



FACTOID 1: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BREAKS

Healthy Meetings Checklist Item: *Are enough breaks offered with opportunities for physical activity?*

Physical activity is probably not what comes to mind when we think of meetings. Long periods of sitting and listening can have a negative effect on energy, attention levels, and enthusiasm. Have “activity breaks,” like stretching, walking discussion sessions, songs and dances, and discovery learning hunts. There are many simple strategies, so be creative! Here are some simple ideas for your next meeting:

Catch This! (ball tossing)

Equipment: 2 to 8 balls for groups of 5 to 20. The more people and the more balls, the greater the difficulty—balls may be of different size and color. Optional: Music or drumbeat.

Instructions: Groups of 5 to 20 stand in circles with enough arm room to toss balls. Give the first person a ball to start the tossing. Focus on throwing to one person and catching from another person (the same people each round). The last person to receive the ball tosses it to the first person. Each person should have the ball once each round. Give the first person subsequent balls until all are in motion. Try to do this successfully for 6 to 10 rounds.

Left-Right, Left-Right (walking in place)

Equipment: None. Optional: Music or drumbeat.

Instructions: Individuals stand with enough room to walk in place and swing arms vertically (like a robot). Stand with your right leg up, your right arm down, your left leg down and your left arm up; start walking in place. Do this for 30 seconds and then increase speed for 30 more seconds.

Walk ‘n Bounce

(walking and ball bouncing)

Equipment: A ball for each person. Attendees may be asked to bring a bouncing ball. Optional: Music or drumbeats.

Instructions: Walk around the perimeter of the room and/or down the hall to your next room for break out sessions while bouncing your ball. If space is limited, this can also be done walking in place.

Rope Walking

Equipment: Length of rope, twine, or ribbon with 2 feet per person—20 feet for a group of 10.

Instructions: Individuals walk to and from designated places in groups of 10 while holding onto the “rope.” Give each group different destinations, and let them walk back and forth.

On-The-Move Discussions

Equipment: Varies. This activity takes a bit of planning and can have many variations. The objective is to keep everyone moving while discussing or brainstorming.

Example: A brainstorming session to flush out options for after-school snacks. Stack chairs in a corner; put chart paper on walls/floors/stands and pens in another corner. After getting a pen, each participant will go from paper to paper writing down his/her ideas. After a designated time, ask for small groups to gather around each chart paper to discuss and choose their top 5 ideas. At this point, groups or individuals can choose to get a chair or continue to stand and discuss.

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Cadence Marches

Equipment: Music, drumbeats, designated “callers.”

This activity requires planning and open attitudes for participation, but can be so much fun. Have meeting planners or volunteers serve as “callers”—callers are the leaders of each group and need to set and lead a cadence tempo and call out the cheers. This can be done marching in place or to and from a designated place and back.

Example: Groups of 5-10 will start cadence marching in place. Leader(s) will start calling, “Left, right, left, right” several times. When the group is in cadence, the leader(s) will call and the group will respond:

“Going to the supermarket,” group repeats;
“Going to buy some local fruits,” group repeats;
“2 red watermelons,” group repeats;
“4 orange cantaloupes,” group repeats;
“6 sunset papayas,” group repeats;
“8 gold oranges,” group repeats;
“10 yellow bananas,” group repeats;
“Let’s eat as sweet desserts,” group repeats;
“Oh good!,” group repeats;
(louder) “Oh good!,” group repeat;
(louder) “Oh good!,” group repeats.
Repeat series 3 times.

Discovery Learning Hunts (learning treasure hunts)

Equipment: Varies

Instructions: Participants are divided into small groups. Each group walks to a designated area to gather information and/or items specific to a particular topic or thing.

Example: Learning about the plants around the meeting area. Assign a particular plant to each group. Groups walk the area to find their plant, gather information about their plant (ornamental, food source, annual/perennial, vine/tree, water requirements, etc.) to share, and give directions to where the plant is located to the rest of the larger group.



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