

The Benefits of Encouraging Workers to Walk



I'm an avid runner so regular exercise is already an essential part of my life. But I know that many people have to be dragged kicking and screaming to the gym. That's one reason obesity has become such a problem in society in general. And it's also a problem in workplaces—overweight workers are more likely to get injured on the job and to suffer disabling injuries.

However, you may not need to convince workers to become marathoners to get them to improve their overall wellness. A recent study demonstrates the benefits for workers—and their employers—of regular, low impact exercise, such as walking.

Study on Low Impact Exercise

A study from the Foundation for Chronic Disease Prevention in the Workplace and the Lancaster University Centre of Organizational Health & Wellbeing looked into the physical and psychological impact of leading corporate health programs on 752 UK- and US-based workers of varying ages, genders, health and base fitness levels.

The study subjects were given pedometers and challenged to walk 10,000 steps per day over 16 weeks as part of a virtual walk around the world. Researchers used self-reported questionnaires and on-site biometric screening to record the subjects' physical activity levels, physical and psychological health, and performance indicators before and after the study.

The results of the study show that participating in the walk resulted in a significant increase in worker physical activity levels as well as the frequency and planning of regular exercise.

In addition, the results revealed:

- A significant improvement in all aspects of worker psychological wellbeing,

such as confidence, self-esteem, sleep and concentration levels, and a significant reduction in all types of stress

- Significantly higher levels of productivity
- A significant increase in satisfaction with workers' quality of life
- 62% reduced their waistline circumference (about 2 inches on average)
- 58% lost weight (about six pounds on average)
- 52% reduced their body fat percentage (10% on average)
- 48% reduced their Body Mass Index (BMI)
- A positive reduction in blood pressure in a large proportion of workers.

Bottom line: The study's results suggest that companies can benefit simply by encouraging and supporting workers to walk more than 7,500 steps per day.

Webinar on Overweight Workers

For more information on how to manage the overweight workforce, attend our webinar today (March 8th) at 12:00 EST. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.