

Health Promotion Newsletter



Newsletter of the Health Promotion Group

Spring/Summer 2008

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Acknowledgements

Welcome to our latest edition for Spring/Summer 2008. The group continues to meet and increase its profile in the University community. We now have representation in the group from all areas of the University and hope that this will assist in access for all to the benefits of health at work and that our newsletter helps staff to become more aware of the initiatives available to assist in reaching optimum health.

Health *for* Life

As part of the University's ongoing and expanding health promotion initiatives and activities in general the Health and Safety Department is again able to offer staff the opportunity to take part in the nationally recognised "Health for Life" scheme, now being marketed through James Watt College and a consortium of Further Education Colleges.

Health for Life is a home study course which helps you to get fitter, feel healthier and reduce stress with only a few hours work per week. The course will show you how to exercise in a way that suits you and show you the right foods to eat for a healthier, balanced diet. You will also learn how to build up a 6 week plan to reach your own personal goal; whether you want to get fit, lose weight, change your diet or even give up smoking!

CSE are delighted to support the Health for Life programme and are offering staff who join the programme the opportunity to take up a 3 month CSE (staff) membership for the price of one month. Current charges available at <http://www.sport.ed.ac.uk/memberships/charges/charges.shtml>

There are a few important terms and conditions which apply to this offer, however, for more information on these, the course in general and on how to sign up for it, please see <http://www.safety.ed.ac.uk/resources/Health/healthforlife.shtm>

Congratulations go to The Centre for Integrative Physiology (CIP)

The CIP has successfully completed the transfer from Scottish Health at Work Award to the Gold Level of the Healthy Working Lives Award.

As many of you may know this involves a much larger Health and Safety remit and looks at a much wider picture of how well they are looking after the staff and their interests.

A big thank you goes to everyone involved in achieving the award and a fine example to the rest of us of what might be achieved. The 'rest of us' continue our work toward this goal and are currently completing our submission for silver award.

Fancy a Float or some Reflexology?



Fancy a session of reflexology? How about a relaxing float at The Edinburgh Floatarium? With the stress of Christmas behind you, but with the credit card bills still flying in, why not take advantage of the discounts offered by various companies around Edinburgh to staff. Have a look at the site below for more details of what might be available:

http://www.humanresources.ed.ac.uk/Staff_Discounts/Discount_Categories/Health.htm

Gardening *and* Wellbeing

Now that Spring is in the air, why not boost fitness levels and perhaps neighbourhood 'cred' by getting outside and sorting out the garden. Not only does this burn calories mowing the grass and weeding, there are also benefit from the fresh air and a little bit of sunshine to perhaps chase away those winter blues. Apparently, digging and shovelling can burn up between 250 and 400 calories,

weeding 105 and 300 calories and mowing the lawn could burn up to 500 calories at a time! According to some health publications gardening is excellent for strengthening muscles especially the legs, arms and tummy area. Tackle the jobs that have needed doing for months this summer - raking up grass or leaves from the garden can certainly work up a sweat.'

Warm up gradually and keep in mind not to overdo it, try and keep your back straight and take regular breaks, at least every 20 minutes if you are kneeling or bending down. Relax and enjoy!

There are various books available to help you garden and get fit, just search for them in any online Search Engine. <http://www.saga.co.uk/magazine/gardening/features/GetFitByGardening.asp>).

Discover the wonders of The Edinburgh Labyrinth



Just a thought but the time of year might lend itself to thinking about relaxing at the labyrinth which is apparently a great place to contemplate and release stress.

The Edinburgh Labyrinth is in a corner of George Square Gardens, and adds to the peaceful nature of this area, giving a chance to relax or reflect. Although new in structure, try a walk on this 'ancient' path. The gardens are usually open weekdays 7am-7pm (4pm in winter)

For more information visit <http://www.labyrinth.ed.ac.uk/info.shtm>

Contingency Plans for 'Flu Pandemic in place

Since early 2006, the University has been formulating its preparedness planning for the possibility of a worldwide influenza pandemic, which is regarded by many scientists as a question of "when?" rather than "if?", together with supporting measures to help maximise our resilience to this potentially serious public health event. Further information on avian flu is published on the main University www site at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/avianflu/> from where a link may be followed to the University's Contingency Plan for Pandemic Influenza. Further information on avian and pandemic flu can be accessed by following the other links on the www page above.

Jog Scotland are officially Award winning!

The University of Edinburgh jogscotland group has been on the go since August 2005 and the group just gets better and better. Don't believe us? Well its official! They were named jogscotland group of the year at a star-studded Scottish Athletics Annual awards dinner last November. Alistair Currie, jogscotland manager commented "All the team at jogscotland are so proud of the winner of this year's award. They really have gone that extra mile and it's fantastic to see them being rewarded for their efforts. The University of Edinburgh are shining examples of what can be achieved through being part of jogscotland." Only a few of the group were able to travel through to Glasgow for the awards dinner.



From left to right: Garry Robertson, Andrew Jeske, Steve Backley, Moira Nicol + John Smith.

To celebrate their award the group attended a well-supported ceilidh which was apparently a great night, they may even have to make it a regular jogscotland event!

The group recognises it is a success because of its members, and also because of the continuing support from the University itself. Moira Nicol said "As a group we are extremely delighted and proud of this achievement and would like to take this opportunity to thank Karen Darling from the H&S department for all her help and support. A key development this year has been our web site and we would also like to thank Candice Schmid also from H&S for helping to set up the website, and the team at MIS for providing the space to host the website". Moira further stated "it's hard to believe that the group has only been up and running (no pun intended) for a mere two years, it's now such an integral part of University life for a growing proportion of staff and students. In today's society, even your lunchtime can be taken up with meetings, talks or seminars. Jogscotland is all about encouraging people to, at least, try jogging as part of a healthy lifestyle and we do this by offering a variety of sessions across a variety of sites every weekday."

There are currently groups on 3 sites, Little France, Central area and Kings Buildings. A fourth site at accommodation services will be up and running in March, for more details of this group contact Judith Law (jlaw3@miscorp.ed.ac.uk). Details on the other three sites and all the latest news about the group can be found at <http://www.jogscotland.safety.ed.ac.uk>.

Moira says that being split over different locations could lead to problems but the solution to the geographical conundrum is to have each campus run its own sessions independently, whilst ensuring this doesn't lead to isolation by promoting the group ethic at every opportunity. The jogleaders meet up on a regular basis to discuss what's happening in each of the campuses. "One of the benefits of having three sites is we get to organise regular events that bring us all together like the Fitness Evening and Time Trial you can read about below. Group identity is thus promoted and everyone has a good time doing it!"

So what have jogscotland been up to over the last year? Last year saw the inaugural fitness evening; this included a fitness test, demonstrations on exercises for strengthening the core muscles, a flexibility workshop, race training advice from Garry Robertson (see picture above) and a stall manned by staff from Run and Become. Also the first Meadows time trial run was held last year. Here the joggers had to predict the time it would take to walk / jog 3 miles, no watches allowed. The winner of the event was the person whose predicted time was closest to their actual time, so obviously it's not necessarily the first home who wins. This means that everyone has an equal chance to win as it's not about being the fastest. Both of these events are in the pipeline to be repeated again this year.

The summer saw the jogscotland 5k challenge series and the three craziest jogleaders took on the challenge of doing all 6; the remaining sensible members of the group took part in one of the two events in Inverleith Park. Once again there was a huge turnout (27 members) for the events and our own University Challenged group (Garry Robertson, Gordon Forbes, Douglas Gillespie and Michael Curtis) were the fastest team.

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Not only do the group enter races but we also help on the other side of the race. No race can really run without the band of the volunteers who help marshal the course and provide support at the start and end of races. The University of Edinburgh jogscotland group has been helping out at races since we started. A popular one is the Great Winter run and Cross Country Championships. Not only do you get to support fellow group members but you get to see world-class athletes.

We have also been asked by jogscotland to participate in a couple

of PR exercises. First the University jogscotland group was invited to take part in the Press Launch of the Welcome the World 5k that takes place in Holyrood Park on 30th March. Then a few representatives from the University jogscotland group, along with other jogscotland members took part in press call with Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon and Public Health Minister Shona Robison. This was to publicise jogscotland and a healthy lifestyle.

On behalf of the Healthy Working Lives group can we say well done to all those who have participated and thank you to Moira for the article and update.

HEALTHY WORKING LIVES (HWL)

A personal workshop experience

In March 2008 Debbie Little (who is one of the Centre for Sports and Exercise's Recreation Supervisor team based at the Pleasance) attended the healthy eating & physical activity workshop provided by HWL initiative. The one-day workshop aimed to promote healthy eating & physical activity in the workplace & everyday lives and was attended by many different workplaces participating in the HWL initiative. This article which has kindly been provided by Debbie summarises her experience.

"To be honest before I attended the course I was unsure what I was to expect or what I would get out of it as I didn't know much about the healthy working lives group. When asked what I would like to get out of it at the start of the day I put down "to enhance my knowledge at a more general/basic level rather than concentrating on the sports/fitness environment that I have always been familiar with. Throughout the day as we worked through the topics I found them all very interesting; some I could relate to more than others

but I began to understand the ideas behind healthy working lives groups & began to put together some ideas of how I could use the topics when I returned to my workplace.

Great Benefits!

In today's world it is very much publicised that we should be active & healthy but sometimes a lot of people don't know why they should & the benefits to them; if this is put across it can make it more realistic as to why they should & encourage people to make changes that don't have to be massive but can have great benefits.

Interesting and Informative!

I enjoyed the whole course found it very interesting & informative, I especially enjoyed hearing from other people in group discussions about their ideas & experiences; I personally forget that some people never do any activity as I have always been an active person & worked in an active environment so it highlighted how people's attitudes can affect what they do in relation to their health & work, how this can then have a knock-on effect to their families & lives & add to today's growing health issues we have as a nation."

Walking Groups - Paths to Health



The University continues to encourage more people to get fit during their working day. One of these initiatives is the highly successful Jogscotland but what if you don't feel fit enough yet to go jogging or would like to get more exercise during the week but think jogging is not for you?

The answer is to set up or join a Walking Group! The concept of these is very similar to Jogscotland groups, whereby we have fully trained Walk Leaders who organise the meeting place, routes etc and go for a 15-30 minute walk at lunch time.

These groups are still in their infancy and we require more Walk Leaders

as well as staff to join these groups to make them a success!

There are currently 4 active Walking Groups in the University who all meet on various days and times. Please contact the following Walk Leaders for Walk information;

Central George Square - Kathryn Dunne, Kathryn.Dunne@ed.ac.uk

Central Infirmary Street - Fleur Rothwell, Fleur.Rothwell@ed.ac.uk and Shona Buchanan, Shona.Buchanan@ed.ac.uk

Central West Richmond Street - Roma Robertson, Roma.Robertson@ed.ac.uk

Little France - Katie Morgan, Katie.Morgan@ed.ac.uk and Karen Simpson, Karen.Simpson@ed.ac.uk

More information on what is involved in becoming a Walk leader can be found at <http://www.safety.ed.ac.uk/health/pathstohealth.shtm>

If you are interested in becoming a Walk leader the next course is held on 30/05/08 1.30-5pm - anyone interested should contact Candice.Schmid@ed.ac.uk who is part of Health and Safety team

More information on what is involved in becoming a Walk leader can be found at <http://www.safety.ed.ac.uk/health/pathstohealth.shtm>



Better Backs Campaign from HSE

The campaign is accompanied by a free easy-to-use information pack at

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/campaigns/campaignpack.htm>

The free pack contains a range of resource information sheets. The following documents are available for download in PDF format. The pack also includes a CD containing all the campaign materials (guidance and information sheets) and a range of supporting PowerPoint presentations and video clips for you to use at events.

A limited number of packs can also be obtained from the Occupational Health Unit contact Janet.craig@ed.ac.uk.

News in brief...

Healthy Living update - 9 out of 10!

The food is officially WELL DONE! This is from the health view as we have excellent news and confirmation from Ian McAulay that 'The Spot Café' at Accommodation Services has fully achieved the Healthy Living Award. Thanks go especially to Klaus Knust who really helped get this award.

News from HWL

Working for a Healthier Tomorrow

A vision of a healthier Britain was unveiled on March 17th by Dame Carol Black, the National Director for Health and Work when she published the first ever review into the health of the working age population, 'Working for a Healthier Tomorrow' It called for urgent and comprehensive reform and a new approach to health and work in Britain. www.workingforhealth.gov.uk

30 days!- to raise awareness with employers of the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing

The Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives is to launch a campaign aiming to raise awareness with employers of the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing, to highlight the costs incurred by days lost to sickness due to mental ill-health, and to offer practical support. The campaign includes a wall planner which illustrates the loss of 30 days a year - the average number of days lost to sickness due to mental ill-health. Further awareness raising will be carried out by targeting national and local press and trade publications to include features and case studies. <http://www.save30days.com/> (Website active from end of March.)

Mentally Healthy Workplaces

The Mentally Healthy Workplace Training programme has been developed by the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives in partnership with the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health.

The course is delivered, free of charge, over 2 days for employers, managers and supervisors. It aims to encourage employers to promote positive mental health in the workplace by giving them the understanding, knowledge and skills to address a wide variety of issues relating to employment and mental health. It also aims to reduce the barriers around employability and mental health by addressing stigma, discrimination and negativity towards mental ill-health with the workplace.

To register your interest in attending this course, please contact your representative on the healthy working lives group who can in turn access the HWL co-ordinator.

National Campaigns in Spring...

IBS Awareness Month

1-30 April 2008

Bringing attention to the symptoms and difficulties associated with irritable bowel syndrome.

www.iffgd.org

MS Awareness Week

14-10 April 2008

Help the Multiple Sclerosis Trust to raise awareness.

www.mstrust.org.uk

Arthritis Care Awareness Week

14-18 April 2008

The campaign is a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of Arthritis Care and the valuable work it undertakes.

www.arthritiscare.org.uk

World Voice Day

16 April 2008

World Voice Day encourages men and women, young and old, to assess their vocal health and take action to improve or maintain good voice habits. www.entnet.org

National Walk to Work Day

24 April 2008

Why not leave your car at home, put your feet first, and walk all or part of the way to work!

www.walkingworks.org.uk

Dates for your May Diary

World Foot Health Awareness Month

1-31 May 2008

The aim of this campaign is to call the public's attention to the importance of good foot and ankle care.

www.fipnet.org

Spring into Action

1 May - 8 June 2008

BTCV's Spring into Action campaign, backed by Prudential plc, the Cabinet Office, BBC Breathing Places and Community Channel, runs thousands of events, both large and small, giving people across the UK the chance to get actively involved in looking after their local environment.

www.bctv.org

Coeliac UK Awareness Week

12-18 May 2008

Coeliac UK's Awareness Week focuses on the Charity's Food Without Fear campaign. Our aim is to raise awareness and understanding of a gluten-free diet amongst chefs and caterers, healthcare professionals and hospital ward staff, parliamentarians and the general public to ensure that eating out through pleasure or need, is freed from restrictions.

www.coeliac.org.uk

World Fair Trade Day

2 May 2008

A celebration of Fair Trade internationally, with events organised worldwide. www.ifat.org

Fruity Friday

16 May 2008

Increasing public awareness of the links between diet, nutrition and cancer prevention, and to raise valuable funds for our cancer research and education programmes.

www.wcrf-uk.org

Access to Resources

Anyone without access to the www can obtain details on any of the above information from the Health & Safety Department.

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Contact Details

Health and Safety Department,
Charles Stewart House,
9-16 Chambers St.

0131 651 4255

Health.Safety@ed.ac.uk

www.safety.ed.ac.uk/health

Design & Layout: Alexis Cameron