five ways to make a healthy salad:

- » **Go green.** The darker green varieties, such as green or red leaf lettuce, baby spring mix, and spinach, are higher in vitamins and nutrients than iceberg lettuce.
- » **Pile on the veggies.** Fresh or grilled vegetables add antioxidants and fiber, plus color and flavor.
- » **Dress light.** Avoid creamy dressings and go for low-fat vinaigrettes, or olive oil and vinegar.
- » **Punch up the protein.** Grilled chicken, fish, tofu, nuts, seeds, edamame, hard-boiled eggs, or beans are great protein additions to turn a salad into a complete meal.
- » **Go easy on the gourmet ingredients.** Scrumptious toppings like goat cheese, wonton strips, bacon bits, croutons, and even healthy fats like avocado and nuts, are all high in fat. If you're working on a weight management goal, pick just one high-fat delicacy, if any, to top your salad.

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3. PAUSE FOR APPRECIATION

Research shows that one of the most powerful workplace motivators is employee recognition! Taking a few moments for appreciation can promote positivity at work and get staff thinking and feeling better.

» Peer Praise

Compliments from peers reinforce relationships between co-workers and can help build a stronger sense of community.

- Decide on a setting where staff gather regularly. Maybe it's at an all-staff meeting, a professional development day, or a luncheon. The more frequent, the better.
- Reserve five to 10 minutes in this setting for co-workers to appreciate one another.
- Appreciations can be spoken or written. They should be specific to your co-workers' accomplishments or personality.

» Symbolic Recognition

Symbols are a fun way to recognize staff accomplishments. Choose a symbol that will have special meaning to staff.

- Create a homemade award. Perhaps it's a gold star, an apple, or a heart. If appropriate, use an actual trophy. You can even decorate the trophy with items relevant to the workplace.
- To promote fairness, establish and publicize criteria for recognition. The criteria should be meaningful to awardees and other staff.

Over time, the symbol will spread throughout the workplace as it gets awarded to different individuals or groups.

» Success Stories

Profile a co-worker who has achieved something you'd like others to know about. Their stories may inspire others to make positive changes to their personal behaviors or daily work habits. The stories can focus on how a co-worker:

- Contributed to the workplace mission and goals
- Organized or led a wellness activity
- Adopted healthier behaviors
- Improved his or her health status
- Supported other staff in making healthy changes

Share these stories in a variety of settings: staff meetings, morning huddles, emails, newsletters, staff bulletin boards, and/or break rooms.

CHAMPION PROFILE

Taking a Human Moment, Melrose Leadership Academy–Oakland Unified School District, California

Melrose Leadership Academy staff take a few minutes from their staff and professional development meetings to congratulate each other on the work they do. They call this process taking a "human moment."

Step 1: The names of all staff attending the meeting are written down and placed into a hat.

Step 2: Each attendee pulls a name and has a minute or two to gather their thoughts about the person they selected.

Step 3: Appreciations are either read aloud or written down and given to the staff person.

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4. LEAD SHORT EXERCISE BREAKS

Research shows that quick three- to 10-minute workouts throughout the day can help you reach your physical activity goals. Squeeze in a few minutes for team stretch or exercise to get refreshed and energized. Try one of these active break ideas during a meeting or at your workstation:

WALKING BREAK/STAIR CLIMBER

- » Lead a quick 5- to 10-minute walk around the building. If you don't have time to leave the building, take a quick walk through the halls of the building.
- » If your building has open stairwells, you have a quick workout waiting for you. See how many flights up and down you can squeeze in during your meeting break.
- » Make your break functional. Try using a bathroom on a different floor so you can add a few flights of stairs.

QUICK AEROBIC WORKOUT

- » Try a five- to 10-minute circuit of fun aerobics moves. Do the following for one or two minutes each:
 - March or run in place
 - Alternating knee lifts (touch your knee to your opposite elbow)
 - Low or high kicks to the front and sides (if you have room in your meeting space!)
 - Wide, side-to-side steps (step left, feet together, step right, feet together)

STRETCH IT OUT

- » Follow a short video with stretches for your workplace. Copy this URL into your browser or smart phone and just follow the lead of Kaiser Permanente union workers.
<http://Impartnership.org/stories-videos/do-your-own-instant-recess>

DANCE PARTY

- » Try a three-minute dance party – the average length of a pop song. Play a song on a cell phone speakerphone. Move your hips. Put your hands in the air. Don't be afraid to make a little noise and have some fun.

BREATHING EXERCISE

Belly breathing is one of the simplest breathing techniques to do. It only takes a few moments and can be a great way to unwind. Lead a group through these steps:

1. Sit in a comfortable position.
2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.
5. Do this breathing three to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.
6. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

PLANNING TIPS

Before planning an appreciation event, talk with your co-worker to understand what they prefer. Not everyone likes to be praised in the same way.

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5. TRANSFORM UNUSED SPACE INTO AN EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM

Employee break rooms can create environments that promote physical, mental & emotional well-being. If your workplace does not have a designated staff break room, try to get creative with unused space that could be repurposed into a wellness room. Even a few small changes, such as a fresh coat of paint and some wellness posters can make a big difference!

Important first steps:

1. Obtain approval for your project from the appropriate supervisors and/or senior management.
2. Seek input from front-line employees and middle management about what they would most like to see in their break room.
3. Identify a point person to act as the break room champion for this project.
4. Assess what items your break room already has, what items need to be replaced, and what needs to be organized or stored in other areas.
5. Based on employee interests and the break room assessment, make a plan for the makeover.

Incorporate some elements from each category below, in order to create a holistic break room that is functional, relaxing, and promotes healthy eating and active living:

FUNCTION

- Keep office equipment (printers, fax machines, paper cutters, etc.) in a separate room from the lounge area to maintain the purpose and feel of the room as a relaxing space.
- Keep papers and supplies organized to reduce clutter.
- Arrange tables and chairs in a way that encourages communal eating and interaction.

HEALTHY EATING & ACTIVE LIVING

- Hang a bulletin board to display upcoming employee wellness offerings and healthy community events (5k race, cooking class, farmers market, etc.).
- Take photographs of employees being active and hang them in the break room for a more personal feeling.
- Have an employee who has experience with yoga or weight training teach an informal class for co-workers to kick off the new space.

RELAXATION / AMBIANCE

- Consider an iPod dock, stereo, or sound machine to create a welcoming environment.
- Encourage staff to contribute items of their own, such as plants and pictures, to make the space more personal and create a sense of ownership.
- Switch from overhead fluorescent lighting to softer light from table and floor lamps.
- Consider adding a small room divider to separate the "active" parts of the room from areas that foster conversation or quiet relaxation.

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6. PASS A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT HEALTHY FOOD AT YOUR UNION MEETINGS

Here is an example from the South Bay Labor Council of what some unions are doing to make their meetings healthier. Copy this resolution or make up one of your own.

Resolution in Support of Healthy Eating and Drinking Habits at Union Halls and Union Meetings

Whereas the union is dedicated to improving the lives of working families, including improving the health of our members; and

Whereas healthy eating and drinking habits are an important part of a healthy lifestyle that helps individuals get the right balance of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients, handle stress, and have plenty of energy; and

Whereas healthy eating and drinking habits are one of the best ways to prevent and control health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, and some types of cancer; and

Whereas preventable diseases related to obesity cause the deaths of 300,000 Americans a year, strain our health care system and damage our nation's economy; and

Whereas the Union can help its members develop better eating and drinking habits by offering healthier, low-fat, and lower-calorie food and beverage choices at its events;

BE IT RESOLVED that from this time forward, the food and drinks served at the Union hiring hall will reflect the intention to promote the health of union members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is the policy of the union to reduce the consumption of processed foods that are high in fat or sweetened artificially.

THEREFORE food and drinks options at our union chapter meetings and events, will meet the following requirements:

- 1. A least half of the beverages made available will be healthier options, including water and other unsweetened drinks.**
- 2. A least half of the food made available will be healthier options in accordance with the Santa Clara County Nutrition Standards 2011 such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, and low fat, unsweetened foods.**

Used with permission from the South Bay Labor Council. Please email anna@wpusa.org at the South Bay Labor Council or call 408-269-7872 with any questions.