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# Virtual Team Bonding RESOURCE GUIDE

MichBusiness has always been a platform for dialog, education and employee engagement tools. This guide was created to help executive leadership and organizations with virtual team bonding activities for employees to help amplify a healthy and uplifting culture through these unprecedented times.

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## Virtual Team Bonding RESOURCE GUIDE

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# Internal Best Practices and Policies

## **25/45 Meetings**

Let meeting times to either be 25 minutes or 45 minutes depending on the importance of the conversation.

## **CEO Q&A Coffee Hour**

During uncertain times, many employees find themselves having burning questions that they are not comfortable asking directly. Host a monthly coffee hour with the whole team and the CEO of your company. A week before the team meeting, have your employees submit their questions for the CEO anonymously. During the Coffee Hour the CEO can read and answer the anonymous questions to hopefully make some employees feel at ease.

## **Choose Your Own Return Date**

All employees feel differently about working at home or in an office. Especially now during the pandemic, if you plan on bringing your work force back in the office, allow employees to choose their own return to the office date depending on their fears and comfort.

## **EAP Services**

Ensure that your team members are well informed on the offers your organization provides through the EAP services.

## **Giftboxes**

If your budget allows, send your team gift boxes or gift cards to make their home offices more comfortable and surprise them for adapting to the virtual workforce. Holiday cards are also appreciated.

## **Mental Health Days**

In addition to PTO, you can offer a Mental Health Day per month for employees to be able to unplug.

## **Mental health time blocks**

Allow your team members to block calendars for mental health breaks on their own, or set a company policy that no internal meetings happen between specific times, so that employees can focus on e-learning, childcare, lunch, and daily walks or drives.

## **Meeting Schedules**

We all believe in Zoom meeting fatigue. To ensure employees can have time to work on their projects and stay mentally focused for meetings, here are a couple things you can do.

## **No Meeting Day**

Choose a day in the week where meetings are not allowed.

## **Required Time Off**

Many employees that work remotely especially in a pandemic don't take time off. To ensure your team is taking advantage of non-screen time, you can create a required time off policy where you close the office hours early on specific days. For example: Monday – Thursday work hours are 8-5PM, and Fridays are 8-1PM.

# Internal Best Practices and Policies

## Team Chat Channel

Have a chat channel on your communication platform that is created for the fun and social aspect of your team members. You can call this your Virtual Water Cooler or The Hallway. Leave this chat open for anyone who wants to share announcements, celebrations, or photos of their families. You can have weekly ice breaker questions such as “What are you grateful for” that employees have social group conversations. This open channel creates an opportunity for employees to feel stronger relations not only with each other but also with the company. It provides a secure space in which employees can drop in and out easily and feel like they are not only disconnected telecommuters but a big part of something far larger.

## Wellness Checks

Have a point person that can call each employee and check on them. Some people will really enjoy talking to someone and have the opportunity to share their feelings and thoughts on the new changes. This gives the opportunity of employees being heard and planning the right accommodations for each one.

## Working Parents Groups

Create a working parents group that allows other employees to know who is on a special work day accommodation due to their children’s needs. Many parents are now asked to help with their kids’ schooling, so sometimes they may need to step away from the screen during regular work hours. As long as that working parent is able to work at different times than the company requires, they can still get their work projects done. Use your personal status on your communication platform to show if you are away and will return at a specific time.

## Quarantine Buddies

Randomly assign two employees to match together for two weeks. Then ask them to check in on one another and help stay connected while working from home. Change the partners every couple of weeks.

# Virtual Team Activities

## 5 Things in Common

Set up a conference call with everyone that wants to participate in this getting to know one another game. As the host, pair up people that work in different departments or that work on different teams. Each team will have 15 minutes to chat in a break out room and find five things in common that they share outside of work. After the time is up, bring everyone back in the main room and let team members share what they’ve learned. If your teams are small, you can split off in different teams repeatedly.

# Virtual Team Activities

## Baby Photo – Guessing Game

Have employees submit their baby photos to one point person. At the end of the year share all the baby photos via email or your social channel and ask employees to guess who each baby is. Reveal the answers at the end of the day.

## Bingo

There are many ways you can play bingo during meetings, virtual conferences, and throughout the week. We suggest using the link below for company wide meetings. With this free and online bingo game, all players are able to have different bingo sheets once the meetings start. If you are using a meeting platform that has a chat box included, let employees type in BINGO if they win: <https://www.lifesize.com/bingo/play.html>

## Book Club

Invite your team members to start an internal book club. You can rotate on which team member picks the book each time. Once the book is chosen, give everyone a week to order it and then set dates to meet and discuss chapters of the book. We suggest you meet once or twice a month and ask each other questions on different topics shared in the book.

## Charades

Charades is a basic game that translates easily to Zoom. Split your group into two teams and use the charades idea generator below to choose your words and phrases. The person who's acting out the charade uses the Zoom "spotlight" feature, and their team has one minute to figure out the phrase. Charades idea generator: <http://www.getcharadesideas.com/>

## Coffee Connect

Sometimes working from home can be lonely. Virtual coffee connections can help. Have participants join in a digital meeting and bring a cup of coffee (or tea!). One person should be in charge of having 4-6 open ended questions ready for a relaxed discussion that participants can share stories about. You can add theme to each coffee connection and chat about specific topics, or just leave it open ended. Don't pressure anyone to answer if they don't want to. Sometimes people just want to be included in group discussions and it's okay if they have nothing to share. Here are some sample questions you can use:

- If you could have your own TV show, what would it be?
- When did your life change for the better?
- What is the largest crowd you have ever been in?
- What are your parent's best qualities?
- What is your favorite memory of your childhood?
- What is one life lesson you will never forget?
- What is the scariest thing you have ever done for fun?
- What is in the trunk of your car right now?
- If you could visit any place in the world, where would it be and why?
- If you had one extra hour of free time a day, how would you use it?

# Virtual Team Activities

## Decorating Contest

For holidays such as Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, and Christmas you can ask employees to share photos of their holiday decorated areas. It can be their work space, front yards, mantels, etc.. Share the photos without naming the owners in an email or on your social channel and have other employees vote for the best decorated space. Winners can be announced at the end of the day or in team meetings. If your budget allows it, offer prizes such as gift cards or care packages for the winner.

## Employee Spotlight Appreciation Week

For a week long activity (depending on the size of your team) and feel good moments, the employee spotlight appreciation week honors each one of your team members with a special shout out. One point person will send an email out every day with 5 (or more) employees that will be highlighted that day. Other team members can email these highlighted employees with special shout outs, texts, or photos highlighting a few of their special qualities. Don't worry if the emails don't all come in the same day, we have learned that once employees receive their spotlight emails from their peers, they will go back to send their own shout out emails as well.

## GIF Story Challenge

Using Microsoft Teams, you can play GIF Story Challenge, which compels players to tell a story using only GIF images. To play:

1. Split the group into teams
2. Send each team a tale to tell, either a famous book, movie, song, TV show, or an original story.
3. Allow teams five minutes to strategize and select GIFS
4. Have each team take a turn telling the story via chat
5. Challenge the opposing team to guess the story

If the team guesses correctly, then award a point. You can award extra points for creativity, humor, and good use of GIFs, too! The team with the highest score after all rounds winds the game.

## Guess That Song

Prior to the game starting, have a play list of popular songs. Have all participants be muted and play a song. Ask the players to unmute and shout the correct name and artist of that song. The first person that guesses correctly gets a point. You can play as many rounds as you want.

## Guess That Movie

Prior to the game starting, curate a YouTube playlist with movie scenes. Then, when playing Guess That Movie, mute all participants and play the movie scene without revealing which film the clip is from. Then, ask the players to submit the name of the movie to you privately in your meeting's chat box. The first person who guesses the film correctly wins the round. Try searching "best movie scenes of all time" or "top movie clips" on YouTube to put together your list.

# Virtual Team Activities

## Guess Who

This is a modified version of the board game Guess Who? in which players have to guess each other's "mystery character" through a series of yes or no questions.

Here's a simple set of rules: All players decide on a single TV series, movie, or show that features many characters. It doesn't matter what genre it is as long as all players are familiar with its characters. Each player chooses a specific character and finds an image to display on their screen. Do not share screens at this point. Then, each will take turns asking each other yes or no questions about the other's "mystery character". Questions may include "does your character have glasses?", "does your character have short hair?", "is your character human?", and more. The player to guess the correct character wins. Upon guessing correctly, screens will be shared to show who each "mystery character" was. This can be repeatable for different characters and shows.

## Guess Whose

Find a theme for the week to share a specific item. It can be coffee mugs, front doors, stuffed animals, etc. Employees can take photos of that specific item and send it to the point person. Throughout the week these photos can be shared in an email or a social channel, and employees will have to guess whose item each one is. Players can offer hints. If your specific item for the week is a coffee mug and you have an avid traveler on the team, they can take a photo of their Hawaii coffee mug to make it easier for others to guess.

## Happy Hour

Happy Hours can be a fun digital hour for team members to relax and just enjoy each other's company. Drinks are optional. This hour can be left open for employees to chat, or you can prepare ice breaker questions or one of the games found in this guide to have your team members interact.

## Jeopardy

You can create Jeopardy by yourself in about 10-20 minutes from scratch and play it with your co-workers! To make a Jeopardy game, we will use the following features of PowerPoint:

- A table to create the game board (or a grid) that shows categories and score (or a cash value).
- Hyperlinks to link each selection on the grid to the respective clue slide.
- Slide Master view to create unified slides for clues and answers with a consistent design.
- To publish the game in web format and share it online, use:
  - PowerPoint to HTML5 converter to open your game in a web browser on any device.
  - Cloud service to share it online via a link or embed your game into your blog or website.

Visit the link to see the full list of instructions:

<https://www.ispringsolutions.com/blog/how-to-make-a-jeopardy-game-in-powerpoint>

# Virtual Team Activities

## **Lunch and Learns – With employees and their families**

This is a great way to highlight individuals in your organization and learn more about your team members, their backgrounds, and family members. Invite your team members to select a lunch date that works best for them to what story they would like to share. This could include sharing more about their religion, cultural background, a fascinating life story, or more.

For example, you could ask your Jewish team members to teach about Passover, or parents with adopted children to share their adoption story, or your Native team members to share more about different cultural traditions.

## **Pictionary**

To play, divide your group into teams. Find a word or use the Pictionary word generator below and choose a team to play first, as well as a designated drawer on that team. The drawer generates a word and has one minute to draw that word for their team to guess. If the team guesses the card correctly, they get a point.

Pictionary word generator: <https://randomwordgenerator.com/pictionary.php>

## **Recipe Share and Company Cookbook**

Take time out during lunch to host this super fun activity! Ask team members to come prepared to talk about their favorite recipe. If your team members are really great chefs, you can add a theme to the different sessions, for example desserts, traditional favorites, seasonal treat, and so on. Ask them to send their recipe and a few photos to the team member that will compile the recipes book. During the team building session, each team member will share their recipe verbally and share a story along with it. This is great for getting to know your team members while also creative something constructive as a group.

After the session, compile all the recipes in a word document, or on another platform, and send out your team recipe book for the whole company to enjoy. Bon Appetit!

## **Robot Training**

While Robot Training usually focuses on instructing a team member through a simple task like tying their shoes or assembling a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, participants can also play this game entirely on Zoom. To play this version, ask one of your colleagues to share their screen. Then, using step-by-step directions, proceed to dictate the steps necessary to complete an action on their screen. For instance, ask the player to pull up Microsoft Paint and instruct them on how to draw a cat. The point of Robot Training is to develop your team's communication and cooperation skills.

## **Run and Find - Scavenger Hunt**

Get all participants ready on camera on a virtual meeting platform. Do not share the scavenger hunt list items yet. Once everyone is on camera and ready, mention the first item that they need to find (example: shoe). After you mention the item, all participants will run and

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# Virtual Team Activities

find that particular item and bring it back to the camera. The first person that returns with the item back to the camera gets a point. You can keep playing until all items have been collected and everyone breaks a sweat. Participants must bring new items every time, no repeats. Tally up the points and announce the winner at the end of the game. (Time suggested: 30-45 minutes). You can create your own list, but here are some items to get you started:

A book with a person on the cover; something that smells good; an item that covers you from the rain; a coffee mug with words on it; a piece of fruit; a breakfast food; a flag; something you can use as weights; something that makes music; sport equipment; fresh desert; something you can turn off; something that provides light; something that grows and needs nurture; a key; a shoe

## Scattergories

Zoom Scattergories: <https://swellgarfo.com/scattergories/>

To play Scattergories, you can use the link above for a crash course. Screen-sharing Edition, here's how you can play:

- Have one person go to the website above. They'll then share their screen so you're all looking at the same list. (You can access the "Share Screen" option by clicking on the green arrow at the bottom of your video or by clicking the Zoom icon in the top right corner of your Mac.)
- Everyone else prepare a pen and paper ready.
- Click play when everyone's ready. (Hit "restart" if you want a different letter.)
- Per each category showed on the screen, players write down answers that they can think of that start with the shown letter for each category.
- When the time stops, everyone must immediately stop writing. After two minutes, everyone shares their answers. If you give an alliterative answer (e.g. "Marilyn Monroe" for "celebrities that start with M") you get an extra point. If someone else has the same answer as you, you both cross that item off and no one gets the point.
- Play as many rounds as you want. Whoever has the most points at the end wins.

Some other rules to abide:

- No adding an adjective before a word to make it work with the letter (e.g. Blue Toyota for "cars that start with T")
- No repeating words (e.g. no using orange for "colors that start with O" and "fruit that starts with O")

# Virtual Team Activities

## Show and Tell

Create a themed show and tell and give your team members at least one week to select their item. During your Show and Tell session, give each team member time to show their item and tell a few stories to go with it. This will spark engaging conversation and create some fantastic team bonding. Some show and tell ideas:

- Favorite Childhood Items
- Vacation Memories
- Family Photos
- Can't Leave the House Without

## Spirit Days or Spirit Weeks

Spirit weeks or Days are where various themed activities happen around the organization usually meant to hype up team spirit, or to bring awareness to a specific event or cause. Team members are also encouraged to wear outfits that correspond with certain themes for the day.

Whole weeks are great, but a fun way to implement spirit days are during team meetings. Invite your team to wear something in the spirit of the time of year or during a season. You can get creative with this one! Team meeting Spirit Day ideas:

- Favorite Summer Hat
- National Eyewear Day
- Favorites Sports Jerseys
- Rep your favorite School
- Wear your favorite Color

## Spot the Difference

To play:

1. The group will split into teams of two to five.
2. All teams will have one minute to study the screen before entering breakout rooms.
3. Within breakout rooms, the teams will decide one background object to change.
4. Teams will rejoin the main room.
5. Players will hunt for differences, and make guesses by typing in the chat box.
6. The first player to spot the difference wins a point for the team.

You can play as many rounds as you would like. At the end of the game, the team with the most points wins.

## Talent Show

Talent shows are a great way to involve the whole family in these team and cultural building activities. Encourage your team to include their family, roommates, and pets.

Preparing for the show:

- Ask performers to sign up to perform in advance
- Set up a show agenda with 2-5 minutes per act.

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# Virtual Team Activities

- Recruit a different team member co-host for each show
- Keep the show short—30 minutes at most, with 5 to 6 performers each time.

During the show:

- Have a specific host or emcee that will introduce all the acts
- Use the “mute all” feature, and then unmute the team member who is performing.
- After each performance, unmute all and give the team a chance to show their appreciation for 10 seconds or so.
  - Turn off the chat feature on mute to avoid distractions as a performer.

## Teams Together Mode Guess Who

Microsoft Teams offers a feature called Together Mode that displays meeting attendees lecture-hall style, placing the image of each participant in an auditorium seat. You can use this capability to play a modern, online-friendly version of Guess Who. Together Mode Guess Who is one of the best online Microsoft Teams games.

To play Together Mode Guess Who:

1. Activate Together Mode in your meeting
2. Choose a team member as the secret person
3. Have players take turns asking questions like “does this person wear glasses?” or “does this person have a natural hair color?”
4. Ask each player to turn off their video when eliminated by the answer to the question
5. The game ends when only one player remains on screen, or when a player correctly identifies the person.

Because the characters are your coworkers, this version of Guess Who is extra fun! Plus, if players use non-physical characteristics, such as “does this person run marathons?” to narrow down the choices, then teammates can learn more about each other, too.

## Trivia

To play trivia, you can create your own custom trivia questions depending on the theme you select. Do not share the questions and answers with your team before the game is played. Once all participants are camera ready, you can ask the first question. Participants will then type their answers in the chat box. Whoever types the correct answer the fastest gets 1 point. You should leave time for everyone to answer in the chatroom, even if you see the correct answer already. This allows everyone to participate and have their chance to answer. Once you announce the correct answer, make sure you keep track of everyone’s points and at the end of the game announce the winner. Allow for discussion if someone has a story to share based on any questions or answers. Trivia games can be themed around holidays, seasons, or at random. Here are two sample trivia games you can start out with. (Time suggested: 30-45 minutes depending on the group size)

# Virtual Team Activities

## Dessert Themed Trivia

1. What is the rarest M&M color? (Brown)
2. What is the top-selling cookie in the United States? (Oreo)
3. Where can you get a Frosty? (Wendy's)
4. What is the main flavor in a traditional Tiramisu cake? (Coffee)
5. What is the main ingredient of a cheesecake? (Cream Cheese)
6. What chocolate factory is headquartered in San Francisco? (Ghirardelli)
7. This powdered sugar fried dough is very famous in New Orleans. (Beignets)
8. What cookie mostly serve as a dessert in Chinese restaurants in the US? (fortune cookies)
9. Name the state which is famous for their third largest production of juicy peaches. (Georgia)
10. This gourmet popcorn company is famous in Chicago. (Garrett Popcorn Shops)
11. Name a holiday on which Pumpkin Pie is prepared in the US and Canada. (Thanksgiving)
12. Name the official state dessert of Massachusetts. (Boston Cream Pie)
13. What is the state fruit of New York? (Apple)
14. What dessert originates from Greece and is made with filo dough, nuts and honey? (Baklava)
15. It is a crisp, sweet crunchy tube filled with a cream or ricotta cheese filling. What is this Italian treat? (Cannoli)
16. What sweet treat is popular in Mackinac Island, Michigan? (Fudge)
17. What kind of ice cream does Ben & Jerry's use in its "Chunky Monkey" flavor? (Banana)
18. What ingredients do you need to make a s'more? (Marshmallow, chocolate, graham cracker)
19. Timbits are tiny donuts found at what store? (Tim Horton's)
20. What candy bar consists of nougat, caramel and peanuts wrapped in chocolate and was named after a family horse? (Snickers)

## Beverage Themed Trivia

1. Anheuser-Busch Brewery had its headquarters in which U.S. city? (St. Louis)
2. The German beer festival is held in Munich during what month? (October)
3. What US state drinks the most alcohol per person? (Nevada)
4. What soft drink has trademarked the slogan "Obey Your Thirst"? (Sprite)
5. What do you call a small, medium, and large in a Starbucks coffee shop? (tall, grande, venti)
6. In "Pirates of the Caribbean" what does Captain Jack Sparrow love to drink? (Rum)
7. What is in a screwdriver? (vodka and orange juice)
8. Name a drink that is served in a salt rimmed glass. (Margarita)
9. How does James Bond prefer his martini? (Shaken, not stirred)
10. This drink is typically served during brunch in a flute glass (Mimosa)
11. Where is Starbucks headquartered? (Seattle, WA)
12. What is a Starbucks puppuccino ? (a small cup of whipped cream)
13. Name the sport that was created due to moonshine. (NASCAR)
14. Little kids sell this type of drink on the streets for 25 cents. (Lemonade)
15. What is the first soft drink that was sent to space? (Coca-Cola)
16. Where is the main Headquarters of Coca Cola located? (Atlanta, GA)
17. What type of cocktail is served in a copper mug? (Moscow Mule)

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# Virtual Team Activities

18. Which beverage is advertised as being “Sports Fuel?” (Gatorade)
19. This drink is popular around the holidays and it has eggs in it. (Eggnog)
20. Name one of the world’s most famous wine regions that’s found in California. (Napa Valley)
21. Name the only U.S. state which grows coffee beans. (Hawaii)

## Typing Speed Race

Typing Speed Races are a fun engaging activity for anyone that likes to chat instead of talk via Zoom (or any other video call platform). As the host, prep a list of words that range in easy to hard difficulty. Once everyone is on the call, you will call out each word and players have to type it in as fast as they can. The person that typed up the word correctly first wins that point. You can keep track of points and announce the winner at the end of the game.

## Viewing Party

You can also host a monthly or quarterly team movie night (or day). Ask everyone to submit a vote for a movie and a time to watch it, then stream it through a conference call for the entire team to see, no matter where they’re located. Consider opening a chat channel so everyone can share reactions and hot takes during the movie, too. Tools like Teleparty (formally Netflix Party) can be used to easily to sync the play time of videos as well. There are a number of sources online that will let you stave off the shelter-in-place blues by hosting your own virtual watch parties. Here are your best options:

<https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-host-a-virtual-watch-party/>

## Virtual Campfire

Virtual campfires for remote workers include wildly smart stories, fun games and s’mores. If your team member would like to have s’mores, they can bring a piece of chocolate, mini marshmallows, graham crackers, a small candle, and a toothpick. Open up the meeting link and enjoy a cozy fire chat with your team. Have some deep ended questions prepped if the conversation doesn’t flow on its own.

## Virtual Musical Chairs

Virtual Musical Chairs adapts the idea behind the in person game to an online environment. Instead of trying to steal chairs before the music ends, the last participant left dancing when the music ends loses the round. To play, create a Spotify playlist with dancy tunes. Once everyone is in the online meeting room, start playing songs, pausing at random and phasing out the last player who is still dancing. As each participant is eliminated, ask them to turn off their camera to help keep track of who is still playing.

## Virtual Tours

Host virtual tours where employees can share their work spaces, backyards, etc. You can also use the links below to go through a museum or a national park together virtually.

## Virtual Museum Tours

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours>

## Virtual National Park Tours

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/national-parks/virtual-national-parks-tours>

# Wellness Activities

## Dance party

If you have a dancer in the group, ask them to host a virtual dance party. You can either have everyone do the shuffle on camera or let them dance on their own to the same music.

## Meditations

There are many apps and YouTube videos on meditation sessions ranging from 10 minutes to 60 minutes. Have team members join you in a meeting room and set a meditation session for everyone to breathe and relax together. Cameras can be off if employees feel more comfortable laying down.

## Social Distanced Hike

If you live by a park and team members are comfortable getting out of the house, have them join you for a social distanced hike. Walk together but maintain six feet.

## Therapy Sessions

If your budget allows, hire a therapist for a lunch and learn to provide tips and tricks on how to de-stress, relax, and unplug.

## Virtual Workouts

If you have a fitness person on the team, ask them to host weekly virtual workouts. The sessions can be held for 15-30 minutes and we suggest starting at an easy difficulty. Find out what equipment attendees have so you can build the workouts, but start with body weight workouts initially. Cameras should also not be required for employees' comfort levels. You can also screen share workouts on YouTube or use [www.fitonapp.com](http://www.fitonapp.com), a complimentary workout video library.

## Virtual Yoga

If you have an avid yogi at your workplace, ask them to host weekly 15-20-minute yoga sessions virtually. You can change the time from morning, lunch time, and afternoons for everyone to get together, breathe and stretch for a relaxing moment. Keep the difficulty to easy.

## Wellness Challenges

Decide on a sleep, step, or water challenge and invite team members to join you. Set the daily/weekly goal and have everyone keep track of their progress. We suggest challenges last anywhere from three weeks to two months. You can also create a specific group channel for the challenges. The challenges are not created for anyone to win, but motivate each other in reaching their goals together. You can always honor the winners if you want to.

- Step Challenge goal: 8-10 K steps per day.
- Water Challenge goal: 9-12 cups per day.
- Sleep Challenge goal: 7-8 hours per night.

# Wellness Activities

## **Wellness Chat Channel**

Create a wellness social chat channel where employees can share healthy tips, workouts, fit-spiration and motivational quotes as well as random stretch and water breaks throughout the day.

## **Walking Meetings**

If team meetings don't require computers, or note taking, allow employees to go for a walk during the meeting. They can move their bodies and listen to important announcements at the same time. We suggest walking employees keep their cameras off for no disruptions.

## **Walking Wednesday**

In a virtual world, allow time each Wednesday for employees to go for a walk around their neighborhood. Employees can then share photos of their walk paths via email or the wellness chat channel.

For more information on mental, financial, and physical wellness, please view our [Wellness Resource Guide HERE](#).