



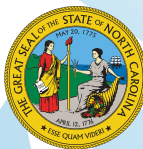
Coordinator's Guide

Bring the Holiday Challenge to your setting

Eat Smart, Move More...
Maintain, don't gain!

HOLIDAY
Challenge

NC STATE
EXTENSION



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Public Health

Bring the **Holiday Challenge** to Your Setting

OVERVIEW

Congratulations on taking the first step towards implementing the Holiday Challenge. This coordinator's guide provides tools and resources to help you implement the 7-week Holiday Challenge program in your setting. Each setting is different, and the strategies and resources provided in this guide are suggestions that should be adapted to fit your audience.

For many, the holiday season can mean a break from regular routines, reduced physical activity, indulgence, and other behaviors that can contribute to weight gain. Rather than focusing on trying to lose weight, the Holiday Challenge is a fun way to help your audience focus on maintaining their weight throughout the holiday season. Everyone can participate—whether they are looking to maintain their current weight or simply pick up new strategies to eat smart, move more, and live mindfully.

During the program, you will send participants weekly newsletters and daily tips each week that contain practical strategies to help them successfully navigate their way through the holiday season. The daily emails during the week can help participants stay focused and feel supported. It is recommended to also provide participants with weekly challenges, healthy holiday recipes, and support through social media.

Holiday Challenge Guidelines: the overall goal is for participants to *maintain* their current weight the last 7 weeks of the year. As a participant they will:

- **Weigh themselves each week.** Tracking weight is a proven weight management strategy. It is important to know starting weight as it will keep participants motivated and allow them to track their progress.
- **Track what they eat and drink.** By tracking what they consume each day, they can make sure that they are eating within calorie goals to maintain weight.
- **Track their activity.** Participants stay motivated by tracking activity each day. Every little bit adds up and seeing how much they have done can encourage them to do more.
- **Make a plan.** Participants figure out what works best for them. They use the tips and strategies provided to help them navigate the season.

Resources for Holiday Challenge coordinators can be found on esmmweighless.com/holidaychallengeprogram. These resources include:

- Program Content
- Holiday Walking Challenge
- Promotional Resources
- Tracking Resources
- Evaluation Templates

The collage features several key resources:

- Newsletter:** A 'Welcome to the Holiday Challenge' newsletter with a 'WEEK 1 CHALLENGE' section titled 'Wise & When You Bite It and Joy Is When You Trot It!'. It includes a 'Daily Tip: Social Connection' and a 'Trendy's Email' section.
- Walking Log:** A 'WALKING LOG' for tracking activity. It includes a table with columns for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and rows for Week 1 through Week 4. The table is currently blank.
- Social Media Graphic:** A graphic for the 'Holiday Walking Challenge' with the text 'COMING SOON!', 'Holiday Walking Challenge', and 'DON'T BE LEFT OUT! JOIN THE FUN'. It also includes the text 'Remember to check the weekly newsletters for updates, recipes, and more!'.
- Other Resources:** A 'Monday's Newsletter' and a 'Recipe Booklet' are also visible in the collage.

Steps to Success

Think about these steps when you are planning a Holiday Challenge program that meets your setting's needs. There may be additional considerations unique to your setting that are not covered in this guide. Choose what is right for your setting.

1. **Identify a Holiday Challenge Coordinator.** This may be you or another person in your setting. A designated coordinator will make sure that the program is successful by managing the project, pulling together partners, and keeping enthusiasm going.
2. **Talk with key people to assess and ensure buy-in.** Regardless of the setting, engaging leadership buy-in is a crucial part of the process and program success. In a worksite, it may be an administrative executive, human resource manager, legal counsel, security or property manager, or others with decision-making authority. Show them examples of program materials and discuss options for incentives for participants. Discuss time commitment, responsibilities, the budget, and resources available. Be realistic, especially in the beginning. You can always modify or enhance the program once it is established. Remind leadership of the many benefits to participation in the Holiday Challenge, including happier, healthier individuals throughout the holiday season and into the New Year.

Having a dedicated staff member is a key success factor for developing and managing the Holiday Challenge program for your setting.
3. **Assess interest in your setting for participation in a Holiday Challenge program.** Consider sending online surveys, using a paper survey, or talking informally at gatherings to gauge interest. Make sure there is broad interest and support for participation in a Holiday Challenge program to ensure success and ongoing support in your setting.
4. **Establish a planning committee.** The composition and number of committee members will be determined by your setting. Seek members with administrative, communication, health promotion, and marketing/promotions expertise. In a large worksite setting, you may need members from several departments, whereas in other settings it may be a one-person show.
5. **Determine program logistics and develop a project timeline.** Allow ample time to complete each step of the project. Remember, some planning tasks may take longer than expected while some steps can be quickly accomplished with a phone call or email. Reference our sample Holiday Challenge Program Timeline.

For more information about how to bring the Holiday Challenge to your setting, visit esmmweighless.com/holidaychallengeprogram or contact holidaychallenge@esmmweighless.com.

Holiday Challenge Program Logistics

The Holiday Challenge is a 7-week program that provides general resources for healthy eating and physical activity. How you implement the program in your setting depends on your audience and budget. You may need to make alterations to the program based on your setting's needs. Below are questions for consideration when implementing the Holiday Challenge program in your setting.



Q. How much funding does my setting have to run and promote a Holiday Challenge program?

The program can be as simple as sending emails from a free email account or it could involve a more complex setup using a paid email service like Constant Contact, social media engagement, and organized events. It is possible to run a Holiday Challenge program without funding by utilizing free digital resources. Keep in mind that coordinating the program does take time. Consider how much time the coordinator and the planning committee will have to devote to the running of a successful program. Paid email services are available that will help increase efficiency (ex. Constant Contact or Mail Chimp) and have scheduling and social media connection features.

Q. How will participants register in my setting?

The registration process will look different based on the resources and abilities available in your setting. Registration could be a digital sign-up form (ex. Google Forms) or an online survey (ex. Survey Monkey). For a very streamlined registration process, paid email services have inline contact sign-up form features that can be embedded on a website and funnel the registrations from your website back to a contact list. A free or paid digital sign-up form is recommended but a paper sign-up form could also be utilized.

Q. Does my setting have existing communication and or social media channels? Will the Holiday Challenge coordinator have

access to post through these channels?

It will be helpful to consider if the Holiday Challenge coordinator will have direct access to communication channels. If not, consider who they will need to connect with in their setting. A helpful resource would be a central landing page for participants to register, read announcements, and find resources. *Below are ideas for landing page content:*

- **Registration Link:** If you utilize a digital registration process, make it easy for your participants to know where to register.
- **Supplemental resources that support participants:** Share quality resources with your participants such as downloaded tracking logs, healthy recipes, and physical activity resources.
- **Frequently Asked Questions:** on your landing page list and answer anticipated participant questions. Below are examples of questions you may want to answer on your landing page pro-actively:
 - What is the Holiday Challenge?
 - Is the Holiday Challenge free?
 - When will the Holiday Challenge begin?
 - When does registration close?
 - Are there incentives?
 - How do I track my progress?

Q. Does my setting have the capacity for optional add-ons?

To generate successful participant engagement, determine if your organization can give out incentives or organize additional activities.

Holiday Challenge Program Content

Incentives

Make sure that any incentives provided are based on participation and not weight. Incentives do not have to be expensive and can even be free. Examples range from extended lunch hours to a drawing for a fitness tracker. Get creative with the incentives and make them appropriate for your setting!

Activities

In-person or virtual group activities allow participants to feel like a team and not as if they are doing it alone. For example, organize and encourage participation in the Holiday Walking Challenge which is a great physical activity complement to the program content. The Holiday Walking Challenge content can be inserted into the Holiday Challenge program content in Weeks 3 through 6 (see the Sample Holiday Challenge Program Timeline). Download the materials on esmmweighless.com/holidaychallengeprogram.

Other ideas for activities include but are not limited to:

- Program kickoff event.
- Healthy holiday potluck.
- Offer virtual or in-office lunch-n-learns on holiday stress, healthy eating, physical activity, financial support, or other topics of interest.
- Assign (or draw) Holiday Challenge buddies to write encouraging notes, go on walks together, and cheer each other on.
- Create a virtual or in-person lunchtime social support group for encouragement and accountability.

Remember that you may need to alter the duration of the challenge or program content based on your setting's needs.

The 7-week Holiday Challenge program consists of 35 emails excluding any marketing or end of program emails. There are 7 "Newsletters" that are emailed on Monday mornings. There are 28 "Daily Tips" emailed Tuesday through Friday mornings. Download the Holiday Challenge program content on the website esmmweighless.com/holidaychallengeprogram or create your own!

Create Your Own Program Content

We encourage you to get creative and customize the content to your setting. To help you create evidence-based program content for the Newsletters and Daily Tips reference the resources listed on esmmweighless.com/holidaychallengeprogram.

Newsletter Format

- Email Header Graphic
- Holiday Challenge Rules
- **Weekly Challenge:** *a paragraph instructing participants on a behavior or topic to focus on for one week.*
- Weekly Workout
- 2-3 Healthy Recipes

Weekly Challenge Examples

- Holiday Recipe Swap
- Mealtime Without Screen Time
- Mindful Eating
- Focus on Whole Grains
- Gift an Experience
- Pack or Prep Lunch Everyday
- 12 Days of Moving More
- Focus on Fruits and Vegetables
- Take Back Your Time
- Foster a Positive Outlook
- Adopt Flexible Thinking
- Find Your Fitness Connection

Daily Tip Format

- Email Header Graphic
- A few paragraphs about a healthy lifestyle behavior topic
 - Healthy Eating
 - Physical Activity
 - Stress Management
 - Sleep
 - Mindfulness
- **Daily Challenge:** *a small action that a participant can take that day.*

Daily Challenge Examples

- Skip the elevator and take the stairs.
- Invite a neighbor for a stroll.
- Prioritize your sleep tonight.
- Do 20 calve raises while waiting in line.
- Engage in a calming activity today.
- Take a 10-minute stretching break.
- Call a loved one to chat.
- Plan an exercise snack today.
- Engage with nature today.
- Choose water most of the day.
- Take a 5-10 minute walking break.

Marketing and Communications



There are many ways to create excitement for the Holiday Challenge program in your setting. Be creative when planning promotion opportunities.

- Develop a budget and timeline for communication activities. Aim to begin marketing for the program at least one month before the start date.
- Use effective ways to promote the Holiday Challenge (e.g., e-mails, blogs, social media, posters, announcements, etc.). Get others in your setting involved in generating excitement for the Holiday Challenge.
- Develop your own promotional materials like fliers and posters letting people know about the project. Make sure they are in well-trafficked areas.
- Think fun, lots of color, and enthusiasm for promoting your program.

Program Kick-Off

Prepare a kick-off activity or celebration for the first day of the Holiday Challenge and use lessons learned to make it even better the next time.

Set up a table or station to hand out educational materials and get people signed up for your Holiday Challenge.

Arrange for a cooking demonstration, taste testing, or a fun workout class.

Give door prizes or other incentives.

Distribute tracking logs for participants to track their weekly weight, physical activity, and food.

Connect with participants on social media.

Downloadable resources are provided on esmmweighless.com/holidaychallengeprogram.

Program Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the success of your project to improve it in the future and to let stakeholders know how well the project does. During the planning process, determine what success looks like for your setting and develop an evaluation plan. Ideas include collecting participation data through digital or paper surveys. At the program's conclusion, create a shareable report that shows how many people participated and any feedback you received about what worked well as well as ideas for future years.

Program Registration

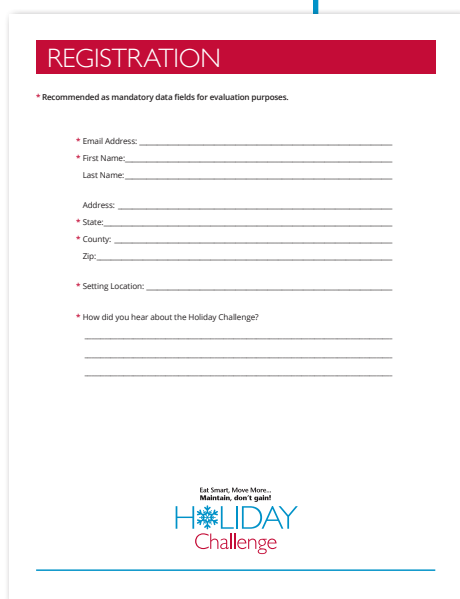
Remember that the registration form also contains valuable data that can be used for evaluation purposes. It is recommended to have a digital registration process. Think about what information you may want to collect for reporting purposes.

Download Evaluation Forms on esmmweighless.com/holidaychallengeprogram.

- Registration Form
- Pre-Program Evaluation
- Post-Program Evaluation

The forms can be printed, or the Holiday Challenge coordinator can use a digital resource (ex. Google Forms, SurveyMonkey, etc.) to recreate the forms to make data

collection and analysis easier. For a comprehensive report, it is recommended to have at a minimum a registration form as well as a pre and post-evaluation form.



REGISTRATION

* Recommended as mandatory data fields for evaluation purposes.

* Email Address: _____

* First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

* State: _____

* County: _____

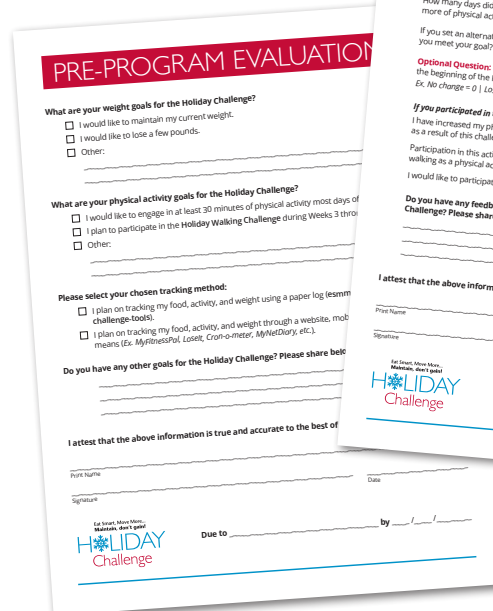
Zip: _____

* Setting Location: _____

* How did you hear about the Holiday Challenge?

HOLIDAY Challenge

Eat Smart, Move More...
Maintain, don't gain!



PRE-PROGRAM EVALUATION

What are your weight goals for the Holiday Challenge?

I would like to maintain my current weight.

I would like to lose a few pounds.

Other: _____

What are your physical activity goals for the Holiday Challenge?

I would like to engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week.

I plan to participate in the Holiday Walking Challenge during Weeks 3 through 5.

Other: _____

Please select your chosen tracking method:

I plan on tracking my food, activity, and weight using a paper log (esmm challenge-tools).

I plan on tracking my food, activity, and weight through a website, mobile means (Ex. MyFitnessPal, LoseIt, Cron-o-meter, MyNetDiary, etc.).

Do you have any other goals for the Holiday Challenge? Please share below:

I attest that the above information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

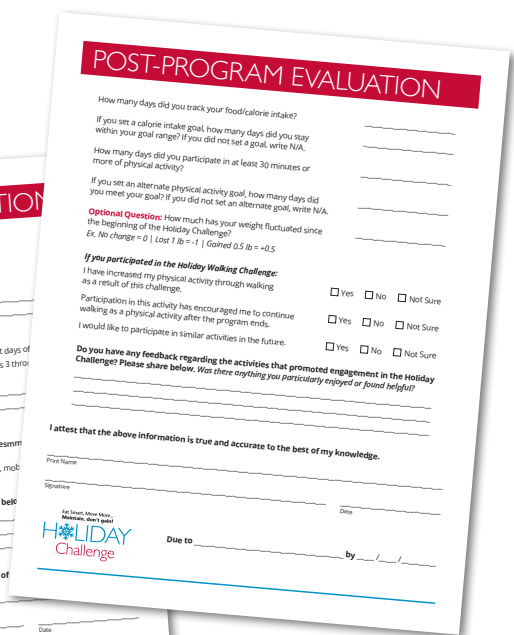
Print Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

HOLIDAY Challenge

Eat Smart, Move More...
Maintain, don't gain!

Due to _____ by _____



POST-PROGRAM EVALUATION

How many days did you track your food/calorie intake? _____

If you set a calorie intake goal, how many days did you stay within your goal range? If you did not set a goal, write N/A. _____

How many days did you participate in at least 30 minutes or more of physical activity? _____

If you set an alternate physical activity goal, how many days did you meet your goal? If you did not set an alternate goal, write N/A. _____

Optional Question: How much has your weight fluctuated since the beginning of the Holiday Challenge?
Ex: No change = 0 | Lost 1 lb = -1 | Gained 0.5 lb = +0.5 _____

If you participated in the Holiday Walking Challenge:

I have increased my physical activity through walking as a result of this challenge. Yes No Not Sure

Participation in this activity has encouraged me to continue walking as a physical activity after the program ends. Yes No Not Sure

I would like to participate in similar activities in the future. Yes No Not Sure

Do you have any feedback regarding the activities that promoted engagement in the Holiday Challenge? Please share below. Was there anything you particularly enjoyed or found helpful?

I attest that the above information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Print Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

HOLIDAY Challenge

Eat Smart, Move More...
Maintain, don't gain!

Due to _____ by _____

Sample Holiday Challenge Program Timeline

Pre-Challenge Tasks

- Assess Leadership Buy-In / Determine Program Logistics
- Create and Organize Program Content
- Create Marketing and Communication Schedule
- Open Registration
- Pre-Program Evaluations

Challenge Tasks

- Program Kickoff in Week 1
- Send Emails / Provide Participant Assistance
- Host Additional Activities to Increase Engagement
- Continue Marketing Communications
- Mid-Program Evaluations

Post-Challenge Tasks

- Post-Program Evaluations
- Distribute Incentives
- Create Wrap-Up Report

WEEK 1

Mon Week 1 Challenge: _____
Tue _____
Wed _____
Thu _____
Fri _____

WEEK 2

Mon Week 2 Challenge: _____
Tue _____
Wed _____
Thu _____
Fri _____

WEEK 3

Mon Week 3 Challenge: _____
Week 1 of Holiday Walking Challenge
Tue _____
Wed _____
Thu _____
Fri _____

WEEK 4

Mon Week 4 Challenge: _____
Week 2 of Holiday Walking Challenge
Tue _____
Wed _____
Thu _____
Fri _____

WEEK 5

Mon Week 5 Challenge: _____
Week 3 of Holiday Walking Challenge
Tue _____
Wed _____
Thu _____
Fri _____

WEEK 6

Mon Week 6 Challenge: _____
Week 4 of Holiday Walking Challenge
Tue _____
Wed _____
Thu _____
Fri _____

WEEK 7

Mon Week 7 Challenge: _____
Tue _____
Wed _____
Thu _____
Fri _____