

# How to ... hold a launch event



## Why hold a launch event?

Holding a launch event is an excellent way to promote new and existing health initiatives to employers and employees. The launch event can help:

- raise the profile of your initiatives
- engage employees in the type of activities that will be on offer
- show employees that their organisation is committed to health in the workplace.

It is also a good way to meet employees and get their feedback on your ideas.

## Who should be involved in the planning and delivery of the launch event?

Gain support from people within your workplace and in the local area.

It is extremely useful to gain management support and commitment in the early stages of planning. If management are involved, employees are more likely to feel they can help with the event and turn up on the day. Involvement from staff across and at all levels of the organisation will also be invaluable and will lighten the load of organising the event.

You can also engage with external partners (such as local leisure centres and gyms, or primary care trusts) and invite them to advertise their services by sending information or attending on the day. You will be surprised at what some organisations may do or offer for your workplace.

## Where are you going to hold your launch event?

When deciding where to hold your launch event, consider if the location is:

- convenient for employees to get to
- an appropriate size
- accessible to the invited visitors on the day
- likely to cause disruption to others nearby.

You may have to hold your event in more than one location.

## When will you hold your launch event?

Choose a date that enables you to plan and prepare fully and does not put pressure on yourself or others. Before setting a date, find out if there are any workplace events, meetings or important dates or times of the year that will clash with your event and affect its success.

When thinking about what time of day or week to hold your event you may wish to think about repeating your event to cover shifts, part-time workers and absent workers.

## What will your launch event look like?

When considering what to include in your launch event, it is useful to think about what you want to achieve.

The name and/or logo of your health programme should be highly visible during your launch event. The coordinator and any key people involved should be on show during the event so that employees are clear about whom they can approach in the future.

Your launch event should be fun and include elements that will appeal to all employees.

Employees will be more likely to attend if they know the event is supported by management. A clear way to show this is to have management support when promoting the event and their presence on the day. Encourage management to agree that employees can attend the event during their working time.

## Here are some ideas to consider including in your launch event:

- **Highlight the opportunities and services already available to employees.** The event is a good opportunity to make employees aware of what is already available to them and how they can get involved. To highlight opportunities to employees you could create new web pages on your intranet, or produce a leaflet and/or a poster display.

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- **Provide information on physical activity, healthy eating and/ or mental wellbeing.**

The event is a good way to raise awareness and encourage employees to start thinking about their health.

- **Provide some physical activity taster sessions.**

Taster sessions help to engage employees and will give them an idea of what is available and how easy it is to take part. See Ideas for taster sessions at your launch event, below.

- **Provide health checks for all employees.**

- **Invite relevant organisations to promote what they offer.**

Physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellbeing related organisations will be able to provide specialist advice and information. They often have attractive stands and can bring leaflets and resources that employees find helpful. See Ideas for taster sessions at your launch event, below.

- **Provide suggestion boxes and boards.**

Gather employee ideas and opinions on what they have found useful and what they would like to see in the future. You may want to provide either anonymous suggestion boxes or a large pinboard where people can share comments and openly make suggestions.

### **How will you let people know you are holding a launch event?**

Communication is key to attracting people from both within and outside the workplace to your launch event.

### **Some ideas to encourage employees to attend include offering:**

- freebies
- health passes, free swims or vouchers
- competitions
- a raffle, with a healthy fruit box for a prize
- taster sessions
- health checks

- healthy snacks
- mini massages.

For more information on communicating your messages and encouraging people to attend, see Booklet 1, page 16 - 20 in the Health at Work Toolkit.

### **Ideas for taster sessions at your launch event**

#### **Walking**

You could organise for led walks to take place during the launch event, either at lunchtime or throughout the day. You could also provide pedometers to all employees who attend. Visit [Walking links](#) for more information, ideas and organisations linked to walking.

#### **Cycling**

You could organise cycle maintenance workshops, cycle safety checks and cycle skills training. Visit [Cycling links](#) for more information, ideas and organisations linked to cycling.

#### **Leisure centres and corporate membership**

If you already have an established link with a local leisure centre and/or provide corporate membership for employees, encourage their representatives to come along and advertise this to employees.

If your organisation does not have a corporate membership arrangement, you could contact local leisure centres and gyms and ask about what they could offer.

#### **Activity demonstrations – such as yoga, pilates or dance**

You could organise for an external instructor – for example, a yoga, pilates or dance instructor – to deliver sessions throughout the day or at lunchtime. A local gym may be able to provide instructors to deliver sessions. For more information, visit [How to promote activity classes](#).

#### **Blendavenda**

Blendavenda is a cycle-powered smoothie and

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cocktail maker and is an ideal way of stimulating people's interest at events.  
See [www.blendavenda.com](http://www.blendavenda.com).

## **Fun options around fruit and vegetables**

Food is very sociable and always good for encouraging people to come along. Think about providing some healthy options that will look and taste good. You could provide free fruit and vegetables, exotic fruit sampling, or fruit kebabs.

For more information and ideas about promoting healthy eating in the workplace, see the BHF Health at Work Toolkit, Booklet 3. Order your copy from our [website](#).

## **Massage**

To help ease some of the strains and tension that people may be experiencing from sitting or standing in one position all day, you could provide some massages at your event – for example, a chair massage (a massage they can have while sitting on a chair), or a head massage. You may be able to find a local masseur who would be prepared to offer some massages at your event.

Masseurs are not regulated, so it is important to check that anyone you use is insured against causing injury and has been trained specifically to offer massage. For contact details of local masseurs, see the website of the Academy of On-site Massage ([www.aosm.co.uk](http://www.aosm.co.uk)) or StressBusters ([www.mobile-massage-uk.co.uk](http://www.mobile-massage-uk.co.uk)).

For more information and ideas about promoting mental wellbeing in the workplace, see the BHF Health at Work Toolkit, Booklet 4. Order your copy from our [website](#).