

**Have a Healthy
&
Active New Year!**

Get Moving...
Fitness on a
Budget



FITCITYCHALLENGE

Fitness on a Budget



Not everyone has the time or money to go to a gym, but that doesn't mean that you can't be physically fit. There are lots of free activities you can do around the house, your neighborhood and the community.

Fitness Around the House

There are lots of free workouts in your daily routine. Dance around with the vacuum cleaner, sweep the floors, walk up and down the stairway, march in place, rake leaves, mow the lawn, scrub the bathroom and kitchen. These are all great ways to get your heart rate going.



Play Time Isn't Just for Kids



Who says you have to be a kid to hula hoop. Join in with the kids and play with them. Jumping rope or skipping down the sidewalk..... it's all fun. And you are being a good role model to your kids. If they see mom and dad being active, they are more likely to be active. So go outside and play!

DVDs and Videos and Books

You can find many types of exercise videos/DVD's and books at your local library that you can check out free. Or consider buying one or two of your favorites and share them with your friends and neighbors. You could start an exercise video/DVD sharing club in your neighborhood.



Free Weights for Free



If you can afford to buy a few dumbbells, they are a great way to strengthen your upper body. But you probably have items around the house that you can use. For example, if you have a couple of bags of dried beans, they will work as light dumbbells. If you use a liquid laundry detergent that has a handle, save the empty container. You can add water and adjust so you will have different weight levels. Some canned goods will work just fine. Just make sure you can adequately grip them.

Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation/Senior Centers

Check out your local Parks and Recreation centers and Senior Centers. Many of them offer classes and use of their facilities at a nominal price. You can also ask about walking groups. If they don't have one, maybe they can start one if enough people are interested.



Remember, the most important thing is to find ways to incorporate physical activity into your day. It doesn't have to cost you money or big chunks of time and you will be investing in good health for you and your family.



FITCITYCHALLENGE

Creating a "Biggest Loser Competition for Your Workplace Come Out a Winner

The popularity of the television show "The Biggest Loser" has motivated many companies to start a weight loss challenge. Losing weight should be a reward for eating better and being more active. Making lifestyle changes will help sustain weight loss and avoid the ups and downs on the scale. Fit City Challenge encourages living a healthy lifestyle by eating healthier and being more physically active which can result in weight loss and/or weight maintenance. Here are some tips for developing your office's "Biggest Loser" competition.



1. **Doctor's Approval.** To ensure the safety of participants, encourage physician approval prior to competition, especially for those who have been sedentary and/or have existing health concerns or issues.
2. **Create Safe Guidelines.** Discourage your employees from using unhealthy measures to lose weight such as; laxatives, over the counter diet pills, sweat suits, excessive exercise or skipping meals to lose weight quickly. This can be harmful to their health and they may gain the weight back after they stop. Remind people that lifestyle changes are the best way to maintain long-term weight loss.
3. **Individual or Teams?** Determine if your company would prefer to compete as individuals or teams or both. Teams can be assigned or chosen. Try to mix up body shapes, sizes and fitness levels to be competitive.
4. **Offer Incentives.** There are many ways to do this. You can charge each person \$10 to participate and the winner takes it all. You can offer time off from work, gift cards, publicity (name in newsletter or e-mail), or a break on insurance premiums. If competing on teams, make sure incentives are appropriate (and approved) for a group.
5. **Set Limits.** Set a specific number of weeks that the competition will last. Typically 6-12 weeks is a good amount of time.
6. **Impartial Judge.** Identify a fellow employee who is not involved and has no stake in who wins. This person can perform weekly weigh-ins, if you are having them. The same scale should be used each time, and weigh-ins should be performed at the same time of day. Provide a confidential place for the weigh-ins.
7. **Weekly or Just Once?** Determine if you want the group to do weekly weigh-ins or weigh just at the beginning and end. With weekly tracking, the loss percentage (see #9) can be publicized among the participants, if desired. This can help with motivation and accountability.
8. **Percentage Only!** To encourage people of all sizes and fitness levels to participate, ensure them that only percentage of weight loss will be considered. The recommended healthy weight loss is ½- 2 pounds per week (though some weeks there may be a large loss and some weeks none at all). There is not a percentage recommendation, as that will vary so much by the beginning weight of the individual.
9. **Arm Them With Information.** Hold Lunch and Learns, hand out nutrition brochures, share recipes, offer pedometers and encourage them to walk (2,000 steps=1 mile), send weekly e-mails with wellness information. Use the Fit City Challenge website (www.fitcitychallenge.org) "calculators and tools" tab to find out how many calories you burn at various activities such as playing children's games, raking leaves and walking.
10. **Have a Party!** Hold a kick-off event to publicize your competition. Be sure to go over the rules and expectations with all participants. You can offer tracking sheets for participants to track their weight loss and activity or they can use the Fit City Challenge online fitness log. You must register at www.fitcitychallenge.org to have access to the online log. Use this as an opportunity to educate employees while having fun. For example, have weekly competitions such as a hula hoop or jump rope contest. Find fun ways to get your employees moving and laughing together. This is also an important lesson that exercise can be as simple and fun as a child's game.

Then Celebrate! No matter how much weight everyone lost, you have created an atmosphere of health and wellbeing. Now you can continue to walk together at lunch, share healthy recipes, and bring only healthy items to share in the break room. Many employees who did not participate will now be motivated to join in your healthy lifestyle and may be your next "Biggest Loser".

Submitted by: Amy Bertram, PT, APT, CEI Trinity Consulting, Inc.





January Fitness Special!!

Join one of Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Fitness Centers in January and get up to 3 months FREE – you can get a 12 month membership for the cost of 9 months! Call or visit the center for more details.

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Fitness Centers:

- ▶ **Aquatic Center (MCAC)****: 800 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., 704-336-DIVE
- ▶ **Bette Rae Thomas Fitness Center**: 2921 Tuckaseegee Road, 704- 432-3084
- ▶ **First Ward Fitness Center**: 610 E. 7th Street, 704-336-3375
- ▶ **Mallard Creek Fitness Center**: 2530 Johnston Oehler Road, 704-548-8234
- ▶ **RAY's Splash Planet**: 215 N. Sycamore Street, 704 -432-4RAY
- ▶ **Southview Fitness Center**: 1720 Vilma Street, 704-392-7452
- ▶ **Tuckaseegee Fitness Center**: 4820 Tuckaseegee Road, 704-399-4492
- ▶ **West Charlotte Fitness Center**: 2401 Kendall Drive, 704 -393-1560

** Promotion excludes MCAC. MCAC special: (1) Pay for 11 months and get the 12th month free, Friend Savers (2) Have a friend join, get a month free**

Happy New Year!

Resolutions don't work unless you do, make a commitment to live a healthier lifestyle in 2009.

Tips for Setting Resolutions You Won't Abandon

Determine your goal. Grab a piece of paper and write down your goal. Instead of writing something vague like, "I'll eat healthier this year" or "I'll be more active," try setting a specific goal like "I will not eat fast food more than once per week" or "I will go for a walk for 30 minutes, 4 days per week." After you write your goal down, ask yourself these questions: is it specific, able to be measured, able to be achieved and realistic? If the answer to these questions is no, perhaps daily or weekly goals would be easier to manage.

Create a plan. On the same piece of paper, write down a plan to meet your goal. Look at your plan and ask yourself if it is realistic. Be honest. Is it too hard? Will it take too much time? Is it too boring? Ask yourself what you will stick to and change your plan accordingly.

Get help. Most people have trouble reaching their goals without some help--either from friends, family or support groups. Now that you have a goal and a plan laid out, reach out to someone for help and support. Find a spouse, sibling, co-worker or a friend who is also taking a resolution to be healthier this year and team up for success!

Think small. Eating healthier and being more active is about the small choices you make. Every time you take the stairs or choose a glass of water over a soft drink, you're taking steps toward your goals. All of those small, daily choices are what determine your success, so what matters is keeping your focus on what you'll do today.

Don't kick yourself. Shame and guilt can hold back our best intentions. If you often feel guilty after a setback, imagine what you would say to a friend in the same situation. Most likely, you'd be encouraging and supportive and help come up with some solutions to the problem. Treat yourself with the same love and respect, realizing that, more often than not, failure is a part of success. If you have a setback, just start over. What is most important is that you don't give up.

