

# Corporate Fitness Plans Improve Employee Health and Wellness

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Companies with workplace wellness programs are improving employee health, decreasing absenteeism and saving money. Find out how an employee wellness plan can help you.

Instituting a workplace wellness program at your company improves the health of your employees, decreases employee absenteeism and saves your company money, too. Learn more about starting an employee wellness program at your company.

## Workplace Wellness Yield Big Results

- A company investment of \$100-\$150 per employee each year to participate in an employee wellness program can save companies \$300 to \$450 for each employee every year, according to Ron Goetzel, Director, Cornell University Institute for Health and Productivity Studies. The savings can take a few years to actualize, says Goetzel, and are seen in reduced health expenditures.
- The Wellness Councils of America reported a \$24 return for every \$1 spent on a company wellness program for small businesses.
- According to a 2005 survey by The Art of Health Promotion, companies who instituted employee health and wellness programs realized a 30% reduction in medical and absenteeism costs in less than four years.

A successful workplace wellness program starts with company leaders. Business owners should lead by example, taking part in their company's corporate fitness program and working closely with a wellness coach. Company leaders should make sure employees are well aware of their wellness efforts, posting weight loss results or smoking cessation results on company intranet or bulletin boards for everyone to see.

## More Tips for Creating Employee Health and Wellness Programs that Really Work for You

- Encourage employees to kickstart their own wellness programs by visiting their doctor. A complete physical should include information about blood sugar, cholesterol levels and general health.
- Target specific health-related concerns in your corporate fitness program. Information about how to fight obesity, smoking, alcoholism and drug abuse should be at the forefront of your employee wellness program, along with related conditions.
- Hire a wellness coach to instruct employees on how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Reward employees for participating in company wellness plans. Let employees accrue health and wellness points that they can redeem for prizes. Make the prizes healthy, too -- a free massage, private training session with your company's wellness coach or health food gift certificate encourages even more healthy lifestyle choices.
- Acknowledge employee health and wellness leaders in company newsletters, in posted bulletins and on the company intranet.

If you're a business owner and you're trying to increase employee participation in your company wellness program, consider Johnson & Johnson's approach. Faced with only 26% of employees participating in their employee health and wellness program, Johnson & Johnson offered employees a \$500 discount on medical insurance costs if they completed a health risk profile. The number of employees participating in the Johnson & Johnson corporate fitness program jumped after they offered the incentive -- to more than 93%.

Ron Goetzel encourages those looking to pitch a corporate fitness program to company leaders to use basic facts about the benefits of employee health and wellness programs as part of their argument. Keep it simple, and share results from other company's employee wellness plan success stories.