



Guidelines for Healthy and Energized Meetings

2013



Guidelines for Healthy, Energized Meetings

Introduction

If you are planning an event, you will want to make sure participants are energized and productive. By offering access to healthy foods and physical activity opportunities you will:

- help attendees get the most out of the event
- support their overall health
- help reduce their risk for chronic disease and an unhealthy weight, and
- model healthy behaviors

If you are ready to make the healthy choice the easy choice at your meetings and events, this guide developed by the Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control, offers general considerations, food and beverage suggestions, ideas for incorporation of physical activity, and a healthy/energized meeting checklist that can be used in planning.

General meeting planning considerations

Location

For overnight meetings:

- Choose a place where participants can walk or wheelchair to dinner or evening entertainment.
- Provide maps of the area showing where participants can easily and safely take a walk or wheelchair.
- Choose a smoke-free hotel that has fitness facilities and include information about these facilities in the materials sent to participants.
- Plan at least one pre- or post-meeting physical activity, being mindful to accommodate those with physical limitations.
- Consider a casual dress code for the meeting to enable people to participate in physical activity.

For shorter meetings:

- Choose a place – for both the meeting and for lunch break - where participants can walk or wheelchair to.
- Assure signage notes location of the stairs.
- Consider walking/rolling meetings when feasible. If planning a walking/rolling meeting, advise participants ahead of time and be open to changing the format if participants raise accessibility issues.

Note: When planning walking activities, choose routes with sidewalks of ample width and many curb cuts so that those with mobility devices can participate.

Scheduling

- Limit meetings to one hour when possible.
- Refrain from scheduling meetings over the lunch hour.
- Consider incorporating physical activity into introductions and ice-breaker sessions.
- Schedule brief activity breaks every two hours and include on agenda to cue participants to action.
- End meetings early and encourage participants to use the spare time for a walk or breathing exercise.

Food and Beverage Service

- Provide space on the registration form to include food allergies or dietary restrictions.
- Adhere to food safety practices when preparing, storing and serving food.
- Select foods and beverages that are culturally appropriate.
- Select locally grown foods, if available.
- Display Nutrition Facts Labels, whenever possible.
- Include a vegetarian option; consider a vegan option for large groups.
- Provide water, fresh fruits and vegetables, whenever possible.

- **Calories:** keep total calories between 500 and 650 for meals and 100-200 for snacks.
- **Fat:** limit foods high in saturated fat and trans fat by selecting low-fat dairy products, lean meats, and healthy oils, such as olive oil and canola. Keep total fat intake to less than 35percent of the meal's total calories.
- **Fiber:** include whole grain breads, cereals, rice and pasta, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.
- **Sodium:** ask for low-sodium options and use salt in moderation.
- **Drinks:** avoid sugar-added sodas and juices; offer water, unsweetened tea, and coffee; serve water in pitchers, when possible, to reduce the use of plastic bottles; provide nonfat or lowfat milk instead of creams or flavored creamers; and serve drinks in 6-8 ounce sizes.

Tips for encouraging healthy choices

- Less is more – studies show people eat more when more meal choices are offered, even if they are not hungry. Offer fewer choices to help participants avoid overeating.
- Portion control – people tend to fill their plates no matter what size; use smaller plates to encourage healthy serving sizes.
- On the side, please – ask for all condiments, sauces and dressings to be delivered on the side. Keep the food against a side wall rather than in the middle of the table to discourage people from nibbling throughout the meeting.
- Balance the plate – No matter what type of meal you are serving, include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. The healthy plate is ½ non-starchy vegetables, ¼ healthy proteins and ¼ whole grains (www.myplate.gov).

Food and Beverage Suggestions

These lists are suggestions and can be mixed and matched to create a delicious meal full of nutrients and variety. Available water and an abundance of fruits and vegetables help keep attendees focused, full of energy and more productive.

Snacks and Light Refreshments - Consider whether it is necessary to provide food at meetings, especially mid-morning or mid-afternoon.

- Bite-sized fruits and vegetables in-season: grapes, cherries, berries, baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, broccoli florets
- Whole, fresh fruits: apples, oranges, pears, bananas
- Cut-up fresh fruits: watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew melon
- Pre-packaged fruit cups and dried fruits (useful when refrigeration is not available)
- Cut-up fresh vegetables: celery, squash, bell peppers.
- Nonfat or low-fat dips
- Baked pita chips with hummus
- Low-fat pretzels
- Air-popped popcorn seasoned with herbs
- Low-fat frozen yogurt
- Baked tortilla chips (7 grams of fat or less/ounce) and salsa
- Roasted nuts (unsalted or lightly salted)
- Low-fat granola bars (5 grams of fat or less/bar)
- An assortment of low-fat cheeses and whole grain crackers
- Water – plain, sparkling or flavored with no added sugar
- Coffee, tea (offer decaf) – served with nonfat or low-fat milk
- Milk – nonfat or low-fat



Breakfast

- Whole fresh fruit; fresh fruit cut-up with low-fat yogurt dip
- Whole grain toast or English muffins
- Oatmeal
- High-fiber cereals, such as bran flakes and low-fat granola
- Whole grain pancakes or waffles (portion size = size of a CD)
- Fruit toppings for cereals and pancakes - raisins, berries, bananas, peaches, dried fruit
- Hard boiled eggs
- Vegetable omelets or eggs made with egg substitute or without yolk
- Thinly sliced lean ham or Canadian bacon
- Bagels, cut in half or quarters, with fruit spreads, hummus, low-fat cream cheese, jam



Lunch and Dinner

- A variety of seasonal or local fresh fruit
- Salads containing a variety of vegetables and fruits, low-fat dressing on the side
- Sandwiches - presented in halves so people can take smaller portions - with low-fat cheeses, lean meats (chicken, turkey, fish) or all vegetables; low-fat spreads; and 100 percent whole grain breads
- Vegetable-based, low sodium soups or soups using evaporated milk instead of cream
- Pasta with low fat cheeses, extra vegetables or vegetable-based sauces
- Foods that are baked, broiled, poached, grilled, roasted or steamed
- 4 ounce maximum portions of meat
- Provide at least two vegetables with every meal – fresh, steamed, roasted or grilled without butter or creamed sauces
- Serve entrees and side dishes with tasty beans, peas, and lentils



Physical Activity at Meetings

It is important to include physical activity breaks during meetings, especially during meetings lasting longer than an hour. Including physical activity helps staff stay focused and involved, and it also demonstrates how easy it is to be active on a regular basis. In addition, physical activity breaks allow for meeting participants to get part of their recommended daily 30-60 minutes of moderate physical activity.

Physical activity can occur anywhere – inside the meeting room, outside the meeting room, outside the building or even around the table in a chair.

You don't have to be a certified exercise instructor or even physically fit to lead a physical activity break. No special equipment is needed, although music or props could be used if desired. The key is to move, be safe and have fun.

A physical activity meeting break is:

- Completely voluntary – meeting attendees should not be pressured to join in
- Movement at each person's own rate, in a way that is comfortable to them with no pain
- Movement that keeps persons moving for 5-10 minutes and gets the heart pumping
- Activity that makes you smile at yourself and with your coworkers/colleagues
- An energizer for the rest of the meeting

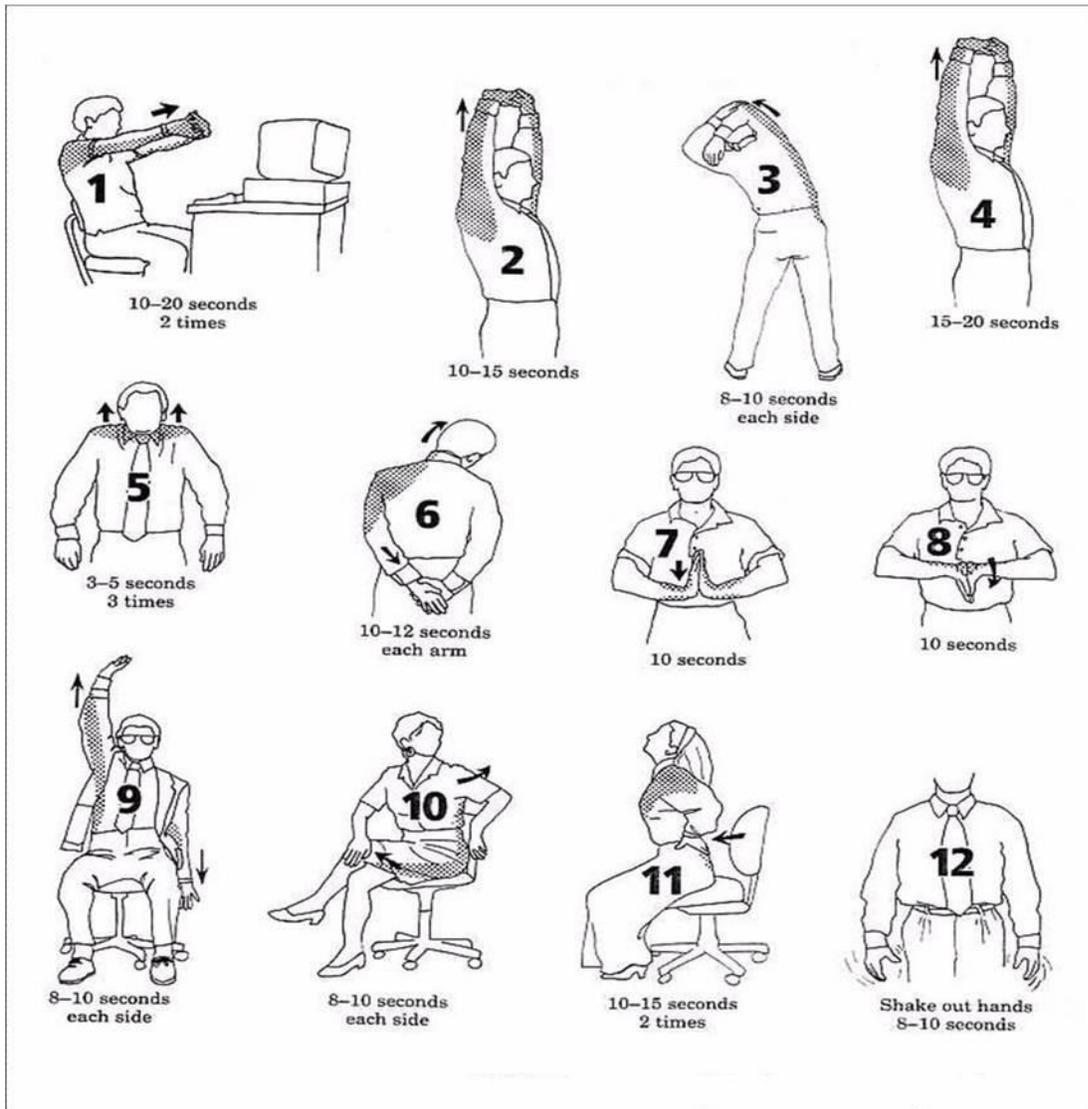
A physical activity meeting break does not need to:

- Make participants sweat
- Cause pain or discomfort
- Be led by a professional or an organization

General tips for conducting physical activity breaks:

- Ensure each participant has sufficient space and clearance in order to avoid injury.
- Remind attendees participation is voluntary.
- Advise participants to do only what is comfortable for them and to stop immediately if they feel pain or discomfort.
- Consider adjusting the planned physical activity break to accommodate participants with physical limitations – for example you can ask participants to “stand up or roll back.”
- Start by stretching the body slowly and gradually work in the arms, hands, legs, feet, neck and torso. This can be done while sitting or standing.
- Avoid bouncy and jerky movements.
- Walking and marching movements can be done in place; participants can lift knees higher or faster and pump their arms, if they want a more vigorous workout, but only if it is comfortable.
- Music or stories encouraging movement could be used by the leader. Be creative!

Simple, in-place stretches:



Potential Motions

balance	chew	go	pinch	rotate	skip	tap
bend	clap	hit	pirouette	ride	slide	throw
blow	climb	hop	poke	run	slip	turn
bounce	clog	jump	pop	sashay	slither	walk
brush	cycle	kick	press	serve	spin	wave
build	dance	levitate	pull	shuffle	swagger	wiggle
bump	float	lift	push	skate	swim	wipe
catch	fix	paint	roll	ski	swing	write

Movement Ideas

Can you:

- ... pounce like a tiger
- ... balance on a high wire
- ... climb a rope
- ... swagger like a cowboy
- ... swim the butterfly
- ... clog like you are on stage
- ... paint the fence
- ... wax the car
- ... shuffle like you just got out of bed
- ... float in the waves at the beach
- ... balance a ball like a seal
- ... wiggle like an inch worm
- ... push the donkey up the hill

Can you stretch like you're a giraffe?

Can you pretend you're an elephant?

- ... a cat?
- ... a snake?
- ... a bull frog?

Can you be

- ... a fireman?
- ... a lumberjack?

Can you pretend to be

- ... a ball?
- ... a flower?

Can you give four people high five?

Can you giggle like it is your birthday?

Can you sit down like it is time for school?

Can *you* think of other ideas?

These ideas were taken from the *Eating Smart and Moving More Planning Guide for Faith Communities*.

Mix and match motions with movement ideas or come up with your own. There is no right or wrong way to conduct meeting physical activity breaks.

Move, be safe and have fun!

Checklist for Healthy, Energized Meetings

Use this checklist to ensure your meeting promotes good health for all participants.

- ✓ Does the menu include a variety of food choices?
- ✓ Does your meeting include some form of physical activity?
- ✓ Did you include both fruits and vegetables with each meal and snack?
- ✓ Are whole grain breads, cereals, rice and pasta incorporated into meals?
- ✓ Are there options for participants with special dietary needs, such as vegetarian, lactose-intolerant or gluten-free diets?
- ✓ Did you request low calorie, low sodium, and low or reduced fat items where possible?
- ✓ Did you specify that dressings, sauces and condiments be served on the side?
- ✓ Did you provide healthy portion sizes? (e.g., small or cut-up bagels, < 5 oz. meat)
- ✓ Did you serve locally grown food when possible?
- ✓ Did you take cultural needs into account?
- ✓ Did you adhere to food safety practices when preparing, storing and serving food?
- ✓ Did you provide water in bottles or pitchers at breaks and meals?
- ✓ Did you offer a selection of low-calorie, unsweetened beverages, if serving drinks other than water?

Visualize a Serving Size

A SERVING OF THIS....	LOOKS LIKE THIS....
 SALAD	 BASEBALL
 GRAPES	 LIGHTBULB
 2 TBSP PEANUT BUTTER	 GOLF BALL
 BAKED POTATO	 COMPUTER MOUSE
 CHICKEN	 DECK OF CARDS
 FISH	 CHECKBOOK