

THE FACTS

- Research shows that 8 out of 10 women and 7 out of 10 men in Northern Ireland do not engage in sufficient physical activity. Many of these people are employed.
- Inactivity is one of the main risk factors for diseases such as coronary heart disease; this may place a significant burden on the health of your employees.
- Physical activity can play a major role in promoting the physical and mental health of employees.
- Physical activity is one of the best methods to reduce stress and can also lead to increased productivity.
- Research has shown that employees who are fit and active have lower levels of absenteeism.
- Physical activity can be used as an effective team building tool.

WHAT A WORKPLACE CAN DO

There are many ways employers can promote physical activity in the workplace such as:

- Encouraging employees to take a walk at lunchtime possibly by organising a group-walking program, or by promoting the use of the stairs rather than the lift.
- Provide information about physical activity that is taking place in the local area e.g. posters and leaflets.
- Support and participate in events such as National Bike Week, Bike to Work Week and Get a Life, Get Active Campaign.
- Form a company sports team e.g. soccer, gaelic football, netball, rugby etc. Not only will this encourage employees to take part in physical activity but it will also help to increase staff morale and cohesion.
- Provide shower facilities or changing facilities for employees who wish to take part in physical activity during the working day.
- Some larger businesses provide exercise facilities, however this can be costly, an alternative would be to subsidise the cost of employees joining a gym.

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SUGGESTED ACTION

- Set up a group which represents employees and management to discuss physical activity in your workplace.
- Consult with other agencies such as the Health Promotion Department and your local Council (Leisure Department).
- Ask employees about what would encourage them to become more physically active.
- Put the ideas into practice. What action is taken will depend on the resources available within your workplace. Resources will include time, people, skills, money and equipment. Larger businesses may have more resources available, but remember often the simple ideas work best.
- Evaluate your scheme regularly using feedback from your employees.

HELP IS AT HAND

- Health Promotion Department
12C Gransha Park Clooney Road, Derry/Londonderry
028 7186 5127
- Derry City Council, Leisure Department,
98 Strand Road
028 7136 5151
- The Sports Council for Northern Ireland
028 9038 1222

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