

Create and participate in health and wellness activities

May is Global Employee Health and Fitness Month (GEHFM). Created by the National Association for Health and Fitness (NAHF) and ACTIVE Life, the goal of GEHFM is to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle to employers and employees through worksite activities and environments.

During the month of May, employers and employees are encouraged to create “Healthy Moments” and form “Healthy Groups.”

Healthy Moments are meant to inspire short-term changes in eating, physical activity or personal and environmental health. These changes add up over time, resulting in overall improved health. Some suggestions include:

- Walk to work. If that’s not realistic, take a walk during your break. Even a 10- or 15-minute brisk walk can revitalize your energy and even relieve stress.
- Try a new, healthy recipe.
- Cook dinner at home instead of eating out. Portion sizes of restaurant meals are often oversized, and full of excess calories, fat and sodium.
- Learn to substitute healthy ingredients when cooking and baking.
- Try a new exercise class.
- Do stretching exercises while watching TV.
- Schedule a physical exam with your health care provider. Regular exams are important to identify any risk factors or health problems before they become serious. Treatments can be more effective when health conditions are diagnosed in the early stages.

Healthy Groups create maintainable activities intended to last beyond Employee Health and Fitness Month, as it takes an average of 66 days to develop new habits. Here are a few ideas:

- Create exercise groups to meet at break times to walk, run or bike.
- Establish healthy meal clubs that share recipes, cook for one another once a week, and distribute healthy snacks to each other throughout the day.
- Start intramural athletic teams or join community athletic leagues.

Why not form a Wellness Team at your workplace? Brainstorm ideas. Be creative and make it fun. Any activity that encourages healthy eating, movement and stress reduction is worthwhile.

If you like more information about GEHFM, please visit <http://www.healthandfitnessmonth.com>.

