With busy lifestyles of today, many people do not have time to commit to an extensive exercise routine. However, exercise is still very important and should be a part of everyone’s life in some way. Options are almost limitless; the most difficult part is making the decision to be active no matter what a typical day entails. This issue of Health and Safety News is dedicated to getting the word out on one option that does not cost any money and the amount of time needed can be easily worked into the day.

The information was taken directly from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) website: http://www.cdc.gov/features/workingwellness/. To read more about a topic in blue, right click the mouse and select Open Hyperlink.

Wellness in the Workplace

Chronic Disease at Work

Chronic diseases such as depression and hypertension can lead to a decline in the overall health of employees in a workplace, contribute to an increase in health-related expenses for employers and employees, and lead to days away from work. Many businesses have realized the benefits of health promotion, and to curb the costs of rising health care they have begun offering wellness programs to their employees. Ideally, the office should be a place that not only protects the safety and well-being of employees but also provides them opportunities for better long-term health.

Although chronic diseases are among the most common and costly of all health problems, adopting healthy lifestyles can help prevent them. A wellness program aimed at keeping employees healthy is a key long-term human asset management strategy.
What is a Workplace Wellness Program?

A workplace wellness program is a health promotion activity or organization-wide policy designed to support healthy behavior and improve health outcomes while at work. These programs consist of activities such as health education and coaching, weight management programs, health fairs, medical screenings, on-site fitness programs, and more.

Wellness programs also include policies intended to facilitate employee health, including allowing time for exercise, providing on-site kitchens and eating areas, offering healthful food options in vending
machines, holding “walk and talk” meetings, and offering financial and other incentives for participation. Effective workplace programs, policies, and environments that are health-focused and worker-centered have the potential to significantly benefit employers, employees, their families, and communities.

**Looking into a Wellness Program?**

Ask your employer if they offer a wellness or health promotion program. If not, suggest implementing one at your office. If you are an employer looking to start a program of your own, read the CDC’s [Worksite Health ScoreCard](https://www.cdc.gov/worksitescorecard/index.html) and other materials for recommendations on implementing a health promotion program at your workplace.

**More Information**

The medical care costs of people with chronic diseases accounted for more than 75% of the nation’s $2.2 trillion medical care costs in 2009. A number of studies published last year in *Preventing Chronic Disease* discuss wellness at work and the importance of expanding health promotion into the workplace. Read these articles for more information:

- Promoting Prevention Through the Affordable Care Act: Workplace Wellness
- Reducing Occupational Sitting Time and Improving Worker Health: The Take-a-Stand Project, 2011

**Additional Resources**

- [The Health Project](https://www.cdc.gov/healthproject/index.html)
- [Leading by Example: The Value of Worksite Health Promotion to Small- and Medium-sized Employers](https://www.cdc.gov/LeadingbyExample.html)
- [CDC Workplace Health Resources Quick List](https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthresources/quicklist.htm) [PDF - 623KB]

Reference:
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