

# MOVE MORE NORTH CAROLINA:

## *A Guide To Stairwell Initiatives*



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*Stairwell initiatives promote using the stairs as a way to incorporate physical activity into daily life. Stairwell initiatives encourage stair use through a variety of physical improvements including paint, lighting and artwork, as well as prompts such as promotional signs. When developing a stairwell initiative, consider the following:*

**DISCUSS THE IDEA** of the stairwell initiative with building management and/or building owner. Consider others (e.g., departments or units) who could partner in the stairwell initiative.

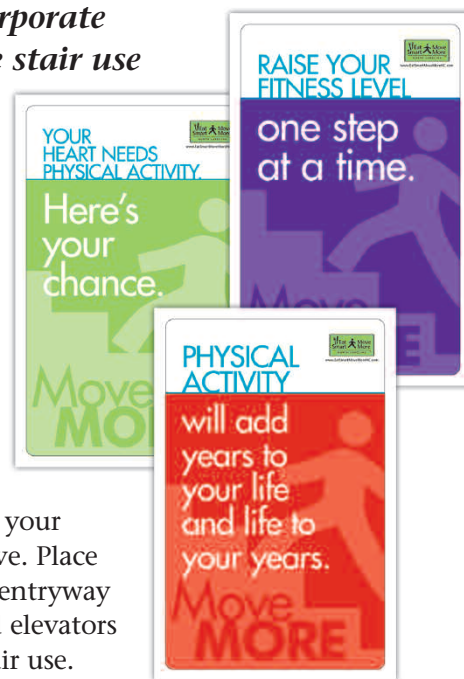
**ASSESS THE EXISTING CONDITION** of stairwells. Consider any maintenance issues that need to be addressed before enhancements are attempted (e.g., lighting malfunction, safety hazards, missing railings, etc.).

**BRAINSTORM IMPROVEMENTS** that would make the stairwells more attractive and user-friendly. Decide on which improvements would most benefit your stairwell. Consider polling employees to find out what they would like to see changed.

Improvements may include such things as:

- **Paint**—Choose paint colors that are bright and inviting. If possible, have employees pick out the color scheme to include wall paint, handrail paint, baseboards and carpet. Some agencies have incorporated and coordinated colors that match the area or departmental themes for each floor.
- **Artwork**—A quick way to perk up a stairway is to hang artwork. You can choose posters, motivational quotes, work by local artists or have a co-worker with artistic talents create art right on the walls.

- **Point of Decision Prompts**—Signs that encourage stair use are a great way to promote your stairwell initiative. Place the signs at the entryway to stairwells and elevators to encourage stair use. The Eat Smart, Move More...North Carolina initiative has provided 28 posters available for free download. Go to [www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com](http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com) and click on “worksites.” These posters are in pdf format and can be printed and laminated at your local print shop. You can have them framed for a more finished and professional look. Post the signs at eye-level or at a place where they are easily visible.
- **Carpet and/or Rubber Stair Treads**—Create an inviting and comfortable environment with the addition of carpet or stair treads. Place carpeting on the landings and rubber stair treads on the stairs themselves. Kick guards can be installed to increase stair durability. The type of landing and stair coverings you use may depend on specific building needs and fire codes. Consider whether doors will be able to open and close over any new flooring installed. Doors can be shortened or replaced if necessary, but it is better to plan ahead for any potential issues. All floor covering, including carpet, must be fire retardant.



**Stairwell initiatives are being adopted by organizations across the state, including the NC Legislative Building.**



- **Enhanced lighting**—Increase the light in the stairway, either by adding more lights or using brighter bulbs if allowed. Alternatively, you can use “daylight balanced” bulbs which more closely match daylight.
- **Music**—Increase the pleasant atmosphere in the stairwell by adding music. Music systems can be wired or wireless, depending on particular needs. Employees may provide input into music selection.
- **Informational Placards**—Inform employees that you are promoting stairwell use by adopting a stairwell initiative sign. Place the sign outside the primary stairwell entranceway. The sign should describe the purpose, funding and support behind the project. For example, “This Stairwell to Better Health has been provided through funding from (fill in the blank). Achieve a healthy weight one step at a time.”



**DEVELOP A PROPOSAL** listing the improvements you would like to see. Consider including options in your proposal. For example, provide a desired level (a project ideal) and a minimum level of improvement. Proposals should also include a brief overview of the project and a justification such as improved employee health and reduced healthcare costs. Be sure to include a cost estimate, and, if applicable, who would be responsible for completing and paying for each item. Discuss the proposal with building management. Cost estimates may need to be part of a later discussion if the building management has to be involved with gathering such estimates.

**PREPARE A BUDGET** that outlines each element of the proposed enhancements and the persons/departmental budgets responsible for each.

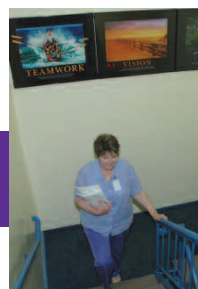
**CONTACT THE LOCAL FIRE MARSHAL AND BUILDING INSPECTOR** for specific

guidance on safety issues after management has given permission. It is critical that you establish clear lines of communication and expectations before moving ahead. It is likely that:

- Art inside the stairwell will need to be in a metal or fire retardant frame.
- Art may need to be behind tempered safety (shatterproof) glass.
- Art may need to be securely mounted to the wall with approved brackets.
- Art may need to be mounted at or above a minimum height.
- Handrails and/or walls may need to be certain colors, paint type, or reflective nature to ensure escape routes remain safe.

Often, the greatest challenge in completing stairwell initiatives is getting all decision makers (i.e., building management, fire marshal, building inspector) on the same page as you start the project. Establishing clear lines of communication and responsibility early in the process is essential for success.

Make this a team effort and promote it widely. Consider a public ribbon cutting or promotional event to encourage everyone to begin using the enhanced stairwells.



**Examples of stairwell initiatives can be viewed at [www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com/stairwells](http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com/stairwells).**



Download printable posters at [www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com](http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com)



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