The Health Impact Program’s website and app make it easy to track your progress

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If I told you that you could earn up to $200 from the state of Arizona each year by doing activities that you probably are already doing, would you believe me?

It’s true! You can receive payouts of between $25 and $200 from the state by participating in the Health Impact Program, an award-winning well-being program designed to help you make small, everyday changes to experience better health. All benefits-eligible employees can participate, and more than 1,600 of your colleagues have already signed up.

Participants earn points by engaging in healthy activities – some of which you’re probably already doing – and then tracking them through the Virgin Pulse platform, which can be accessed through a website or mobile app. There are four reward levels: $25 for 25,000 points, $75 for 35,000 points, and $100 for 50,000 points. Hit every level and you could earn up to $200 for the year.

Do you get your annual physical from your primary care physician each year? If you do, you just earned yourself 5,000 points! You can also earn points by tracking physical activity (by syncing with an Apple Watch or Fitbit, for example), practicing mindfulness or being nicotine free.

Racking up 50,000 points might sound difficult, but once you dive in, you’ll see how quickly those points add up.

Below, University employees already participating in HIP share their favorite features of the platform.

Sync with your step-tracking device

Carrie Johnson, senior health educator and health communications manager at Campus Health and Wellness, says she likes the daily card features and the fact that she earns points just for reading them.

She also enjoys earning points for physical activities she already does daily.

"The step-tracking feature syncs to my Apple Watch so all of that gets counted without me having to input anything," she says.

Christi Castillo, project coordinator at Campus Health and Wellness, also appreciates how easy it is to track with the app.

"I appreciate that the Virgin Pulse app syncs with my Apple Watch and updates my steps, sleep and more without me having to enter it manually," she says.

Apple Watch is just one of the many devices and apps that the platform syncs with to help HIP participants earn points for things like physical activity.

Create healthy habits

Castillo also finds value in the Healthy Habits section of the platform. Within the platform, you can choose which healthy habits you want to focus on, which can help you stay engaged with current habits or find new things to try out.

Because consistency is important in developing new habits, participants earn points when you track daily and when you track 10 or 20 days out of the month.

"I really enjoy logging in to track my healthy habits on the app," Castillo said. "Some of my habits were things I already do every day, but it was great to have reminders for some new healthy habits that could easily be incorporated into my daily routine."

The platform makes suggestions for new habits to track, which can be changed at any time.

Nick Prevenas, director of media relations with University Communications, likes how the app develops a sense of his physical activity and tailors its reminders accordingly.

"I am a runner – it’s my favorite stress-relieving activity – and the Virgin Pulse app will notice if I haven’t been putting in the miles," he says. "It offers that vital added bit of encouragement to remind me to get back on the trail."

Take mini-courses for a quick ‘reset’
Lori Van Buggenum, project director in the Office of University Initiatives, loves the gamification of many activities she was already doing before joining the program.

Beyond physical activity, Van Buggenum enjoys how the platform supports mental well-being, specifically in the RethinkCare mini-courses.

The mini-courses, or training sessions, are less than six minutes each and are designed to help participants develop personal well-being skills such as reducing stress. The topics include mindfulness and meditation, self-awareness, and yoga.

“When I am having a tough day, I can hop into one of these sessions for a quick five to 10 minutes and reset,” Van Buggenum said.

In addition to RethinkCare, employees have access to additional third-party programs like Wondr and Real Appeal for weight management and other types of support.

Get rewards your own way

Because the program has many facets, participants can earn rewards by using it in the ways that work best for them.

Participants also aren't required to earn the maximum of 50,000 points in order to receive a reward.

“You don’t need to be perfect with this program to find it helpful and useful,” Van Buggenum said.

Interested in joining HIP and want to take advantage of earning an incentive for focusing on your health? Find more information on registering and using the portal on the HIP Life & Work Connections page. The Health Impact Program is provided and managed by the Arizona Department of Administration and powered by the Virgin Pulse platform.

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