Now initial implementation can finally begin: Launch your new staff wellness program. Your operational plan should guide you step-by-step through what to do first, second, and so on. If you’ve completed your operational plan and do not know what to do first, who is responsible for it, and when it should be completed, your operational plan isn’t finished.

Your operational plan should outline every task, deadline, and resource required to get your program up and running. Initial implementation can be a real challenge, but it is easier with a strong, detailed plan. Implementation requires attention from all leadership positions to ensure organization roles and functions align with the program’s development, but it also requires flexibility. No matter how well you plan, new or unforeseen challenges happen. However, with a good plan and a well-prepared team, you should be able to adapt without much difficulty.

Consider beginning implementation with a smaller scale pilot program that is adaptable and easy to maintain. Or, instead of launching four completely new wellness activities at once, start with one simple activity and build from there.

Be sure to monitor your implementation plan and strategies during your pilot program or first event. Assessing the effectiveness of your implementation plan will help your program adapt to improve the implementation process for the next event.

More: For more information regarding the implementation process, consider the National Implementation Research Network’s 4 Stages of Implementation resource found on their website at nirn.fpg.unc.edu.

Tips for successful initial implementation

- Start simple: schedule just one event per month or a few simple activities throughout the year
- Have an initial kick-off event to promote the wellness program to all participants and leaders involved
- Use e-mails, posters, social media posts, newsletters, and announcements at meetings to raise awareness and interest before the first event
- Have a fun and easy first event - preferably with incentives and prizes - to encourage attendance
- Collect data and feedback about the first activity or event to guide improvement efforts