



Physical Activity Break

the people

Medical Care Development (MCD) is a public health organization dedicated to improving the health of people in Maine and around the world. MCD employs approximately 50 people in its Augusta office. MCD's projects include promotion of cardiovascular health and breast and cervical health, AIDS/HIV prevention, suicide prevention, mental health programs, and disease management. Many of these projects are grant-funded in collaboration with the Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health, and the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services.

the idea

MCD has a physical activity break policy to support employees in getting regular physical activity. Employees are encouraged to engage in 30 minutes of physical activity during the workday, as their job duties allow.

the need

The company wanted to support healthy lifestyles by removing the lack of time barrier, allowing employees to be physically active while at work. Furthermore, given the link between physical activity and improved mental and physical health, allowing employees time to exercise benefits the company through increased morale, increased productivity, and improved company image. MCD president John LaCasse sees nothing but positives from this policy. "Most people can't work eight hours straight," says LaCasse, adding, "The same amount of work, if not more, will be done even with the 30-minute break."

the idea at work

MCD's Director of Human Resources, Eunice Reneyske, sums up MCD's physical activity break policy in the following way: "MCD has had a physical activity policy since 2000. We understand that employees have lives outside of work time and that they need some flexibility to attend to their personal needs. This policy allows employees the opportunity to engage in physical activity during the workday."

2.3 Physical Activity Success Stories

Physical Activity Break (continued)

MCD's physical activity break is promoted in a variety of ways. First, on most days of the week, weather permitting, a member of the company's Wellness Committee sends out a company-wide e-mail encouraging employees to meet in the lobby and go for a walk. In addition, each year since 2001 the company has participated in Move and Improve, a 12-week physical activity incentive program of the Community Wellness Service of Eastern Maine Medical Center. Since the goal of this program is to get 30 minutes of activity, four days per week, the physical activity break is a perfect way to help participants reach their goals.

the cost

No measurable costs were incurred implementing the policy, making it a prime example of a no- or low-cost idea employers can do to support their employees' health and well-being.

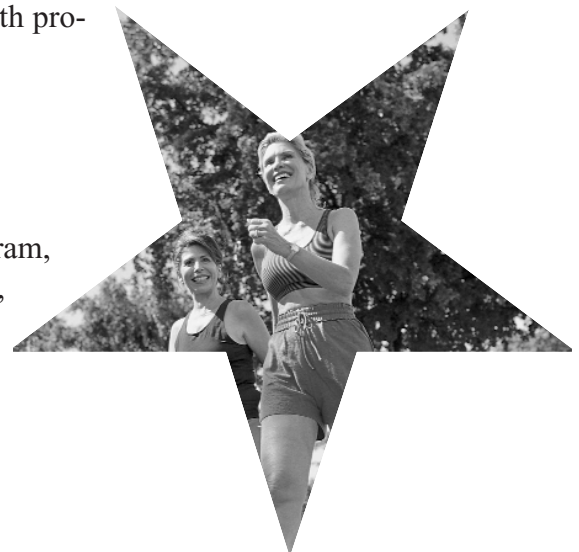
the result

MCD understands that exercising regularly and eating healthy will lead to healthier, happier, and more productive employees. "These outcomes are part of MCD's goal to maintain a healthy workplace," says Reneyske.

From his vantage point, LaCasse notes, "It's great to see employees heading out for walks, knowing that we are supporting their health and well-being. Employee health, happiness, and a healthy work environment are interdependent with productivity, so I am confident that our break policy contributes to the success of MCD."

contact(s)

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Below is MCD's Physical Activity Break Policy.



Medical Care Development

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Physical Activity Break Policy:

Medical Care Development is dedicated to improving the health of people in Maine and around the world. MCD supports healthy lifestyles, and we believe that encouraging employees to be physically active at work can result in better physical and mental health. Active employees will be happier and more productive, and our employees, our organization, and the people we serve will benefit from this policy.

Given the link between physical activity and improved mental and physical health, allowing employees time to exercise will benefit the company through increased morale, increased productivity, and improved company image. Employees who are physically active generally experience better morale.

Employees are encouraged to engage in 20 to 30 minutes of physical activity during the workday, as their job duties allow and providing the walk time doesn't cause hourly employees to incur overtime. Exercise can also include walking and climbing stairs in the course of work.

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