



## Encouraging employees to be physically active at local events

Need ideas to for getting your employees involved in healthy activities during and after work? We're here to help. After all, encouraging your employees to participate in local events that support healthy living can be a great way to demonstrate a commitment to healthy workplaces, active living and your community.

### Choosing events to support

If your company isn't quite sure where to begin, start small. Pick an existing event, and encourage employees to register. There are a number of 10-km runs frequently organized by charitable and non-profit organizations and most of these feature secondary events like three- or five-km runs and short-distance walking events. Events like these give your employees choices about how they'd like to participate and save you the trouble of having to create events on your own.

Refer to local event listings and consult with local groups and event organizers for ideas. A particularly helpful resource is Health Canada's [Calendar of Health-Related Days](#), which notes days, weeks and months recognized by health organizations and the health professional community. February is Heart Month, for example, and March is Nutrition Month—both can be great opportunities to introduce your employees to topics around healthy living and physical activity through contests, information sessions and fun campaigns.

### Launching your own events

Although launching your own events can be time-consuming, your employees may be willing to oversee some of the necessary responsibilities. Bring up the topic at staff meetings and see where it leads. Just be sure not to overload your team—you don't want to negate any of the goodwill that these initiatives help create.

If you've already established an internal committee, such as a health and safety or social committee, use it to discuss relevant topics regularly. Once you've established a routine, you can discuss more and more ideas to expand physical activity options for your employees.

### Everyone benefits

Employee participation at local events benefits everyone:

- Employees benefit on a personal level from the health benefits of physical activity.
- Group activities often boost employee morale—a boost that's beneficial for your organization, as well.
- Local events and organizations benefit from having the increased support.
- Supporting a specific event or organization can help your own organization generate goodwill in the community.
- Participating in local events can build camaraderie among employees and strengthen relationships between staff and management.
- Participation promotes individual health, helps create healthy social environments at work and positively impacts employee well-being.

### Bigger steps, more events

When you, your company or your committee is ready for a bigger challenge, consider launching or participating in events that run over longer periods of time. You can try designing challenges that allow employees to track their steps, cycling distances or stairs climbed, for example.

In larger cities—Edmonton and Calgary, for instance—consider participating in Corporate Challenge. It's a month-long event designed for companies of all sizes, featuring activities like volleyball, bocce and tug-of-war. All you have to do is organize your teams and register for those events that you and your employees want to participate in.

### Learn more

[Terry Fox Run](#)

Various events in support of cancer prevention and research.

[Edmonton Corporate Challenge](#)

[Calgary Corporate Challenge](#)

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