

Workplace Well-being: Consider Remote Workers

As teleworking becomes a more standard way to work, it is important to support employees in good health. Working from home can be detrimental to individual physical and emotional well-being due to limited options for physical activity and social interactions. Physical and emotional well-being can improve by staying active, participating in activities that reduce stress reactions and keeping engaged with colleagues. It can take creativity and dedication to keep active while working from home.

Work and home life lines can become blurred when working from home. In today's culture of constant connection, it can be tempting to check and answer emails at all hours of the day and night. This lack of separation between work and home life can lead to burnout and cause mental health to suffer. Fostering a workplace culture that prioritizes an appropriate work/life balance can do much to improve employee well-being.

Due to advances in technology, the last decade has seen more and more employees move to remote work, at least for a portion of their hours. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, around 31 percent of employees employed in early March 2020 had switched to working at home by the first week of April. Many workers may continue working at home until the pandemic is fully contained and beyond.

Ideas (Choose one or more)

- Read and discuss the information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on [Engaging Remote Employees in Their Health and Workplace Wellness Programs](https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/initiatives/resource-center/case-studies/engaging-remote-employees.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/initiatives/resource-center/case-studies/engaging-remote-employees.html>)
- Read and discuss Module 6 of the [free tool kit for health promotion professionals](https://www.welcoa.org/resources/health-promotion-professional-toolkit) (<https://www.welcoa.org/resources/health-promotion-professional-toolkit>) on supporting your employees remotely provided by the Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA)
- Share working at-home tips from [4 Ways to Achieve Better Work-Life Balance During the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/4-ways-achieve-better-work-life-balance-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-0401204) (<https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/4-ways-achieve-better-work-life-balance-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-0401204>).
- Support employee physical wellbeing by sharing this [ergonomics at home piece](https://www.healthsource-solutions.com/healthy-workstation-ergonomics/) (<https://www.healthsource-solutions.com/healthy-workstation-ergonomics/>).
- Remind employees of all [the benefits of getting outside](https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/10-ways-to-relax-in-nature-and-stress-less) (<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/10-ways-to-relax-in-nature-and-stress-less>) at least once each day.
- Set aside time each week for staff members to connect virtually with one another. Activities can include show and tell, trivia, virtual scavenger hunts, time to chat about non-work related topics (keep conversation light).

- For employees looking for a safe place to share their concerns and fears, consider hiring a facilitator (can be from your EAP) to moderate small group sharing/support sessions.
- Shift your organization's wellbeing program to one that supports remote workers (Could include purchasing subscriptions to meditation/yoga/mindfulness apps, home office stipends to encourage employees to invest in productive home workspaces, healthy snack/fruit delivery, team building challenges supported on an electronic platform.)
- If possible, allow employees to work a flexible schedule to fit in childcare, eldercare, exercise, etc.

Resources

- [Employer Resources for the Changing Workplace](https://www.heart.org/en/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-resources/employer-resources-for-the-changing-workplace) (<https://www.heart.org/en/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-resources/employer-resources-for-the-changing-workplace>), American Heart Association
- PDF: [Working Remotely During COVID-19: Your Mental Health and Well-Being](http://workplacementalhealth.org/getmedia/fd8a9b98-b491-4666-8f27-2bf59b00e475/Working-Remotely-During-COVID-19-CWMH-Guide) (<http://workplacementalhealth.org/getmedia/fd8a9b98-b491-4666-8f27-2bf59b00e475/Working-Remotely-During-COVID-19-CWMH-Guide>) American Psychiatric Association
- [Pro Tips for Working From Home and Staying Healthy](https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/20/health/staying-well-working-from-home/index.html) (<https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/20/health/staying-well-working-from-home/index.html>), CNN Health

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