



Best Practices for Implementation

Before being released, the Eat Healthy • Be Active Community Workshops were pilot tested at 10 sites across the country, including cooperative extension, worksite wellness programs, faith-based organizations, and parent groups. The workshops were designed using low-health literacy principles and were tested with participants of varying socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. After teaching the workshops, pilot site instructors provided feedback on their experiences. These are some of the best practices they share.

FORMING THE WORKSHOP GROUP

Choose the Time of the Workshop

- Poll potential participants to determine the time of day that works best for them.
- If you are holding the workshops at a worksite, ask the supervisor if participants can bring their lunch and hold the workshops during the lunch hour.
- Keep in mind that participants may be more engaged and willing to come to the workshops during times of the year that are generally less busy. Consider starting the workshops after the holidays or after school starts.

Find Workshop Participants

- If you are teaching the workshop series more than once, ask your previous participants to share their positive experiences with friends and to suggest new participants for upcoming workshops.

PREPARING FOR THE WORKSHOPS

- Be sure to thoroughly review the workshop concepts and lesson plan prior to teaching, and use the resources in the appendix for more information.
- The workshops were designed to be used by a variety of community leaders and educators, even those without a nutrition degree.



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ADDING ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO THE WORKSHOPS

- The Community Workshops are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>) and the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/>). The focus of the workshops is to give individuals tips and tools to eat healthy and be physically active to promote good health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.
 - Depending on the particular needs of your participants, you may find you want to focus more attention on one area, such as setting goals to reach a healthy weight.
 - You can use the Web links in the appendix of the Community Workshops materials to find additional handouts, tools, and resources that meet the needs of your participants.
- Example:** if you have PowerPoint access, you may want to show the Portion Distortion Quiz (<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right/portion-distortion.htm>) as a visual presentation on how food portions have changed.
- The Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA+) is an 8-week program that can be added to the workshop series. PALA+ empowers participants to select physical activity and healthy eating goals each week, and those who complete the challenge can earn a certificate of achievement from the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition (www.fitness.gov).



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MOTIVATING PARTICIPANTS TO ATTEND WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Give Workshop Reminders

- Collect email addresses or phone numbers either before or at the first workshop to provide reminders of upcoming workshops.
- Consider creating an online calendar to notify participants of upcoming workshops.

Offer Workshop Incentives

- If you are able, offer participants an incentive to come to each workshop, or the entire series of six.
- Provide items that help participants apply workshop concepts such as pedometers, reusable water bottles, or stretch bands for muscle strengthening activities.
- If you have larger items such as a cookbook, a gift certificate to a grocery store, or a kitchen tool, consider holding a raffle at the end of the workshop series. For each workshop participants attend, they receive a raffle ticket, and the more raffle tickets they have at the end of the series, the more likely they are to win the prize!

Take Steps to Motivate Participants

- If participants already know one another, suggest that they “buddy up” to help motivate one another to try the tips at the end of each workshop and to remind one another of upcoming workshop sessions.
- To excite participants about the next workshop, at the end of each class, give participants a few highlights about what will be discussed and remind them of the “Things to try at home” listed at the end of each workshop.

OVERALL TIMING AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- Each workshop was designed to be completed in approximately 60 minutes, including time for a few questions and answers during or at the end of the workshop.
- If you are teaching a larger group with many questions, you may find you need more than 60 minutes to complete the workshop.

Limit the Time You Spend Answering Questions

- Answer a few questions during the class but bring index cards for people to write down any questions that you don't have time to address. Then, spend a few extra minutes during the beginning of the next workshop to answer these questions. This can be especially helpful if there is a question you need to look up more information to answer.
- If you have some extra time, consider staying after the class to address any lingering questions asked during the workshop.
- Change the layout of chairs so participants aren't sitting too close together. Chairs that are close together may encourage more side conversations or questions during class and you may need to spend some time keeping everyone focused.



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ENHANCING STRETCH BREAKS AND MUSCLE STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES

- Consider playing music during the stretch breaks and muscle strengthening activities

Enhance the Stretch Breaks

- The stretch break will come approximately halfway through the class.
- You may find it helpful to include this as an opportunity for everyone to get up and move around.
- If there are distracted participants, this can also be an opportunity to “restart” the class after the break.

Enhance the Muscle Strengthening Activities

- If you are bringing canned soup or other canned goods for participants to use during workshop 6, give the cans to the participants to keep.
- Suggest that they keep the two cans at their desk at work or somewhere close at home as reminders to do the exercises. Suggest also that they keep a printed copy of the exercises close by.



TASTE TESTING

- Many of the workshops include taste testing to allow participants to try some new foods or foods they do not frequently eat.
- Participants at pilot testing sites really enjoyed trying new foods, so you are encouraged to include these activities when you are teaching the workshops.
- Please be mindful of participants with food allergies. If you are bringing in packaged items, be sure to bring in the container so that participants can check the ingredients list if necessary.

Taste Test the Slow Cooker Recipe

- For the slow cooker recipe, you may want to prepare it ahead of time and bring it to class to taste test.
- If you are able to, also demo the recipe in class so participants can taste the food and see exactly how it is prepared.
- Keep in mind that if you start the slow cooker to cook during the workshop, it will not be finished before the end of class.

LAST CLASS

- To show your appreciation, make the last class a celebration of the group’s participation in the Community Workshops.
- You may choose to try a new recipe or bring in a different food to taste test.
Example: One instructor made yogurt parfaits with yogurt and fruit for everyone.
- Don’t forget to award every participant with a certificate of completion.