



Physical Wellness in the Workplace



According to workers' compensation insurer SFM, 87% of employers state that they are committed to physical wellness in the workplace. And the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cite several studies showing that wellness programs can help improve employee health behaviors, reduce elevated health risks, reduce health care costs, improve productivity and decrease absenteeism.

The importance of physical wellness at work is clear, but many people don't fully understand what it is.

What is physical wellness?

Physical wellness is anything that promotes the body's health and functioning on a regular basis. According to University of New Hampshire Health and Wellness, elements of physical wellness include:

- Staying hydrated
- Eating when hungry
- Sleeping consistently (seven to nine hours a night)

- Exercising daily
- Practicing safe sex
- Weighing the effects of alcohol and drugs
- Washing hands thoroughly and often
- Showering daily
- Monitoring and addressing stress

Work site physical activity programs

The CDC recommends instituting a work site physical activity program to make it easier for employees to engage in physical wellness. Barriers to physical wellness at work include:

- Time constraints
- Concerns about neighborhood safety
- Lack of social motivation

Some options that can overcome these barriers include:

- Walking paths
- Bike paths
- Stretching and yoga rooms (supply mats and create a relaxing ambiance)
- Meditation rooms (use a quiet, low-lit space)
- Exercise bikes
- Weight rooms

Evening and morning exercise sessions are an effective way to engage employees, build morale and make good use of any on-site equipment.

A note on inclusion

Employees have unique health and fitness goals and needs, and personal situations vary greatly. Make sure your wellness programs are open to different skill and ability levels, and support your employees' right to privacy.

For more information

The CDC provides [guidance on physical activity at work](#). It's also important to take note of the Department of Labor's reminders on [workplace safety and health](#).

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