

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Taking a Healthy Lead at Work

Another workday begins. After stumbling out of bed and getting ready you head to work. On the way, you hit the drive thru for some caffeine and pick up a box of donuts for your morning meeting. By 10 a.m. you're full of energy. By 11 a.m., you can barely keep your eyes open. With so much work to do, you and your colleagues skip lunch or grab some takeout. And exercise? Who's got the time?

It may seem like making healthy choices—especially at work—is too inconvenient, but it doesn't have to be. Take the lead at work and try:

Grazing greener. Help keep waistlines trim, energy levels consistent and arteries clear by swapping those donuts for a fruit tray or yogurt at your next meeting. Better still, put healthy snacking on the agenda by organizing a "Well Wednesday" or "Fresh Friday," where employees take turns bringing in nutritious treats for everyone to share.

Stepping up the pace. Connect with co-workers by organizing a pre or post-work walking group. "Training" for a charity walk or run not only gives the group a goal to work toward, but a sense of greater purpose. Walking is a great way to boost your health, mood and productivity. Or try some lunchtime Yoga or Pilates. If space (or flexibility) is an issue, consider pulling together a company slow pitch, basketball or volleyball team—anything that encourages you and your co-workers to get together and get active.

Passing it on. Whether it's a great article on exercise and depression, a fabulous low fat recipe, or health and wellness information don't keep it to yourself. Pass it on. If you have a company intranet, post links on the site. Keep it upbeat and general and be sensitive to other people's comfort levels. Avoid singling out individuals or distributing information on controversial issues.

Breathing life into wasted space. Take the initiative and transform a cubbyhole of vacant space into a "recharging space" or "decompression lounge" for people to visit on breaks to de-stress. It doesn't have to take major effort or money. Clear out the clutter and replace it with some comfortable seating, play some relaxing classical or jazz music and add the water cooler to help everyone stay hydrated. It could also be a great place to post wellness tips and information.

Championing a healthy work environment doesn't require huge, time-consuming changes. It can be simple—it's about enthusiasm, creativity and action. Helping strengthen the physical and emotional wellness of co-workers will trickle down to the entire organization, leading to healthier minds, bodies and a more productive workplace.

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