



Physical Health: An Essential Factor in Employee's Wellbeing

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Executive Summary

This report explores the significant relationship between physical health and mental wellbeing in the workplace, highlighting how physical health underpins overall employee performance and organizational success. It demonstrates that optimal physical health leads to enhanced mental concentration and job satisfaction, while poor physical health increases susceptibility to stress and mental health issues. Studies indicate that robust workplace health programs significantly reduce absenteeism and healthcare costs, offering substantial economic benefits. The report recommends optimizing work environments, implementing health and nutrition programs, promoting active workplaces, and integrating comprehensive health strategies to improve both physical and mental wellbeing. Labayh's initiatives, which include nutritional workshops, office exercises, and Employee Assistance Programs focused on lifestyle improvements, exemplify effective strategies for fostering healthier, more engaged employees.





Introduction

The intricate relationship between physical health and mental wellbeing within the workplace is gaining unprecedented attention, reflecting a broader recognition of their combined impact on employee performance and organizational success. Physical health—encompassing aspects such as physical fitness, nutrition, and overall bodily health—serves as a foundational element that significantly influences mental wellbeing. It is well-documented that employees in optimal physical health are more likely to exhibit higher levels of mental concentration, resilience, and overall job satisfaction. Conversely, mental wellbeing, which includes emotional stability, psychological resilience, and general mental health, is equally influential in shaping an individual's ability to perform work tasks effectively. The interplay between these two aspects of health is evident through numerous studies and workplace observations, which consistently show that improvements in physical health can lead to enhanced mental wellbeing and vice versa. For instance, regular physical activity not only boosts physical health but is also a proven stress reliever and enhancer of mental alertness.

However, in many work environments, the importance of maintaining a balance between these two dimensions of health is often overlooked, with most traditional workplace health programs focusing predominantly on one at the expense of the other. As businesses increasingly recognize the symbiotic relationship between physical and mental health, integrated health programs that address both dimensions are becoming crucial. Such programs not only foster healthier, more engaged employees but also contribute to the reduction of workplace absenteeism and turnover, thus promoting a more productive organizational culture.

01

What Is
Physical Health?

What Is Physical Health?

Physical health is fundamentally about how well the body functions at all levels—from the health of organs and body systems to overall physical fitness and absence of disease. This concept encompasses a broad spectrum of elements including exercise, nutrition, sleep, and general physical wellbeing, which are crucial for the effective performance of daily activities without significant fatigue or discomfort.

Statistics and Data

In the workplace, the relationship between physical and mental wellbeing is particularly significant. Employees in good physical health are generally more productive, have lower absenteeism rates, and report higher job satisfaction. Conversely, poor physical health can lead to increased stress, burnout, and higher susceptibility to mental health issues. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) emphasizes that healthier employees are generally more productive, as they are less likely to call in sick or use vacation time for health-related issues.





For example, employees with obesity tend to have higher rates of absenteeism due to illness compared to their average-weight counterparts. Specifically, while average-weight men typically miss about three days of work per year due to illness or injury, men with a BMI between **25 and 35** miss about two additional days, marking a **56%** increase. Similarly, average-weight women miss an average of **3.4** days, but this figure rises to **3.9** days for overweight women, **5.2** days for obese women, and up to **8.2** days for women with a BMI of **40** or higher. This trend indicates a significant escalation in missed days as weight increases, with women in the highest obesity category missing nearly one week more per year than their average-weight peers.

Research across **56** studies on workplace health programs suggests these initiatives can result in substantial savings—around **25%** on absenteeism, health care costs, and workers' compensation and disability management claims. Additionally, specific health programs at Duke University focusing on managing high blood pressure and cholesterol not only improved employee health but also showed a positive return on investment, with the blood pressure program returning **\$1.21** for every dollar spent and the cholesterol program returning **\$3.39** for every dollar invested.



02

Factors Affecting Physical Health In Workplaces

Factors Affecting Physical Health in Workplaces

Factors affecting physical health in the workplace encompass a variety of elements ranging from environmental conditions to personal health practices and organizational culture. Each of these factors plays a significant role in shaping the physical health of employees, which in turn impacts their overall productivity and wellbeing.

Work Environment and Ergonomics



The physical layout of a workplace, including the design and ergonomics of workstations, significantly influences employee health. Poorly designed workspaces can lead to physical discomfort and musculoskeletal disorders, such as back pain or carpal tunnel syndrome. Ergonomic furniture and tools designed to minimize strain can make a substantial difference in promoting physical wellbeing.

Workplace Policies and Culture



Organizational policies regarding work hours, breaks, and physical activity opportunities significantly affect employee health. Cultures that promote long hours with few breaks can lead to chronic fatigue and related health problems. Conversely, encouraging regular breaks and providing amenities like gyms or activity rooms can boost physical health.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Programs



Employers who invest in health promotion and disease prevention can have a profound impact on workplace health. Programs that offer health screenings, flu vaccinations, smoking cessation support, and regular health education not only foster healthier employees but also reduce absenteeism and healthcare costs.



Physical Activity and Exercise



Regular physical activity is crucial for maintaining good physical health. Exercise helps in managing weight, enhancing muscle strength, and improving heart health, which can significantly reduce the risks of chronic diseases such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. Workplaces that encourage physical activity through onsite facilities like gyms or sponsored gym memberships, or by organizing fitness challenges and walking meetings, can greatly enhance their employees' health.

Nutrition and Accessibility to Healthy Food Options



Access to nutritious food at work is crucial. Workplaces that offer healthy eating options or provide facilities for employees to store and prepare their own food can help in maintaining good health. On the other hand, limited access to nutritious food can lead to poor dietary habits that are detrimental to physical health.

Nature and Outdoor Access



Exposure to natural settings can boost physical and mental health. Natural light enhances mood and focus, while fresh air can improve respiratory health. Workplaces that are located in areas with access to green spaces or that provide terraces or gardens for employee use can help in reducing stress and boosting physical wellbeing.

Sleep Quality and Work-Life Balance



Adequate sleep is a critical component of good physical health. Lack of sleep can lead to a range of health problems, including weakened immune function, weight gain, and increased risk of cardiovascular diseases. Employers can support better sleep by promoting work-life balance, limiting after-hours work communications, and providing flexibility in work hours.



03

Why
Physical Health?

Why Physical Health?

The intricate relationship between physical health and mental wellbeing has been the focus of extensive research, demonstrating a clear bidirectional connection. This connection suggests that not only can poor physical health lead to deteriorating mental health, but poor mental health can similarly compromise physical health, creating a cycle that can be challenging to break.



Overview of Current Research

Individuals in good physical health are generally found to have lower rates of mental health issues. This correlation holds across various demographics and geographic locations, underscoring the universality of the relationship.

One study in this field noted that physical activity directly influences neurotransmitter levels, which can improve mood and reduce anxiety, illustrating how physical health impacts mental states. Furthermore, chronic physical illnesses can trigger psychological stress and depression, which can affect physical health and healing, demonstrating the bidirectional nature of the relationship.



Examples of How physical Health Impacts Mental Wellbeing



Exercise and Depression:

Regular physical activity increases endorphin levels, often dubbed 'feel-good' hormones, which can naturally counteract symptoms of depression and anxiety. For instance, aerobic exercises, like jogging and swimming, have been shown to reduce anxiety and depression significantly.



Diet and Mood:

Nutritional psychiatry is an emerging field focusing on the impact of diet on mental health. Research has shown that diets high in refined sugars and unhealthy fats can exacerbate symptoms of mood disorders, including depression and anxiety, while a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, unprocessed grains, and fish can improve mental wellbeing.



Sleep and Mental Health:

Sleep quality directly affects physical health, which in turn impacts mental health. Poor sleep can lead to physical issues like obesity and cardiovascular problems, which may increase the risk of developing mood disorders. Conversely, consistent good-quality sleep can enhance both physical and mental health.

Impact on Productivity

The interplay between physical and mental health significantly affects workplace productivity. Employees in good physical and mental health are typically more engaged, exhibit higher energy levels, and have better concentration, which translates to increased productivity. On the other hand, employees suffering from health issues may experience decreased motivation, increased absenteeism, and lower productivity overall.

01 Reduced Absenteeism

Healthier employees are less likely to take sick days, directly enhancing productivity. For example, a study indicated that regular physical activity led to a marked decrease in absenteeism due to better overall health.

02 Improved Cognitive Function

Good physical health enhances cognitive function, leading to better problem-solving abilities, creativity, and memory. This is particularly important in roles requiring critical thinking and decision-making.

03 Enhanced Work Engagement

Physical and mental wellbeing can foster greater employee engagement and morale. Employees who feel good, both physically and mentally, are more likely to be committed to their tasks and invested in the success of their organization.



04

Case Study of Companies
Integrating Health Programs

Case Study of Companies Integrating Health Programs

In recent years, a number of companies across various industries have successfully integrated comprehensive health programs into their workplaces, demonstrating a significant positive impact on employee mental wellbeing. These case studies offer valuable insights into the benefits of such initiatives and highlight best practices for their implementation.

Johnson & Johnson

Johnson & Johnson's "Live for Life" program, one of the earliest comprehensive corporate health initiatives, started in the 1970s and has evolved into a global wellbeing strategy. This program includes health screenings, personal coaching, fitness programs, and mental health services. This comprehensive program includes a variety of health promotion activities tailored to reduce risk factors associated with chronic diseases such as hypertension, high cholesterol, and obesity. Over the years, the program has evolved to include modern elements like behavior change initiatives, stress management, and energy management workshops, notably through their **Energy for Performance in Life (E4P) program**.

Importantly, the program led to significant improvements in employee health metrics, including mental wellbeing, demonstrating the potential for well-structured health initiatives to **yield substantial economic benefits alongside enhancing employee health**. An analysis of their health programs showed a return of **\$2.71** for every dollar spent, largely due to reduced medical costs and lower absenteeism.

05

Recommendations for Improving
Physiological and Mental Wellbeing
in The Workplace

Recommendations for Improving Physical and Mental Wellbeing in The Workplace

As businesses continue to recognize the crucial link between employee health and productivity, it becomes essential to adopt comprehensive strategies that promote both physical and mental wellbeing. This chapter outlines practical steps for companies looking to enhance health outcomes for their employees, alongside policy recommendations to support sustainable health practices.

Practical Steps for Enhancing Workplace Physical Wellbeing

01 Optimize the Physical Work Environment

Ensure that the workplace design supports physical health. This includes investing in ergonomic furniture, providing adjustable desks, and designing workspaces that encourage movement rather than prolonged sitting. Consider the layout of the office to include green spaces or relaxation areas where employees can recharge.

02 Foster an Active Work Environment

Encouraging physical activity within the workday can significantly boost employee health. This might be facilitated through the provision of on-site fitness facilities, subsidized gym memberships, or integrating standing desks and walking meetings into the office routine. Promoting an active lifestyle not only enhances physical health but also improves mental alertness and reduces stress levels.

03 Improve Nutritional Options at Work

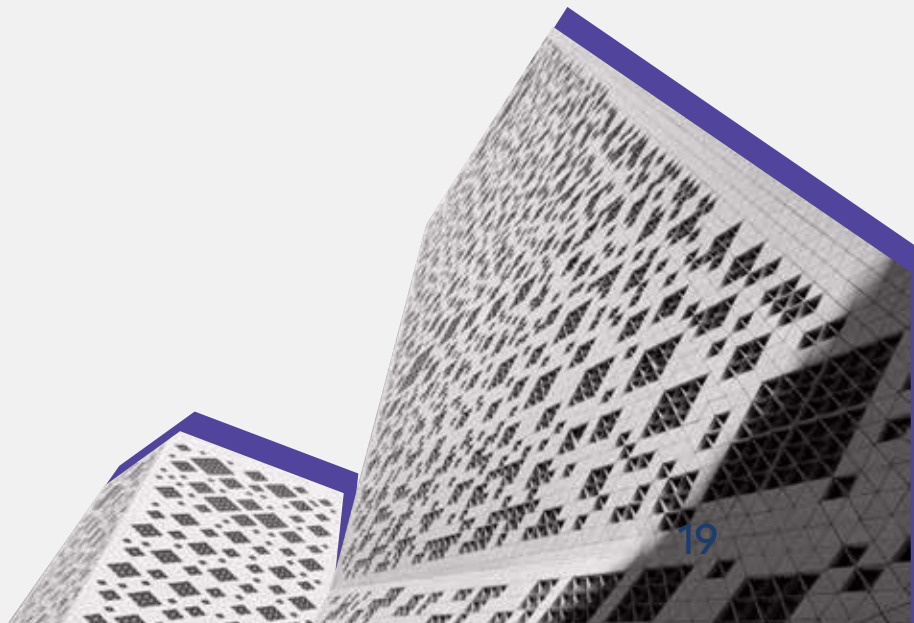
Provide healthy eating options in the workplace cafeteria or through vending machines. Employers can offer fruit baskets, healthy snacks, and water dispensers to promote better eating habits. Hosting nutrition workshops or personalized dietary planning with a nutritionist can also empower employees to make healthier food choices.

04 Implement a Workplace wellbeing Program

Develop a comprehensive wellbeing program that includes health screenings, flu vaccinations, and educational seminars on physical health topics such as heart health, diabetes prevention, and smoking cessation. Regular health assessments can alert employees to potential health issues before they become severe.

05 Foster a Culture of Health Awareness

Create a culture where physical health is a priority. This can be achieved by providing continuous education on the benefits of physical health and by celebrating milestones in employees' health journeys. Leaders should model healthy behaviors to reinforce the importance of health in the workplace.



Policy Recommendations for Sustainable Health Practices

Institutionalize Health and wellbeing Goals:

Embedding health and wellbeing objectives into the corporate mission or values can help institutionalize these goals within the company culture. Policies that explicitly support health demonstrate a company's commitment to its employees' wellbeing.

Regular Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms:

Establishing regular reviews of health and wellbeing programs can help organizations adjust initiatives based on effectiveness and employee feedback. This adaptive approach ensures that programs remain relevant and continue to meet the evolving needs of employees.

Support from Leadership:

Strong endorsement and participation in health programs by company leadership can greatly enhance the credibility and uptake of these initiatives. Leaders should actively promote and engage in health and wellbeing activities, setting a visible example for all employees.

Collaborate with Health Professionals:

Partnerships with health professionals and organizations can enhance the quality and credibility of workplace health programs. These experts can provide valuable insights into the latest health trends and offer professional guidance on program development.

06

Labayh's Contributions to Physical
Health of Its Clients



Labayh's Contributions to Physical Health of Its Clients

Labayh is making significant strides in enhancing the physical health of its clients' employees by integrating a comprehensive approach that encompasses multiple dimensions of wellbeing, including a strong focus on nutritional aspects. This holistic approach is part of Labayh's commitment to fostering healthier workplace environments and promoting long-term health benefits for employees.



Nutritional Workshops and Coaching

One of the core offerings from Labayh includes workshops on diet and nutrition which are designed to educate employees about the importance of healthy eating habits and how they can be incorporated into daily life. These workshops provide practical advice on choosing nutritious foods, understanding nutritional labels, and planning balanced meals that support physical health and enhance mental clarity and energy levels throughout the workday.

In addition to group workshops, Labayh offers personalized nutritional coaching. This tailored service helps employees set and achieve specific dietary goals, manage dietary restrictions, and make informed food choices that contribute to their overall health. Nutritional coaching is particularly beneficial for employees dealing with chronic health issues or those seeking to improve their diet as part of a broader health and wellbeing strategy.



Office Exercises and Active Breaks

Recognizing the sedentary nature of many modern workplaces, Labayh offers demonstrations and coaching on physical activity through structured office exercises and active breaks. These are designed to fit seamlessly into the workday without disrupting productivity. Activities may include short guided stretch sessions, desk-based exercises, or small group activities that can be performed in a limited space. These exercises help reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders, boost circulation, and decrease the health risks associated with prolonged sitting.



Employee Assistance Programs Focused on Lifestyle Improvement

Labayh's Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) extend beyond traditional mental health support to include elements focused on physical health and lifestyle improvements. These programs offer resources and support for smoking cessation, which not only helps in reducing health risks associated with tobacco use but also promotes a healthier workplace environment. Additionally, the EAPs provide management strategies for chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, empowering employees with the knowledge and tools they need to manage these conditions effectively.

These initiatives demonstrate Labayh's proactive approach to its clients' wellbeing, highlighting the understanding that healthier employees are more productive and engaged. Through its comprehensive wellbeing programs, Labayh is setting a standard for corporate health initiatives, showing that investing in employee health goes beyond basic medical care to include enhancing quality of life and work.

As shown, Labayh is a field leader in offering programs related to physical health for employees. Contact Labayh today and receive initiatives aimed to improve the physical health of your employees and their wellbeing.



07

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