



New Year, New You: Tips for Workplace Health Promotion

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Unhealthy lifestyle behaviors contribute to rising healthcare costs and are considered an economic burden for many employers across the country (Wieneke et al., 2016). Most people who are employed spend a majority of their waking hours at work. Because the greatest asset for any organization is its employees, many companies, large and small, have invested in employee wellness programs. According to a recent RAND Corporation survey, about half of all employers with 50+ employees offer some type of wellness program (Larkin, 2014). It is clear that employers are uniquely positioned to influence health for the better by offering workplace health promotion programs (Michaels & Greene, 2013).

The benefits of employee wellness programs are well documented. Employee wellness programs capitalize on the workforce by keeping individuals healthy and happy so they look forward to coming to work and being as productive as they can be (Larkin, 2014). Wellness Programs boost productivity, improve employee morale and, as a benefit, may make it easier to recruit and retain staff members. They promote employee health, help reduce health care costs and absenteeism, avoid illness or injury, and improve the quality of work life (Michaels & Greene, 2013).

Unfortunately, wellness programs can be expensive and staff intensive, and changing the wellness culture of an organization takes time and consistent effort (Wieneke et al., 2016). By utilizing on-site wellness champions to educate and support co-workers and addressing the primary wellness concerns of employees (e.g., obesity, exercise, work/life balance, and stress) through low-cost options, senior living sites have been successful in engaging employees and creating long-lasting behavior changes (Larkin, 2014; Merrill & Hull, 2013).

Select Rehabilitation understands the effort and commitment it takes to establish successful resident and employee wellness programs. LIFE by Select Rehabilitation emphasizes Living well to be Involved, Fulfilled and Energized in LIFE. Consider some of the following tips from this innovative program for improving the health and wellness in your workplace:

- **Take a Breather.** Stress is normal throughout our daily lives, so don't forget to breathe. Deep breathing can help improve your overall health and give you piece of mind. Performing breathing exercises can help slow a fast heart rate and even lower blood pressure.
- **Get Up and Stretch.** Since we can't all have a full blown workout at the office, settle for a nice long stretch. Stand up, make a loop around the office, and stretch before you sit back down.
- **Drink Water.** Keep a full 8 oz. glass of water at your desk and refill it throughout the day. It's another reason to get up and move.
- **Walk Past the Vending Machine.** Instead, outfit your desk with a basket of fruit or heart healthy nuts, like almonds. Pack your own lunch to help curb the temptation to grab takeout.

- **Laugh!** There's got to be some truth to the saying "laughter's the best medicine" since we've all been saying it for so long! Keep a folder of things that make you laugh in your desk when you need a quick chuckle.
- **Refresh Your Desk.** Consider investing in a pillow for back support or sit on a physioball. Opt for specialized keyboards to maximize ergonomics. And remember to always practice good posture!
- **Focus on Physical Activity.** Try to incorporate simple ideas to increase your activity. Take the stairs, park further away from the door, find a walking buddy for your lunch hour. All those extra steps add up quickly!

For more information, or more low-cost ideas and incentives for worksite wellness, contact Select Rehabilitation at 877-497-7838.

References

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