

Winter 2019 newsletter

Your **physical wellness** is one of several interconnected components that make up your *total health*. This issue of our newsletter celebrates, supports and recognizes the many ways your physical health plays a role in your overall wellness.

Finding time for your physical wellness can be challenging, however, it's important to prioritize physical health as it can influence your mental, work and life health. In this case, the *"whole is greater than the sum of its parts."* At the end of a busy work day, it is important that you have given yourself both the permission and the time for self-care.

If you practice self-care you can be more productive as you have increased energy and stamina. It can be hard to change behaviour but it's worth the effort. It allows you to put the well earned energy towards activities you enjoy, including friends, family, adventures and leisure time.

While we are working to integrate physical wellness into our day, it's important to remember that everyone is unique and there is not one method that will work for everyone. You may need to be creative to find ways to nourish your body that make sense for you. It's important to listen to your body and modify what you are doing to be successful. You may need to adapt your expectations as your body changes over time.

Physical wellness might be as simple as meal planning, going outside for some fresh air, walking instead of driving or doing some breathing exercises to energize your mind, body and spirit. The key is finding things that are meaningful to you. Others might have or offer ideas, but don't compare or define your success by their path. Be proud of your progress on your physical wellness journey and thrive.

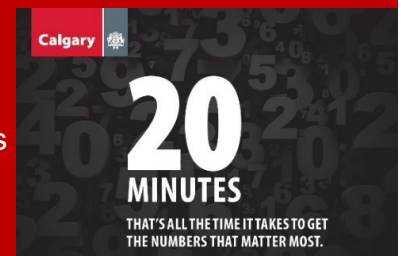


Reference:
Howatt, 2018

- ▶ Biometrics factors
- ▶ Lifestyle choices
- ▶ Medical history
- ▶ Physical activity
- ▶ Nutrition
- ▶ Sleep

Health Screening Clinics:

Do you know your numbers? The Health Screening Program gives you the opportunity to take control of your health by checking your blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol numbers. This information can help you to identify your risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Clinics are available at multiple City locations in 2019. Appointments take approximately 20 minutes. Visit calgary.ca/wellness for more information.



Wellness spotlight: Proactive steps towards wellness made as a team

A team in Human Resources consisting of HR Business Partners focused on their health in a big way. Under the leadership of Jeff Bell, the group focused on their mental, physical, work and life health.

Jeff's article (right) outlines the steps their team took to practice self-care and this helped these colleagues recognize and support one another. Their positive and proactive approach motivated and inspired others along the way.

One team member, Wura Odiase, shares how she made changes to integrate wellness in her workday. See Wura and her words of wisdom below.



Team of HR Business Partners model wellness in their work day

Written by Jeff J. Bell, HR Team Leader



On our team, we often talk about ensuring we take care of ourselves in addition to partnering with our client's businesses. It's just so easy to get lost in your daily work and forget to reserve time for ourselves.

So, this year we used each other as support. We created a water drinking challenge to increase the amount of water we were drinking daily. Wura was the team member who increased her water intake the most. And she maintained these levels well past the end of the challenge!

After another challenge focused on ensuring we took time away from our desks for a mid-day break. Then we got confident and engaged Laurie Grant in Wellness. She suggested a total health challenge that focused on four different aspects of health, including physical, mental, life and work. By bringing purposeful focus to our health, we were more present and intentional in our work and better able manage the work and personal stressors which are part of our lives.

Wura Odiase's perspective on making lifestyle changes

In August, my leader inspired our team with a water drinking challenge which required each of us to drink a liter of water per day. That was big deal for me, as at that time I could go an entire day without drinking *any* water. I began my challenge taking baby steps but today I drink three liters of water a day and am hoping to keep that going! Then came the September 2018 challenge to take our breaks, which was followed by the Total Health challenge as Jeff's article describes above.

I was ready to add another lifestyle change to my new water drinking habit. I joined a Zumba class through the employee fitness program. I thought I had great rhythm but this class proved me wrong! Despite this, I enjoyed this time and always looked forward to it. I am looking forward to the next team challenge. In the meantime, I'm gradually increasing my exercises and eating the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables each day. My little efforts are yielding great dividends. Aristotle says, "We are what we repeatedly do." For me, this is about being mindful about my choices and purposefully doing the things that add value to me and my family. Hopefully, I can inspire others to step in and join the race. Remember, the greatest wealth is health.

Photos: Wura's smoothie to keep her energized; Wura on the elliptical in 8th floor gym, Municipal building.

Integration of stretching by Customer Services and Communications' BOWD team

In 2018, Jacob George and his BOWD team worked collaboratively with HR Wellness and Recreation to integrate a stretch into their work week. The sessions built off the success from past initiatives led in Roads and Parks at The City. Below are some stakeholder highlights.

Amanda Cole, Employee Fitness Specialist with Recreation at The City worked with Jacob's team. She shared her experience on this collaborative opportunity. She said, "This CSC group embraced the benefits of stretching throughout their work day! We worked on improving posture, engaging the core and addressing tight and inactive muscles reminiscent of desk jobs once a week for four weeks. After this time, members of the group understood the benefits that stretching has on reducing stress and calming busy minds."

A few participants from the session identified some outcomes they experienced in the stretch initiative.

Shirley Tennant, Web Associate said, "We had good participation in the stretch class, the stretches were easy to do, the instructor (Dianne) was positive, motivating and fun! The results were the best part. I think we all felt refreshed, relaxed and learned some helpful and practical information. A take-away for me was stretching can be done at anytime and is well worth taking the time to do."

Donna Bertrand, a CSC analyst stated, "Participation in the stretch program really helped bring it top of mind. I think we forget about our bodies when our minds are so focused on work. But pausing to stretch now and then - getting the blood flowing - is as much a gift to our brains as it is to our brawn."

For information on a stretch program for your business unit or team, contact wellness@calgary.ca or visit calgary.ca/wellness for support.

Benefits of Stretching

1. Increases flexibility.
2. Gives you more freedom of movement.
3. Improves performance.
4. Improves circulation.
5. Improves muscle imbalances, proper alignment → posture.
6. Reduces stress.
7. Calms mind-mental break.

Photo: Dianne Lyle,
Fitness Instructor



City supports to enhance your physical wellness this year:

- **Ergonomic assessments and support from your Safety Advisor:** to maximize your alignment and ensure your work areas is set up ergonomically. Use the online ergonomic assessment tool and resources available on calgary.ca/safety to set up your workstation for maximum success and healthy outcomes.
- **Fitness classes and Wellness Education Sessions:** take advantage of The City's low cost fitness and/or free education classes at different City locations (visit Calgary.ca/wellness for more information).
- **Active Living Program:** if you have an annual membership, or continuous monthly pass at a City location or City partner facility, you are eligible for partial reimbursement through the Active Living Program.

Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

Everyone faces challenging and stressful events in their lives. Most of the time we can handle these situations ourselves; other times we could benefit from some support. Access support from a professional counsellor, a Life Smart Coach or obtain career coaching through your EFAP, Homewood Health, Homeweb.ca or by phone 1-800-663-1142.