



Healthy Work Environment

Having healthy work habits can boost your morale, improve your energy, quality of work, and decrease physical discomfort, emotional stress, and illness.

A great way to maintain a healthy work environment may include:

Exercise

Exercise can benefit your overall health and can improve the quality of your work life by helping you:

- Manage stress and anxiety
- Have more energy
- Reduce anger
- Increase your confidence
- Achieve a better quality of sleep

The National Physical Activity Guidelines (2009)¹ recommends at least thirty minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. Taking into consideration that you spend most of your time at work, why not incorporate the time needed to meet this guideline around work. Getting together with co workers can boost your motivation and help make the activity more interesting. You could start a walking group or a group that meets with a personal trainer in a park.

Eating well

Maintaining a healthy diet can be easy with some planning. One way to help you eat a healthy diet is to plan your lunches at the beginning of the week. Even try to mix it up and take left overs from dinner the night before.

Keeping a draw full of healthy snacks like fruit and nuts can help lift your blood sugar levels in the afternoon. Having high sugar foods such as chocolate will give you a short burst of energy but it will not last as long.

Ergonomics

Sitting in your chair for long periods of time can cause back and neck pain. The tendency to slouch in your chair can be a part of this cause. Try to be mindful of your posture and try to ensure that your back rest is supporting your lower back.

Finding a way to stretch can be beneficial for your body as well. Even simple little stretches in your chair can loosen up tight muscles and improve your posture. Short breaks and stretches are recommended every hour by taking regular opportunities to change positions like standing, walking and reclining while on the phone.

Re Balance Your Lifestyle

Leave work at work

It's important for your mental health and wellbeing to separate work and your personal life. Having a self-supporting life away from the office can help improve your mood and social life. Being capable of finding time to relax, sustain hobbies, and let go of work stress can also give you energy to help you through more demanding times. Try to remain mindful of your preferred "wind down" techniques and look at healthy alternatives.

It's also important to aim to leave work on time. It's understandable that you have to do overtime at times, but it's essential to try and maintain a balance with work hours. Seek out ways to reduce your stress levels at work and plan to do more intensive tasks during the time of day when you feel at your best.

Learn to manage conflict

It can be universal for conflicts to arise in a workplace. This may be when two ideas or points of view conflict, or when there is increased workload or stress placed on individuals or a team.

Being aware of what your limits are will help you to know what you are able to deal with. Having open and realistic discussions about what your limits and priorities are with others can help form agreements and resolve differences.

Creating strong but flexible limits, open conversations and conflict resolution can help your self esteem, confidence and improve your relationships at work.

If conflicts are unable to be resolved, find out your workplace grievance procedure to assist with the process.

Useful links

For information on exercise and stretching

www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/policies/ohs/ergonomics/

Occupational Health and Safety www.workcover.com.au

Government initiative to improve health and wellbeing www.measureup.gov.au

Factsheets including tips on how to manage conflict www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

¹ Australian Government Department of Health and Aging www.health.gov.au