

Step 3: Implement Your Program

Now that you've built your case and built your program(s), it's time to implement your initiatives. Even with the most thought-out and well-planned initiative, there will be challenges and unforeseen road blocks during the implementation period. However, because you took the time to plan appropriately, you'll be well-equipped to handle anything that comes your way. During implementation keep your eyes and ears open to employee feedback, concerns and success stories. These will be helpful during the evaluation of your initiative. Also, be flexible with your plan. You may have to make modifications to it as your initiative rolls out.

Step 4: Evaluate Your Program

When designing a wellness program, be sure to include the following pieces in the overall program plan to ensure you can measure the impact of your wellness program:

- ❖ Measurable goals and objectives
- ❖ Baseline data
- ❖ Staff who are trained to evaluate appropriately
- ❖ Clear rules and fair administration of incentive programs
- ❖ An outlined budget and actual cost data
- ❖ A communications plan

What are the benefits of evaluating outcomes?

- **To see if your intervention worked**
Did you achieve your objective? Did employees learn about their health risks, get stronger or more flexible, or use the stairs more often?
- **To demonstrate the cost benefit of the intervention**
To get the money to repeat a program, you need to be able to show that it was effective enough to justify its expense. That's what cost benefit means — not that the intervention saved money, but that the benefit was worth the cost.
- **To compare different types of interventions**
You may have tried three different approaches to increasing employees' activity levels. With evaluation of your data, you can see which approach was most effective. You can also compare your outcome with industry standards. For instance, workplace smoking cessation programs are considered very successful if 35% to 50% of participants quit. How did your program compare?
- **To provide information about the program**
You will produce valuable information about your program through evaluation that you can use in reports and presentations to management, press releases, stakeholders' meetings, company newsletters and meetings.