

Healthy Workplace

At a glance Activities



Approximately 65% of the Australian population is engaged in employment. Over ten million Australians spend an average of eight hours per day in the workplace, which makes the workplace an important place for supporting a healthy lifestyle.

Benefits of a Healthy Workplace

For employers...

- Improved work performance and productivity
- Improved company image and employee retention
- Improved employee engagement and relationships
- Reduced absenteeism and sick leave
- Reduced workers' compensation costs

For employees...

- Healthier lifestyle
- Increased health awareness and knowledge
- Increased job satisfaction and morale
- Supportive work environment
- Reduced risk of chronic disease

This information sheet provides practical suggestions for activities that can be easily implemented in your workplace to promote a healthy lifestyle and obtain the above benefits.

Healthy workplace activities

Listed below are examples of activities to promote nutrition and physical activity in the workplace. These activities are classified as **low**, **medium** or **high** according to the level of financial and employee resources required to implement them.

The tables also indicate whether the activities target **people**, **the working environment** or **organisational policies**. It's a good idea to choose a range of activities across these three areas to create physical and social environments that foster a healthy workplace culture.



Examples of activities targeting nutrition

	People	Environment	Policy
Low resource activities			
Liaise with local provider(s) to take food orders from employees and deliver boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables			✓
Provide a protected space away from work areas for meal breaks with room for some food preparation			✓
Display healthy eating information in appropriate places in the workplace (e.g. kitchen, canteen, dining room)			✓
Develop regular communications on nutrition (e.g. healthy recipe of the week, nutrition tips, myth busting), and provide links to relevant websites	✓		
Organise a dietitian to take employees on a food label reading tour at the local supermarket	✓		
Offer healthy food and drink choices at employee functions and meetings		✓	✓
Provide nutrition magazines for employees to read in your workplace		✓	
Provide water cooler(s) that all employees can access easily		✓	
Medium resource activities			
Ensure there are sufficient kitchen facilities for food storage and preparation e.g. refrigerators, microwaves, cutlery and crockery		✓	
Provide free or subsidised fresh fruit and vegetables in the workplace		✓	
Establish workplace policies that promote and support employees to eat healthily e.g. workplace healthy catering policy			✓
Offer healthy food options in vending machines		✓	
Arrange a mobile food service that offers healthy options		✓	
Have a dietitian provide an educational talk on healthy eating	✓		
Provide subsidies for the purchase of nutrition related books e.g. cookbooks	✓		
High resource activities			
Provide incentives and/or support (e.g. flexible time) for employee participation in off-site nutrition or weight management activities	✓		
Include employees' families in education regarding nutrition e.g. disseminate information relevant to families, invite families to nutrition information sessions	✓		
Change the menu in your workplace canteen to ensure that healthy options are available		✓	
Have a dietitian run a weight management/nutrition course on-site	✓		

People	Environment	Policy
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Examples of activities targeting physical activity

Low resource activities

Offer flexible work hours to allow for physical activity during the day			✓
Support physical activity breaks during the workday, such as stretching or short walks			✓
Map and promote walking routes close to your workplace		✓	
Map and promote public transport options to and from your workplace		✓	
Encourage and support active transport, such as getting off the bus several stops earlier or parking the car further away		✓	
Develop a lunch time walking group	✓		
Post signs at lifts and escalators to encourage use of stairs		✓	
Provide bike racks in safe, convenient and accessible locations		✓	
Provide regular communication on physical activity, fitness messages and links to relevant websites	✓		
Promote walking meetings as a way of discouraging sedentary behaviour			✓
Liaise with local fitness centres to obtain discounted rates/membership	✓		

Medium resource activities

Provide subsidised membership at local fitness centres			✓
Set up a pedometer loan scheme	✓		
Implement employee challenges or competitions using pedometers	✓		
Provide support for employees to enter fun runs and walking events as a workplace team	✓		
Provide shower and/or changing facilities in the workplace		✓	
Arrange a workplace team to participate in organised sport activities and/or events, e.g. local fun run/walk, netball or touch football team	✓		
Implement a physical activity questionnaire to determine employees' interest in physical activity options	✓		
Provide health related social functions (guest speakers, classes etc.)			✓
Develop a Workplace Active Travel Plan that highlights active travel options to and from your workplace			✓

High resource activities

Provide on-site fitness classes	✓		
Provide all employees with pedometers	✓		
Provide an on-site exercise facility		✓	
Have an exercise physiologist attend and perform simple fitness tests on-site	✓		
Have an exercise specialist give regular motivational fitness talks on-site	✓		
Have a fitness instructor lead employee walking, jogging and/or running groups	✓		

Tips for choosing appropriate activities

1. Talk to your employees about what is important to them
2. Identify your organisation's needs and budget
3. Match your budget and resource capacity with possible activities
4. Set a relevant timeline to initiate and review chosen activities



Additional program target areas

Most workplace health programs target at least nutrition and physical activity. However, there may be other health areas relevant to your workplace and employees, which you'd like to include in your program. Information sources for other target areas are provided in the table below.

Information sources for additional program target areas

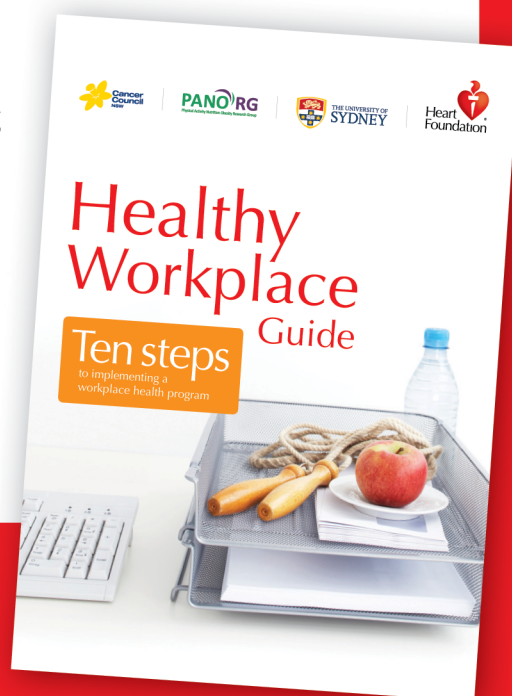
Program focus	Organisation	Contact details	Website
Smoking cessation	Quitline	13 78 48	www.13quit.org.au
Smoke free policy	Heart Foundation	1300 36 27 87	www.heartfoundation.org.au/driving-change/current-campaigns/smoke-free
Alcohol	Alcohol info (NSW Government)		www.alcoholinfo.nsw.gov.au/workforce_capacity/safe_workplace
Alcohol	Turning Point	1800 888 236	www.turningpoint.org.au
Mental health	beyondblue	1300 224 634	www.beyondblue.org.au
Mental health	Black Dog Institute	(02) 9382 4530	www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
Sun protection	Cancer Council NSW	13 11 20	www.cancercouncil.com.au

Need help to implement your own workplace health program?

The **Healthy Workplace Guide** has been developed to assist workplaces to implement their own workplace health program from start to finish, guiding organisations through the essential steps for effective programs and providing links to useful tools and resources for each step in the process.

Your free **Healthy Workplace Guide** can be accessed online at
www.heartfoundation.org.au/workplace-wellness

To order a hard copy email:
nsw@heartfoundation.org.au



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