

How to Make 2017 Healthier at Work

It's only a few weeks into the year and some of us have already let our New Year's resolutions slide. Luckily, for those searching for a healthier lifestyle this year, the workplace can bring resolution success.

Organizations across the world have an increased desire to improve employee wellbeing. But, it's not just moving more and sitting less, leaders are now taking an interest in the holistic wellbeing of their people — their physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing. Science tells us physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing are linked, and improving holistic wellbeing in the workplace will lead to a better workday and better work performance.

Here are five ways to make this your healthiest year at work.

Get on your feet

Some have said sitting is the new smoking, but it's not sitting that's hurting you, it's how you're doing it. The bottom line is it's a positive for your physical wellbeing to get out of your desk chair at frequent intervals throughout the day. Take a walk around the office, go visit a friend in a different department, simply stand up and stretch; all are good for giving your mind and body a break. One way to combat the hazards of sitting? Try out a standing desk or make sure you're using a variety of postures throughout the day.

Get moving, seek out nature

It's true that a brisk walk outside or a little jog can boost your physical wellbeing. But, if you don't have time to sweat, shower and get back to the office, just getting outside for a few minutes can improve your cognitive wellbeing. Research shows us nature has the ability to help us refocus, reset and lessen stress. So, take a meeting outside or instead of sitting in a small conference room with a colleague, consider taking a few laps around the parking lot while you talk.

If you don't have a chance to get outside, you can get your steps in by taking the long way between appointments. You can also find ways to stretch your legs while working with a Walkstation treadmill desk and look for spots to work near natural light to bring some of the outside world in. If you can't leave your desk, don't give up. The Washington Post illustrates 12 ideas for how to work out in the workplace including how real employees felt while doing the exercises.

Get social

Your desk can likely serve several purposes, but it was not meant to be a dining table. Some 80% of Americans report eating several meals per week at their desk. Taking a lunch hour or a water break can allow you to do more than grab a snack. Finding times to socialize is an important part of today's experience at work. Social connections and relationships allow people to feel a sense of belonging and see their relationship to the organization leading to a sense of purpose in their work.

Get focused

A healthy person at work needs to balance social and collaborative activities with time to focus. By finding a private space to get away, we give ourselves the opportunity to practice mindfulness, to concentrate and to come up with new ideas. It's only when we remove ourselves from the group and find solitude that we can absorb information, generate our own point of view and become better collaborators.

Get rejuvenated

This might sound like sacrilege (don't let your boss read this!), but working less can lead to a healthier lifestyle and increase productivity. Research has shown employees who think they have good work-life balance work 21% harder than ones who don't. It's not just a psychological effect either; stressed and fatigued brains closely resemble ones that are asleep. Seek out spots for rejuvenation. There's a reason you have your best ideas in the shower or driving to work. Your brain needs time to unwind.

These are just a few ideas to help you make 2017 your healthiest year yet. Start small and find a few ways to improve your physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing and soon you'll feel better and work better too.

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