**8 Habits Every Employer Should Demonstrate to Encourage a Healthy Lifestyle**

We talk a lot about what employees can do to get healthier, but what about employers? Employers have the opportunity to lead their team by setting a healthy example at work. When an employer puts in the effort to get healthier, happier, and more productive, employees will be more likely to extend that effort for themselves! Employees will take wellness advice more seriously from an employer who proves that they care about the health of their staff.

So, if you’re an employer and want your employees to live a healthy lifestyle, it’s time to practice what you preach! Be sure to demonstrate these 8 healthy habits to encourage a healthy lifestyle:

**Take a lunch break**

Skipping lunch is bad business. You’ve probably noticed that many of your employees are guilty of half-working, half-eating – including yourself! When schedules are hectic and projects are piling up, skipping your lunch break and eating at your desk might seem like the best idea. Not to mention, no one wants to be judged as the office “slacker” for taking a lunch break.

However, eating at your desk or skipping lunch entirely is counterproductive. Taking a much-needed afternoon break to enjoy your lunch outside of your cubicle will actually boost productivity. When employees see you [taking a lunch break](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/bid/337259/Why-You-Should-Be-Taking-Lunch-Breaks), they’ll be more inclined to start doing so themselves!

**Stand more**

The risks of a [sedentary lifestyle](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/sedentary-lifestyle-vs.-active-lifestyle-infographic) are nothing to mess with. Chances are, you and your employees are sitting way too much. According to [Mayo Clinic](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/sitting/faq-20058005), 50-70% of people sit at least six hours per day. Lack of physical activity can lead to serious health issues like heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and hypertension.

Because traditional office setups encourage sitting over standing, it’s important that employers set a healthy example by standing as often as possible. Try standing during meetings and presentations or use a standing desk. No need to worry if your company’s budget doesn’t allow for standing desks, it’s incredibly easy to make a [DIY standing desk](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/make-your-own-standing-desk) for yourself and your employees.

**Prioritize your mental health**

Mental health is often overlooked or left out of workplace wellness. However, mental health is just as important as physical health. According to [NAMI](https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) (National Alliance on Mental Illness), one in five US adults experiences mental illness in a given year.

Mental illness has been shown to lead to many business issues such as absenteeism, decreased work performance, and lost productivity. Show your employees that your truly value mental health by prioritizing it for yourself. Start the morning off with yoga, take a break when you need one, and lead a group meditation session before a meeting.

**Snack healthily**

Swapping out a donut for a piece of fruit during a morning meeting sends a healthy message. With office cake culture leading the social norm, it’s typical to find employees and employers alike snacking on leftover sweets and baked goods from the breakroom. Unfortunately, eating sugary, processed foods throughout the workday will really slow down business. Set a healthy example by brining in healthy snacks to share like almonds, fresh veggies and hummus, or Greek yogurt.

**Use your PTO**

[Vacation](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/bid/353100/Taking-a-Vacation-May-Save-Your-Job-And-Your-Life) time is more important than you might think. All work and no play leads to built-up stress that can wreak havoc on your physical and mental health. You want your employees to use their PTO to rest and recharge. Unfortunately, some of your employees may be [reluctant to use up their PTO](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/bid/353100/this-is-why-employees-shouldnt-waste-another-vaction-day-0), thinking it might reflect poorly on their work performance. As an employer, you can eliminate any vacation stigma by taking one yourself!

**Stay positive**

If you want your employees to stay positive, you need to start by [becoming an optimist](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/7-daily-habits-that-will-turn-you-into-an-optimist) yourself! Staying positive will help keep you happy and less stressed, which can lead to a wide array of health benefits. When you notice staff morale is down, lead a healthy example by smiling more, complimenting colleagues, and encouraging gratitude among your team. You’d be surprised what one person’s genuine positivity can do!

**Move more**

It’s no secret that regular exercise is essential for a healthy body and mind. However, working 40 hours a week at an office makes regular exercise seem difficult for employees achieve. Employers should make an effort to move more and exercise regularly to encourage employees to do the same. Take a jog over your lunch break, switch to [walking meetings](http://info.totalwellnesshealth.com/blog/bid/342307/Walking-Meetings-Would-They-Work-For-You), use your onsite gym, or take two 10-minute walking breaks each day. When employees are shown that physical activity at work is achievable, they’ll be more likely to move more themselves!

**Participate in your workplace wellness program**

This one should be obvious. You can’t expect employees to partake in the workplace wellness program if their employer isn’t! Be sure to complete challenges, participate in screenings, and engage in some of the program’s wellness activities. Getting involved in your company’s wellness program will show that you are serious about creating a healthy and happy workplace.

One of the first steps in creating a culture of wellness and promoting your company’s wellness program to partake in healthy habits yourself. Putting in the effort to become healthier and happier will prove to your employees that you mean business and believe in the benefits of a healthier lifestyle. Use the habits above to start leading a healthy example today!

What healthy habits do you practice at your office?