

Energize Meetings or Conferences:

A guide for "*in motion*" breaks

Many employees spend time attending meetings that require sitting for long periods of time. An easy way to energize your meetings and conferences is to incorporate scheduled physical activity breaks. They are a great way to keep participants focused.

You can do these activity breaks with little or no equipment in a meeting or conference area that has limited room to move. Managers, facilitators or volunteers can lead the group through one of these three to five minute activity breaks.

Here are a few things to consider when planning an energizing physical activity break into your agenda.

How do I get the space ready?

- Find out ahead of time the size and set up of the area you will be using.
- If the room is large, you may need a microphone (headset or lapel microphone) and a large projection screen may be required.

Who should lead the Energizer?

- Anyone can lead these activity breaks. You don't need specialized training. Select a volunteer who is comfortable being up in front of a group, can clearly communicate with the audience, and has energy and enthusiasm.
- Always have a back-up leader, just in case. You could also have two or three leaders for larger groups.
- You can hire an accredited fitness leader to lead the activity breaks. Contact the Manitoba Fitness Council at 204.474.8644 in Winnipeg; or toll free at

How do I get the attendees to participate?

- Know your audience. The comfort level of the audience will affect the success of the activity breaks. If participants aren't familiar with each other, they may be less likely to take risks or fully participate. Choose an activity where they can participate independently. If the group has an existing relationship, do an activity that requires interaction or partners.
- Choose energizers that are appropriate for the participants' abilities and fitness levels. Demonstrate adaptations to accommodate different abilities and fitness levels. Show how you can do the activities seated or at different intensities.
- When planning your activity breaks, remember that your participants might be wearing business suits, skirts, or heels – making some activities difficult to do. Communicate with the participants ahead of time and recommend that they wear comfortable clothing and shoes.

When should I schedule an Energizer?

- Choose to do your activity break when the participants have been sitting for a long period of time. Break up a long session (two hours or more) or have an activity break before your nutrition break.
- Energizers can also be a great way to excite and energize your participants first thing in the morning or to bring people back together after a break.
- Incorporate activities appropriate to the time of the year. (E.g., In the winter, try snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. Lead the group through a mini-vacation that gets them thinking of warmer times like walking on a tropical beach.)