

June/
July
2016

SPECIAL EDITION

NEWSLETTER OF THE
CITY OF TACOMA

HealthVine



DEADLINE APPROACHING

If you want to save at least \$240 in 2017, you should start working on the requirements TODAY. As a reminder, the requirements for the 2017 Incentive are as follows:

- Completion of two Journeys between Oct. 1, 2015 and Sept. 30, 2016.
- Completion of the Annual Health Compass between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, 2016.

The 2017 Wellness Incentive amounts are identical to the 2016 Incentive options. **For more information about the monetary incentive, please go to wellness.cityoftacoma.org/wellness-incentives.**

Additionally, there is a comprehensive and extremely helpful Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Guide available at wellness.cityoftacoma.org.



SUMMER INCENTIVE CAMPAIGN: DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE(S) TO WIN A \$75 GIFT CARD!

Summer in the Pacific Northwest is a great time to start a healthy, new habit. You could be starting a new activity like hiking, biking, rowing, or a team sport. You could also be trying to get more vegetables in your diet. Whatever the case may be, the region's natural beauty and agricultural abundance is sure to inspire you. Tacoma Employee Wellness wants to help keep you engaged in your health. For every RedBrick Journey you complete, you will be entered to win a \$75 gift card. Four winners will be selected at each draw date.

Drawing Dates: July 20, Aug. 3, Aug. 17, Aug. 31 and Sept. 14.

Example: If you have already completed two Journeys this year, and do not have time to complete another one before July 20, you will still get TWO entries into the first drawing. But then, if you end up completing one more Journey by the second drawing, you will be entered into that Lottery drawing THREE times (since you have now completed three Journeys)! In short, you get entered into each drawing based on the total number of Journeys you have completed by the draw date.

Stay tuned for more information about the Summer Incentive. In the meantime, visit <https://TEW.redbrickhealth.com> to work on Journeys.

SHARE YOUR WELLNESS STORY. We want to hear from YOU! Please submit your Wellness Story/Journey to wellness@cityoftacoma.org.



TACOMA
EMPLOYEE WELLNESS
Growing with Better Health

Safety Corner

Information in this section was provided by the City of Tacoma Risk Management/Safety Division

HOW YOUR BODY WORKS

Muscles move as a result of signals from your brain through an amazing cabling system. This delicate cabling system is protected by an ingenious set of movable bones called the spinal column.

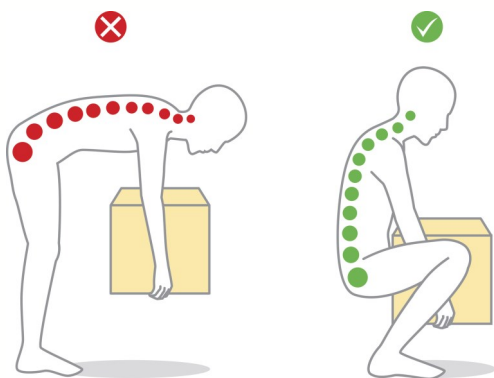
The spinal column supports the upper body, gives us flexibility to bend in all directions, and consists of 24 bones called vertebrae, connected by spinal discs.

Spinal discs act like shock absorbers and allow us to tilt forward, backward, or sideways.

Keeping your spinal column injury free will reduce the effects of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

PREVENTION, STAY IN YOUR SAFETY ZONE

To protect yourself from MSDs and other painful injuries, stay in your Safety Zone.



The safety zone is the area directly in front of your body, from mid-thigh to shoulder height, extending from the length of your forearm and hand.

When you bend to lift outside this zone, the discs and muscles of your lower back have to support the weight of your upper body, plus whatever you are lifting.

TIPS BEFORE WEEKEND CHORES

Warm up your muscles first. Before starting, do five minutes of stretching to get your circulation going.



Use material handling aids. When moving heavy objects, use carts, dollies, wagons or wheelbarrows.

Reduce weight and force. Know the weight of your load and make multiple trips for larger tasks.

Push instead of pull when possible.

Don't be afraid to drop your load, instead of bending over. If you lose your grip, let the load drop to the floor.

Don't lower something that needs to be lifted later.

TIPS BEFORE YOU WORK ON YOUR CAR

When you work on your car, remember to practice good body mechanics.

Never reach and/or lift outside your safety zone. If you need to reach, find the shortest reach possible and use one hand to support your upper body.

Avoid repetitive twisting and turning. Use a floor crawler instead of crawling underneath your car.

Use the proper grip. Wear gloves, grip with thumb and fingers, and keep your wrists in neutral position.

Use proper lifting techniques.

Use the correct tools for the job. Always get the right tool instead of using one not designed for the task.

Take regular breaks and rest if you feel pain. Every hour, take a two or three-minute break to rest and stretch.

THE RIGHT WAY TO RELAX

Maintain the natural curve of the spine and sit against the back of the chair or sofa. Use cushions if needed.

Use a foot stool if your legs dangle to improve circulation from your legs to your heart.

Make sure you have a firm mattress so that your body is relaxed and your neck is not sagging.

Support your neck with a neck support pillow or a rolled towel under the padded area of the pillow.

Try to sleep on your back to reduce pressure on your discs. If you sleep on your side, bend your legs and knees.

Elevate and bend your knees with a pillow to reduce excess curvature in your spine.



Back Health/Safety Journeys

Lift Right, Sit Right (3 Stages): Learn how to sidestep back pain by trying out easy ways to tweak the things you do every day, from lifting to sitting to standing — even sleeping! Take small steps and be good to your back, no matter where your activities take you.

Strengthen Your Core (2 Stages): Core strength means more than six-pack abs. Strong muscles in the center of your body can help you avoid back pain throughout your day, from tasks at work, to picking up your kids to moving that sofa. Practice and put together simple moves that will help you look better, feel better and avoid back pain.

Wellness Champion Opportunities

Do you want to help create excitement around leading a healthy lifestyle? By volunteering to be a Wellness Champion for the Tacoma Employee Wellness Program – Growing With Better Health – you can!

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Serve as a liaison between the Tacoma Employee Wellness Program and your work department/location.
- Assist with and provide feedback for Tacoma Employee Wellness activities and events (i.e., Health Fairs).
- Recommend improvements and solutions.
- Distribute program materials for communications, activities and events.
- Attend Wellness Champion meetings/trainings (approximately 2 hours per month). Supervisor approval will be required.

HOW TO APPLY

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

CURRENT TEAM MEMBERS

- Chris Hartman, Management Analyst II, Environmental Services (CTP)
- Chris Hicks, Lead Water Service Worker, Tacoma Water
- Michele Nelson, Utility Services Rep II, T&D Services Engineering (TPU)
- Shantel Shepard, Administrative Assistant, Tacoma Water

Meet Chris Hicks, Wellness Champion, Lead Water Service Worker, TPU

My name is Chris Hicks and I have been working at Tacoma Water since 1998. I currently run a construction crew that operates, maintains, installs and repairs structures like water mains, services and fire hydrants. I wanted to be involved with the Wellness program because I want to help spread the word. Being healthy is not about being on the newest diet, it's choosing to move more, eat healthier, and sleep better. Learning to be healthy has helped me enjoy life more. I'm still not done—it's not easy for me—but this will be another tool I can use to get myself to where I want to be.

Employee Wellness Story Spotlight: Chris Hicks

In our efforts to get out more and be a bit more active, my wife decided to plan a family hike. She picked Lake Serene and Bridal Veil Falls just past Goldbar on the Skykomish River.

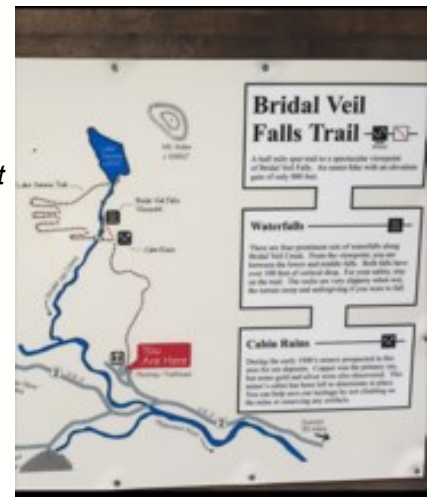
This is the first time we have gone out specifically for a hike. We have gone camping, or gone to other attractions and done some hiking in the process. But, a dedicated trip for hiking was pretty new to us. We packed our snacks, dressed in light layers, checked the weather report for the 10th time, and saw that it would be overcast, around 60 degrees.

By the time we got there, our famous Western Washington rain decided it wanted to hike with us. It was dumping. We put our ponchos on and went for it anyways. The trail was well maintained, a constant uphill walk at a manageable grade. You had to cross a couple of small streams along the way, maybe ankle deep.

We then came to a point where we could go up to the falls, or to the lake. We chose the falls. It was a half-mile of very steep hiking. We came to a point where the trail narrowed and was under a few inches of water, and was still continuing its climb upward. We turned back. The conditions, combined with our inexperience, just didn't feel right.

On the way back, my wife informed me that she bought the forest pass for the whole season, so we had to use it another six times to get our money's worth and that we had to come back when it was a bit drier.

While we didn't make it to the falls, we still had a good time. About halfway back to the trail head, the sun came out. It was great, and it made the way back so much better. The streams were much easier to cross, we could enjoy the scenery without the drumming of rain on our ponchos. As far as being a bit more active, my Fitbit measured 10,000 steps, and 86 floors climbed, in about three hours. It was good family time, we had smiles on our face when we were done, and are looking forward to the next hike.



Summer Hiking Tips*

If you can walk, you can hike. That's not to say you're ready to take on the Pacific Crest Trail. Even those in good shape need to start out with novice hikes and gradually take on more challenging trails to build confidence and skills while avoiding injury or burn out.

DETERMINE YOUR FITNESS LEVEL

Always be conservative and talk to your doctor before starting out. Some questions to consider are:

- Can I walk or run a mile?
- Do I have any ankle or joint problems?
- Do I have asthma, allergies or heart problems?

FIND A HIKING COMPANION

Hiking with company can make starting out both safer and more enjoyable.

SELECT APPROPRIATE CLOTHING AND GEAR

Footwear: Hiking boots provide support and comfort for your feet and ankles on long trails and uneven terrain.

Proper Clothing: In the summer time, this typically means a synthetic t-shirt and shorts. However, living in the Pacific Northwest, you should always be prepared for rain or wind. So, make sure to pack a rain/wind jacket and hiking/rain pants.

You should also consider purchasing hiking-specific socks because they offer more cushioning and breathability than cotton tube socks.

Backpack: To ensure safety and comfort on your hike, these items are considered essential:

Map and compass (although trails in city and state parks tend to be clearly marked); water; food; rain gear; firestarter and matches; multi-tool or knife; first aid kit; flashlight or headlamp; sunscreen and sunglasses; insect repellent

HIKING SAFELY

Keeping safe while hiking begins with careful planning and preparation. **On Page 3, you will recall that City of Tacoma employee Chris Hicks implemented these steps perfectly!**

- Check the weather and read recent trip reports to find out about current trail conditions and potential hazards.
- Stay on the trail! The chances of getting lost or injured increase dramatically if you leave the path.
- Set the right pace and take breaks when needed.
- Hike within your skills and abilities. It is okay to turn back if a hike ends up being more difficult for you or another companion in your group.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Watch for storm clouds, potential hazards on the trail or wild animals.

HIKING ETIQUETTE

Give other groups space (and right of way): Don't crowd other parties; either pass them or wait to give them some space. Similarly, let faster groups pass and yield to those hiking uphill when you're descending. And don't forget to say hello to passers-by!

Watch your noise level: Let yourself (and others) enjoy the sounds of the outdoors by limiting your group size to six or fewer and keeping your noise level to a minimum. If you bring your cell phone, turn it off and only use it in case of emergencies.

Minimize your impact: As the saying goes, leave only footprints, take only pictures. Pack out all your trash, never attempt to approach or feed a wild animal, and stay on the trail to avoid trampling delicate flora and fauna.

Be a good group member: Set an appropriate pace, warn others about loose rocks and other hazards, and hold overhanging branches out of the way so they don't hit those behind you in the face.



*** Information in this section was adapted from the Washington Trails Association. Please visit their website at wta.org for more information on hiking safety, etiquette, trail options and much more!**



2015 City of Tacoma Team

2016 South Sound Heart & Stroke Walk

Did you know two-thirds of adults in this country are obese or overweight, nearly half of all adults have high cholesterol, and obesity in children has tripled in the past three decades? By the year 2020, American Heart Association strives to improve the cardiovascular health of Americans by 20 percent while also reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20 percent.

You can be part of saving and improving lives too. Visit the [City of Tacoma Heart & Stroke Walk Page](#) and register as a participant or team captain. Once you're signed up, you can reach out to coworkers, friends and family to participate by sending emails and using social media. Our goal is to have 150 employees, friends and families participate. Let's make it happen!

Many thanks in advance for your consideration to support the Heart & Stroke Walk. Your participation is greatly appreciated and will make a significant impact on the fight against heart disease and stroke! If you have any questions about the event you can reach out directly to Heart & Stroke Walk staff partner Dawn Hong at dawn.hong@heart.org.

The City of Tacoma has participated in the South Sound Heart and Stroke Walk for over 11 years, and has helped raise over \$164,000 to support the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association. These funds have helped support cardiovascular and stroke research and programs in our community. Previous research funded by the American Heart Association has brought us CPR, AEDs, cholesterol and blood pressure medications, life-saving surgical techniques and much more!

TEAM CAPTAINS

We are still in the need for City of Tacoma team captains! Please visit the [City of Tacoma Heart & Stroke Walk Page](#) to register today for your team. Special thanks to the following individuals who have stepped forward to lead teams for their departments:

City Attorney's Office: Cheryl Comer; **Director's Office:** Linnea Meredith; **Finance:** Carly Erkers; **HR Huff & Puff:** Angie Hardy
Police: Loretta Cool; **Power Generation:** Jenni Allen; **Power Management:** Christine Hogue **TEAM IT:** Kathy Lapp

CITY OF TACOMA GOAL

The City of Tacoma aims to have a great showing with at least **150 walkers** and achieve a fundraising **goal of \$15,000** for the fight against heart disease and stroke. Participating is fun and easy, and you can invite friends and family to join you!

THIS NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT THE WELLNESS MICROSITE
<http://wellness.cityoftacoma.org/159-2>



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.

HealthVine Special Edition Newsletter

Wellness Program Information Inside

Summer Incentive Campaign. Tacoma Employee Wellness wants to help keep you engaged in your health. For every RedBrick Journey you have completed or do complete by each drawing date, you will automatically be entered to win a \$75 gift card (four winners at each draw date).

Employee Spotlight Story.

Chris Hicks is a Lead Water Service Worker for Tacoma Water. Read about his personal journey to better health!

2016 Heart and Stroke Walk. Demonstrate your commitment to health by participating in this year's South Sound Heart and Stroke Walk.

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