

Commander's Wellness Challenge

Overview



- **Program Objective:** Weight loss and healthy living challenge to highlight command support of health and involve civilians in activities. Challenge requires pledging to 1) lose 15 pounds during the 3 month timeframe and 2) successfully complete two 5K Walk/Run Events.
- **MTF:** Fort Sill
- **Implementation Dates:** 2013– Present (2 cycles)
- **To reach local point of contacts, visit [Military Installations](#)**
- **Total Force Fitness Domains:** Physical, Behavioral, Social

Program Description



- Safely promotes and executes a coordinated and collaborative event that promotes the Garrison Commander's dedication to physical wellness.
- Open to all Fort Sill employees. Active Duty will often train with their civilian coworkers for the 5Ks, improving camaraderie and support.
- Incentives includes 2 hours off for every 5 lbs. lost – up to six hours off; or participation in two 5K walk/run
- Participants cannot use their regular tour of duty hours for this program. Time spent includes breaks, lunch, and after/before hours to walk/run.
- At the culmination 5K event all participants receive certificates, leadership recognition, and an invitation to a "wellness social"

Evidence of Program Effectiveness



- **Reach:** Both civilians and active duty participate, positively influencing one another. For example, 21 of the 31 civilians from the Personnel Control Facility participated in 2014.
- **Participation:** In 2014 189 employees signed up, 1200 miles walked, 125 participated in final 5K
- **Results:** In 2014 participants lost 3 lbs. on average for a total of 600 lbs.; the female winner lost 19 lbs. & the male winner lost 33 lbs. In 2013 participants lost a total of ~1000 lbs.

Costs and Required Resources



- 90+ days to run the program
- 1 Wellness POC, 1 hour/week for data collection
- Supplies: ink, paper, overtime cost for police (for 5K road blocking), and wellness social

Lessons Learned



- **Clearly state in the Op Order** the rules, objectives, and requirements for funding, leave requests, prizes, etc.
- Make the **Garrison Commanders 5K a required run** out of the two required
- **Utilize the staff and individuals that are motivated to help;** have the wellness POC manage the signups and 5K validation (via receipt, shirt, or tag)
- Start at the garrison level and **after success has been proven and there is a support base, expand to the installation-wide level**

Leadership Driven Fitness Initiatives: Highlights and Best Practices

Fort Sill and Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod take an innovative approach to health and wellness by offering leadership-driven fitness opportunities.

Fort Sill: Commander's Wellness Challenge

- ✓ **Incentivize Participation:** For every 5 lbs. lost, participants earn 2 hours off (up to 6 hours total)
- ✓ **Inclusion is Key:** By allowing all Fort Sill employees to participate, the competition promotes camaraderie and collaboration between civilians and Active Duty
- ✓ **Perfect Timing:** Take advantage of people's increased commitment to wellness in the New Year by kicking off the competition in January

Cape Cod: Early Morning Leadership-Led Workouts

- ✓ **Offer Variety:** Providing a wide range of activities – from CrossFit to soccer – ensures that all participants can engage in fitness
- ✓ **Make Connections:** Promoting team sports allows officers to connect with junior enlisted in a positive recreational environment
- ✓ **Schedule Strategically:** By requiring that all attend the morning muster meeting at 0730, individuals are more likely to stay for the workout that follows

Leading by Example: Proof of Effectiveness



In a study¹ of 67 separate work groups involving 683 total employees across a large communications organization, researchers found a positive correlation between **employees' perceptions of the worthiness of their leader as a role model** and their **willingness to go above and beyond their formal job description** to help fellow employees or the organization as a whole.

The **physical distance of the leader from the group** also had an effect on employees' organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), a metric designed to capture one's willingness to go above and beyond a formal job description.

¹ T. Yaffe and R. Kark. (2011). Leading by example: The case of leader OCB. *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

Impact of Commander's Wellness Challenge at Fort Sill

Quantitative Evidence

- Five office administrators banded together and walked **50+ miles** over the course of the competition
- **1200** miles total through the 5Ks! ¹



Best Practices & Resources

Incentive Structure: Prizes = Results & Participation

- **Personnel incentives:** Weight loss, improved health, stress reduction, camaraderie, and overall well being
- **Time-Off:** 2 hours off for every 5 lbs. lost – up to six hours off; or participation in two 5K walk/run
- **Recognition & Celebration:** all participants receive certificates, leadership recognition, and an invitation to a “wellness social

Media & Resources:

- Article detailing initiative’s success published Fort Sill Cannoneer in July 2014

Safety:

- Need a clearance for participation for health issues and at a certain age
- If program team notices an issue they will issue a referral to healthcare provider and/or dietitian

1. Probable error of 50 miles

Qualitative Evidence

Leadership Support

Sgt. Maj. Thomas Miller participated in the 7:30 a.m. 5K. "We all, not just Soldiers, need to look at how we can better take care of ourselves, and lead healthier lives," the command sergeant major said.

Testimonials

"The challenge helped me get into shape and stay in shape," said Bell, who stopped exercising when he left Army active duty in 1996. "Now exercise is a regular part of my daily activities."
- Jonathan Bell, Network Enterprise Center network administrator,

"We all got together and had a lot of motivation and camaraderie from the staff,"
-John Cutler, Personnel Control Facility deputy commander

Group Support



- Five office administrators banded together and walked **50+ miles** over the course of the competition
- Resource Management Office Employees **lost over 100 lbs.!**

Participation

92 women +
89 men =
181 total participants

Collaboration with the AWC & the Network Enterprise Centers

Early Morning Leadership-Led Workouts

Overview



- **Program Objective:** Encourage physical fitness and camaraderie through commander-led early morning workouts that offer individuals a wide range of workout options
- **MTF:** Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod
- **Implementation Dates:** 2013– Present
- **Point of Contact:** LT Vanderlaske (Steven.B.Vanderlaske@uscg.mil, 508-968-6316); Senior Chief Edwards (Sean.C.Edwards2@uscg.mil)
- **Total Force Fitness Domains:** Physical, Social

Program Description



- Command shows their support and encouragement of fitness by having “mandatory” workouts at 0730 every Wednesday morning
- Senior Chief will give a brief message at the beginning of the session, and then individuals divide into groups and exercise in their desired manner
- Workouts are varied, such as ~10 people at CrossFit, floor hockey, dodgeball, soccer, ultimate frisbee, flag football, running, weight lifting
- Sessions kick off in the main Air Station “gym,” a renovated hanger
- Installation’s support of fitness includes 2-3 wellness lunches per week of 3 hours that Active Duty and civilians are allowed to take

Evidence of Program Effectiveness



- **40-50 participants per week (roughly one-third of workforce)**
 - Workouts are mandatory for those at work on Wednesday
- **Increased participation** was noted after it was made clear that all members will be in attendance at 0730 morning muster
- Feedback from junior enlisted has been “**overwhelmingly positive**,” according to Senior Chief

Costs and Required Resources



- ~1/1.5 hours commitment on Wednesday mornings (0730) from leadership and all Active Duty
- No additional costs or resources, just support for fitness from command

Lessons Learned



- Innovative way to **effectively connect senior leadership with junior enlisted**; program contributes to morale of the unit and gives officers and enlisted the opportunity to **build relationships while playing team sports**
- By not forcing a singular workout, commanders are able to **encourage a broader range of individuals to engage in physical activity**
- **Offering a wide range of fitness activities** empowers individuals to feel like they have more of a choice in their own health and well-being
- If individuals are required to attend morning muster, they are more likely to stay for the workout following the meeting