

Investing in Your Team's Physical Health

1st June 2020

Physically active employees are more likely to be healthy and have a reduced risk of developing chronic diseases. Research has found that occupational health and wellness initiatives dramatically reduce sickness absence while improving productivity. So health and wellness schemes not only save money, they also lead to increased profitability.

Healthy workplaces are also happier workplaces, with higher morale and energy levels. Employees are more likely to be engaged and have a positive attitude towards their employer, which in turn improves retention.

There are many steps that managers can take to invest in the physical health of your team, and adopting these across a company can have a big impact without a major financial cost to the company. Here are seven ideas to start with.

Offer a free or subsidised membership at a local gym or online fitness programme. Encourage your organisation to look at its benefits package as a way to encourage physical well-being.

Make time for fitness. Consider allowing your team an extended lunch break or a slightly later start to the working day so that they are encouraged to use the facility. Doing so could free up more time at home for employees and help strike a better work-life balance.

Think bike. Cycle to work schemes can provide a tax-efficient means for employees to purchase cycling equipment so that they can complete their daily commute by bicycle. Your company should also take into consideration if you will provide suitable onsite storage facilities for bikes and whether you have showering and changing facilities for cyclists.

Arrange more standing or walking meetings to encourage exercise and movement in the office. Encourage people to use the stairs rather than the lift, and to stand up and stretch at least every hour. If they can, suggest your team take requests or queries to colleagues in person rather than emailing or calling them.

Implement a programme that inspires staff to add walking into their working day. Post some motivational signage indoors and a signposted walking route outdoors. Set goals for your team and incentivise participation, so that they are encouraged to gradually increase

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the amount of exercise they do.

Try hosting an online fitness challenge or competition. This can encourage people to try new activities, such as table tennis, in a friendly and inclusive atmosphere. Start a running club for individuals who want to take their exercise to the next level. Bring in a trainer or counsellor to provide professional advice and assistance.

Provide employees with an activity tracker, such as a Fitbit, so that they can measure how much exercise they are doing. Gather feedback on the initiatives from your team so that you can evaluate their success, and plan what comes next.