



## Fitness Area

### the people

Maine Machine Products Co. (MMP Co.) is located in the Oxford Hills town of South Paris and employs roughly 115 associates. The company works to manufacture precision machine components for various industries including telecommunications, defense, and computer equipment. Approximately half of the employees include machine operators and support staff, while office staff and management make up the remaining half. MMP Co. formed a wellness committee in 2001, specifically to create a healthier work environment for employees. The Health and Wellness Committee is made up of employees from a variety of positions within the company, including management, machine operators, and office staff.

### the need

People who are active on a regular basis are more productive and have fewer lost days due to illness. Factors contributing to people not working out include convenience and cost. MMP Co. wanted to provide an area in the workplace for fitness equipment and other activities in order to support employees in getting regular physical activity.

### the idea

MMP Co. created an area within the facility, with adequate space for equipment and floor mats, to allow associates to exercise during their breaks, or non-work time, at no cost.

### the idea at work

The Health and Wellness Committee discussed plans for the fitness area with management and received approval for a space to locate the equipment. This area is in a newer, attached building with ample space for equipment and mats, yet is convenient to all employees. Liability issues were discussed and investigated regarding the use of fitness equipment as well as employee participation in physical activities on the premises. After some discussion with the company's insurance carrier, it was decided that warning signs (i.e., "use at your own risk") would be placed in the fitness area, as well as a small sign

## 2.3 Physical Activity Success Stories

### Fitness Area (continued)

indicating the importance of a physician visit before engaging in new forms of physical activity.

The Health and Wellness Committee posted a notice indicating that any employees with serviceable fitness equipment, who were willing to donate it for use by associates, were to contact a member of the Committee. Several employees were interested in donating their equipment. One employee even knew a family that needed to get rid of a Universal Gym. “One day after work, we drove an hour away, packed up the equipment, and brought it back as the centerpiece of our activity area,” said Scott Brown. Other types of equipment include an elliptical trainer, treadmill, and exercycle.

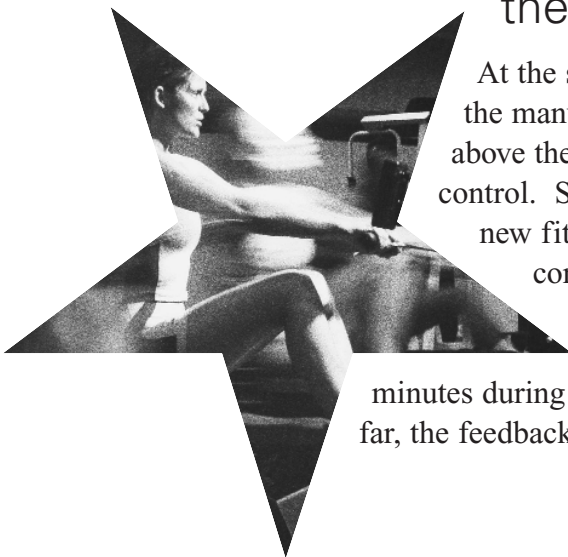
#### the costs

The cost of employees bringing in equipment was minimal. As a result, the Health and Wellness Committee and management agreed that, when reasonably priced equipment became available, it would be considered.

There are six pieces of equipment in the activity area, including a Universal Gym set, treadmill, aerobic-glide, wind-trainer, NordicTrack, and elliptical trainer. The amount invested in the equipment is \$500, which was used to purchase the treadmill. In addition to these items, the Committee is interested in purchasing mats, posters, therapy balls, and other pieces of equipment or materials as requested.

#### the results

At the start, the equipment was located in the middle of the manufacturing floor, but has since been relocated to above the tool crib to allow for more privacy and better user control. So far, six to twelve people are using the new fitness area daily. Many employees appreciate the convenience of the facility. One employee remarked that the fitness area “is great to have right in the building because you can use it for 10–15 minutes during your lunch break and still have time to eat.” Thus far, the feedback has been very positive.





## Employee participation in physical activity increased 112%

Maine Machine's efforts have resulted in some measurable changes in the physical activity levels of employees. The company conducted a baseline survey of employee health behaviors and administered the same survey after one year of new initiatives, such as the fitness area. Approximately 50% of employees completed the survey at each time point.

- Employee participation in regular physical activity, four or more days per week increased from 25.0% (17 employees) at baseline to 52.9% (27 employees) 12 months later.
- The number of employees who agree or strongly agree that MMP Co. provides opportunities to be physically active increased from 12.7% to 53.0% over the course of one year.

contact(s)

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