



HEALTHY
WORKPLACES



TOOLKIT



What is Fit Together?



Fit Together is a community collaborative that was formed in December 2010. The initial purpose was to identify and implement environmental and social improvements in Northwest Connecticut that make the healthy choice, the easy choice, for all residents.

Our mission is to build the healthiest kids, families, and communities through sustainable strategies which foster healthy choices and active living.

Our vision is that Torrington and Winsted will be widely recognized amongst the healthiest communities in Connecticut. Our hope is that residents of all ages will engage in sound nutritional practices, healthy habits, and physical activity with the capacity and will to continually make positive health choices in their daily lives.

Fit Together aims to achieve three main objectives across three target audiences in order to accomplish it's mission:

Objectives:

1. Increase opportunities for healthy eating and nutrition education
2. Increase opportunities for physical activity as a part of everyday life
3. Improve healthy choices and lifestyle behaviors

Audiences:

1. Workplace
2. Youth and Families
3. Community Wide



Fit Together Steering Committee:

- Carla Angevine, Executive Director, Fit Together, Community Wellness Coordinator, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
- Michelle Brady, Director of Nursing, Community Health and Wellness of Greater Torrington
- Greg Brisco, CEO, Northwest CT YMCA
- Elinor Carbone, Mayor, City of Torrington
- Michael Curi, MD, Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine
- Tim Gaffney, Market Edge Writers, Torrington KIDSMARATHON Final Mile
- Renee Giroux, Sustainable Healthy Communities
- Jennifer Kelley, Director & Municipal Agent, Winsted
- Rista Malanca, Zoning Enforcement Officer, City of Torrington
- Brian Mattiello, Vice President for Strategy and Community Development, Hartford HealthCare Northwest Healthcare
- Leslie Polito, Public Health Nurse, Torrington Area Health Department
- Owen Quinn, Executive Director, United Way of Northwest Connecticut
- JoAnn Ryan, President & CEO, Northwest Chamber of Commerce
- Ann Vitali, Torrington Public Schools
- Rachel Welcome, Winsted Community Volunteer

Purpose of the Workplace Toolkit

Fit Together aims to provide a starting point for workplaces that are new to wellness promotion, and strengthen the efforts of workplaces with existing wellness programs. The Fit Together's emphasis is on increasing physical activity and healthy eating behaviors amongst employees, with the goal of having these practices carry over to the home. It is the hope that these healthy practices will be reinforced with children and families, therefore having the potential for a much broader public health impact across the community.

Fit Together Worksite Health interventions are centered around the 5-2-1-0 message, which includes recommendations supported by science and endorsed by medical professionals. Specifically, "5210" promotes:

- 5** or more fruits & vegetables
- 2** healthy screen time habits *
- 1** hour or more of physical activity
- 0** sugary drinks, more water & low fat milk

Worksite participation in the Fit Together initiative provides a connection for area employers to one another through the collaborative effort of improving the overall health of the community by way of worksites. It provides a linkage to organizations that participate and to supportive resources, such as Fit Together. The more organizations that participate in the initiative, the greater the impact, and the greater the overall improvement in health within our community. These common, user friendly messages will be shared throughout Northwest Connecticut in various settings to synergize the importance of increasing physical activity and healthy eating.

* Examples:

- Charge cell phone in kitchen or living room as opposed to bedroom
- Have tech free time during meals
- Aim to avoid multitasking with technology

More information on developing healthy screen habits and creating a family media use plan can be found at www.healthychildren.org

GETTING STARTED



WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOOLKIT?

Why the Workplace?

How to Incorporate Wellness into your Worksite: Wellness Programs

Fit Together Worksite Health Recognition Program

Wellness Resources

LET'S BEGIN!



WHY THE WORKPLACE?

If someone spends 40 hours a week at work, and there are 168 hours in one week, that is about 25% of one's time spent at work per week! As Fit Together aims to improve overall community health within Torrington and Winsted, it is vital to target the workplaces in these towns as a conduit for encouraging wellness and spreading the 5-2-1-0 message. By improving the health environment of worksites in Torrington and Winsted, and teaching employees the importance of healthy eating and physical activity, we are one step closer to improving the overall health of the community!



As employers, implementing health and wellness practices and policies for your employees might seem intimidating or not important at first glance. However, the benefits to both employers and employees is clear. Workplace health programs have the ability to positively impact the individual employees and the organization as a whole, such as through the potential to support recruitment and retention, improved health outcomes and employee morale.



Importantly, workplace wellness programs could also result in lower health care costs for the employer. These costs can be lowered as a result of less absenteeism, worker's compensation costs and additional health related costs for the employer.

For example:

-Duke University implemented a wellness initiative focused on controlling high blood pressure and cholesterol in their employees. Since the start of this program they have seen positive return on investments for both the blood pressure (\$1.21 to \$1.00) and cholesterol programs (\$3.39 to \$1.00).

For more information on successful worksite health programs, such as at Duke University, and information on how various worksites have started their initiatives, visit the CDC's (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) Workplace Health Promotion page at <https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/initiatives/index.html> and review the "Employers in Action" page.



In addition, by implementing wellness measures in your workplace, you are not only supporting the health of your staff, you are supporting the health of the greater community surrounding your business!

HOW TO INCORPORATE WELLNESS INTO YOUR WORKPLACE

What is a Wellness Program?

A wellness program can include many different interventions centering around improving overall employee health and wellness. As a result, a wellness program also has the potential to reduce employer health insurance costs, well-being, aim to move forward by having these objectives in development, and then implemented.

SOME INTERVENTIONS INCLUDE:

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS



NUTRITION CLASSES



WELLNESS EDUCATION



DISCOUNTED GYM MEMBERSHIPS



SMOKING CESSATION PROGRAMS



HEALTHY FOODS IN VENDING MACHINES



FLU SHOTS



7 Steps to Start a Wellness Program

- 1 Ownership and Leadership
- 2 Get Support from All
- 3 Acknowledge Current Wellness Status and Collect Baseline Data
- 4 Identify Key Needs and Expectations
- 5 Develop a Plan
- 6 Take Action
- 7 Monitor, Evaluate and Maintain

An Employee Wellness Program is designed to provide employees with simple, effective and engaging ways to improve their health, while providing employers with practical ways to quantify the benefits of healthy employees.

1. OWNERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

Start by getting support for the development of the program by those of leadership in the company. Recruit someone who is willing to hold a lead role in the wellness committee and will be a contact person throughout the development and upholding of the program. Like any workplace policy, it will be key to have the support of senior management to allow for the potential investment necessary to create a successful wellness program. The program leader must recognize and emphasize that the wellness initiative will be an investment, and this must be clearly articulated to senior management. It can be helpful to also provide statistics on the efficacy of employer created wellness programs on the potential for reduction of overall costs associated with employee productivity, health insurance fees, etc.



2. GET SUPPORT FROM ALL

Get support from as many individuals as possible surrounding the introduction of an employee wellness program. Talk to as many people as possible, even those who may not be direct employees of your company. Some of these parties may include:

- **Union/Worker Representatives**
- **Management**
- **Health and Safety Professionals**
- **Human Resources Professionals**
- **Medical or Occupational Health Staff**
- **Local Community Groups Invested in Wellness, such as Fit Together!**



3. ACKNOWLEDGE CURRENT WELLNESS STATUS AND COLLECT BASELINE DATA



Though you may not have an employee wellness program established outright, you may already be promoting various wellness-centered initiatives throughout your business. There may also be previously formed groups centered around some sort of wellness activity, which may serve as a good starting place for the establishment of your official wellness committee. Acknowledging these existing wellness centered activities, such as a walking group during lunch, may inspire ideas for initiatives to implement in your wellness program. For example, a walking mileage club may be created in which individuals can earn points for every mile, or number of steps taken, and the highest point earner could be rewarded monthly.

Fit Together coordinators can support your workplace with baseline workplace health data collection by means of the **Community Healthy Living Index**, or CHLI. The Worksite CHLI assessment is a tool designed to collect data on the status of various proven health interventions within the workplace. Each question provides a “best practice” or improvement idea for work sites to implement. Following the completion of the assessment, a Fit Together coordinator can guide you to complete the **Discussion and Improvement Planning Guide**, or DIPG. The DIPG provides discussion prompts to guide a worksite’s conversation in first steps to improve worksite wellness and initiate the identification of key needs or priorities for moving forward.

4. IDENTIFY KEY NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS



In order to develop a program that will inspire employee interest, it is most effective to start by gathering information on employees needs, attitudes, and preferences. A survey can be a good tool to gather this information. Attached is an example of a survey designed to collect information on these topics. Surveys can be conducted by several different means, such as via Internet, face-to-face, or by telephone. They can be conducted person-to-person, through small focus groups, or one surveyor may collect data from a larger group at one time such as in a round table.

WE’RE HERE FOR YOU!

5. DEVELOP A PLAN

- **IDENTIFY PRIORITY NEEDS**
- **SET REALISTIC TARGETS AND TIMELINES**
 - HAVE BOTH SHORT AND LONG TERM GOALS
 - UTILIZE SMART GOAL MODEL
- **PLAN HOW AND WHEN TO INITIATE PROGRAM**
- **PLAN HOW TO MAINTAIN INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION**
- **IDENTIFY RESOURCES NEEDED FOR EACH STEP OF IMPLEMENTATION**

- EX. TIME, MONEY, PEOPLE



In addition, when appropriate, institute a point system to organize your priorities and to articulate the goals of the program. For example, employees may receive incentives for healthy behaviors as follows:

- Health Risk Assessment- X points for completion
- Activity/Fitness- X points per month for approved physical activity
- Education- X points for completion of approved educational programs.
- Prevention and Early Detection- up to X points per year, per screening for approved health screens, preventive dental visit, Primary Care Provider visit, eye exam, or flu shot.
- Disease Management- X points per year, per enrollment in one or more approved disease management programs.
- Nutrition- X points awarded monthly for completion of approved programs.

6. TAKE ACTION

It is now time to put your plan into action. Promotion of your program can be done in many different ways. Some examples include:

- Posters around workplace
- Posting on your organization's internet or intranet
- Bulletin boards
- Management telling employees about the program
- Host demo days
- Flyers/pamphlets/brochures
- Kiosk where all material is promoted
- E-mail

TIP



Introducing your new found program and policies within official worksite corporate policies is an essential step in order to solidify the program's importance, and your company's commitment to improving workplace health.

The CDC's Worksite Health Scorecard report from 2018, which includes 873 worksites in 35 different states, reported: 83% of businesses have a tobacco control policy in place, 73% have an appointed health promotion champion, 69% provide on-site preventative flu shots for employees, 47% have physical activity programs, 45% provide education on weight management and more. Visit cdc.gov for the full report.

7. MONITOR, EVALUATE AND MAINTAIN



It is important to continuously monitor the progress of your program and track results based on your chosen interventions. There is always room for improvement and modification to better meet the needs of your program and its participants. Based on your evaluation you may choose to modify short-term or long-term goals for the program. By modifying your goals based on the needs of program participants, it is more likely interest and participation will be maintained.

FIT TOGETHER WORKSITE HEALTH RECOGNITION PROGRAM



Fit Together Northwest CT has developed a worksite health recognition program based off of the standards set by the Y's CHLI Worksite Health Assessment. Fit Together hopes for the recognition program to encourage community businesses to strive to improve their ranking and achieve and maintain gold level status, in turn improving the worksite health environment for their employees



In order to achieve Gold Status:

Worksite must be able to identify at least one action in **5** categories, and **10** total actions that they have done to promote employee wellness in their worksite



In order to achieve Silver Status:

Worksite must be able to identify at least one action in **4** categories, and **8** total actions that they have done to promote employee wellness in their worksite



In order to achieve Bronze Status:

Worksite must be able to identify at least one action in **3** categories, and **6** total actions that they have done to promote employee wellness in their worksite



CATEGORIES

1. Administrative Support/General:

- ✔ Worksite has appointed wellness committee and/or wellness coordinator
- ✔ Worksite offers health insurance plan which fully covers preventative screenings
- ✔ Worksite (or its health insurance plan) rewards employees for participating in preventative wellness activities (ex. smoking cessation classes, physical activity program, preventative screenings, health risk assessment)
- ✔ Worksite has no smoking policy on workplace grounds, or clearly demarcated smoking area away from common outdoor areas
- ✔ Worksite offers on-site preventative health services/screenings, such as flu shot administration or blood pressure screenings



2. Health Promotion:

- ✔ Worksite has completed worksite health assessment for employee health environment (ex. Fit Together's CHLI)
- ✔ Worksite regularly provides health promotion materials to employees such as posters, health fairs, flyers, emails or other routine communication
- ✔ Worksite provides incentives through the health benefits plan or through cash/prize rewards for engaging in physical activity and/or healthy eating (ex. worksite wellness challenges)
- ✔ Worksite informs employees about the availability of health promotion programs, services or classes in the community whether through means such as newsletters, e-mails or bulletin boards
- ✔ Worksite has suggestion box for ways to promote health (physical activity, health eating, etc.) within the workplace that is regularly checked



3. Physical Activity Opportunities:

- ✔ Worksite incorporates physical activity into their meetings, such as by holding standing or walking meetings, or stretching at some point during meeting
- ✔ Worksite conducts or sponsors sports teams, walking clubs, or events to encourage physical activity among employees
- ✔ If applicable, worksite encourages employees to get up and go on a short walk periodically (ex. walk for five minutes every two hours at least)
- ✔ Worksite encourages employees to avoid eating lunch at their desk
- ✔ Worksite holds fitness challenges and events (ex. walking challenge or encouraging employees to sign up as a team for a softball league)



4. Environment Surrounding

Physical Activity:

- ✓ If worksite has stairwells, their use is promoted through keeping stairwells clean, safe and accessible
- ✓ Secure bicycle parking is available for employees
- ✓ Worksite has safe area outside for exercise (ex. trails, walking paths, sidewalks) and promotes their use to staff
- ✓ Worksite allows flexible break or lunch times to allow for staff to participate in physical activity (ex. time to go for short walk during break time)
- ✓ Worksite has posters/flyers posted in employee frequented areas (ex. break room or by time clock) that promote physical activity and its importance, or physical activity opportunities in community

5. Healthy Eating Opportunities:

- ✓ Worksite provides healthy eating/beverage options in their food outlets (ex. cafeterias, snack bars, or vending machines)
- ✓ Worksite ensures healthy options such as salad and/or fresh fruits and vegetables are available at lunches hosted by or at worksite
- ✓ Worksite provides employees with access to safe, clean, and cold drinking water
- ✓ Worksite provides refrigerator and microwave access to employees to encourage bringing in home-cooked healthy meals
- ✓ When applicable, worksite replaces unhealthy food based rewards with healthier alternatives

6. Environment Surrounding Healthy Eating Opportunities:

- ✓ Worksite provides nutrition information for foods offered at events to employees
- ✓ Worksite prices unhealthy food options slightly higher than healthy food options in food outlets (ex. cafeteria, snack bar or vending machine)
- ✓ All signage and advertising near food outlets promotes only healthy options
- ✓ Worksite has posters/flyers posted in employee frequented areas (ex. break room or by time clock) that promote healthy eating and its importance, healthy recipes, healthy food/drink alternatives, etc.
- ✓ Worksite provides clean and private space, with an electrical outlets for employees to pump/express breast milk or breastfeed babies



Northwest CT Healthy Eating & Active Living Initiative



IDEAS ON HOW TO INCORPORATE 5-2-1-0 INTO THE WORKPLACE



EAT **FIVE** OR MORE FRUITS & VEGETABLES

- Offer fresh fruits and vegetables to employees in kitchen area
- Offer healthy options in vending machines
- Post encouraging signage by healthy options



CHOOSE **TWO** HEALTHY SCREEN TIME HABITS

- Encourage tech free time during lunches and break times
- Encourage employees to monitor hours spent on phone
- Discourage multitasking on electronics if able



PARTICIPATE IN **ONE** HOUR OR MORE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Promote physical activity with challenges (ex. step challenges, or mileage challenges with potential to win prize)
- Promote use of stairwells
- Promote active lunches or break times



DRINK WATER & LOW FAT MILK **NO** SUGARY DRINKS

- Offer no-sugar beverage options in vending machines (ex. Seltzer)
- Offer free purified water to employees
- Don't offer sugary beverages at meetings or work related events

KEY MESSAGE	RECOMMENDATION	BENEFITS	SOURCE
5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on consuming a variety of nutrient dense food including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy, protein foods, plant oils - Limit calories from added sugar and saturated fats¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A poor diet is associated with a variety of major illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and certain types of cancer - In turn, a good diet is associated with reduced disease risk and improved overall health² 	<p>1. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. President's Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition. https://www.hhs.gov/fitness/eat-healthy/dietary-guidelines-for-americans/index.html. Published January 26, 2017. Accessed October 8, 2019.</p> <p>2. Importance of Good Nutrition. President's Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition. https://www.hhs.gov/fitness/eat-healthy/importance-of-good-nutrition/index.html. Published January 26, 2017. Accessed October 8, 2019</p>
2 healthy screen habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We recommend charging your phone in the kitchen or living room at night as to not impede sleep, and make the bedroom screen free - Develop a media use plan for your family as to defend against excessive media use³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate media use can help defend against health issues associated with overuse of media such as obesity, problems with focus and lack of sleep³ 	<p>3. How to Make a Family Media Use Plan. (2019, November 5). Retrieved November 13, 2019, from https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx</p>
1 or more hours of physical activity per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adults should do at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate intensity, or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous intensity exercise each week⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular physical activity is associated with a variety of health benefits including: weight control, promotion of strong bones, muscles and joints, improvement of sleep, increased strength and endurance, and prevention of chronic diseases⁵ 	<p>4. Physical Activity Guidelines. President's Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition. https://www.hhs.gov/fitness/be-active/physical-activity-guidelines-for-americans/index.html. Published February 1, 2019. Accessed October 8, 2019.</p> <p>5. Importance of Physical Activity. President's Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition. https://www.hhs.gov/fitness/be-active/importance-of-physical-activity/index.html. Published January 26, 2017. Accessed October 8, 2019.</p>
0 sugary beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily recommendation for men: 3.7 liters of water - Daily recommendation for women: 2.7 liters of water⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water consumption assists the body in getting rid of wastes, in regulating body temperature and supporting healthy joints and tissues⁶ 	<p>6. Water: How much should you drink everyday? Mayo Clinic. https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/water/art-20044256. Published September 6, 2017. Accessed October 8, 2019.</p>

WELLNESS RESOURCES

Workplace Wellness Ideas - GetHealthyCT.org

CDC Worksite Health Resource Center - <https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/initiatives/resource-center/index.html>

American Heart Association Employer Resources for Success - <https://www.heart.org/en/professional/workplace-health/workplace-health-achievement-index/employer-resources-for-success>

Wellness Council of America - welcoa.org

Fit Together NWCT - FitTogethernwct.org

Family Media Planning tool - <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx>

