

Recommendations: PRACTICAL STEPS

It can be difficult to translate employee needs into effective health strategies. Rather than rely only on short-term incentives such as step counts and weight-loss goals, create a physical and cultural environment that promotes good mental and physical health.

General:

- If offered, insurance policies should support employees living with or at risk of obesity.
- Offer discounted access to inclusive health clubs and facilities, but be sure not to present this in a way that may alienate employees who do not or cannot use them.
- Offer training on topics such as nutrition, stress management, mental health and general wellbeing.
- Offer appropriate behavioral counseling and treatment options for employees living with obesity.
- Where possible actively encourage employees to work flexibly. Explicitly encourage regular breaks from the computer.

On Site:

- Provide minimally processed and natural food options in cafeterias.
- Avoid vending machines that stock ultra-processed foods due to storage requirements.
- Provide healthier food at meetings and events - make healthy options the default.
- While physical activity is not a 'quick fix' for obesity, living an active lifestyle confers a number of additional health benefits and must be taken into consideration in the workplace.
- Encourage healthy commutes by providing showering and changing facilities, bike storage or 'cycle to work' schemes.
- Make sure that work stations are comfortable and well set-up.
- Walking areas and stairs should be safe, accessible, well-lit and attractive.

Working from home:

- Lead a positive work from home campaign.
- Acknowledge the additional challenges that may come from new working environments, both in terms of social, physical and mental health.
- Provide a safe and accessible forum for employees to communicate their needs and concerns about changes in their work or workplace.
- Ensure employees feel connected and supported in remote working environments. Encourage informal team check-ins and confidential mental health checks.
- Where possible actively encourage employees to work flexibly and take regular screen breaks.
- Run virtual ergonomic checks on employee workstations to help them use their at-home work set-up safely. Where possible provide suitable ergonomic equipment.

