

SPOTLIGHT

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Walk the Talk: Northeast Region

by Cathy Agan

You may have heard the phrase, “Walk the talk.” Well, LSU AgCenter agents and staff in the Northeast Region are on their way to improving health and wellness and walking the talk they share in their educational efforts. A Well-Ahead Louisiana Workplace Wellness grant has funded equipment and training for team members to “fit in fitness” at the workplace. Workplace wellness initiatives such as this are a means of creating access and accountability for staff to improve health outcomes. Healthier staff members lead to more productive staff members. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, healthier employees are less likely to call in sick and are generally more productive.

FCS team members recently participated in a workshop to learn how to use the equipment and motivate them to participate in wellness challenges. Health in six key areas will be targeted: bone and joint health, cardiovascular health, lung health, blood pressure levels, mental health, and spinal health. Strength training through the use of kettle balls will help improve bone and joint health outcomes. Challenges will encourage participants to utilize the kettle balls during work breaks.



Cardio drumming is a fun way to improve cardiovascular health and will also provide mental health benefits through the creative process of combining music and physical activity. Cardio drumming can also promote lung health and help lower blood pressure levels. Staff members will participate in this full-body, low-impact form of exercise with opportunities to join in virtually to exercise together. Challenges will also be issued to encourage participants to get moving.

Employee mental health will be supported through breath training, yoga, and walking teams. This should also increase flexibility and improve general health outcomes. Recognition will be provided to the walking team with the highest staff participation and completion rate.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agents and nutrition educators have also received ergonomic standing desks to reduce time sitting while working. This will allow for sitting or standing while doing computer work. Fitness balls used for cardio drumming can double as desk chairs to support core engagement.

The Northeast Region is leading by example in setting health and wellness goals. The techniques learned in the workplace wellness training will be shared with clients as agents encourage them to seek opportunities for healthy habits. We encourage you to set your own wellness goals and find an accountability partner to help encourage you. We are excited to serve as accountability partners for our coworkers and look forward to feeling great!

