



## Shape Up *Your* Workplace

A Monthly Series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #1: "Mile Long" Walking Path

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will be introducing a new "Healthy Workplace Idea" each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Mile Long Walking Route:** An easy way for businesses to start creating a healthier workplace is by creating "mile long" walking routes for their employees to use during breaks or before/after work. Depending on your workplace environment, these routes can be within a building or parking garage, on the grounds or in the surrounding neighborhood.

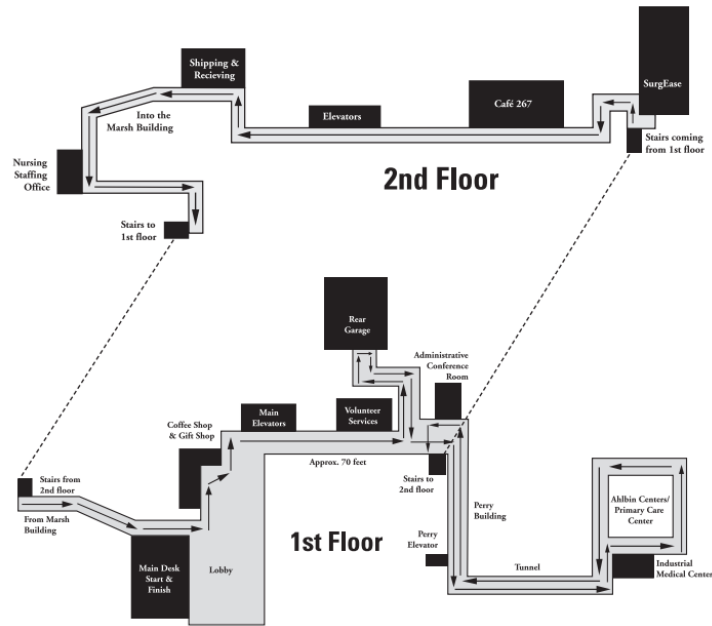
It is easy to do. All you need is an employee willing to wear a pedometer around the building to find a good one mile long route which can be drawn onto an existing map of the facility or to use the "Map My Walk" app or visit [www.mapmywalk.com](http://www.mapmywalk.com) to map out a route in the surrounding neighborhood.

An example of an indoor route at Bridgeport Hospital and an outdoor route from the Town of Stratford is attached.

If you want more information on how to create your own walking route, please e-mail [gethealthyct@gmail.com](mailto:gethealthyct@gmail.com)

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## Indoor Walking Route at Bridgeport Hospital:



## Outdoor Walking Route at the Municipal Building in Stratford:

### Walking Route Maps

Birdseye Municipal Building Walk

**Exercise at least 30 minutes a day to increase your health!**  
 For example, walking the dog for 10 minutes before and after work or adding a 10 minute walk at lunchtime can add to your weekly goal. Or replace a coffee break with a 10 minute walk, and invite a co-worker!



## Shape Up *Your* Workplace

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### Workplace Wellness Idea #2: Healthy Meeting Menus

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a "Workplace Wellness Idea" each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Healthy Meeting Menus:** Many businesses serve food to their employees or customers at company-sponsored meetings or events. Businesses that do this can foster healthier eating practices by offering healthy food choices. This includes ensuring that healthy food options, such as fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and water or low calorie beverages, are offered when food is served. They can also employ healthier cooking options and implement smaller portion sizes.

Here are some suggestions for how to host healthier meetings in your workplace:

- Replace sugar-sweetened beverages with water, water flavored with fresh fruit, seltzers, coffee, tea and unsweetened iced tea
- Offer fresh fruits and vegetables every time food is served
- Always serve whole-grain options and fat free or low-fat dairy options
- Offer reasonable portion sizes: (9") plates and bowls, sandwiches, bagels, and muffins cut in half

Suggested food options for your healthier meetings are on the next page.

If you want more information on how to implement healthier meetings, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org), the [Healthy Meeting Toolkit](#), or e-mail [gethealthyct@gmail.com](mailto:gethealthyct@gmail.com).

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### *Breakfast*

- Pitchers of water, 100% fruit juice, coffee and tea (with skim or 1% milk)
- Fresh fruit (slices or chopped fruit salad)
- Low or non-fat yogurt with low-fat granola
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Fiber-rich whole grain bread, small whole grain bagels, whole grain English muffins
- Spreads: peanut or other nut butters, low fat cream cheese



### *Snacks*

*First, consider if it is necessary to serve snacks at your meeting. If it is, then serve:*

- Pitchers of water, 100% fruit juice, unsweetened iced tea, coffee and tea (with skim or 1% milk)
- Small amounts of whole-grain chips, crackers, pretzels, cereal bars
- Sliced vegetables and low-fat dip
- Fresh fruit (slices or chopped fruit salad)
- Salsa or hummus
- Low-fat cheese and crackers



### *Lunch*

- Pitchers of water, 100% fruit juice, unsweetened iced tea, coffee and tea (with skim or 1% milk)
- Salads of mixed greens tossed with vegetables, fruit, protein such as sliced turkey or chicken, tuna, egg, tofu or beans with low fat dressing on the side
- Sandwiches on whole-grain bread or wraps with lean protein such as sliced turkey or chicken, tuna, egg, tofu and sliced vegetables (lettuce, spinach, tomato, peppers, cucumber, avocado...)
  - Try to replace cheese with hummus or added vegetables
  - Place mustard, light mayonnaise, olive oil, and other condiments on the side
  - Cut sandwiches or wraps in half or in quarters
- Small amounts of whole-grain chips, crackers, pretzels, cereal bars
- Low or non-fat yogurt
- Sliced vegetables and low-fat dip
- Fresh fruit (slices or chopped fruit salad) for dessert





## Shape Up *Your* Workplace

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### Workplace Wellness Idea #3: Healthy Eating for Holiday Work Parties

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will be introducing a new “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Healthy Eating for Holiday Work Parties:** The holiday season is a fun, joyous time to relax and celebrate with colleagues. But it is also a time when it is easy to add extra calories and unwanted pounds. When you have parties at work, encourage your employees to bring healthier versions of holiday favorites to your work parties this holiday season. Here are some ideas for office gift exchanges and holiday events:

- Host a tea and coffee exchange as opposed to a cookie and candy exchange
- Plan an event that focuses on an activity instead of food: ornament decorating or wreath making
- Help your employees indulge in moderation this holiday season by providing helpful tips and recipes

Attached are some easy tips for holiday eating and gift giving strategies for you to implement in your office this holiday season.

For more helpful tips and healthy holiday recipes, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org) or e-mail [gethealthyct@gmail.com](mailto:gethealthyct@gmail.com).

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### Host a Holiday Work Event with Healthier Choices:



- Make sure all food groups are represented
- Serve lean protein with sauce or gravy on the side
- Offer low-calorie drink options such as water and seltzer with fruit
- Bake healthier: Use recipes with unsweetened applesauce or mashed ripe banana instead of butter; try cutting the sugar in half; and substitute spices such as cinnamon, allspice or nutmeg for salt
- “Tweak the sweet:” for dessert, try baked apples with cinnamon and a little sugar instead of apple pie, or have employees make their own parfait with fruit and low-fat yogurt
- Give to others this holiday season by encouraging your employees to provide food or prepare meals for those in need; you could even give food as an office to the local food bank or shelter

Brought to you by [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov)

### Healthy Holiday Gift Ideas for your Employees:

- Host a coffee and tea exchange as opposed to a cookies and candy exchange
- Give the gift of exercise: the first month of a gym membership, an exercise video, etc.
- Make a food basket that includes fruit or healthy items, cooking essentials, and healthy recipes
- Gift the gift of reduced stress: a massage, yoga classes, art or music therapy classes, etc.



### Other Tips to Help your Employees stay Healthy this Holiday Season:

- Post nutrition information about holiday foods and offer recipes for healthier versions
- Remember to enforce healthy meeting guidelines at meetings during the holidays too
- Offer flexible break times to give your employees time to exercise and relieve stress
- Organize exercise events for your office such as walk, yoga, or local races
- Remind your employees that they are going to indulge during the holidays; just make sure that it is done in moderation





## Shape Up Your Workplace

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### Workplace Wellness Idea #4: Hold a Wellness Challenge

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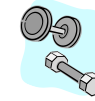
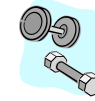
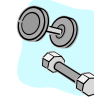
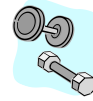
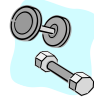
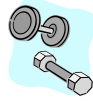
**Hold a Wellness Challenge:** Help your employees achieve their health goals by organizing a wellness competition at work. Here are a few examples of different challenges that you could host to help motivate and improve the health of your employees!

- *Weight Loss Challenge:* Lose the most pounds over a set period of time
- *Steps Challenge:* Take at least 10,000 steps a day (5 miles)
- *Water Challenge:* Drink 64 ounces of water a day
- *Physical Activity Challenge:* Be physically active for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week
- *Fruits and Veggies Challenge:* Eat 5 servings of fruit or vegetables a day
- *Stairs Challenge:* Walk at least 10 flights of stairs a day (see our Step it Up Campaign for motivational posters)

Attached are some examples of how to hold wellness challenges in your workplace.

If you want more information on how to implement a wellness challenge, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org) or e-mail [gethealthyct@ghct.org](mailto:gethealthyct@ghct.org).

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### Host a Biggest Loser Competition at Work

**You will need:**

- Start date, length, teams, captains, weigh-in location, wager, and a calculation method.

**Tips:**

- The most productive competitions go from 6-12 weeks
- Most are individual, but a team challenge is also an option
- Place a scale for weigh-ins in a corner or unused cube to ensure privacy
- Choose to have weigh-ins weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly (Friday is commonly picked)
- Choose the winner to be the team or individual with the greatest percentage of body fat lost
- Have each participant donate \$10, and the winner is given a cash prize *or* a gift such as a FitBit



### Steps Challenge: “Walk Week”

**You will need:**

- Start date, pedometers, walking routes

**Tips:**

- Challenge your employees to take 30 minutes each day to walk
- If this isn’t possible during their pre- or post-work routines, encourage them to pack a healthy lunch, eat for 30 minutes, and use the rest of the time in their lunch hour to walk
- Map out safe and easy walking routes for your employees to use throughout the work day and post them around the office (see our Workplace Wellness Idea: “Mile Long” Walking Routes for more info)
- Host a kickoff event to get employees excited and promote awareness
- Distribute pedometers so that your employees can track the steps they take throughout the length of your challenge
- Award a prize to the employee(s) who have walked the most steps



### Water Challenge: Drink Up!

**You will need:**

- Timeframe (21 days, 30 days, etc.), water bottles, promotional materials

**Tips:**

- Make sure that drinking water in your workplace is clean and accessible
- Encourage your employees to drink 64 oz or 8 glasses of water every day throughout the challenge
- Create tracking sheets so that your employees can easily keep track of how much water they’re drinking throughout the day



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### Workplace Wellness Idea #5: Implement a Step it Up Campaign

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will introduce a new “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**“Step it Up:”** *Encourage your employees to start moving by taking the stairs instead of the elevator and walking more throughout the work day.*

- By implementing a “Step it Up” Campaign at your workplace you can:
  1. Enhance employee relations
  2. Promote better employee health
  3. Encourage a healthy, energizing workplace culture
  4. Lower healthcare costs to your business
- If you have stairwells, check them to make sure they are safe and accessible; improve their appearance if needed by putting in carpet, painting or hanging artwork
- Put motivational signs in the stairwells or break rooms to motivate your employees
- If you have no stairs in your workplace, encourage your staff to walk more during the day by walking during lunch or parking farther away in the parking lot
- Communicate the campaign throughout your workplace

Attached is a sample of the motivational signs you can find on our website at [www.GetHealthyCT.org/step-it-up](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org/step-it-up). We have information for organizations with stairs and for those without stairs. We also have fun facts about the benefits of taking the stairs and walking more each day that you can use to motivate your employees.

If you want more information on how to implement “Step it Up,” please visit [www.GetHealthyCT.org/step-it-up](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org/step-it-up) or e-mail [gethealthyct@ghct.org](mailto:gethealthyct@ghct.org).

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Small  
steps  
make big  
differences.



[www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org)

- Just 2 minutes of climbing stairs a day can keep off the pesky two pounds that most adults gain every year.
- You burn an average of 10 calories per minute climbing the stairs – that's 7 times more than standing in an elevator!
- Walking regularly can lower your risk of diabetes, arthritis, macular degeneration and cancer by 50% compared with people who don't exercise.



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### **Workplace Wellness Idea #6: Revamp your Vending Machine**

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we provide “Workplace Wellness Ideas” that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Revamp your Vending Machine:** Make it easy for your employees to eat healthy foods by providing nutritious food options in your vending machine(s). To help you do this, the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity has published some standards for healthy beverage and food vending machines:

- Beverages should be low calorie with limited added sugars and artificial sweeteners
- Food items should include fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat free/low fat dairy products, with lower amounts of saturated and trans fats, added sugars and sodium
- Entrée items should be no more than 400 calories per item, no more than 35% of calories from fat or total sugars, with no more than 480 grams of sodium
- Vending machines should display the total calorie content for each item
- The healthiest items should be placed at eye level and should be priced less than other choices
- Employees should be educated about the benefits of choosing healthier foods

More details can be found at <http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/final-model-vending-standards.pdf>.

To make your vending machine healthier, start by talking to your supplier about healthier products that they can offer. Ideas for healthy food options can be found on the next page.

For more helpful tips and to find local resources, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org).

Here are some ideas for healthier food items to offer in your vending machines. Try to make at least 50% of your choices to be healthy choices.

- Stock your beverage machine with zero or low-calorie drinks, such as:
  - Water
  - Coffee/Tea
  - 100% fruit juice
  - 100% vegetable juice
  - Natural sodas or carbonated fruit juices
  - Non-dairy smoothies
  - Low-calorie beverages that are less than 40 calories per container
  
- Snacks that follow the previously listed standards include:
  - Baked or popped chips
  - Air popped or low-fat popcorn
  - Fruit or vegetable chips
  - Dried fruit
  - Dehydrated vegetables
  - Trail mix
  - Unsalted nuts or seeds
  - 100% whole grain crackers, pretzels, rice cakes
  - 100% whole grain cereal bars, granola bars, muffins
  - Nutritional bars
  - Low sodium dried meat/jerky
  - Squeezable fruit
  - Sugarless chewing gum





## Shape Up *Your* Workplace

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### Workplace Wellness Idea #7: Grow your Own Garden

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Grow Your Own Garden:** Growing fresh vegetables, herbs and fruits can be an excellent way to improve health and foster healthy eating practices. As an employer, you can encourage your employees to get involved in gardening by sharing this information with them.

Gardens come in all shapes and sizes, from small herb gardens in the kitchen to container gardens on the deck, outdoor gardens in the yard or a shared community garden. Gardening is a healthy and relaxing activity to do and even counts as exercise! Many people find it rewarding to watch a plant grow and produce fruit or vegetables that can be eaten right from the garden. It is also a great family activity to do with children.

Gardening can be easy to do – especially if you start small. See the reverse side for some helpful tips and useful websites.

For more helpful tips and local resources, visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org) or e-mail [gethealthyct@ghct.org](mailto:gethealthyct@ghct.org)

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Consider the following when starting your home or community garden:

### **Home Gardens**

Home gardens are a great project to do with your family. Determine whether or not you would like to make an indoor or outdoor container garden or plant a large garden in your yard. You can purchase the products at your local nursery, hardware store or big box store. Here are the steps needed to get your garden going:

#### **Container Gardens:**

- Choose your containers for use either indoors or out on the deck/patio.
- Choose a location for your garden in full sun, which means six or more hours of direct sun in the summer.
- Be sure there are holes in the bottom of the container, place a layer of small rocks on the bottom, then fill with new bagged soil.
- Either plant seeds (ideal to start these indoors) or buy small seedling plants at the store.
- Water the plants well and regularly and give them fertilizer.
- Weed frequently. Get a trowel and loosen up the soil every couple of weeks.
- In a few short weeks, you should see progress and growth on your plants.

#### **Yard Gardens:**

- Choose your location for your garden in full sun, which means six or more hours of direct sun in the summer.
- Check your soil—much of the soil in CT is laden with unhealthy metals or chemicals. You can have your soil tested by UConn at <http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/factsheets/SoilTestingforLawnsGardens.html>.
- If you are concerned about your soil, build a box (untreated lumber is recommended) on top of the ground, place a layer of landscape fabric on the ground, then fill the box with new bagged soil.
- Either plant seeds (ideal to start these indoors) or buy small seedling plants at the store.
- Start small because too much garden may begin to feel like work. You can raise plenty of vegetables in even a 10-by-10-foot plot of land.
- Fence your garden from hungry animals.
- Water the plants well and regularly and give them fertilizer.
- Weed frequently. Get a trowel and loosen up the soil every couple of weeks.
- In a few short weeks, you should see progress and growth on your plants.

Visit these websites for specific instructions on how to start your garden:

- Container gardening: <http://www.hgtvgardens.com/container-gardening/container-gardening-tips>
- Vegetable garden: <http://www.helpfulgardener.com/vegetable/2003/vegetable.html>
- Planning your first garden: <http://www.bhg.com/gardening/vegetable/vegetables/planning-your-first-vegetable-garden/>
- Preparing new garden beds: <http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/NewGardenBeds.htm>

### **Community Gardens**

Community gardens increase a sense of community ownership and stewardship. They bring people together from a diverse variety of backgrounds. They allow families and individuals, without land of their own, the opportunity to produce food. A community garden becomes an outdoor classroom where learning to grow plants is mentally stimulating and working in it develops critical life skills. People who grow their own food have access to a variety of fresh produce that supports nutritional health, increases physical activity, decreases susceptibility to illnesses and overall reduces the burden on the health care system.

- Check with your community to see if they have a community garden/co-op. <http://www.ctnofa.org/CommunityFarms.html>
- Some gardens let you rent your own plot which you then plant and tend all season. Sometimes there is a lower fee if you share your harvest with a local food bank. Some community gardens are shared among many people – if you volunteer your time to tend the garden, you get to share in the produce. You can find local shared community gardens in many cities. <http://gethealthyct.org/he-city-search/>
- If you are interested in starting your own community garden check out: <http://www.letsmove.gov/community-garden-checklist>





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### Workplace Wellness Idea #8: Promote Locally Grown Foods

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**Promote Locally Grown Foods:** The first step to healthy eating is to purchase fresh, natural foods. Foods that are locally grown, without additives or preservatives, are an excellent choice. You can help your employees find local foods at farmers' markets, through Community Supported Agriculture Programs (CSAs) or directly from farms. Here are ways you can connect your employees to local foods:

- Become a drop off location for a Community Supported Agriculture Program for your employees. You can also supplement the cost of a CSA for your employees to incent them to participate
- Offer a farmers' market onsite for your employees, customers and your local neighborhood
- Distribute a schedule of nearby farmers' markets to your employees so they can find one near them. You can find a schedule for Fairfield and New Haven Counties at <http://gethealthyct.org/get-healthy-food/#local>
- Provide recipes to your employees to prepare the foods that they purchase at a local farmer's market. Get Healthy CT has a Farmers' Market Recipe Generator here: <http://gethealthyct.org/get-healthy-food/#recipes>
- If you have an onsite cafeteria, encourage it to purchase locally and/or offer one meal a week that is made with only ingredients from local farms

See the next page for more information on how your employees can connect to local farmers' markets, CSAs, and community farms this summer.

For more helpful tips and local resources please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org) or e-mail [gethealthyct@gmail.com](mailto:gethealthyct@gmail.com).

Encouraging your employees to buy locally this summer is a great way to get them to purchase healthy, nutritious, and local food! They can support the local economy and experience delicious CT-grown foods this summer. Here's how:

**Visit a Local Farmers Market or Farm:** There are many farmers' markets throughout the state that are usually open weekly from June – October. These are often multi-stall markets in which farmer-producers sell agricultural products directly to the public; particularly fresh fruit and vegetables are sold, but other products such as meat, dairy, baked goods, pickled items, maple syrup, and homemade sauces and dressings are often sold as well. Or you can visit a local farm directly.

To find local farmers' markets visit: <http://gethealthyct.org/get-healthy-food/#local> or <http://ctnofa.org/FarmersMarkets.htm>

To find a local farm, go to: <http://gethealthyct.org/he-city-search/>

To find out how your workplace can host a farmers market this summer, visit: <http://ctnofa.org/FarmersMarkets.htm>

**Join a Community Supported Agriculture Program (CSA):** A CSA directly links consumers to local farmers. Typically, CSA members pay a one-time fee at the beginning of the growing season. In return, they receive shares of the weekly harvest. These shares often consist of vegetables and fruits, though some CSAs may also offer milk, meats, fish, and specialty farm products such as baked goods, cheeses, jams and maple syrup.

To join a CSA or find out how your office could become a drop off location for one, go to this website: <http://ctnofa.org/CSAs.htm>

**Go to a Community Farm:** If you want to learn more about farming and fresh foods, get involved with a community farm. A community farm is a not-for-profit, publicly accessible farm that conducts educational programming for the public, a local source of healthful produce and a demonstration site for local food systems.

Find community farms at: <http://www.ctnofa.org/CommunityFarms.html>





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### **Workplace Wellness Idea #9: Encourage Physical Activity Outside of Work**

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**Encourage physical activity outside of work:** As an employer, you can encourage your employees to get active before or after work in a variety of ways:

- Start a company sports league or find existing leagues for employees to join.
- Find local gyms that would offer membership discounts to your employees.
- Start a walking, hiking, biking or running club.
- Host a wellness challenge.
  - *See Workplace Wellness Idea # 4 for further information*
- Provide your employees lists of free physical activity fitness tools they can use to track their activities.
  - *Get Healthy CT has a list at [www.GetHealthyCT.org/getactive](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org/getactive)*
- Provide bike racks/storage to encourage your employees to bike to work.
- Offer onsite fitness classes such as yoga, Zumba, meditation or aerobics.

For more helpful tips and local resources please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org) or e-mail [GetHealthyCT@gmail.com](mailto:GetHealthyCT@gmail.com).

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Here are some ideas to encourage your employees to be active outside of work hours:

**Start a company sports team and join an existing league:** Follow these simple steps to get a team together.

- Solicit interest from employees about joining a league through your company communication channels. Sports that are played in leagues include: baseball, softball, basketball, bowling, flag football, hockey, golf, tennis, racquetball, bocce, soccer, etc.
- Start your own league if you have enough teams or find a local sports league using Get Healthy CT's searchable database: <http://GetHealthyCT.org/pa-city-search/>

**Arrange for gym membership discounts for your employees at a local gym.**

- Find local gyms in the area using Get Healthy CT's searchable database: <http://GetHealthyCT.org/pa-city-search/>
- Contact a gym to create a discounted rate for your employees.
- Communicate this rate to your employees and encourage them to join by offering reimbursement for the membership fee.

**Start a walking, hiking, biking or running club:**

- Solicit interest from employees about starting a walking, hiking, running or biking club. Identify a team leader who can organize the group(s).
- Empower the team leader to plan regular walks/runs. They can find local walking, running, hiking or biking trails at [www.GetHealthyCT.org/GetActive](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org/GetActive) .
- The team leader can also map out a local route near work using the free "Map My Run" app. This app allows you to plan out a walking, running or biking route of a specific distance and the map can be printed to be handed out.

**Offer onsite fitness classes:**

- If you have space for an onsite class and enough employees to participate, you can often find local instructors who will hold classes at your worksite. They can either charge each participant separately or be funded by the company.
- To offer yoga or meditation, you just need a room with open floor space. To offer Zumba, you would want a larger, non-carpeted space so people can move around.
- Solicit interest from employees about joining an onsite fitness class through company communication channels.
- You can find an instructor willing to come to the company through YMCAs, Parks and Recreation Departments or local gyms. These organizations can be found through <http://GetHealthyCT.org/pa-city-search/>.



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### Workplace Wellness Idea #10: Host a Healthy Potluck

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Host a Healthy Potluck:** Encourage your employees to cook and eat healthy foods by hosting a healthy potluck. A potluck meal where everyone contributes a dish is a great social activity to build teamwork and morale, and having it focus on healthy foods is an easy way to encourage people to try a variety of new, healthy foods.

The healthiest foods to use in cooking are foods that come in their most natural form with limited processing. Specific foods include:

- Whole fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains like whole wheat flour, quinoa, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, oatmeal
- Nuts, dried fruit, seeds or popcorn
- Low fat or fat free milk, unsweetened nonfat yogurt, eggs and low fat cheese
- Plain or fruit flavored water, coffee, tea or 100% juice (orange, apple, grape, grapefruit)
- Unhealthy foods that should be discouraged include any refined grains like white rice or flour, heavy creams, margarine with trans fats, many desserts and baked goods, such as cakes, cookies, donuts, pastries, and croissants, deep fried foods or fast foods, or any item that comes out of a box, can, bag, bottle or package that has more than 5 ingredients

Instructions for how to host a healthy potluck can be found on the next page.

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For more helpful tips and local resources, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)



## How to Host a Potluck:

- Select a date, time and location for the potluck.
- Post a sign-up sheet with different categories on it such as salad, appetizer, entrées and healthy desserts with healthy eating guidelines posted on the top of it. You can set limits for calories, fat, carbs, sodium, etc., and have employees check their recipes with the recipe generator to find out how many calories, fat, carbs and protein there is: <http://recipes.sparkpeople.com/recipe-calculator.asp>.
- Get Healthy CT has links to a variety of recipe sites including a farmers' market recipe generator, ethnic recipes and a SNAP cookbook for low cost, healthy meal ideas. Find healthy recipes here: <http://gethealthyct.org/get-healthy-food/>.
- On the day of the potluck, have employees bring in the dish as well as copies of the recipe they used to share with other employees.

## Step up Your Potluck with these Additional Ideas:

- Take pictures of each entrée and share them through employee communication vehicles, such as your employee newsletter, company website or social media page.
- Start an on-line recipe exchange or company cookbook with all of the healthy recipes.
- Make it a “lunch and learn” and have a nutritionist or health coach come in to give a talk on healthy living during the potluck.

**MyPlate**

**Fruits**  
1½-2 cups each day  
Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

**1 cup fruit =**  
1 cup berries (raspberries, strawberries, blueberries)  
1 medium pear  
1 cup canned fruit in fruit juice  
1 cup diced cantaloupe or watermelon  
¼ cup dried fruit (raisins, blueberries, cranberries)  
1 cup 100% juice

**Vegetables**  
2-3 cups each day  
Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

**1 cup vegetables =**  
1 cup broccoli  
2 cups spinach salad  
1 cup carrots  
1 cup beans or peas  
1 cup tomatoes  
1 cup vegetable juice

**Grains**  
5-8 ounces each day  
Make at least half your grains whole grains

**1 ounce grains =**  
1 small (6" diameter) corn or flour tortilla  
1 slice whole wheat bread  
½ cup cooked pasta, brown rice, or cooked cereal  
1 cup ready-to-eat breakfast cereal  
5 whole-grain crackers

**Dairy**  
3 cups each day  
Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

**1 cup dairy =**  
1 cup low-fat yogurt  
1 ½ ounces low-fat Cheddar or string cheese  
1 cup fat-free or low-fat milk (flavored or unflavored)  
2 cups low-fat cottage cheese  
1 cup calcium-fortified soy beverage\*

**Protein**  
5-6½ ounces each day  
Go lean with protein

**1 ounce protein =**  
1 ounce cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish  
¼ cup cooked dry beans  
1 large egg  
1 tablespoon nut butter  
½ ounce nuts  
¼ cup tofu

**More**  
Fruits and Vegetables  
Whole Grains  
Fat-free or Low-fat Dairy  
Healthy Oils  
Lean Protein such as seafood and legumes

**Less**  
Salt  
Saturated Fats  
Solid and Trans Fats  
Added Sugars  
Fast Food  
Processed Grains

**UDIM**  
UNITED DAIRY INDUSTRY OF MICHIGAN

**Got Questions?**  
Call 1-800-241-MILK (6455)  
WWW.UDIM.ORG

\*Calcium-fortified plant beverages provide calcium but may not provide the other nutrients found in dairy products.



## Shape Up Your Workplace

A Monthly Series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #11: Build Exercise into the Workday

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Build Exercise into the Workday:** Employees spend many hours at work. If your employees spend many of those hours sitting at a desk or behind a wheel, it can be detrimental to their health. It is important that they get up and move during the day. You can encourage them to build low level physical activity into the workday by suggesting helpful tips such as:

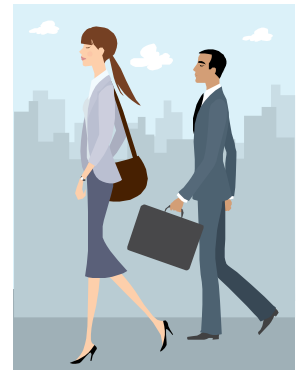
- Bring your sneakers to work so that you can easily walk throughout the day
- Take the stairs not the elevator
- Walk to work or take the bus if you can
- Park further away from your office if you drive to work
- Do easy stretches while sitting at a desk or behind a wheel

Attached are some easy tips for how to exercise at your work station or throughout your work day.

For more helpful tips and local physical activity resources please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org) or e-mail [gethealthyct@ghct.org](mailto:gethealthyct@ghct.org).

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Many employees spend more time awake at the office than at home, and often sit at a desk for the majority of their work day. Help your employees fit some physical activity into their day by encouraging them to:



**Walk during your lunch or break time.**

**Use the bathroom or printer that is furthest away from your desk.**

**Hold walking or standing meetings.**

**While waiting for a meeting, stand up or pace back and forth instead of sitting.**

**Walk to talk with your co-workers instead of calling or e-mailing them.**

**Stretch while sitting at your desk: raise both arms above your head, reach high, and count to ten. Use a resistance band to add more tension and maintain a good posture.**

**Walk to a local coffee shop or store for a quick break.**

**Make it a habit to walk around while you are on the telephone.**

**Find a mile-long walking route around your office and share it with your co-workers.**

**Set an alarm on your calendar that reminds you to get up and walk a little every hour.**

**Stretch your shoulders at your desk: sit upright and lift your left shoulder to your ear, exhale as you lower and circle your shoulder around and back, repeat three times alternating left and right.**



## Shape Up *Your* Workplace

A Monthly Series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### **Workplace Wellness Idea #12: Become a Smoke Free Worksite**

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a "Workplace Wellness Idea" each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Become a Smoke Free Worksite:** Every year in the United States, over 392,000 people die from tobacco-related disease, making it the leading cause of preventable death. Tobacco use contributes to a long list of medical illnesses and diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, emphysema, COPD and bronchitis. Secondhand smoke exposure also causes 50,000 additional deaths per year.

Businesses can start creating a healthier workplace for every employee by becoming a smoke free worksite and helping employees who smoke to quit. Tobacco cessation continues to be one of the most worthwhile measures to lower health care costs and increase productivity at the workplace. According to the CDC, for every employee who successfully quits using tobacco, an employer can expect to see an annual savings of nearly \$3,500 (based on health care and lost productivity converted to 2007 dollars). It, therefore, makes sense (and cents!) for businesses to eliminate smoking in the workplace.

Specific smoking cessation strategies that your company can implement are on the next page.

If you want more information on how to carry out smoking cessation, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org), the [CDC Healthier Worksite Toolkit](#), the [Florida Health Toolkit](#), or e-mail [GetHealthyCT@gmail.com](mailto:GetHealthyCT@gmail.com).

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### **Become a Smoke Free Worksite**

- Implement a smoke-free workplace policy for your buildings and/or entire campus. This will make your facilities more welcoming and safe for employees and visitors. You can find a sample policy on the American Lung Association website under Worksite Wellness.

### **Smoking Cessation Initiatives**

- Provide on-site smoking cessation classes, counseling or access to online courses for employees. Resources can be found at:
  - The Connecticut Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)
  - The American Lung Association's Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNGUSA (586-4872)
  - The National Cancer Institute's Quit Line at 1-877-448-7848 (1-877-44U-QUIT)
  - Services on all lines are free, in English or Spanish, and available as often as needed.
- Provide employees who smoke with incentives to stop smoking:
  - Ensure that your employee insurance plans cover smoking cessation classes and smoking cessation products such as nicotine patches.
  - Charge employees who use tobacco a higher health insurance premium.
  - Provide employees who successfully stop using tobacco a discounted health insurance premium.
  - Create smoking cessation support groups.
- Set up designated smoking areas outside of the building and away from main entrances so employees who do smoke have a designated place to go. This will protect visitors and other employees from second hand smoke exposure.
- Publish educational materials about the dangers of smoking in employee newsletters or other communications. Profile employees who have successfully quit as role models to other employees.







## Shape Up Your Workplace

A Monthly Series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #13: Reduce Stress in the Workplace

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a "Workplace Wellness Idea" each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Reduce Stress in the Workplace:** The average workplace today is a fast-paced, ever changing environment. New technology, economic changes, new competition and other factors lead companies to be nimble and quick to respond to changes. These changes often lead to increased stress in the workplace.

According to WebMD, "Stress is what you feel when you have to handle more than you are used to. When you are stressed, your body responds as though you are in danger.... Some stress is normal and even useful. Stress can help if you need to work hard or react quickly...But if stress happens too often or lasts too long, it can have bad effects. It can be linked to headaches, an upset stomach, back pain and trouble sleeping. It can weaken your immune system, making it harder to fight off disease. If you already have a health problem, stress may make it worse. It can make you moody, tense or depressed. Your relationships may suffer, and you may not do well at work or school."

As an employer, you can help your employees reduce stress on the job by providing them with some ideas on how to manage or reduce their stress. Some simple techniques can be found on the next page.

If you want more information on how to handle stress, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org), or e-mail [GetHealthyCT@gmail.com](mailto:GetHealthyCT@gmail.com).

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## **Ten Steps to Master Stress, Increase Energy and Improve Happiness**

- 1. Change your mind about stress.** If you think stress is bad for you and will harm you; it will. Take control of your stress by watching your self-talk - change it to the good. Your beliefs have more to do with how you respond to stress than the actual stressor. Watch the TED Talk by- Kelly McGonigal on How to make stress your friend: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcGyVTAoXEU>.
- 2. Learn Relaxation Techniques:** Practice deep breathing using your diaphragm whenever you feel tense. Do Yoga, Stretching, Tai Chi, Progressive Muscle Relaxation or Guided Imagery.
- 3. Practice Mindfulness Meditation.** You can find guided meditations on the internet and your smartphone. Or informally, you can pay attention to what you're doing when you're doing it. Focus on all your senses while showering, doing the dishes, eating, walking or hugging.
- 4. Take Five** – Schedule strategic breaks in your day, especially if you're busy. Try setting an alarm to go off every hour to remind you to take a break.
- 5. Focus on Gratitude** – Focus on the positive things in your life. Write down 3 – 5 things you're grateful for, why you are grateful and who is involved. Do this 3 times a week.
- 6. Get out of Your Head and into Your Body** - Doing physical activity is a great way to burn calories and reduce stress. Find an activity that you enjoy, such as walking, running, biking, stretching, calisthenics, tai chi, and make time to do it 3-5 times a week. You can use the Get Healthy CT Local Resources to find activities near you at <http://gethealthyct.org/pa-city-search/>.
- 7. Seek out Social Support.** At work, you can create social support groups, where you can spend half the time complaining and half the time finding solutions. At home, you can talk with family and friends. Follow the same time breakdown as above.
- 8. Develop Transition Rituals** to leave work stress behind when you leave the worksite. This could be something symbolic as a way to separate work from home/personal life, e.g. exiting a certain door as your leaving, starting your car, or crossing a bridge. Or it could be an action such as changing your clothes, listening to music or an audiobook.
- 9. Sleep/Eat/Pray/Love:** Improve your sleep hygiene to get a good night's sleep every night (see the Get Healthy CT October 2015 monthly Health Feature for ideas). Eat healthy foods, and use comfort foods and alcohol in moderation. Lift up your spiritual life by praying or reading inspirational books. Nurture and improve your relationships.
- 10. Make time for Laughter, Entertainment and Fun.** Go out with friends, family and/or co-workers or laugh on your own by watching *Youtube* comedy, sitcoms, cartoons or reading funny books. Find positive escapes such as reading, movies or live music.



## Shape Up Your Workplace

A Monthly Series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #14: Deskercise

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Deskercise:** Technology advancements such as computers have increased our efficiency at work, but they have also caused us to spend more time sitting for hours at a desk or a workstation. According to the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability, even if we are active before or after work and getting our 30 minutes of daily physical activity, research now shows that may not be enough to undo the health risks of a sedentary lifestyle. Sitting for long periods of time during the day is just as detrimental to your health. Prolonged sitting can impair the body’s ability to deposit fat, interrupt the functioning of HDL (the healthy cholesterol), and increase one’s risk for cardiovascular disease and other causes of mortality. Adding short bouts of cardiovascular, strength, and stretching exercises throughout the workday will help reduce sedentary behavior and improve fitness levels.<sup>1</sup>

As an employer, you can help your employees stay active throughout the day by educating them about the importance of getting up and moving every hour and giving them ideas on how to stretch at their desk or workstation. Twenty different “desk exercises” can be found on the next page. You can also create a challenge amongst your employees by having them commit to complete two of these exercises each day for two weeks to see which ones work best for them.

If you want more information on healthy eating and physical activity, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org), or e-mail [GetHealthyCT@gmail.com](mailto:GetHealthyCT@gmail.com).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nchpad.org/1061/5452/Deskercise~~20~Ways~to~Get~Moving~While~you~Work>



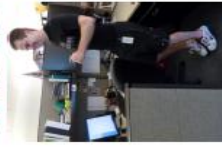
# Deskercise!

## 20 WAYS TO GET MOVING WHILE YOU WORK

The term "deskercise" refers to exercise that can be performed throughout your workday and even from your desk. There are a variety of movements available; here are 20 inclusive ways to effectively add more movement into your day.

### CARDIOVASCULAR

**1. JOG IN PLACE:** This exercise can be done seated or standing. Continue the movement for one minute, if standing increase intensity by picking up your knees.



**2. SKI ARMS:** Hold arms up and out fully extended with one arm forward and the other back. Swap arms back and forth moving continuously for one minute.



**3. SEATED DANCING:** There is no shame in a quick bout of seated dancing. Maybe you have a closed door or cubicle barrier. Regardless, let loose for one minute and get your heart pumping.



**4. PUNCH IT OUT:** From a seated or standing position take some jobs into the air continuously for one minute. To ramp up the intensity grab some full water bottles for added weight or perform in a squat position if standing.



**5. ARM CIRCLES:** Sit tall on the edge of your chair with arms fully extended to the side. Make small circles and work your way up to larger circles. Continue for one minute.

### STRENGTH

**6. SQUEEZE:** Perform an isometric hold on either your glutes or abdominals for 10 seconds and release. Repeat squeeze five times.



**7. WALL SIT:** Find a wall, squat down with your thighs parallel to the floor; make a 90-degree angle with your legs, and hold for a minute. You can also split the challenge into two, 30-second sits.



### 8. CHAIR SQUAT:

Sit on the edge of your chair with feet about shoulder-width apart. Stand up without using your hands and then squat down to return to your chair. When squatting, stick your backside out and always make sure your knees do not cross over your toes. Complete 8-10 reps.



### 9. DESK DIP:

Use a sturdy desk or a non-rolling chair. Sit at the very edge if using a chair and place your hands on both sides of the body. Plant both feet on the floor and take one to two steps away from the desk or chair. Bend your elbows down to a 90-degree angle, hold, and re-straighten. Complete 8-10 reps.

### 10. HAND SHAKE:

Clasp hands in front of chest as if you were giving yourself a handshake. One thumb should be up and the other down. Pull as hard as you can and hold the movement for 20 seconds repeating twice.



### 11. PRAYER HANDS:

Seated upright with feet flat on floor; bring palms together in front of your chest; push both hands together powerfully until you feel your arm and chest muscles contract. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat twice.



**12. WALL PUSH-UP:** Start standing or seated in a chair about two feet from a wall. Lean forward until palms are against the wall and then bend your elbows to push yourself toward the wall. Hold push-up for a few seconds and then push back to the starting position. Complete 10 reps.



**13. CHEST FLY:** Grab two objects and hold in each hand. Begin with arms fully extended in front of your body. With objects in hand, keep the extension, move your arms out to the side and pull them back to starting position.

**14. SHOULDER ROLL BACK:** Roll your shoulders back and squeeze shoulder blades together holding for 10 seconds. Repeat the movement five times.



**15. RAISE THE ROOF:** Grab two objects and hold in each hand. Begin with your arms fully extended out in front of your body. With objects in hand, keeping the extension, move your arms out to the side and pull back into the starting position.



**18. FOREARM STRETCH:** Hold one arm fully extended out in front of you with your fingers facing up. Use your other hand to pull your fingers back towards your body and hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Repeat with your other arm. Now perform the same movement but with your fingers facing down on each arm.

### 19. SHOULDER

**STRETCH:** Clasp your hands together in front of your chest as if you were giving yourself a hand-shake. One thumb should be up and the other pointing down to the ground. Pull as hard as you can and hold the movement for 20 seconds repeating twice.



**20. CHEST OPENER:** Grab two objects such as a full water bottle and hold in each hand. Begin with your arms fully extended out in front of your body. With objects in hand, keeping the extension, move your arms out to the side and pull them back into the starting position.



### 17. OVERHEAD TRICEPS EXTENSION:

Seated upright with feet flat on the floor; bring your palms together in front of your chest and push both hands together powerfully until you feel your arm and chest muscles contract. Hold the position for 20 seconds and repeat twice.





## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #15: Volunteer in the Community

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a "Workplace Wellness Idea" each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Volunteer in the Community:** Volunteering in the community is a great way to promote health, goodwill and fellowship amongst your employees. When people volunteer and help others in their community, they feel healthier and happier. Employees who volunteered through their workplace found that it strengthened their relationships with colleagues. It is also good for your business to be recognized as an organization that cares about and gives back to its community.

In 2013, UnitedHealth Group conducted a study on the link between health and volunteering named "[Doing Good is Good For You.](#)" They found that volunteering makes employees feel better physically, emotionally and mentally. An astounding 76% of participants said that volunteering made them feel healthier and 94% said that volunteering improved their mood. By integrating volunteering into your wellness program, your company shows that you care not only about your employees' physical wellbeing, but also their mental! <sup>1</sup>

As an employer, you can help your employees engage in community volunteerism an employee volunteerism program or by simply providing your employees with some ideas on how to get involved. Some simple tips and links to volunteer resources can be found on the next page.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from The VolunteerMatch Blog for Business Leaders, Volunteering Does the Body (and Your Employees) Good, Written by Laura Ellis, June 2014

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## How to Engage your Employees in Volunteering

Starting an employee volunteer program can be easy. You can start small and build as it makes sense. Here are some key tips to consider as you start.<sup>2</sup>

**Choice of Opportunities:** Offer your employees a range of community service opportunities in which to participate. Partner with various nonprofit organizations in your community, such as those that provide education, health care and social services. This allows employees to volunteer with organizations closely aligned with their personal interests. For example, some employees might prefer the physically labor-intensive tasks required by volunteering for Habitat for Humanity compared to coordinating a March of Dimes community activity. You can allow employees to select the organizations where they prefer to volunteer.

**Incentives:** Hold awards ceremonies to celebrate your workplace's community service efforts. Ceremonies can be as casual as relaxing picnics or formal evening affairs. Give plaques and certificates to employees who volunteer the most, but avoid limiting accolades; every employee who volunteers should get a certificate. Consider providing corporate perks, such as increments of time off for every hour of volunteerism. Give away low-cost items such as T-Shirts, tote bags or mugs as prizes; however avoid offering cash or expensive gifts since these type of incentives contradict the spirit of volunteering.

**Leadership:** Form teams of volunteers. Some employees, who might not wish to engage nonprofit associations on their own, may be more willing to donate time if participating alongside their coworkers. Require teams to have leaders and rotate the leadership position. This strategy allows non-management staff members to experience leadership, which may boost morale significantly.

**Considerations:** Determine how you plan to engage employees in community service before launching a volunteer program. Form committees that include all levels of staff and community members to get everyone engaged in your business's social responsibility goals from day one. You might find it helpful to hire a consultant who specializes in employee volunteer programs to help you get such a program up and running successfully.

<sup>2</sup>*Written by Maya Black of Demand Media on Everyday Life*

### To find local volunteer opportunities, check out these websites:

- United Way's 211 Infoline ([www.211ct.org](http://www.211ct.org))
- Volunteer Connecticut ([www.volunteerct.org](http://www.volunteerct.org))
- Volunteer Match ([www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org))
- CT Association of Nonprofits ([www.ctnonprofits.org](http://www.ctnonprofits.org))





## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #16: Host a Speaker Series on Health

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

As an employer, you can help your employees be healthy by hosting a speaker series on health at your workplace. Why is holding a speaker series a good idea? A speaker series will provide employees with ideas on how to eat healthy, be active and reduce stress. It will also help them find other employees who are interested in being healthy who could become a support network. Research shows that people are more likely to stick with their weight loss or exercise plans if they have a “partner in health” who is helping them stay accountable. Plus hosting a healthy speaker series will show your employees that you care about them and their wellbeing.

Here are some ideas for topics you can offer in a speaker series:

- Nutrition and healthy eating
- Healthy cooking tips
- Weight reduction
- Heart health
- Diabetes prevention and management
- Cancer prevention
- The importance of exercise and how to start
- How to stretch/exercise during the work day
- How to find a workout partner
- Stress reduction at home and work
- Mental health wellness
- Laughter as medicine
- Healthy activities you can do as a family
- The importance of social health

Some simple tips on how to host a speaker series can be found on the next page.

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## How to Host a Speaker Series on Health

1. Decide on the goals/purpose for your speaker series: what do you want to accomplish?
2. Based on your goals, develop a schedule of topics, dates, locations and times.
  - a. Decide how often you will have a speaker (e.g., monthly, quarterly).
  - b. Decide if you will host the speaker series in the same place each time or move around to different sites.
3. Identify speakers for each topic. Places to find speakers in your community include:
  - a. Local hospitals
  - b. Local health departments
  - c. Medical associations
  - d. Gyms
  - e. Other health-focused organizations or retailers
4. Create and publish a regular schedule for your speaker series using your normal employee communication channels and methods. Announcing the talks in advance will allow employees to plan time to attend. Send reminders out weekly to encourage people to attend.
5. Decide if you want employees to register in advance or just walk-in. If you want them to register, appoint someone to manage that process.
6. Get biographies for each speaker so you can introduce them at the start of the talk.
7. After each talk, have employees fill out a short evaluation form. Ask for feedback on the speaker, topic, time and location. Also ask for future topic ideas.



## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #17: How to Read Nutrition Labels

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will help facilitate healthy behavior change in their employees to improve employee satisfaction, increase productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

As an employer, you care about the well-being of your employees. Many people want to start eating healthier but do not know where to begin. You can help your employees by educating them on “how to read the nutrition facts on labels” information. Your employees can use these tips to effectively and easily make well-informed food choices.

#### How to Read Nutrition Labels

Most people are aware that too much fat, cholesterol and sodium are not good for them, but they simply need help learning how to select the best food options to make their diets healthier. The supermarket aisles are packed with appealing titles – low fat, reduced calorie, low carb – but how do you choose the healthiest option? First, turn the package over and look at the “nutrition facts panel,” which the Food and Drug Administration requires on almost all food items except for meats. Be sure to pay close attention to the serving size amount, total calories, calories from fat, nutrients, vitamins and percent daily value (%DV) of each. If you can choose between different brands of the same product, compare labels to select the brand with the healthiest ingredients.

Reading nutrition labels on packages can be time consuming initially. However, once you learn how to read labels and identify the most nutritious products, you will know what to choose on your next shopping trip, and this will save you time as you improve your eating habits.

Some simple guidelines from the American Heart Association can be found on the next page. These are intended to make it easier for you to use nutrition labels to make quick, informed food choices that contribute to a healthy diet.

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Learn to Read Nutrition Facts Labels

**Start here.** A **serving** is the amount of that food or beverage the information on the label is describing. A general rule of thumb is to eat ONE serving during a single meal or snack. The label will also tell you how many servings are in the package. If the label says there are two servings in the package, that's a hint that you may only want to only eat half of that package or share it with a friend.

**Check total number of calories per serving.** Once you see the serving size and how many servings are in the package, you can figure out how many calories are in the food you're eating. If you eat two servings that means you have to multiply the calories by 2.

**Limit foods that have high amounts of certain nutrients.** If the label says the food has lots of unhealthy fats (like saturated and trans fats) you might want

to pick something else. Also try to limit foods that are high in cholesterol, sodium, sugar, or are higher in calories than similar foods or beverages. Making good decisions about what you eat often requires comparing the labels of different foods and finding the best option.

**Quick guide to % DV (Daily Value).** The % DV section tells you the percent of each nutrient that a single serving of the food gives you compared to the amount that most people should eat in a day. You want to consume lower percentages of saturated fat, cholesterol or sodium; so choose foods with a low % DV, like 5 percent or less. You want to consume more of nutrients such as fiber or vitamins and minerals; so choose foods with a higher % DV — like 20 percent or more.

**Get the right amount of certain healthy foods and nutrients.** Your body functions best when it gets the right amounts of foods that provide the fiber, vitamins and other nutrients your body needs to function at its best.

**Start here**

**Check the total calories per serving**

**Limit these nutrients**

**Get enough of these nutrients**

**Quick Guide to % Daily Value: 5% or less is low, 20% or more is high**

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 slice (47g)  
Servings Per Container 6

### Amount Per Serving

**Calories** 160      Calories from Fat 90

		% Daily Value*
<b>Total Fat</b>	10g	15%
Saturated Fat	2.5g	11%
Trans Fat	2g	
<b>Cholesterol</b>	0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b>	300mg	12%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	15g	5%
Dietary Fiber	less than 1g	3%
Sugars	1g	
<b>Protein</b>	3g	
Vitamin A	0%	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium	45%	Iron 6%
Thiamin	8%	Riboflavin 6%
Niacin	6%	

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

A serving size? A portion size? I'm confused. A "serving" is the amount of food recommended to keep your body healthy. A "portion" is the amount of a food you eat at any one time — which may be more or less than a serving. Try keeping your portion sizes close to one serving for each meal!





## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #18: Healthy Grocery Shopping Tips

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

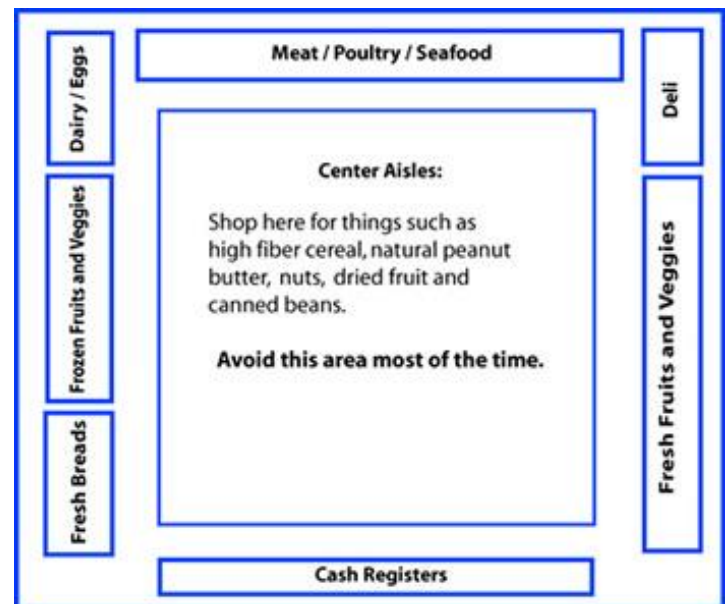
One way to help your employees adopt healthier eating habits is to provide them with simple-to-use tips for buying healthier food and preparing healthy meals. Here are some simple guidelines for healthier grocery shopping and cooking. The guidelines are intended to help you shop smarter and prepare healthier meals at home.

### Simple Healthy Shopping Tips

Healthy meals begin at the grocery store, but first you need to know how to navigate the aisles to select the healthiest ingredients for your meals. Here are some simple tips you can use on your next grocery trip:

- ✓ **Shop the outer perimeter of the grocery store first:**

You should spend the majority of your grocery budget in the outer perimeter of the store since that is where you find the healthiest and least processed items. You may need to go to specific aisles for other healthy items such as canned beans, nuts, and high fiber cereal.



Source:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/community-health/mass-in-motion/kids-health/eat-better/grocery-shopping.html>

- ✓ **Don't shop hungry:** Shopping on a full stomach will help you to avoid tempting (and often unhealthy) snack items. Try keeping healthy snacks in your car or bag like trail mix, cut-up vegetables, fresh or dried fruit.
- ✓ **Buy in season:** Fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season are often less expensive in the supermarkets. Local Farmer's Markets are a great place to buy fresh produce. Check out our Winter Farmer's Market list on [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org).
- ✓ **Go with a plan:** Before you shop, plan out your meals for the week and use those ingredients to build your shopping list. Sticking to your list will also help you save money by avoiding unnecessary items. Here is an example of a Grocery Game Plan to use:

Download a copy at:

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-grocery-list>

- ✓ **Try buying canned or frozen:** Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are often less expensive, just be sure to check the label to make sure there is no added salt or sugar. You can also rinse the item to help remove some of the added salt and sugar.

The form is titled "CREATE A GROCERY GAME PLAN GROCERY LIST" and features a grid with the following categories:

FRUITS	GRAINS (BREADS, PASTAS, RICE, CEREALS)
DAIRY (MILK, YOGURT, CHEESE)	VEGETABLES
PROTEIN FOODS (MEAT, SEAFOOD, BEANS & PEAS, NUTS, EGGS)	OTHER
<b>NOTES:</b>	

**Try these websites for additional resources to help you plan to shop healthier!**

- Budget Menus: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-sample-two-week-menus>
- List Your Weekly Meals: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-weekly-meals>
- Tasty Low Cost Recipes: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-recipes>

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #19: Healthy Cooking Tips

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

After your employees have used our healthy shopping tips at the grocery store (from Workplace Wellness Idea #18), you can provide them with these healthy cooking tips so they can prepare healthy meals at home. They could try making small changes over time to create a healthy eating lifestyle, rather than a short-lived diet. Experimenting with one or two changes at a time can help them figure out what works best for their routine and taste buds!

**Cook in large batches:** One tip to help busy employees during the work week is to cook larger dishes on the weekend that will last for several meals throughout the week. This will not only save time, but can also help to avoid those often unhealthy choices we tend to make when we are hungry and in a rush.

**Healthier ingredient substitution examples below:**

If your recipe calls for this ingredient:	Try substituting this ingredient:
Bread crumbs	Rolled oats
Butter, margarine or oil in baked good	Applesauce for half of the required butter
Pasta, enriched (white)	Whole-wheat pasta
Seasoning Salt	Herb-only seasonings, finely chopped herbs, or garlic, celery or onions
Sour cream, full fat	Fat-free or low-fat sour cream, plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt
Sugar	Reduce the amount of sugar by one half; for sweetness try adding vanilla, nutmeg or cinnamon

**Add more vegetables:** Seasonal vegetables can be added to favorite recipes and sandwiches to add extra flavor and nutrients. To preserve the color and nutrients in vegetables, cook them quickly by steaming or stir-frying. For a quick side dish, try steaming veggies in a bowl with a small amount of water in the microwave.

**Add more fruit:** Seasonal fruit can be added to meals for extra nutrients. Add strawberries, bananas or peaches to your cereal or non-fat yogurt. Apples, blueberries, and dried cranberries can boost the nutritional content of a salad. Keep fruit on hand for a quick healthy snack during the work day.

**Vary your proteins:** Experiment with main dishes made with beans or peas, nuts, soy and seafood. Try adding hummus, a hard-boiled egg, or unsalted nuts/seeds to salads for an extra boost of protein. Using lean meats and low-fat dairy products can upgrade typical protein choices.

**Plan ahead:** Planning weekday meals ahead of time can save time and prevent the need to grab something that is quick and unhealthy. Prepare and plan lunches the night before for healthy eating at work. Prepping healthy breakfast the night before is another morning timesaver. Here is a great make ahead breakfast they can try:

### **Low Fat Mini Frittatas**

1 ½ cup finely chopped onion  
1 ½ cups baby spinach chopped  
1 egg  
4 egg whites  
¼ cup reduced fat cheese grated  
Freshly ground pepper



Preheat oven to 350°. Spray two mini muffin pans with non-stick cooking spray. In medium skillet sprayed with cooking spray, gently sauté onion, Add spinach and cook until wilted. Remove from heat. Whisk egg and egg whites in a medium bowl. Add cheese and season with black pepper. Spoon the egg mixture into each mini muffin cup, filling them ½ way. Bake for 15 minutes until set and puffed up. **1 serving** = 1 mini frittata, **Calories** 11 , **Total Fat** 0.4 mg, **Sodium** 23 mg, **Carbs** 0.5 g, **Protein** 1.3 g

<http://lowfatcooking.about.com/od/appetizersandsnacks/r/minifrittatas.htm>

**Try these online resources for simple and delicious recipes:**

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-recipes>

[www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating)

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #20: Healthy Work Spaces

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

As an employer, you want your employees to be productive, but did you know that sitting for long periods of time can be harmful to their health? Sitting for long periods of time can lead to high blood pressure, high blood sugar and excess body fat. These issues can ultimately lead to decreased productivity and increased missed days of work. One way to ensure that your employees stay healthy is to promote active and healthier workspaces. In our Workplace Wellness Idea #20, we will provide you with ideas for turning your employee’s desks into spaces for health promotion stations.

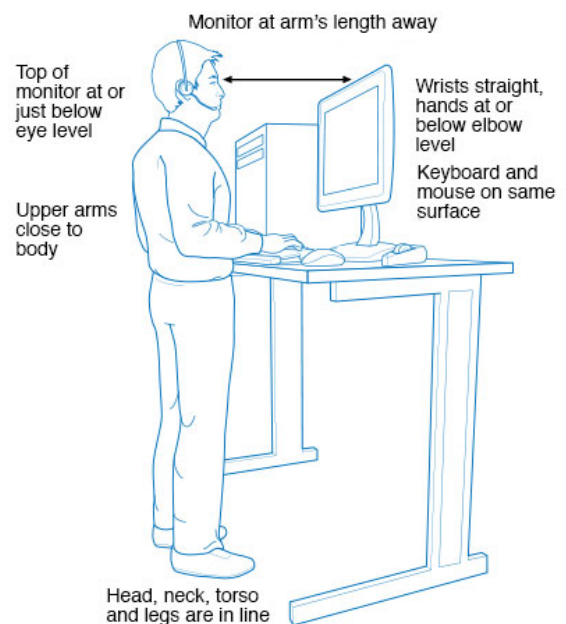
#### Standing Workstations

Sitting at a desk all day can be harmful to your employee’s health. Encourage them to work in the standing position for periods of time during the day.

According to the Mayo Clinic ([www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)), a proper standing workstation allows your employees to keep their legs, torso, neck and head approximately in line and vertical. They should use a desk that will allow them to keep your wrists straight and hands at or slightly below the level their elbows. Don't use books or boards to change the height of your desk.

**REMEMBER:** Standing too long can also be harmful. It is best to offer work stations that can easily adjust from the sitting to the standing position.

#### Proper Standing Workstation Ergonomics



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Source: [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)

## **Portable Stair Steppers**

Instead of sitting during conference calls, your employees can use portable stair steppers to get up and get active. These small machines can easily be stored under a desk when not in use and can be shared by several people.

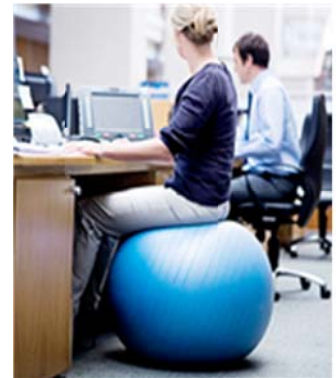
**REMEMBER:** According to [www.livestrong.com](http://www.livestrong.com), it is important to use proper form to get the most from a mini stepper. Place feet flat on the pedals and keep them there as you move your legs up and down in a steady motion.



## **Exercise/Stability Balls**

Another option for employees is to use an alternative to a standard office chair, like an exercise or stability ball. According to [www.prevention.com](http://www.prevention.com), if used correctly, sitting on a stability ball for short periods of time can improve core strength and posture.

**REMEMBER:** This option may not be for everyone and does require a bit of balance. Encourage employees to switch out their regular office chair for an exercise ball for 20-30 minutes at a time.



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In addition to workstation improvements, you can encourage employees to take short activity breaks during the day. One online program, Activity Bursts Everywhere (ABE), offers a free video library of short, 3-8 minute activity bursts that allow your employees to move and exercise right at their desks.

These exercise videos are organized by the setting and include standing and sitting exercises for the office, home and even waiting areas.

Depending on your fitness level, you can start doing one burst per day and then build up gradually. These not only can be used at work, but employees can also access this video library for quick activity breaks at home. See all available videos at: [www.abeforfitness.com](http://www.abeforfitness.com)



**For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)**

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #21: Promote Walking Meetings

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

In our last Workplace Wellness Idea, we suggested ways you could promote active and healthier workspaces for your employees. In addition to ensuring that employee workspaces promote health, you can increase worksite physical activity by convening a walking meeting. Throughout the typical work week, employees spend a lot of time sitting in meetings. In addition to working stationary at a desk all day, sitting for meetings is yet another missed opportunity to get up and get active. Here are some tips you can use to help you make your next meeting an active one!

#### Benefits of a Walking Meeting:

- Enhance relationship building and team spirit
- Help people stay fit and active
- Break up the workday
- Different environments will inspire new ideas
- Stimulates oxygen flow in the body and brain
- Increases creativity and problem solving ability
- Facilitates better office communication
- Breaks down “walls” between management and employees
- Meetings outdoors can facilitate happier, more energized and alert employees



## Walking Meetings: The Do's

- ✓ DO stick to a small group
- ✓ DO choose a safe route
- ✓ DO accommodate different fitness levels and walking paces
- ✓ DO suggest a walking meeting ahead of time
- ✓ DO suggest that everyone bring a water bottle
- ✓ DO determine the agenda and walking route beforehand
- ✓ DO ask employees to keep a pair of comfortable walking shoes in their car or at their desk
- ✓ DO provide employees with pedometers or download free phone apps to track steps walked
- ✓ DO have fun!

## Walking Meetings: The Don'ts

- ✓ DON'T walk near noisy areas which can make it difficult to hear everyone
- ✓ DON'T walk to extra calorie destinations (donut shop, dessert shop, etc.)
- ✓ DON'T surprise your group with a walking meeting
- ✓ DON'T require your employees to walk for a meeting. An alternative is to invite everyone that is interested to walk with you after the meeting has ended

## More Helpful Tips for a Healthier Workplace:

Consider convening a worksite committee on physical activity and/or workplace wellness.

Survey employees on what makes conferences, meetings and the office environment more supportive of physical activity and incorporate these ideas into the workplace as appropriate.

Encourage standing during long meetings or ask someone to lead an activity break.

Source: [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov)

**For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)**

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #22: Creating Food and Beverage Policies

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

According to the American Heart Association ([www.Heart.org](http://www.Heart.org)), in order to provide a healthier workplace, employers can:

- ✓ Support healthier choices, provide leadership and role modeling, and create a culture of health
- ✓ Offer physical activity opportunities that are relevant to the audience and environment to help people achieve at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day
- ✓ Provide a tobacco-free environment
- ✓ Prioritize sustainable practices when possible by minimizing waste, encouraging recycling and sourcing products from sustainable producers
- ✓ **Offer nutritious food and beverage options**

To help employers with this last recommendation to offer nutrition food and beverage options, the American Heart Association has created an easy-to-use toolkit specifically designed to help employers create food and beverage policies.

**See Page 2 for more details and to learn how to access this useful resource.**

**Creating Healthy Food and Beverage Policies:** The American Heart Association has created a Healthy Workplace Food and Beverage Toolkit, [www.heart.org/FoodWhereUR](http://www.heart.org/FoodWhereUR), to help organizations improve their food environment and promote a culture of health. This resource provides you with practical action steps and suggestions that are easy to understand and apply which include:

- Specific guidance and nutrition standards for beverages, snacks and meals
- Sample email to employees
- Information on healthy eating, creating a culture of health, how leadership and management can be involved, special events, meetings, vending machines, healthier cooking methods and resources

**Who can use this toolkit?** Anyone involved with procuring, providing or planning food and beverages in an organization/workplace -- from vending machines to catered special events.

### **Seven Simple Steps to Get Started: Guidance for Leadership and Management**

1. Reduce and ultimately eliminate regular soft drinks and sugar-sweetened beverages.
2. Offer at least one fruit and/or vegetable serving with every meal.
3. Do not serve butter.
4. Reduce and ultimately eliminate candy in vending machines.
5. Switch to whole-grain bread and bread products.
6. Serve fruit instead of traditional desserts.
7. Do not serve fried foods.



To access this free toolkit, visit [www.heart.org/FoodWhereUR](http://www.heart.org/FoodWhereUR)

*\*You must first register to receive instant access to the Food and Beverage Toolkit and downloadable resources.*

**For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)**

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #23: Pack Healthy Lunches

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

Encouraging employees to pack healthy lunches is one way to encourage healthy eating in the workplace, as well as help save them money. Here are some healthy lunch ideas that are easy to pack for the work week:

- ✓ Salads of mixed greens tossed with vegetables, fruit and protein (such as sliced turkey or chicken, tuna, egg, tofu or beans) with low fat dressing on the side. See next page for an easy way to bring a salad to work.
- ✓ Sandwiches on whole-grain bread or wraps with lean protein such as sliced turkey or chicken, tuna, egg, tofu and sliced vegetables. Instead of cheese, use hummus or added vegetables.
- ✓ Small amounts of whole-grain chips, crackers, pretzels, cereal bars
- ✓ Low or non-fat yogurt
- ✓ Sliced vegetables and low-fat dip
- ✓ Fresh fruit (slices or chopped fruit salad) for dessert
- ✓ Water, 100% fruit juice, unsweetened iced tea, coffee and tea (with skim or 1% milk)

#### Tips for Eating a Prepared Lunch at the Workplace

**Watch what you eat** – By paying attention to what you are putting into your mouth, you are more likely to make healthier food choices.

**Disinfect your desk** – Wipe your whole desk area once a day. Avoid touching your phone, keyboard, and mouse while you’re eating. Keep some hand sanitizer on your desk too.

**Use a placemat** – Give yourself some extra protection after you wipe-down your desk.

**Eat with a friend** – Invite an officemate over to eat with you. Taking that break and interacting is important from a productivity and creativity standpoint.

**DON’T FORGET to walk when you can** – Eating your lunch at your desk requires less energy, so don’t forget to get up and take a walk or have your lunch outdoors.

Source: [www.WebMD.com](http://www.WebMD.com)

## Healthy Lunch Idea: Salads in a Jar

Salads are a healthy lunch option and they're an easy way to fit more fruits and vegetables to your diet. Mason jar salads are a new trend for a portable way to have a healthy and effortless lunch. You can prepare salads in large batches on the weekend to help get you through the entire workweek, without having to chop and assemble all of your ingredients every day! In addition to different types of lettuce greens, make sure your salad has a variety of ingredients from different food groups. Examples include:

Vegetables	Fruit	Protein	Grain	Dressing Options
Asparagus	Grape Tomatoes	Meat	Barley	Olive Oil and
Broccoli	Avocados	Poultry	Bulgur	Vinegar
Cabbage	Apples	Fish	Corn	Vinaigrette
Carrots	Grapes	Hard-boiled Eggs	Couscous	- Balsamic
Celery	Pears	Beans	Whole-Wheat Pasta	- Pomegranate
Cucumbers	Strawberries	Grains	Quinoa	- Orange
Green peas	Dried fruit	Seeds and nuts	Rice (black, brown, red, wild, mixed)	- Cider
Mushrooms	- Raisins	Cheese with less fat and sodium		- Lemon
Onions	- Cranberries	- Mozzarella		<b>Make Your Own</b>
Peppers	- Cherries	- Swiss		
Radishes	- Apricots	Hummus		
Spinach				
Zucchini				

### Healthful Tip:

Bottled salad dressings can add extra calories, and often contain large amounts of trans-fat, sugar, preservatives and artificial flavors. Check the labels or try making your own.

### How to Pack a Perfect Mason Jar Salad

Start with the heavy and most non-absorbent ingredients, like the dressing on the bottom and work your way up with lighter ingredients.

Try the order below and explore your favorite ingredient combinations!

- Salad dressing: 1 to 4 tablespoons in the bottom
- Hard chopped vegetables: carrots, celery and peppers
- Beans, grains & pasta
- Softer vegetables & fruits
- Proteins, nuts and seeds
- Salad greens: Fill the rest of the jar with salad greens.
- Finally, screw the lid on the jar and refrigerate for up to 5 days

**Tip:** Wait to add any soft or perishable ingredients to the top until the day you plan to eat. **Source:** [www.thekitchn.com](http://www.thekitchn.com)

Search for salad dressing recipes at: [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)

More lunch recipes at: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)



For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #24: Healthy Food Donations

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

As an employer, you can help your employees support the health of their community by asking them to donate healthy foods to local food programs. Hunger is a real issue in our community. According to the Connecticut Food Bank and Feeding America, 13.1% or 472,540 Connecticut residents are food insecure, and one out of every 5 children is food insecure. An increasing number of residents in CT have been relying on the Connecticut Food Bank each year. In 2015, the CT Food Bank prepared more than 18.5 million meals to people in six counties, making food banks vitally important to our community.

#### Why is it important to donate healthy food?

Health and hunger are connected. According to Feeding America’s *Hunger in America 2014 Study*, one-third of the households using food banks reported having a family member with diabetes and two-thirds of households reported having to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care. People who face hunger are at a greater risk for diet-sensitive diseases including Type 2 Diabetes, high blood pressure and heart attacks, and have poorer health outcomes.

Local food drives often collect our unwanted pantry items, like boxed and canned foods, which are often high in salt, sugar and other additives that can lead to poor health. Next time you donate, think about some *healthier* items you can give that can help create an impact on the health of your community. Encouraging employees to donate healthy food can benefit the well-being of the community. Some healthy donation ideas are listed on the next page.



Source: <http://www.feedingamerica.org> | <http://www.ctfoodbank.org/>

## Get started with HEALTHY food donations

### Healthy Food Donation Options:

Shelf-stable milk and non-dairy alternatives - almond or soymilk

Whole grain low-sugar cold cereal and unsweetened oatmeal

Canned fruit in 100% juice or water

Canned low sodium, no salt vegetables

Whole grain pasta, whole wheat tortillas, taco shells

Low sugar, low sodium pasta sauce

Low sodium/water packed canned tuna / salmon / chicken

Brown rice & quinoa

Unsweetened dried fruit

Low sodium soups

Low sodium nuts & beans

Natural peanut butter or other nut butters

Non-creamy/lite salad dressings/vinegars

Unsweetened applesauce

Sugar free, low sodium & no salt items

100% fruit juice

→ **Fresh produce**

**\$5-\$10 grocery store gift card**

Check first. Some sites accept items from home and community gardens.



## Where to donate

- CT Food Bank- *accepts food and donations online* [www.ctfoodbank.org](http://www.ctfoodbank.org)
- Local churches
- Local food pantries & soup kitchens
- Local seasonal food drives:
  - Grocery stores
  - Schools
  - Other organizations
- You can also contact your local health department for more information.

### How to Host a Healthy Food Drive

- ✓ Assemble your team of family, co-workers or neighbors
- ✓ Identify a local food pantry to receive your donation
- ✓ Select a donation drop off date/time
- ✓ Distribute flyers and a healthy food donation list
- ✓ Collect the healthy donations
- ✓ Drop off donations to your selected feeding site

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #25: Healthy Eating When Dining Out

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

#### Eating Healthy When Dining Out:

Dining out is fun and enjoyable, especially when it is with friends and family, but it can make maintaining a healthy lifestyle more difficult. It can be hard to stay on track with a menu full of delicious looking options – but planning ahead can help. Below are several easy tips you can share with employees to help them make healthier choices when dining out.

#### Why is it important to make healthy decisions when dining out?

Whether at a sit down restaurant or a fast food chain, dining out can be associated with a higher intake of calories, fat and sodium. This is due to the larger portions that many restaurants are serving these days. It’s enjoyable to dine and socialize with others, but these excess calories can add up over time unless you choose smart healthy options.

Having a plan when dining out is the best way to eliminate the temptation of unhealthy eating. Try these tips next time you dine out for lunch (or anytime):

- ✓ Choose a restaurant with a wide range of menu options
- ✓ Ask for options with lean meats, low-fat dairy and whole grains
- ✓ Ask the server not to bring a bread basket to the table
- ✓ Look at the menu before you arrive and take time to plan what you will order
- ✓ Eat slowly - don’t rush through your meal If you eat a large lunch, choose a smaller meal for dinner
- ✓ ***See page 2 for even more helpful tips!***



## More Tips to Battle the Dining Out Splurge:

**CONSIDER YOUR DRINK:** Choose water, fat-free or low-fat milk, unsweetened tea, or drinks without added sugars

**SAVOR A SALAD:** Start your meal with a salad packed with vegetables to help you feel satisfied sooner. Ask for dressing on the side to avoid extra calories



**SHARE A MAIN DISH:** Divide a main entrée between family and friends

**SELECT FROM THE SIDES:** Order a side dish or appetizer-sized portion instead of a regular entrée for your meal

**FILL YOUR PLATE WITH VEGETABLES & FRUIT:** Select options like a stir-fry, kabobs or a dinner salad and have fruit for dessert or a side dish

**PASS ON THE BUFFET:** Avoid “all you can eat” buffet restaurants

**GET YOUR WHOLE GRAINS:** Request 100% whole-wheat breads, rolls, and pasta

**QUIT THE “CLEAN YOUR PLATE CLUB”:** Instead of eating the whole portion you are served (which is often double the amount you need), ask for a to-go container and take the rest home for later.



Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) for even more tips about making *healthier* eating choices

For more information, please visit [www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #26: Make a Pledge for Employee Wellness

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Make a Pledge for Employee Wellness:** As an employer you can take a pledge towards creating an environment that supports the health and wellness of your employees. The New Year is fast approaching so now is the perfect time to begin to start implementing small changes within your organization that can have a big impact on employee health.

An easy way to start is to take a pledge to offer healthy food and beverages at meetings or to increase physical activity opportunities in the workplace. These are just two examples of how employers can take small steps to improve their employee’s health. Suggestions for these include:

#### Healthy Food and Beverage Options for Meetings:

- Fresh or dried fruit
- Salad, raw vegetables
- Whole grain breads
- Pita or baked tortilla chips
- Low-fat dairy
- Pre-portioned snacks
- Baked, roasted or grilled lean meats
- Granola bars
- Pretzels
- Low sodium soup with vegetables
- Nuts
- Bottled water or unsweetened tea

#### Promote Workplace Physical Activity:

- Display motivational posters and brochures
- Institute a “take the stairs” campaign
- Promote walking meetings and lunch-time walks
- Encourage employees to participate on local sports teams, road races, etc.
- Provide pedometers and institute a 10,000 steps per day challenge
- Establish a “physical activity week”
- Provide information on local opportunities for physical activity

If you sign a pledge through GHCT, we will support you in the process. See page 2 for more details.

## Workplace Pledges Made Easy with Get Healthy CT!

Organizations that take a pledge through Get Healthy CT will receive resources, support and organization recognition on the Get Healthy CT website. Email us at [moreinfo@gethealthyct.org](mailto:moreinfo@gethealthyct.org) today for help with your pledge!



### Our **NEW** GHCT Organization Pledge Ideas Include:

#### 1. Pledge to promote a culture of health through any of the following:

- a) Promote the GHCT website [www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org) to employees on your website, intranet, newsletters, etc.
- b) Distribute the GHCT monthly newsletters to employees. This online newsletter highlights various health and wellness events taking place around Fairfield and New Haven counties, as well as gives tips and information to support healthy lifestyles.
- c) Implement at least 2 new Workplace Wellness Ideas in a year. This Workplace Wellness Series provides businesses with low or no cost ideas to support healthy behaviors of their employees.

#### 2. Pledge to adopt healthy eating guidelines as recommended from the American Heart Association's (AHA) Food & Beverage Toolkit:

- a) Improve vending machine options by reducing the number of sugar-sweetened beverages offered and reducing sodium and calories in food so that at least 50% of vending items meets AHA healthy guidelines.
- b) Improve provided/cafeteria/catered meals on-site to make them consistent with a healthy dietary pattern.
- c) Improve overall food and beverage environment and adopt policies to make healthy choices easy.

#### 3. Pledge to adopt suggested guidelines for increasing physical activity in the workplace:

- a) Increase awareness of physical activity options within the workplace through information and signage.
- b) Provide motivation and means through workplace challenges, environmental assessments and improvements, or by showcasing senior leadership participation.

For more information on how you can make a pledge for your organization, please email us at [moreinfo@gethealthyct.org](mailto:moreinfo@gethealthyct.org)

For more information, please visit [www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #27: Encourage Monthly Health Challenges

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

#### Why Monthly Health Challenges?

Daily physical activity is essential for good health, but finding the time to exercise can be very difficult. Get Healthy CT makes it easier by creating a “Monthly Health Challenge” designed to help users perform a specific exercise for 30 days, while progressively getting more challenging throughout the month.

Our Monthly Health Challenges are easy to use because they feature exercises that can be done at home with little or no cost and minimal equipment. Each challenge includes an easy track for beginners and a more challenging track for those who are more experienced. We also include instructions and pictures on how to perform each monthly exercise. Past challenges have included calf raises, jumping jacks and sit-ups. All our challenges are made available on our website at [www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org) and can be downloaded to print and share with employees.

#### How to Encourage Employees to Try a Monthly Health Challenge

- Email the challenges out to employees once per month
- Hang our health challenges up around the office, in the break rooms and restrooms
- Include a link to our health challenges in your monthly newsletters to employees
- Make it a group effort to complete challenges together
- Discuss the latest health challenge at the beginning of staff meetings
- Compete against other departments for fun, health promoting prizes

**See page two for a sample of a Get Healthy CT Monthly Health Challenge**



## A Sample Monthly Health Challenge By Get Healthy CT



### 31-Day Calf Raises Challenge

<b>(E) Easy</b> <b>(C) More</b> <b>Challenging</b>	1 (E )15 (C )25	2 (E )20 (C )40	3 (E )25 (C )50	4 (E )30 (C )60	5 <b>(E)Rest</b> <b>(C) Rest</b>	6 (E )30 (C )60
7 (E )35 (C )70	8 (E )40 (C )80	9 (E )45 (C )90	10 <b>(E)Rest</b> <b>(C)Rest</b>	11 (E )50 (C )100	12 (E )55 (C )120	13 (E )60 (C )130
14 (E )65 (C )140	15 <b>(E)Rest</b> <b>(C)Rest</b>	16 (E )65 (C )140	17 (E )70 (C )150	18 (E )75 (C )160	19 <b>(E)Rest</b> <b>(C)Rest</b>	20 (E )75 (C )170
21 (E )80 (C )180	22 (E )85 (C )200	23 (E )90 (C )220	24 <b>(E)Rest</b> <b>(C)Rest</b>	25 (E )90 (C )250	26 (E )95 (C )260	27 (E )100 (C )270
28 (E )105 (C )280	29 (E )110 (C )290	30 (E )120 (C )300	31 <b>(E)Rest</b> <b>(C)Rest</b>			

Recent Monthly Health Challenges have included:

- Jumping Jacks
- Squats
- Wall Sits
- Sit Ups
- Much More!



Most challenges are available in Spanish. To view all our Monthly Health Challenges, visit [www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org) under the “Physical Activity” tab and check back monthly for new challenges to be added!

**For more information, please visit [www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org)**  
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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #28: The Buddy System

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

#### Why the Buddy System?

Scheduling time for a daily workout can be very difficult for busy working adults. Once committed to an exercise schedule, having ongoing motivation to exercise can be a regular physical and mental battle. This is why Get Healthy CT suggests that you have a “buddy” and not do it alone.

Choosing a workout partner can be a great way to help you get organized and stay motivated to exercise. The “buddy system” works well because knowing that you have a partner depending on you helps increase your drive to stick to your workout plans.

#### Benefits to Having a Good Workout Buddy

- ✓ Increases support to help you achieve your fitness goals
- ✓ Makes working out more fun
- ✓ Provides support to try new workouts
- ✓ Increases competition which can push you to work harder
- ✓ Makes workouts safer
- ✓ Increases motivation to exercise regularly
- ✓ Provides a cheerleader for your successes
- ✓ Encourages social behavior
- ✓ Holds you accountable to another person

#### Choosing the Right Workout Buddy

Selecting the right workout buddy is very important. You want to make sure that you identify someone you enjoy being around as well as will help you work towards your fitness goals. See page 2 for more tips on choosing the perfect workout buddy.



## Tips for Choosing the Perfect Workout Buddy

**Make sure you like them:** Your workout buddy has to be someone you actually like spending time with. If not, you will find it difficult to stick to your planned workouts. A great workout buddy will make your workout time more fun and interesting, so it is important that you enjoy being around them.

**Check your schedules:** If your schedules do not match, then it will be very difficult to find time to work out together.

**Look for a positive attitude:** You want to find a buddy who is positive, friendly, solution-focused and wants to keep working for better results. They also need to respect your time, be dependable, and if they're spotting you, you need to be able to trust that they've got your back.

**Find someone that is committed to change:** The key to success when starting a new workout routine is being committed to that new behavior. You want to make sure you find a workout buddy that is as (or even more) committed than you are. This will help keep you stay on track towards accomplishing your goals.

**Be sure to avoid someone that:**

- Constantly makes excuses not to exercise
- Acts overly competitive
- Arrives late or cancels often
- Has a bad attitude



### Find Physical Activity Opportunities Near You

Once you have found your perfect workout buddy, you will need to decide where you will start your physical activity together. For help with this, visit our website [www.GetHealthyCT.org](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org) for a searchable database of physical activity options by town.

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #29: Encourage Meal Planning and Preparation

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

#### Why try meal planning?

Planning weekly meals can help busy working adults stick to their healthy eating goals. In addition, taking a small amount of time each week to prepare meals for the week ahead can help to avoid those quick and often unhealthy last minute food decisions. The goal to make meal planning successful is to find a process that works for you. Get Healthy CT has compiled a list of easy meal planning and meal preparation tips to help you get started today.

#### Things to Consider Before Meal Planning

**How many meals do you need to plan for?** Decide how many meals you’ll need to get through the upcoming week. Don’t forget to include plans for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Keep in mind that making meals in larger batches will allow for leftovers for additional mealtimes.

**What do you have time for?** If you have a busy work week coming up, you may want to choose meals that are simple to make and can be served up quickly, such as ones you can make in a slow cooker.

**What do you want to eat in the next week?** Your food choices may be influenced by the weather (hot or cold) or by what produce is in season. Thinking about these things in advance will help make the recipe selection process easier.

**What is your budget?** Decide how much you want to spend and stick to your budget. Plan meals around which fruits and vegetables are in season, what is currently on sale and what ingredients you already may have in your freezer or pantry.

See page 2 for more meal planning tips and a healthy soup recipe!

## Meal Planning and Meal Preparation Tips

**Try new recipes-** Look online, in recipe books and ask friends for new healthy recipes ideas. Our favorite recipe resources include: **EatingWell.com** and **ChooseMyPlate.gov**. These links and others can be found on GetHealthyCT.org.

**Use a weekly meal planner-** Once you find new recipes you want to try, go ahead and plan your meals for the next week. A useful tool to help create your plan for the upcoming week can be found at: [www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-weekly-meals](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-weekly-meals)



**Go grocery shopping with your plan-** Once you create your own Grocery Game Plan, use those recipe ingredients to build your weekly grocery shopping list. This will help ensure you get all the items you need to create your planned meals, as well as help you stay on budget but not buying unnecessary items.

**Pick one day of the week to prep several meals-** Select one day each week when you may have a little more time to devote to meal preparation. Sundays may work well for some people. Set aside some time on that day to prepare larger meals that you can eat throughout the week.

**Double your recipes-** You can make large batches of certain foods, like soups, and eat them throughout the week or freeze them for a quick meal option at a later date. The soup recipe below can be used to get you started.

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### Minestrone

1. 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
2. 1 32-ounce container vegetable or low-sodium chicken broth
3. 1 15-ounce can cannellini (or other white) beans
4. 1 15-ounce can kidney beans (optional)
5. 1 9- or 16-ounce package frozen green beans
6. 1 5-ounce bag fresh spinach or one 10-ounce box frozen spinach, thawed
7. 1/2cup (2 ounces) grated Parmesan
8. ½ tsp salt and ¼ tsp black pepper



In a large pot, over medium heat, bring the tomatoes and their liquid to a simmer. Cook for 2 minutes. Add the broth, cannellini, and kidney beans (if using) and bring to a simmer. Add the green beans and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Add salt, pepper, and spinach and stir until wilted. Ladle the soup into bowls and sprinkle with the Parmesan. Serve with the bread.

**Source:** [www.realsimple.com](http://www.realsimple.com)

**For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)**

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #30: Choose Healthier Fast Food Options

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

#### Make Healthier Food Choices

There may be days where it is difficult to find the time for a sit down meal. On those days, you may have no choice but to get in the drive-thru lane for something quick. Consuming fast food regularly can have a negative impact on your health, so the key is moderation. You should limit the amount of fast food meals you eat and learn how to order the healthier items on the menu. Get Healthy CT has put together some helpful information to help you learn how to make healthier fast food choices.

#### Tips for Selecting Healthier Fast Food Items

**Control Your Portion Size:** Many fast food meals are large enough to make several meals. Avoid supersized and value-sized items, and go for the smallest size available. You can order from the children’s menu for reasonable portion sizes.

**Select Grilled or Roasted Meats:** Avoid fried and breaded items, such as crispy chicken and breaded fish fillets. Also, try to avoid processed meats such as sausage, bacon, hot dogs, or ham. Better options when available, are turkey or grilled chicken breast.

**Read Descriptions Carefully:** Dishes which are labeled as deep-fried, pan-fried, baked, batter-dipped, breaded, creamy, crispy, scalloped, or au gratin are usually high in calories, have unhealthy fats, and are loaded with sodium.

**Choose Healthier Salads:** Be careful when ordering salads, as many fast food salads are loaded with high calorie and high fat toppings. Go without the bacon, extra cheese and ask for salad dressing on the side. Oil and vinegar is a good option.



*See Page 2 for  
more helpful tips!*

## More Tips for Selecting Healthier Fast Food Items

- ✓ **Be careful when it comes to condiments and dressings.** When choosing items, be aware of calorie-packed salad dressings, spreads, sauces, and sides. Mayonnaise and oil-based sauces in particular add a lot of calories. Try holding the mayo and asking for mustard or a packet you can add yourself to help control how much you put on your sandwich.
- ✓ **Watch what you drink.** Soda is a source of hidden sugar and calories. The average large soda has around 300 calories and 19 spoonfuls of sugar. Shakes are even worse, with up to 800 calories and a staggering 120 grams (30 spoonfuls) of sugar. Switching to diet soda isn't the answer, as the artificial sweetener it contains can trigger sugar cravings that contribute to weight gain. And don't be fooled by lemonade and fruit drinks, which add calories and sugar without much in the way of nutrients. Order water or unsweetened tea or coffee instead.
- ✓ **Be wise about sides.** Watch menu items that come with one or more side dishes. Sides that can quickly send calories soaring include fries, chips, rice, noodles, onion rings, coleslaw, macaroni and cheese, biscuits, and mashed potatoes with gravy. Better bets are side salads with light dressing, baked potato (easy on the toppings), fresh fruit cups, corn on the cob, or apple slices.
- ✓ **Pass on the French fries.** Do you really need those fries? A sandwich or burger should be plenty filling on its own. If you need a side, try fruit, steamed vegetables or a garden salad.
- ✓ **Skip the bacon.** It's always tempting to add bacon to sandwiches and salads for extra flavor, but processed meat has very few nutrients and is high in fat and calories. Instead, try ordering extra pickles, onions, lettuce, tomatoes, or mustard to add flavor in a healthier way.



Source: <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-eating/healthy-fast-food.htm>

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up *Your* Workplace

A Monthly Series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #31: Encourage Gardening

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

#### **Grow Your Own Garden:**

A green thumb and a lot of space are not necessary to benefit from planting your own garden. Even if you have very little space or experience, you can begin a garden with just a few houseplants or gardening containers. Growing fresh vegetables, herbs and fruit is an excellent way to improve your health and foster healthy eating practices. As an employer, you can encourage your employees to start their own garden by sharing these simple tips with them.

### Benefits of Having Your Own Garden

#### **Save Money**

Save money each week by planting and growing fresh vegetables and fruit to use in your meals. Even small garden plots can produce significant amounts of food that can be enjoyed by the entire family.

#### **Improve Health**

It is much easier to include fruits and vegetables into your diet when they are right in your backyard. Eating more fruits and vegetables can help lower your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, and cancer.

#### **Increase Physical Activity**

Working in a backyard garden is a great way to increase your daily physical activity and burn calories.

#### **Share the Wealth**

Gardens can tend to produce a lot in the summer months. A number of vegetables tend to be high yield. You can share the gift of fresh fruits and vegetables with neighbors, friends and coworkers. Pick a day at work and encourage everyone to bring in a healthy treat using what they’ve grown. Start a fruit and vegetable co-op and trade your crops with others to add variety to your diet.



*See Page 2 for more helpful tips to get you started gardening today!*

## Step by Step Guide to Plan a Garden

- 1 Tender Plants:** Plants such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, basil etc. are the most fussy. Unless your climate is extremely warm you'll want to reserve the best sunny spots in your garden for these high-value crops so add them to your plan first. South facing walls can be particularly good for providing the heat that these plants like in order to produce an abundant harvest.
- 2 Roaming Plants:** Next place plants that like to send out vines that roam around the garden – melon, squash etc. These need to be situated at the edge of your vegetable beds so the broad leaves attached to the vines don't cover your other plants. Placing them at the edge lets them spread out across paths or grass.
- 3 Vertically Climbing Plants:** Anything that grows up supports – peas, beans and some squash such as cucumbers will need to be located where they won't shade other vegetables. The one exception is areas with very hot summers where some cool-season crops such as lettuce and spinach can benefit from shade in the heat of the day.
- 4 Irrigation:** Some plants perform badly in dry conditions – celery, onions, strawberries etc. Areas of your garden that are slightly lower will retain more moisture or you may need to plan to provide irrigation to get consistent growth.
- 5 Pollination:** Certain plants need to be near others in order to pollinate well and 'set fruit' (i.e. produce the edible portion). The main one you need to consider is sweet corn, which should be grown in blocks to ensure that it produces full cobs.
- 6 Accessibility:** What plants do you want to be able to regularly harvest? Herbs, salad, tomatoes etc.? These should all be placed as near to your kitchen as possible. Not only will you then be more likely to use them but it will help you to keep on top of the weeds and remove slugs regularly.
- 7 Succession Planting:** If you are short of space or want a crop throughout the season, consider using succession planting and intercropping.
- 8 Don't Overcrowd:** Finally, tempting though it is, be very careful not to overcrowd plants as you add in the remaining ones to your plan. This is the number 1 mistake made by new gardeners and it's easy to see why – plants look so small as seedlings and we all hate pulling up the result of our hard work to thin them out!

Source: <https://www.growveg.com/guides/how-to-plan-a-vegetable-garden-a-step-by-step-guide/>

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up Your Workplace

A monthly series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #32: Provide Healthy Eating Tips

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will provide a “Workplace Wellness Idea” each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

**Healthy Cooking Tips:** Eating health and planning meals ahead can help lead to good habits and good health. Adopting a healthy eating lifestyle, rather than a short-lived diet, can help you achieve and maintain your wellness goals. Try experimenting with one or two changes at a time to help you figure out what works best for your routine and your taste buds! One healthy cooking tip is to plan ahead and to prep meals.

Preparing healthy meals ahead of time can help save time and money. Preparing breakfast the night before is one way to make sure you start the day with a healthy meal. Preparing weekday lunch options the night before, can also help make eating healthier at work much easier. Here is a great make ahead lunch that you can try.

### Greek Chicken Mason Jar Salads

#### Ingredients:

- 5 Quart size mason jar
- Newmans Own Olive Oil and Vinegar Dressing
- 1 quart cherry tomatoes, halved
- 5 mini cucumbers, sliced
- 1 cup pitted greek olives, sliced or chopped
- ¾ cups crumbled feta cheese
- 2 cups chopped or shredded chicken
- 5 cups chopped romaine lettuce

#### Directions:

1. Divide and layer all ingredients into mason jars. Start with salad dressing, then tomatoes, cucumbers, olives, cheese, chicken, and end with lettuce.
2. Put the mason jar top on and store in refrigerator for the week.
3. When ready to eat pour into a bowl and serve!





## Use healthier ingredient substitutions in your recipes:

If your recipe calls for this ingredient:	Try substituting this ingredient:
Sour Cream	Fat-free or Low-fat-cheese (less than two grams of fat per ounce)
Whole Egg	Two egg whites, ¼ cup cholesterol free egg substitute
Whole milk or heavy cream	Skim, 1% , or canned skim milk, low-fat yogurt instead of whipped cream
Seasoning salt	Herb-only seasonings such as garlic powder, onion flakes, or finely chopped herbs
Butter	Use oil, use diet, whipped, or tub margarine instead
Chocolate	Reduce the amount of sugar by one half; for sweetness try adding vanilla, nutmeg or cinnamon

**Cook in large batches:** Cooking larger dishes on the weekend can save time during the week and can help you avoid unhealthy choices when we're hungry and in a rush.

**Add more fruit and vegetables:** Add seasonal fruits and vegetables to your favorite recipes, sandwiches, or cereal to add extra flavor and nutrients. To preserve the color and nutrients in vegetables, cook them quickly by steaming, blanching or stir-frying. For a quick side dish, try steaming veggies in a bowl with a small amount of water in the microwave. For a quick healthy snack during the day, keep fruit on hand.

**Vary your proteins:** Experiment with main dishes made with beans or peas, nuts, soy and seafood. Add hummus, a hard-boiled egg, or unsalted nuts or seeds to salads for an extra boost of protein. Using lean meats and low-fat dairy products can upgrade your typical protein choices.

**Try these online resources for simple and delicious recipes:**

- [www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating)
- <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-recipes>

For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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## Shape Up *Your* Workplace

A Monthly Series brought to you by Get Healthy CT

### Workplace Wellness Idea #33: Create a Walking Route

Get Healthy CT aims to provide businesses with ideas that will facilitate healthy behaviors of their employees to improve employee satisfaction, productivity and showcase the employer as a role model for health. To support this, we will be introducing a new "Workplace Wellness Idea" each month that employers can implement at low or no cost.

#### Why create a walking route at work?

An easy way for businesses to start creating a healthier workplace is by creating easy to access walking routes for employees to use during breaks or for before/after work. Depending on your workplace environment, these routes can be within a building or parking garage, on the grounds or in the surrounding neighborhood.

#### Where do I begin?

It is easy to do. All you need is someone willing to wear a pedometer around the building and to find a secure one mile long route which can be drawn onto an existing map of the facility. Another option is to download and use a variety of smartphone apps that can help map out a route around the surrounding neighborhood.

Smartphone apps that can be used to help map a route include:

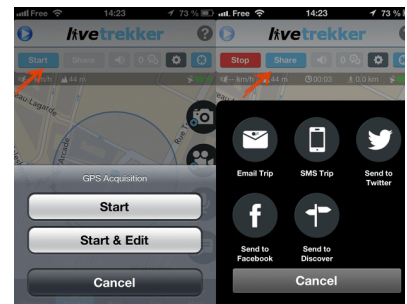
#### Map My Walk/Map My Run



#### Pacer

#### Walkmeter GPS Pedometer

#### LiveTrekker



#### Footpath-Route Planner

## 12 Ways to Promote Physical Activity at Work

1. Conduct a workplace walkability assessment to ensure a safe and pleasant environment for walking.
2. Offer secure bicycle storage and showers for employees who actively commute.
3. Implement flexible scheduling-making it easier for employees to carve out time for exercise while juggling work and home responsibilities.
4. Make stairwells more appealing with paint, artwork, and motivational signage.
5. Negotiate a corporate discount with local gyms for a low cost membership or other benefits.
6. Encourage workers to take brief 2-3 minute fitness breaks throughout the day for walking, stretching, or stair climbing.
7. Offer free or reduced cost pedometers to employees! Run a steps-per-week team competition throughout the office.
8. Sponsor or promote employee participation in community events like 5K runs, basketball games and charity walks.
9. Organize lunchtime walking, running, bicycling, or yoga groups.
10. Encourage walking for one-on-one meetings.
11. Make standing or pacing vs. sitting at long meetings an acceptable option.
12. Encourage workers to be active at their workstations as much as possible—a few desk pushups, walking/pacing while on the phone, or stretching!

Source: <https://www.acefitness.org/acefit/fitness-fact-article/3120/fostering-a-workplace-culture-of/>



For more information, please visit [GetHealthyCT.org](http://GetHealthyCT.org)

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