

Tips for Incorporating Physical Activity Into Training Sessions

According to George Bernard Shaw, *“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”* Being playful is a key to successfully incorporating physical activity into any meeting or conference. A little active play in an otherwise serious learning environment helps to “loosen up” the participants – and often enhances their creativity and engagement with personal and group learning. Here are some other tips for planning activities that are guaranteed to get every participant up and moving.

1. Match the activities to the participants and the program’s theme.

Expert trainers know how important it is to match any activity, including physical activities, to the audience’s interests. If you are training child nutrition professionals, you could include a game of Simon Says where all the motions are common kitchen activities (chopping, mixing, flipping, etc.). If your training is near a holiday, you can use music for that occasion as background for your physical activities.

2. Always keep safety and comfort in mind.

While some physical activities may be lots of fun (a game of balloon volleyball, for example), they might not be appropriate in a tightly packed room or for people who have limited mobility or latex allergies. Every physical activity provides another opportunity to showcase how easy it is to enjoy an active lifestyle. To be successful with physical activity in a meeting, always be mindful of the comfort and safety of participants.

3. Provide music whenever you can.

Music is a powerful and positive way to get people moving. The beat of some musical styles almost forces people to get up and move around. When choosing music, think about your location, your audience, and the mood you want to set. Find a variety of music to suit your audience. From “polka” to “rock and roll,” you can find songs your participants will enjoy.

4. Ask for help when you need it.

Not everyone feels comfortable leading physical activities. If you are hesitant or unsure about taking on this role, ask for help from your colleagues or from a fitness professional. If there are any physical education (PE) teachers in the audience, they are often eager to lead physical activities. With advance planning, you may be able to enlist the assistance of a local dance instructor, yoga teacher, or physical therapist.

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