

Wellness Ideas for Meetings, Breaks and Staying Healthy

When members of a meeting stop concentrating or lose their enthusiasm, this could simply be because they have been sitting and listening for too long or concentrating too much. A stretch, a game, two minutes chatting to a neighbor can re-energize the group and enable them to tackle difficult issues.

Here are some ideas to re-energize a group during meetings.

Rain: A facilitator talks the group through this energizer. Get everyone to stand up. Start tapping your head lightly with your fingers imagining soft rain. Let it slowly get heavier the further you move your hands down your body. Let the rain turn into a thunderstorm on your calves. Clap them hard with your hands. Then move your hands back up your body, ending with soft rain on your head.

Touch Blue: Have everyone touch something blue on someone else, something yellow, a knee, some glasses, etc. Call the next thing as soon as people touch whatever has been named.

Hot Potato: Everybody stands in a circle. Pass a beanbag around the circle to music. When the music stops, the person holding the beanbag is out and must go in the center of the circle and do stretches. For example: touch your head; then your chest; then your knees; and then your toes. Pretend the bean bag is a very hot potato.

On-The-Move Discussions: The object is to keep everyone moving while discussing or brainstorming. Stack chairs in a corner; put chart paper on walls 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 five ideas.

Knot Game: Stand in a circle, close your eyes. Walk towards the centre of the circle with outstretched hands. Find another hand for each of yours. Once all hands are linked up, open your eyes. Try to unravel the knot without opening hands so that you end up in a circle again. Don't get frustrated if you can't unravel it completely, sometimes it's just not possible. The knot game works best in groups of 10-20 people. Form two knots if there are more of you.

Walking Wellness: Meeting members are asked to bring comfortable walking shoes to the meeting. Walk a specific route as many times as possible during a 15-20 minute break.

Stretching: Try stretching for several minutes. Tighten and relax your muscles one group at a time. First your legs, then your arms, then your back, your feet, your fingers, your toes and even your face and neck. Hold contraction for 10-60 seconds and then let go. This will give your muscles some activity even when you are sitting down.

Walking in Place: Music is optional. 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. Increase speed after 30 seconds.

Stand up and Stretch: Have everyone stand up and do: jumping jacks; knee lifts; flap arms like a bird; hopping; scissors (feet apart then cross in front, feet apart then cross in back). Then do basic stretches: reach for the sky; touch your feet; knee to chest; rotate ankles; scratch your back.

Flower Seed Stretch: In a circle, everyone starts as a small seed (crouched, hunched), then slowly sprouts and grows, eventually flowering towards the sun (tip toes, arms outstretched). Repeat, getting faster each time, leading eventually to seeds in unison jumping into the air and letting out loud "ahhhs"!

