

# HEALTHY MEETINGS & EVENTS GUIDE

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University of Wisconsin–Madison



The University of Wisconsin–Madison is committed to promoting the health and wellness of students, faculty, and staff. This guide gives recommendations to event planners and leaders in the UW community to promote and encourage well-being at meetings and events.

Meetings and events are a normal part of the work-day, so it is important that these spaces provide a healthy environment. This guide will focus on different aspects of meetings and events including food options, sustainability, physical activity breaks, and mindfulness.

We hope the Healthy Meetings and Events Guide will be useful in promoting health and wellness at meetings and events throughout campus.

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# Managing the Meeting

## BEFORE THE MEETING

Before the meeting begins, distribute the agenda. This will give employees an idea of what to expect, and it will also ensure everyone is on the same page about meeting priorities

It is also a good idea to determine roles before the meeting begins. Consider determining the following roles:

- Facilitator: responsible for writing the agenda and leading the meeting; keeps the meeting on topic
- Note-Taker: responsible for taking notes during the meeting and sharing those notes with everyone in attendance afterward
- Time-Keeper: ensures the agenda is being followed and time is allocated correctly

Finally, before entering the meeting space, do a quick self-check. This could be taking a few minutes to practice meditation or simply taking a few deep breaths. Use this time to prepare your mind to focus on the upcoming meeting.

## DURING THE MEETING

### Introductions

A facilitator should start a meeting by introducing themselves and allowing others to introduce themselves and their roles. Try adding an ice breaker question to the beginning of the meeting to make people feel more comfortable with others at the meeting.

### Agenda Review and Check-In

Start the meeting with a brief overview of the agenda to guarantee everyone is on the same page regarding the discussion and goals for the meeting. When reviewing the agenda, check to make sure all necessary items are included.

Allow attendees time for a quick check-in before the meeting starts. This means taking a few minutes for people to individually (or as a group) analyze their focus and attentiveness. Possible questions to ask include: “How are you feeling right now?” or “On a scale of 1-10, how much attention and focus do you have on the meeting and agenda?”

### Working Agreements

Remember to create a welcoming space where everyone is comfortable sharing their thoughts. The facilitator of the meeting should take 3 minutes at the beginning of the meeting to discuss working agreements to make sure that everyone feels comfortable participating in discussion. Clear and collaborative working agreements build trust among meeting attendees and help folks feel emotionally well.

### Discuss Agenda Items

After the above steps are completed, it is time to move into the agenda items. Be sure to uphold working agreements during this time and continue to build trust and offer a safe space for discussion and collaboration during the meeting. To support emotional well-being, include reflection questions after larger agenda items to allow individuals to process what was discussed and share their thoughts if they feel comfortable.

### Review Action Items

Before concluding the meeting, take the time to review the discussions, arguments, actions, and remaining questions from the meeting. Review what people agreed to do and discuss any potential challenges that could inhibit implementation of actions.

## **OTHER TIPS**

Consider these ideas to improve health and wellness during meetings:

- Have a small group? Try a walking meeting
- If the meeting is longer than an hour, provide a stretching break
- Consider having a standing meeting



# Food Options

## WHY IS HEALTHY FOOD IMPORTANT?

A healthy diet is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Unhealthy eating habits are shown to contribute to obesity and other chronic diseases. If you are offering food at your event or meeting, offering healthy food options will help foster and promote healthy eating habits.

## FOOD SUGGESTIONS

Not all events or meetings will offer food, but if you are planning an event with a meal, snacks or beverages, the following are suggestions for healthy food options. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, the following is a general list of foods to eat and avoid:

### Foods to eat:

- Vegetables (dark green, red/orange, legumes, starchy, etc.)
- Fruits
- Grains (at least half of which are whole grains)
- Fat-free and low-fat dairy (milk, yogurt, cheese, etc.)
- Proteins (seafood, lean meats, poultry, eggs, legumes, nuts, seeds, etc.)
- Oils

### Foods to limit:

- Processed foods (high in trans-fat and added sugar and sodium)
- Red meat (high in saturated fat)
- Processed meat (high in sodium)

### Other tips:

- Be aware of portion sizes
- Offer vegetarian options
- Ask about dietary restrictions and allergies
- Choose sustainable or locally grown food

Looking for alternatives? Here are some options for swapping out unhealthy foods with healthy foods:

| <b>Instead of...</b>     | <b>Choose...</b>                    |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Chips or Vegetable Chips | Steamed or Fresh Vegetables         |
| Breaded Meat             | Lean, Grilled or Baked Meat or Tofu |
| White Bread              | Whole Grain Bread                   |
| Processed Foods          | Homemade and Whole Foods            |
| Dessert                  | Fresh Fruit                         |

Planning a department potluck? Here are ideas for healthy meal, dessert, and snack ideas:

- Salads or Wraps
  - Offer a build their own salad or wrap station. Make sure you have plenty of leafy greens, different types of vegetables, lean protein (eg. grilled chicken or tofu), healthy fats (eg. avocados or nuts), whole grain tortillas, and low-fat, low-sugar toppings or dressings (eg. hummus or yogurt based sauces)
- Soups
  - Soups or chili loaded with vegetables and lean protein can be a healthy option for lunch at meetings and events. However, make sure you are aware of the sodium content if the soup is pre-made. You can also serve whole wheat bread as a side.
- Snacks
  - Looking for snack ideas for your afternoon meeting? Try offering unsalted nuts, a fruit tray, vegetables with hummus or guacamole, or plain yogurt topped with berries and nuts.
- Dessert
  - Fruit can be a good substitute for dessert at meetings or events. For example, you could offer apples with almond or peanut butter or berries covered with melted dark chocolate.



## DRINK SUGGESTIONS

Drinks like soda, juice, or energy drinks often include an unhealthy amount of added sugar. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends that no more than 10% of your daily calories come from added sugar. In order to encourage healthy choices, try offering non-sugar filled drinks.

### Drinks to Offer:

- Water (still or carbonated)
- Coffee (with almond/soy milk)
- Regular or Herbal Tea

### Drinks to Avoid:

- Soda
- Juices (with added sugar)
- Energy Drinks

## UNION CATERING

Union [policy](#) prohibits outside food and drink being brought in for meetings and events held at the union. If your event or meeting is held at one of the unions and you are looking for food options, check out [Union Catering](#) for breakfast, breaks, lunch, appetizers, receptions, and more. The Union also has pick-up options and delivers to buildings outside of the union. Here are suggestions for healthy options on the menu:

- Breakfast:
  - Yogurt parfait bar (vanilla yogurt, granola, fresh berries, dried fruit, and local honey)
  - Lox bar (salmon lox, French baguette slices, whipped cream cheese, capers, red onion, hard-boiled eggs, and lemon)
  - Sides: whole fruit, hard boiled eggs, grapefruit halves, fresh seasonal fruit salad, fresh seasonal berries and more
- Snacks:
  - Refresher (fruit, vegetables, dip, iced tea, lemonade, water)
  - Veg-out (hummus, tzatziki sauce, carrots, celery, red pepper, cherry tomatoes, Naan, pita chips, feta, and olive antipasto, soda and water)
  - Sides: hummus and pita chips, fresh seasonal fruit, whole fruit, cucumber mint water, lemon lime water, orange water and more
- Lunch:
  - Build your own sandwiches: spinach tortilla with butternut squash spread, grilled vegetables, and greens
  - Buffets: mixed greens, sesame ginger chicken tikka masala, stir fried vegetables, basmati rice
  - Soups: mushroom and barley, tomato basil bisque, curry tomato lentil
- Dinner:
  - Sake salmon with sautéed spinach, cilantro rice, and seasonal vegetables (plated entrée)
  - Spaghetti squash nest, risotto cakes, and grilled vegetable ratatouille (plated entrée)



- Sustainable table buffet (mixed greens with herbed grapefruit dressing, chilled gazpacho, watermelon feta salad, spiced squash, grilled vegetable board with quinoa, polenta, and balsamic glaze, farro risotto, and seasonal vegetables)
- Dessert:
  - Chocolate dipped strawberries (by the dozen)
  - Order fruit from the breakfast or snack menu

## HOUSING CATERING

Consider [Housing Catering](#) for breakfast, breaks, lunch, receptions, banquets, dinner, cookouts, and more! Housing Catering has healthy options listed for both buffet lunches and buffet dinners! Here are some healthy items from Housing Catering:

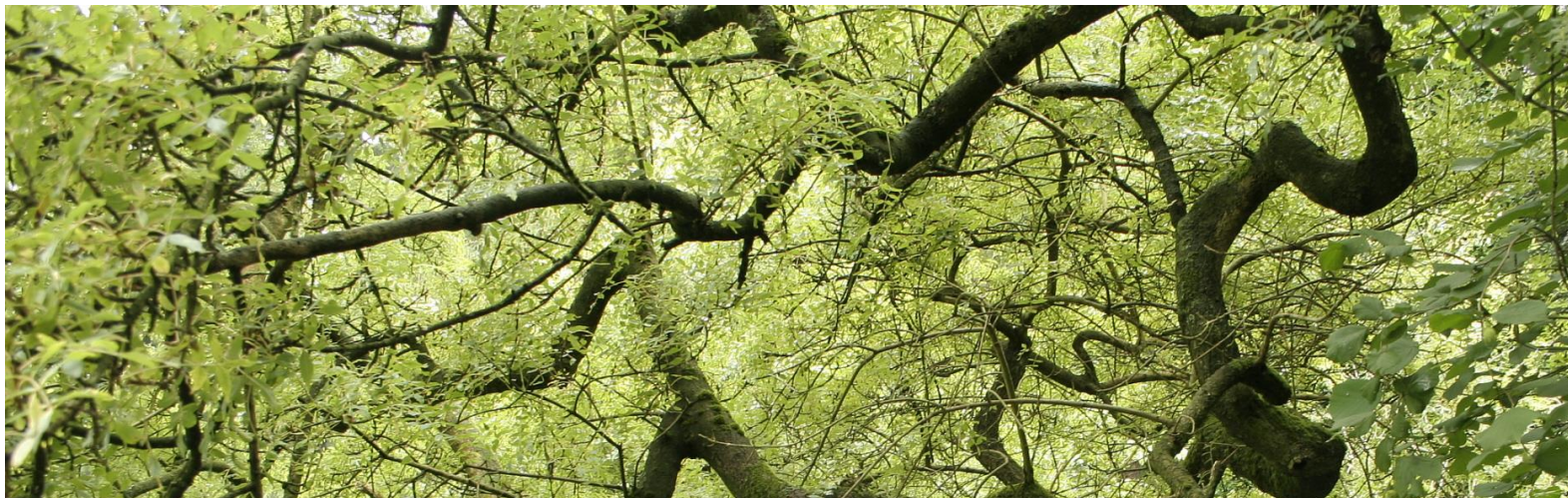
- Breakfast:
  - Boxed breakfast: bagel and cream cheese, yogurt, fresh fruit, granola bar; coffee, juice, milk, or water
  - Healthy continental breakfast: coffee, milk, juice, water, granola bars; hard boiled eggs, yogurt, or fruit salad
- Snacks:
  - Fresh, whole fruit: apples, bananas, and oranges
  - Vegetable and dip platter: serves 25
  - Fruit platter: serves 25
- Lunch:
  - Healthy lunch buffet: choose a salad, entrée (tilapia, chicken, roasted vegetable pasta, etc.), side (rice, vegetables, etc.), and dessert (cheesecake or fruit cup)
- Dinner:
  - Healthy dinner buffet: choose a salad, entrée (salmon, chicken breast, roasted vegetable pasta, etc.), side (rice, vegetables, etc.), and dessert (cheesecake or fruit cup)

## FOOD SAFETY

Safe preparation and storage of food is important in preventing food borne illnesses. If you are preparing the food, the following are four CDC recommended tips for food safety:

- Clean: Wash your hands and surfaces often, wash fresh fruits and vegetables
- Separate: Don't cross-contaminate, keep raw meat separate from all other foods
- Cook: cook meat to the correct temperature (145°F for whole cuts of beef, pork, veal, and lamb; 160°F for ground meats, such as beef and pork; 165°F for all poultry, including ground chicken and turkey; 165°F for leftovers and casseroles)
- Chill: Refrigerate perishable foods within two hours of preparing

If the food is catered or pre-made, make sure all hot foods stay at 135° or above and all cold foods are stored at 40° or below.



# Sustainability

## WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainable development is defined by the UN as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The University of Wisconsin-Madison is dedicated to promoting sustainability on campus.

The [Office of Sustainability](#) was created to ensure that UW remains “a living model for sustainability, exemplifying values and actions that demonstrate our commitment to stewardship of resources, respect for place and health and well-being of the broader community, now and for the future” (Sustainability Task Force Report, 2010).

## SUSTAINABILITY AT MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Promote and encourage participants at meetings and events to practice sustainable habits, such as:

- Walk, [bike](#), or take public [transportation](#) to the event
- Opt for meatless food options
- Bring your own reusable water bottle

As organizers, there are many ways to eliminate overall waste at meetings and events:

- [Make use of compost bins](#) on campus
- If ordering food, get a good estimate of how many people you are expecting
- Donate excess food to local organizations like the [Food Recovery Network](#)
- Provide fewer single-use products (ex. straws, plastic plates, etc.)

- Opt for reusable glassware rather than plastic, to-go containers, cups, and utensils
- Reduce paper by using digital copies of your program/agenda/etc.

Check out the [Office of Sustainability's guides](#) on what you can/cannot recycle, throw away, or compost at UW-Madison. To find compost bins near you (some are open to the public), check this [map](#).



## Physical Activity

### WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPORTANT?

Physical activity, along with a healthy diet, can improve overall health. Regular physical activity can help prevent chronic disease, control weight, reduce fat, improve sleep, reduce stress, promote bone, muscle, and joint development, and more. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends adults age 18-64 years old get 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per day.

Planning for physical activity breaks during meetings can help to promote and encourage exercise. Furthermore, taking a break during meetings can help improve the mood, attention, and focus of employees.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BREAKS

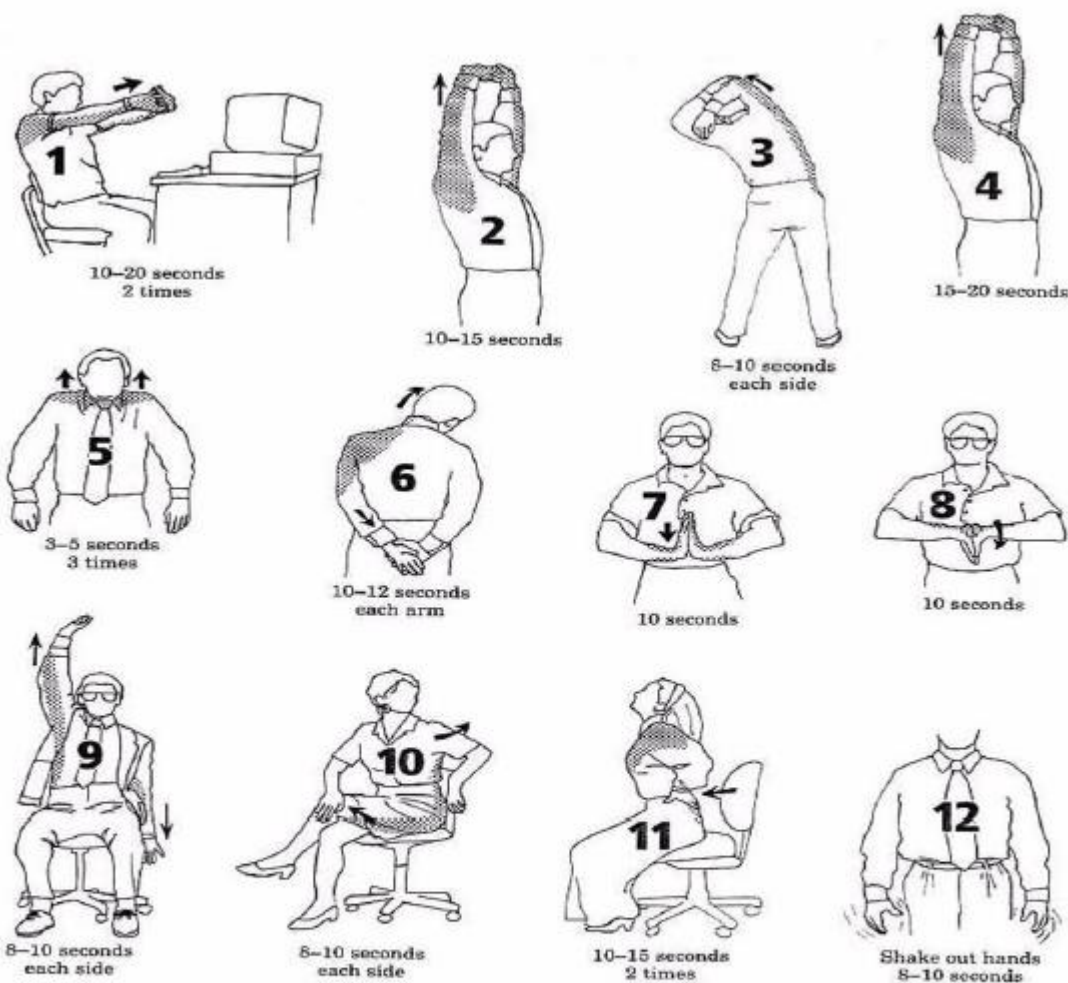
The following is a chart of suggested meeting/break times:

| Meeting Length | Break Time                |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| 1-2 hours      | 5 minutes                 |
| 2 hours        | 5-10 minutes              |
| 2-4 hours      | 10-20 minutes             |
| All Day        | 5-10 minutes & 30 minutes |



## EXAMPLES OF BREAKS

During a short break, encourage meeting participants to stand-up, stretch, or walk around. Consider leading group stretches or providing this guide for sitting and standing stretches:



Source: Stretching by Bob Anderson

**Do not bounce or twist while stretching. If you experience any tingling, numbness, or pain, while performing stretches, stop and contact your primary care provider.**

If you have a long meeting (4 hours or more), consider the following physical activity breaks:

- Walk outside ([HERE](#) are suggested walking routes around campus)
- Walk inside the building
- Walk up and down the stairs in the building
- Stand up to talk and interact with others

## OTHER TIPS

Consider these tips as you are planning physical activity breaks:

- Make sure the physical activity is optional for participants
- Plan activities that are safe and do not require a professional leader
- If you are walking, ensure the trail is safe
- Plan activities ahead of time to allow for sufficient time
- Consider a casual dress code that allows individuals to walk during breaks
- Organize optional pre-meeting, morning activities like meditation or yoga