

Jan/
Feb
2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE
CITY OF TACOMA

HealthVine

SPECIAL
EDITION

FEELING THE PRESSURE

Being just 10 pounds overweight can increase the force on your knees by 30 — 60 pounds with each step.

The added load can increase stress on knees and may break down cartilage, which can lead to conditions such as osteoarthritis. Overweight women have nearly four times the risk of knee osteoarthritis as women who are within a healthy weight range; for overweight men the risk is five times greater.

Knees are not the only joints affected by extra weight. Being overweight has also been associated with hand osteoarthritis.

If gaining weight increases the force on joints, think about how good it would feel to lose weight and ease the pressure. The lighter load might make it easier to get active without aches and pains.

START WITH SMALL CHANGES:

1. Replace soft drinks with water.
2. Eliminate seconds at meals.
3. Consume smaller portions.
4. Reduce fried foods.
5. Walk in place while watching television.

Source: Adapted from *The Johns Hopkins Arthritis Center*



SIMPLE TIPS TO START AND CONTINUE AN EXERCISE ROUTINE

Find a partner. Not only does a partner help to hold you accountable, but working out with a friend or family member can also make the experience more enjoyable.

Choose activities you enjoy. It is pretty clear that if you enjoy doing something, you will be more likely to develop a habit or routine. It is also important that you choose activities that are the right fit for you, physically. For instance, if you have arthritis or other joint issues, swimming may be a better choice than hiking, jogging or even walking for exercise.



Vary your routine. Prevent boredom or injury by switching up your exercise of choice. Maybe walk one day and bike the next. The possibilities are endless—so be creative.



Be patient. Although we naturally want to see instant results, you probably won't see any noticeable changes for weeks or even months. With perseverance and dedication, positive changes will happen, so don't get discouraged!

Make exercise fun. Listen to music. If you are using a stationary machine, watch TV. Reading can even be safe to do on certain stationary machines, such as bikes. You could also find fun things to do, like taking a hike or walking at the zoo.

FITTING IN MORE EXERCISE

Although going to the gym or starting a walking program are great ways to get healthy, you can also improve your health and metabolism by incorporating simple activities while you are not physically exercising.

Stand out. Standing burns nearly twice as many calories as sitting. Aim to stand when you are:

- Talking on the phone
- In a meeting
- At a sporting event
- Watching television
- Reading
- Folding laundry

Avoid convenience. Put in a little extra effort to fit in more calorie-burning activities.

- Walk to a coworker rather than emailing or calling.
- Take the stairs, rather than the elevator (especially if it is just a flight or two).
- Choose a parking spot a little bit further from the entrance.

Fidget. There are little things you can do while sitting, but just make sure that you don't bug your coworkers or family!

- Tap your foot at your desk.
- Chew sugar-free gum.

HEALTHY WAYS TO SATISFY YOUR SWEET CRAVINGS

Give in without the guilt.

Fruit pizza: Toast an English muffin and top with yogurt and sliced fruit. Drizzle with honey.

Fruit sundae: Take your favorite fruit sorbet and top it with berries and drizzle with chocolate.

Chocolate dipped fruit. Melt chocolate chips and dip your favorite fruit (i.e., strawberries).



Banana shake. In a blender, combine 1/2 cup of milk, 1/2 cup of yogurt, 1 frozen banana and 1 tbsp. honey. Blend until smooth.

Source: *Adapted from Hope Health Institute*

UNDERSTANDING YOUR METABOLISM

Your metabolism is driven by a chain of processes that converts food to energy for your body so you can do everything from breathing to running a 5K.

The metabolism slows with age: Our metabolic rate slows 1 to 2 percent every 10 years after the age of 20.

Our bodies are designed to efficiently store fat. We are much more efficient at storing fat than burning it. That is because our bodies were built to protect against famine, not to avoid weight gain.

Our bodies need “enough” sleep. Not sleeping enough may affect glucose metabolism, which leads to insulin resistance, an increase in appetite and a decrease in energy used.

Source: *Adapted from the University of Rochester Medical Center*

TACOMA EMPLOYEE WELLNESS SURVEY

NOW AVAILABLE! We encourage you to participate in this survey, whether or not you participated in the RedBrick Health program. Your feedback is imperative as we grow and improve our wellness program. We look forward to hearing what type of activities, classes, campaigns, and any other program enhancements you would like to see in 2016 to compliment your efforts as you practice (and improve) your everyday habits.

The survey is only open for a couple of weeks and should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Take the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/tacomaemployeewellness>.

GYM MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNTS

We thank you for patience as we continue to finalize this project. Employees should expect the release of a comprehensive list of discounts in early 2016.

2016 WELLNESS INCENTIVE PARTICIPATION

We want to sincerely thank everyone who participated in the first year of the Tacoma Employee Wellness Program.

We are pleased to inform you that our participation was comparable to the norm. This is something that we can and should feel very proud about, especially considering this was the very first year of the program and employees were asked to participate in two campaigns over a 10-month period (Jan 1. — Sept. 30, 2015).

2016 PARTICIPATION: 50%

Employees were asked to complete the following requirements:

1. Complete two Wellness Journeys between Jan. 1 and Sept. 30, 2015.
2. Complete the Annual Health Compass Assessment between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, 2015.

Questions, comments or concerns about the program?

Please email or call Wellness Coordinator Shannon Carmody at wellness@cityoftacoma.org or (253) 591-2002.



GET A JUMPSTART ON YOUR NEW INCENTIVE REQUIREMENTS

As a reminder, you need to complete certain tasks in 2016 if you hope to earn an incentive for 2017. Specifically, you have until Sept. 30, 2016 to fulfill the requirements and earn the 2017 Wellness Incentive. So, make sure to get started NOW!

2017 INCENTIVE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Complete two Wellness Journeys between Oct. 1, 2015 and Sept. 30, 2016. **Start working on your Journeys NOW.**
2. Complete the Annual Health Compass Assessment between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, 2016. **You can take the Health Compass at anytime—BUT you will ONLY get credit for the Health Compass if you take it during the specified timeframe of Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, 2016.**

2017 INCENTIVE (CREDIT):

- A. \$20 per month credit (\$240 savings annually) toward your premium contribution for medical insurance coverage under the Regence and Group Health Traditional plans.

OR

- B. \$40 per month credit (\$480 savings annually) toward your premium contribution for medical insurance coverage under the Regence and Group Health High-Deductible Health Plans AND a higher City contribution into your Health Savings Account.

Where should you start? Work on Journeys!

Journeys take anywhere from two to six weeks to complete. Anything you have done with Journeys starting Oct. 1, 2015 has counted towards your 2017 Wellness Incentive. Once logged in, click on "HEALTHMAP" to see a list of all Journeys.

Visit wellness.cityoftacoma.org for Journey FAQs and tips, and for more information regarding the 2017 incentive and requirements.



City of Tacoma
Human Resources Department
Employee Wellness
747 Market Street, Room 1448
Tacoma, WA 98402

Your Wellness Program Resources

Questions? For general questions regarding your Wellness program or the incentive, please visit the Tacoma Employee Wellness microsite at wellness.cityoftacoma.org or contact Wellness Coordinator Shannon Carmody at (253) 591-2002 or wellness@cityoftacoma.org.

If you would like help with the registration process, or have user issues on the website, please call RedBrick Customer Service toll-free at (877) 278-5241.

Forgot Your Password? You can reset your password by visiting <https://tew.redbrickhealth.com> and clicking: "Forgot your password?"

Forgot Your Username? Contact RedBrick Customer Service toll-free at (877) 278-5241.

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Wellness Program Information Inside

2017 Incentive is Underway. How can you save at least \$240 in 2017? You should start working towards your achievable and fun 2017 incentive requirements TODAY.

Begin an Exercise Routine You Can Enjoy. Simple things such as varying your activities or finding a workout partner can help you start and continue an exercise routine.

Employee Wellness Survey. Your feedback and ideas are critical as we aim to grow and improve the Tacoma Employee Wellness Program in 2016.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- FEELING THE PRESSURE • P.1
- SIMPLE EXERCISE TIPS • P.1
- SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH • P.2
- EMPLOYEE WELLNESS SURVEY • P.2
- GYM MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNTS • P.2
- 2016 INCENTIVE RECAP • P.3
- 2017 INCENTIVE—START NOW • P.3

Jan/Feb 2016