

# Did You Know . . .

May 2013

## May is Global Employee Health and Fitness Month . . .

And we're challenging employees to live healthier lifestyles by creating Healthy Moments. Healthy Moments are occasions of healthy eating, physical activity, or personal/environmental health. Examples include: going for a walk, cooking a healthy meal, participating in an exercise class, quitting smoking, or making that doctor's appointment you've been putting off. Feel free to be creative with your own Healthy Moment (or several).

### The Benefits of Physical Activity

Research shows that those who are physically active are likely to live longer, healthier lives. The benefits of physical activity include weight control, reduced blood pressure, improved blood sugar regulation, stronger bone density, and stress reduction.

Also, a person who has hypertension, diabetes or a history of smoking can greatly benefit from including regular physical activity into their daily routine.

#### The First Step

If you are over 40 years of age, inactive or have health issues, consult a physician before you begin an exercise program.

#### A Complete Program

There are three main components to a well-balanced program of physical activity: aerobic exercise, strength training and flexibility training.

Commitment to a regular physical activity program is more important than the intensity of your workouts. Choose exercises you are likely to pursue and enjoy, such as:

- Walking
- Running
- Stair climbing
- Biking
- Rowing
- Cross-country skiing
- Swimming



#### Did you know...?

If you burn at least 150 extra calories per day by being physically active, you significantly reduce your risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, colon cancer, anxiety and depression.



Healthy aerobic training should be performed three to five days per week with a minimum of 20-30 minutes per day. Remember, if your schedule is tight, it is better to exercise for a shorter period of time than not at all.

Strength training is another important exercise option. Strength training should be done two to three times per week, and is performed with free weights or weight machines. If real free weights aren't handy, cans of soup make a great substitute. For the purposes of general training, two to three upper body and lower body exercises should be done. Abdominal exercises are an important part of strength training as well.

Flexibility training is important too, but is frequently neglected, resulting in increased tightness as you age and become less active. Stretching is most safely done with sustained gradual movements lasting a minimum of 15 seconds per stretch. At a minimum, strive to stretch every day.

### Get Your Kicks and Get Fit on Route 66

Get Fit on Route 66 is a physical activity program open to employees of McWane and its divisions. This will be a fun, interactive virtual 2,448 mile journey down historic Route 66 — from the Lake Michigan shore to the Pacific Ocean. You'll track your progress by recording exercise minutes; 1 minute equals 1 mile on the route (up to a maximum of 90 miles per day). You earn a road sign for every day that you record 30 minutes, and the division with the most road signs per participant at the end of the journey will be crowned "King of the Road." Registration opens May 20 at <http://mcwane.getfitonroute66.com>. The journey begins June 3 and ends September 8. Look for more information at your facility.



For Generations

## It's a Great Time to Get Active Outside

Getting the recommended amount of physical activity every day doesn't have to be a chore. Playing outside is an easy way to make activity fun for the whole family. Getting outdoors is a great way for your family to develop an active lifestyle.

### Where to Go

There are many different places you can go to get active outside. You can stay as close as your back yard or take a short trip across your state. Visit a local park, playground or recreation area, or check out a state or national park. Not sure where to find one in your area? The Let's Move! initiative's website [www.letsmove.gov/where-go](http://www.letsmove.gov/where-go) provides links for places to go. The MapWalk website [www.mapwalk.com](http://www.mapwalk.com) is great for mapping (and measuring) walking, running or bicycle routes.

### What to Do

It's easy to find affordable activities that will help bring your family together as you enjoy the outdoors.

**Travel by foot.** From walking around the block to hiking up a mountain, there are many new places to explore on foot. Hiking and walking have been shown to improve cardiovascular health and even help you lose weight if you walk regularly.

**Ride your bikes.** Riding a bike helps improve balance and endurance. Biking is a fun, family-friendly activity that you can all use to stay healthy and get places faster.

**Go swimming.** This low-impact activity burns more calories per hour than almost any other activity, and has been shown to improve strength, flexibility and cardiovascular health.

### What to Bring

If you're spending more than an hour or two outside, think about bringing along the following to keep it safe and fun:

- Drinking water to stay hydrated
- Healthy snacks like nuts and carrot sticks
- Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses to protect from the sun's UV rays
- Rain gear or extra layers in case the weather changes
- Reflective clothing and/or a flashlight if you will be out after dark
- Backpack to carry everything



McWane, Inc.  
1143 Vanderbilt Road  
Birmingham, AL 35234