

## 2.3 Physical Activity Success Stories



### Flextime Policy

#### the people

The City of Auburn is located in Central Maine and employs 260 people in a variety of positions, including office staff, manual laborers, and public safety officers. The City's Wellness Committee has been active since 1995. The Wellness Committee works with the Maine Municipal Association's Employee Health Trust to offer educational programs and incentives to support employee health.

#### the need

The City of Auburn recognizes the benefits of regular exercise to the employee and to the organization as a whole and wished to support employees in pursuit of more active lifestyles.

#### the idea

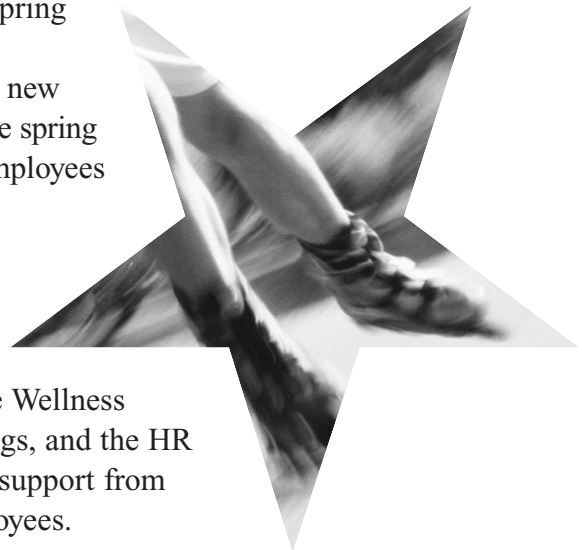
The Wellness Committee developed a formal policy allowing employees to use flextime to get in their daily physical activity.

#### the idea at work

This new policy idea came from a Wellness Committee discussion regarding how the City Manager could better support and encourage healthier lifestyles. Over the winter and spring of 2002, the HR Director gained support from the City Manager on this idea and drafted a policy. A copy of the new policy was approved and distributed to all managers in the spring of 2002 to communicate the policy and encourage their employees to utilize it.

#### the cost

There were no monetary costs associated with this policy change. The time costs were minimal as well. The Wellness Committee discussed the idea at several different meetings, and the HR Director spent several hours drafting the policy, gaining support from managers, and communicating the new changes to employees.





## the results

Physical  
activity  
participation  
increased  
55%

Employees are able to take advantage of the flextime policy with approval from their department head. Not all departments can allow employees to participate, as it could be disruptive to teamwork and productivity. However, many employees have utilized the policy with great results. Reine Mynahan, who uses her lunch break three days a week to exercise, says the policy allows her to do her normal routine during the day. She finds that a physical activity break during the day “revitalizes me, and makes me feel alive and more energetic. It makes me feel I can conquer more.”

Through an employee survey, the City has also observed an increase in physical activity participation among employees. The number of employees who participate in physical activities for five days or more each week increased from 17.9% of employees to 27.8% over the course of one year. This represented a 55% increase in physical activity participation among City employees. In addition, 29 employees indicated that they started a regular exercise program as a result of the City’s wellness initiatives, as compared to just two prior to the wellness team activities, such as the flextime policy. Survey results such as these offer proof that low- or no-cost changes that support healthy lifestyles really can make a difference in employee behaviors.

## contact(s)

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## 2.3 Physical Activity Success Stories

### Flextime Policy (continued)

Below is the City of Auburn's Flextime Policy.

#### City of Auburn

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#### Flex Time for Exercise Policy

The City of Auburn recognizes the benefits of regular exercise to the employee and to the organization as a whole. A healthy workforce has more productivity, less absenteeism, and lower health insurance utilization rates. The City, as a way of encouraging overall health and physical fitness, will permit employees flexibility during the regular workday to pursue an exercise program.

Employees will be permitted to take flextime for the purposes of participating in a fitness program either through an individual regimen or through an established fitness program such as a fitness center. Specifically, employees who exercise during their lunch period may extend their lunch period if there is not sufficient time to complete their exercise regimen. Similarly, employees who exercise before work may report to work later than their normal start time if such a delay is a result of participating in an exercise program. Time for the exercise program will include travel to and from the exercise site, time for changing, actual exercise time, and showering.

The following are conditions on flextime for exercise:

- The staffing and work demands are very different among departments. Flextime for exercise may not be appropriate for all departments and employees. Therefore the employee and the supervisor and the department director must mutually agree to flex time before it is implemented. Factors such as union contract provisions, office coverage, minimum staffing levels, vacations, sick leave and other unplanned absences, special projects and peak workloads, and requirements for supervision will be considered before implementing individualized flextime.
- The employee must make up any time lost either at the end of the regular workday, during the lunch period or before normal start of the workday.
- Flextime for exercising will not disrupt the normal workflow of the department or impede customer service.
- Flextime away from regular job will not exceed 30 minutes per day.
- Flextime should occur on a regular schedule to the extent possible (example: lunch time every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, etc.)

Failure of the employee to adhere to these conditions, barring any extenuating circumstances which are approved by the department director or supervisor, will cause the employee to lose the opportunity to participate in flextime.

Approved by the City Manager on June 12, 2002.