

PUMP UP Productivity in the Workplace

5 Steps to Getting Started

Did you know that 2 in 5 working Canadians believe that lack of time **due to work** is a perceived barrier to their activity? At the same time they report very modest support from their employers to be physically active. Only 20% say their employer is very or extremely supportive, with most reporting moderate (18%) or little or no encouragement (61%). Of those reporting no support, 45% believe that employer encouragement would help them be active. Of those having some support, 67% think that such support actually helps them to be active.

Can your company afford to ignore the problem of sedentary employees? Research indicates that there may be increased costs for companies that have a medium to high percentage of physically inactive employees who also have poor nutritional habits. These costs include: increased employee benefit costs, reduced productivity, decreased employee satisfaction, increased absenteeism, increased short and long-term disability payments, higher turn-over rates as well as increased levels of worker's compensation. Fatigue, inattention, and accidents are also more common among inactive employees.

Statistics show that employee wellness programs pay for themselves:

- ✓ Canada Life in Toronto showed a return on investment of \$6.85 on each corporate dollar invested on reduced turnover, productivity gains and decreased medical claims.
- ✓ Dr. Roy Shephard for the Canadian government found corporate wellness programs returned \$1.95-\$3.75 per employee per dollar spent.
- ✓ A new government of Ontario report, *The High Cost of a Sedentary Lifestyle*, says up to one-half the burden of medical costs can be prevented by changes to healthier lifestyles and "sedentary lifestyles are just as dangerous to health as smoking a pack of cigarettes a day."
- ✓ Municipal employees in Toronto, missed 3.35 fewer days in the first six months of their "Metro Fit" fitness programs than employees not enrolled in the program.
- ✓ British Columbia Hydro employees enrolled in a work-sponsored fitness program had a turnover rate of just 3.5% compared with a company average of 10.3%.
- ✓ The Canadian Life Assurance Company found that the turnover rate for fitness program participants was 32.4% lower than the average over a seven-year period.
- ✓ Toronto Life Assurance found that employee turnover for those enrolled in the company's fitness program was 1.5% versus 15% for non-participants.

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Employee wellness begins with awareness. Your employees need to know that the company supports their efforts to get more active, and will provide them with resources and incentives to get started.

1. **Create a 'Fitness Zone' in your office** – *Awareness increases interest.* Stock up on pamphlets about nutrition, fitness, running, getting started... *anything health and fitness related.* Information on all of these topics (and more) is available through the Health Canada website, (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>), and Alberta Milk (<http://www.albertamilk.com>). If you go to www.healthyalberta.com you will even have access to a workplace section that provides information and resources for employers and employees.

2. **Find Facilities** – Compile a list of the closest fitness facilities and their contact information, and let your employees know that the company encourages lunchtime workouts. If the company extends membership subsidies include the guidelines and benefits. *By doing some of the ‘leg work’ you increase the likelihood that your employees will make the call.*
3. **Learn at Lunch** – Hire a speaker to provide fun and informative lectures to staff over a few lunch hours. *Lectures (especially entertaining ones) are a ‘stress free’ way for employees to gather more information about taking this fearful step toward fitness. Live Out Loud, Fitness and Wellness Consulting provides sessions on life balance, stress reduction, overcoming barriers to exercise, and improving nutrition. Contact info@realchangeconsultants.com*
4. **Hire a Trainer** – Contact a nearby fitness facility and enlist a trainer to be ‘on-call’ for personal training sessions. Post contact information and session rates in your ‘fitness zone’ as well as the trainers credentials and background. If you have a fitness facility in your building make sure they hire qualified staff. *The first step to getting started is always easier with help!*
5. **Hire a Workplace Wellness Consultant** to design your workplace wellness program. Providing the above resources is a great way to give passive support (and hope your employees ‘bite’), but why not take that extra step and hire a consultant to design and implement a fun and simple office wide program that will **ensure action** among your employees? Contact info@realchangeconsultants.com

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Life Balance *is* possible, even with your busy schedule! Michelle makes you think, laugh, and implement REAL change. With a Masters in Kinesiology, a BA in Psychology, and a specialization in Health and Exercise Psychology, Michelle not only walks her talk in life balance and fitness, but she knows a lot about it! She takes that credibility seriously in an industry where *anything goes*. She has built her career since 1990, as a college educator, personal trainer, fitness coordinator, and author. As a professional speaker, she shares her experiences in a humorous and realistic way with delighted audiences across North America. Michelle knows her energy has fueled her business success! Today, through her seminars and products, she helps people overcome big challenges through a start small solution that really works!