

MAKE YOUR MEETINGS MOVE

A GUIDE TO INCLUDE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN COMMUNITY AND WORKPLACE MEETINGS



Barwon
Health

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This resource was produced by the Healthy Communities Unit, April 2021

For more information, please email healthycommunities@barwonhealth.org.au

About this resource

Who is this resource for?

The Barwon Health Make your Meetings Move resource is a useful tool for groups and workplaces who would like to support the health of their members by incorporating opportunities for movement into their meetings.

Using the resource

It is recommended that the group or workplace leaders, for example the manager, president, or secretary, share the resource with the group to prompt discussion about how to promote physical activity in your meetings.

The resource can be used as a whole or in part to support the context or group it is being used for. One section of the resource assists your group to develop a Physical Activity Policy. It is recommended the development of such a policy be placed on the agenda of your group, so that the healthy practices suggested become integrated into meetings.

The resource should be accessible to group members and be revisited on an annual basis in line with review of the policy.

Why should physical activity be included in meetings?

Evidence shows that physical activity promotes physical and mental health as well as improved cognitive function (Health Direct). However, many of us are time-poor and finding time to exercise can be hard. Including physical activity into activities you are already doing is a simple but effective way to get more exercise. Doing this as a group increases the likelihood of participation and promotes healthy behaviours in other settings (Psychology Today).

How to make your meetings move

Meetings are usually conducted sitting. However, there are many opportunities to include physical activity into meetings easily and without disrupting your agenda.

We encourage you to keep your meetings 'moving' for better health. This resource provides ideas for you to consider.



Consider where you meet



Choose a location with walking routes, exercise facilities or parks nearby so participants can use these before or after the meeting. Provide maps for participants.



Choose a venue that is easy to get to on foot and has parking for bicycles.



Indicate options for parking that are further away and encourage walking to and from the venue.



If the room is above ground, encourage participants to use stairs instead of lifts, if able.

Include incidental activity throughout your meeting



Throughout every meeting there are many small moments when you can add an opportunity to move.

These moments occur before the meeting begins, throughout the meeting itself, and after the meeting is over.

Here are a few ideas you might like to try:

At the beginning

- As part of your normal introduction, encourage participants to stand up and move around the room whenever they like.
- Encourage participants to help themselves to water or drinks but have it away from the tables.
- Add an icebreaker that encourages participants to move around the group.



During the meeting:

- Re-focus the group with a physical activity break. Make sure it is on the agenda so that you allow time.
- Have a short stand, stretch, 'wriggle-time' or movement breaks at regular intervals, or make every second topic one where members are invited to stand for the length of that discussion.
 - A standing break is easy, requires no equipment or preparation, increases attention and concentration, and need not stop the meeting content/discussion.
 - A stretching break can help relax the body, and prevent muscular tension and pain induced by long periods of sitting.
 - A moving break is a short activity that encourages participants to do simple movements to loosen up after periods of sitting and move out of their seats or even the room.
- If the meeting is due to last more than two hours, include a break in the middle of the meeting, or encourage participants to go for a walk after lunch.
- Play up-tempo music during breaks to inspire people to move more.

The last five minutes is a great time to end the meeting on a high note with some fun and energy.

Can your whole meeting be active?

Sometimes, a whole meeting can be standing, walking or in a moving format, depending on the abilities of participants, your agenda and the resources you need for that meeting. If tables are required, simply move them to the side of the room.

A standing meeting can be a suitable format for short meetings. You will need to make sure that all participants are physically able to stand for the meeting and inform them beforehand about the format.

The meeting could be in a moving format where people move from one topic area to the next, standing for a series of brief discussions or presentations.

A walking meeting can be suitable for one-on-one and small group meetings.

- Develop walking routes and share them with participants.
- If broken into pairs or smaller groups, propose key topics that participants discuss while walking.
- Then identify points and times where the whole team come together to share and discuss topics.
- Make sure that the last stop is long enough to sum up the results of the meeting.



Staying active during online meetings

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many meetings have moved online, with many groups finding this to be a convenient way to reach all of their members. But how does physical activity fit into this new style of meeting when we are stuck behind a camera and microphone?

Sitting at a computer for long periods, such as during online meetings, is not good for our health. Some people might notice they get neck or back pain. To counter this, encourage your members to consider their posture. There are many good sites that can help your members improve their posture while on a computer.

While it is a different environment, there are still ways to increase the amount of physical activity your group can do:

- Plan for some elements to be done standing or moving. For example ask those that can to stand while the secretary's report is read out.
- Offer for the whole meeting to be done standing for those able.
- Encourage your members to put prompts on sticky notes around their computer to stretch, move or stand, and to take them down as they do them.
- Include a break for people to get a drink, take their rubbish out, or simply move around.
- Encourage people to do a few stretches in between discussion points.
- Encourage anyone using a mobile device to change locations.
- Encourage people to wriggle and fidget. Let them know that you will not consider it rude and support this to get some physical activity.

Online meetings are a new way of working for many people, but they can be just as active if you plan carefully and allow movement to happen.

Other considerations

- Encourage comfortable clothes and shoes suitable for moving and walking.
- If the weather is not suitable for walking outside, walk along corridors and between floors.
- Make sure those with disabilities can participate equally. For example, you can ask members to “stand up or roll back” to begin an activity.
- Form a team for activity challenges such 10,000 steps, and formally recognise activity achievements.
- Consider having a welcome pack that includes your physical activity information (walking routes and services, clothing, active agenda, etc.).
- Identify a role for someone to lead the group in activities or who can guide participants on walks during breaks.
- Display posters or information that encourages incidental activity.



Make your meeting health safe

Meetings have been cancelled, restricted or moved online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However this has allowed us to explore ways to meet that we can apply as infectious diseases occur, such as a gastro outbreak, or a severe flu season. There are healthy practices we can implement while continuing to stay in touch.

Holding meetings online has many benefits, such as making access easier for people who have limited budgets, family commitments or disabilities. Moving meetings online can save attendees time and reduce their carbon emissions. However, while many are adapting to this form of meeting, others feel they aren't as personal or feel as supportive as face-to-face events.

So while meetings have changed to include more online components, we have learnt that even a pandemic is unlikely to mean the end of face-to-face meetings. Whether meeting online or face-to-face, there are many ways to make your meetings move.

Remember we all have different health requirements. If any member is concerned about their health or safety in your meeting environment – be respectful and consider including additional requirements that meet their needs, or meet online instead.



Simple ideas to keep your meeting health safe

- Hold meetings outside in the open air whenever possible.
- If you or anyone in the group is unwell they must not attend any face-to-face meetings.
- Avoid touching your face and shaking hands to greet others.
- Ensure physical distancing of 1.5 metres from each other.
- Wear face masks that cover the mouth and face.
- Cover your face with your elbow whenever you cough or sneeze.
- Practice frequent hand-hygiene.
- Limit food handling and sharing of food.
- At times when there is a contagious illness in the community, or when several members are unwell and cannot attend in person but still wish to participate, consider holding your meeting online. Keep these meetings active too.



Having a safe space

- Ensure your room allows sufficient space per person, according to current guidelines.
- Open windows for more ventilation.
- Regularly and thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces and shared spaces. Pay attention to doorknobs, light switches and kettle handles.
- Consider if any excess furniture can be removed to allow distancing and reduce cleaning load.
- Consider asking participants to provide their own cups and cutlery. If these are provided ensure thorough cleaning.
- Consider use of paper towel rather than tea towels or dish cloths.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Keep attendance records with contact information.



For more information about physical distancing requirements, visit <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

Implementing a Physical Activity Policy in your community group or organisation

Many groups have policies to ensure they run well and efficiently, and maintain high standards of practice. Over the next few pages we have provided a template for a Physical Activity Policy that you can use, or adapt, for your group.

We encourage you to consider this for several reasons:

- A policy outlives a single enthusiastic individual. Most community groups have a regular change in leadership, and each individual brings their own style and influence into the role. A policy ensures that the actions you implement now, for the health and wellbeing of your group, will survive beyond your tenure, and continue to benefit the group into the future.
- A policy encourages whole-of-group actions. It is more likely that individuals will participate in actions when it is a group agreement, and such agreement is clear when it has been accepted as policy.
- A policy encourages practices that do not rely on one or two enthusiastic leaders. In the absence of usual leaders, those stepping in to the role have clear guidance on what to do, simply by following the policy.
- A policy supports the values of the group, and is a clear demonstration of care for the membership. In this way, it supports the accountability of the group to its community.

But remember: having workplace policies and procedures in place is only valuable if you make sure they are properly implemented and monitored.

To implement this policy, you can copy it or find it on the Barwon Health Website here: www.barwonhealth.org.au/services-departments/community-health-services/healthy-communities/active-living. Simply fill in the spaces indicated with your organisation details.

Sample policy template

<Group / Organisation name> Physical Activity Policy

Use this template to create your own physical activity policy by adding your group details and adding/deleting any strategies you hope to implement. We have indicated places where you should add your organisations name.

Overview

Being physically active is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Regular, physical activity can reduce the risk of heart disease, type two diabetes and some cancers. Physical activity also supports emotional wellbeing and can increase productivity and encourage social interaction.

Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines are:

- Doing any physical activity is better than doing none
- Be active on most, preferably all, days every week
- Accumulate 2.5 – 5 hours of moderate intensity physical activity each week
- Do muscle strengthening activities on at least two days each week
- Minimise the amount of time spent in prolonged sitting
- Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible

Policy Statement

< Group/organisation name>:

- Recognises the importance of regular physical activity and reduced sedentary time, in the prevention of chronic disease and the maintenance of physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Is committed to creating an environment that supports and encourages regular physical activity and reduced sedentary time in line with the guidelines above.
- Is committed to facilitating active participation of members in initiatives that promote increased physical activity and reduced sitting time.

Objectives and Strategies

< Group/organisation name > will implement the following strategies to support increased physical activity:

[Add, delete or alter these strategies to reflect what your group is doing.]

1. Create a supportive environment for physical activity to occur, including:
 - Select a venue that is easy to access on foot or bicycle.
 - Provide information on nearby opportunities for activity such as gyms and parks.
 - Provide information on car parking that promotes a longer walk to and from the venue where safe to do so.
 - Place items such as water, bins and leaflets where access is encouraged by moving to them.
 - Ensure those with disabilities have opportunities for physical activity.
 - Ensure stairwells are signed and inviting to use (well-lit, adequately ventilated,) and easy to access.
 - Encourage appropriate clothing for increased activity such as looser garments and comfortable shoes.

2. Provide opportunities for members to increase their physical activity and sit less in meetings, including:
 - Promote active transport to and from meetings e.g. cycling, walking or catching public transport.
 - Consider opportunities for standing components of meetings.
 - Provide opportunities for physical activity before, during and after meetings and shared activities.
 - Encourage participation in group fitness activities and/or fitness challenges.
 - Encourage staff to take standing, stretching or movement breaks, for at least two minutes every half hour.
 - Organise walking meetings or meetings in a moving format when possible.
 - Plan member social events that include opportunities to be active.

3. Educate members about the benefits of physical activity and reduced sedentary time, such as:

- Provide relevant information material (e.g. maps and brochures).
- Conduct education sessions.
- Provide reminders to be active (e.g. posters to encourage use of the stairs, prompts to stand and stretch).

Members are encouraged to:

- Read and understand this policy and seek clarification from <board/group leadership> when required.
- Participate in activities organised to support this policy.

<The board/group leadership> have a responsibility to:

- Ensure that all members have easy access to this policy at induction and during their membership.
- Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy and the strategies within.
- Manage the implementation of this policy and ensure it is reviewed, updated and communicated to members on an ongoing basis.

Review

This policy will be reviewed six months from implementation and then once every year. <Insert committee/role> is responsible for reviewing this policy. This process will involve:

- Assessing progress and seeing if objectives have been met.
- Providing members with the opportunity to give feedback and using this to make changes as required.
- Communicating reviewed policy to members.

Date: <insert policy implementation date>

Date of next review: <insert review date>

As the <representative> of <this group>, I endorse this policy into practice.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Resources

General Resources

Australian Department of Health: Guidelines and tips:

www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-physical-rec-older-guidelines

[www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/F01F92328EDADA5BCA257BF0001E720D/\\$File/Tips&Ideas-Older-Aust-65plus.pdf](http://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/F01F92328EDADA5BCA257BF0001E720D/$File/Tips&Ideas-Older-Aust-65plus.pdf)

Australian Physiotherapy Association:

<https://australian.physio/home/highlights/safe-exercise-home-older-australians>

Better Health Channel:

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/physical-activity-for-seniors

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/physical-activity-how-to-get-started

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ten-tips/10-tips-to-exercise-safely

City of Greater Geelong:

www.geelongaustralia.com.au/healthygeelong/getactive/article/item/8d16e5f29ffe84d.aspx

Health Direct

www.safeexerciseathome.org.au/

Psychology Today

www.psychologytoday.com/sites/default/files/attachments/34033/jssarticle.pdf

Safe Exercise at Home Organisation:

www.safeexerciseathome.org.au/

Resources

For those inspired to commence or expand their 'exercise'

Visiting your GP for exercise advice is a good starting point. A GP can provide anyone with a chronic health condition with a care plan that gives them access to 5 free Allied Health visits in a calendar year (Enhanced Primary Care program). Alternatively, you can self-refer to a community health physiotherapist.

'Exercise Right' Organisation has videos to play that take you through the activities. Perhaps these could be considered for inclusion in meetings?

<https://exerciseright.com.au/home-workouts-active-ageing/>

Your council may have information and services like the City of Greater Geelong LiveWell programs:

<https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/leisurelink/healthandfitness/livewell/default.aspx>

Check out your local Senior Citizens centre, and U3A (University of the Third Age) for exercise classes. Many include yoga, active-ageing exercise classes, 'No Falls programs', tai chi, dance and more.



Ways to move poster

Print out or tear off the following poster to display in your meeting room.



Skate Flick Balance Shuffle
Fidget Spin Skip
Wipe Glide Bounce
Bend Build Fix
Swim Dance Serve
Lift Dab
Tap There are many ways to
Wave MOVE Float
Clap Roll Wiggle Bump
Catch Rotate Cycle
Jump Run Throw Push
Kick Hop Climb Pull
Pirouette
Ride Walk Slide Brush

How many ways can YOU move today?

This resource was produced by the Healthy Communities Unit, April 2021

We acknowledge the collective efforts of a number of organisations in the Healthier Eating and Active Living Incidental Activity working group: City of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway Shire, Dementia Australia, G21, Golden Plains Shire and Surf Coast Shire.

For more information, please email healthycommunities@barwonhealth.org.au

