

Physical Wellness for Work

Introduction:

Work also provides a sense of purpose, positive feelings from making a contribution, and a structure for each week. Working even just a few hours a week requires physical energy, concentration, and stamina.

Focusing on physical wellness daily habits can support success getting and keeping a job. These habits and routines include sleep and rest, eating well, physical activity, managing stress levels, and doing activities that are relaxing. Going to the doctor and taking care of medical conditions is also very important.

The following pages outline some physical wellness areas to consider to get and keep the job you want.

As you work with your Employment Specialist you can review to explore your own strengths and identify areas where you might want to improve. This booklet also includes information, tips, and suggestions to help you successfully get a job or keep the job you have. We encourage you to update and review with your Employment Specialist and other supporters.

Good luck~

Physical Wellness for Work

Physical wellness is important to your success in getting and keeping a job. Physical wellness includes many types of choices that contribute to your health, energy level, and concentration. Sleeping well, staying active and making healthy choices are all very important. Physical wellness also includes taking care of minor illnesses, getting regular screenings, and consulting with health professionals when medical attention is needed. These are all important for people like yourself who want to work.

How do you describe your physical health? (*circle one*)

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

What is a typical day like for you from the time you get up until you go to bed? (list the activities do you do each morning, afternoon and evening).

Morning activities: _____

Afternoon activities: _____

Evening activities: _____

How many hours a day could you work each day? _____

How many hours could you work each week? _____

Habits and Routines

A **habit** is an automatic behavior—something you do without thinking. When you are a worker, it is important to have habits that help you to get ready for work, get to work, be productive at your job, and structure your free time to include rest and relaxation.

Routines are patterns of habits that provide structure for your day. Creating routines is important to help you when your work is challenging or you need to manage the everyday stresses of being productive.

Check all of the items below that apply to you:

- I rely on daily habits to accomplish my goals.
- My habits assist me in getting ready to start the day.
- Habits help me to structure my daily activities.
- Habits help me during stressful times in life.
- I use a nightly routine to prepare me for quality sleep.
- I can identify habits that make me successful as a worker.
- I know which habits could be a challenge in the workplace.

Ideas for Creating Wellness Habits

1. Getting your day started and winding down as the day ends will help you by structuring your day and building in good habits.
2. Organize your workday around your natural clock. For example, do difficult tasks at the time when you are most alert.
3. Replace unhealthy habits with new positive and healthy ones. For example, during a typical workday, you cannot stop what you are doing to smoke a cigarette or go to the store and buy an energy drink. These habits interfere with your work and can distract you from your tasks.
4. Keep your work space organized so you know where things are when you need them.
5. Set out the next day's clothes, lunch or snacks, transportation money, or other needed items before the end of the day.
6. Use prompts and reminders, such as a pill box, an appointment book, a "to do" list, and/or a special place to keep your keys. This helps in the morning when you are preparing to get ready for work. These prompt and reminders are also useful if you get busy at work and tend to forget things you need for your own self-care.

STRENGTHS (record on page 17)

What habits do you have now that help you (or would help you) succeed at work?

What habits do you have now that might get in the way of doing well at work?

What would you like to change or improve about your habits, to help you do well at work? (record on page 18)

Sleep and Rest

Sleep is a natural state of rest for the mind and body. While most people require 7-8 hours of sleep a night, some are able to function with 6 hours or less, and others require 9 or more. *Rest* involves limiting your actions to create a quiet and effortless state. To get good rest, you need to interrupt both your physical and mental activity. Working requires enough sleep and quality sleep and rest. Many people who are successful at work have a regular sleep and wake time each day and find moments throughout the day to rest and recharge their bodies and minds.

Being well for work requires the right amount and type of sleep and rest so that we can:

- Get up early enough to do whatever is needed and still get to work on time
- Get through the workday, staying awake and alert, with enough energy to do the job
- Take care of whatever other activities we are responsible for completing before bedtime

How would you describe quality of your sleep? (circle one)

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

How many hours do you currently sleep per night, on average? _____

Your typical sleep schedule is from _____ to _____
(time you go to bed) (time you get up)

What is the ideal amount of time you would need to sleep to be able to work well the next day?

_____ hours

Check all of the items below that apply to you:

- I go to bed at about the same time every night.
- I wake up at about the same time every night.
- I try to do something to relax my mind and body each night before sleep.
- I wake up in the morning feeling rested.
- I feel alert and can concentrate well most of the day.
- My energy level is pretty stable throughout the day.

Ideas for Improving Your Sleep and Rest

1. Go to bed and wake up at the same time, even on weekends. Once you start a routine, sleep will become a habit. You may have to wake up earlier on work days than you do on the weekend. Or, you might work a job that requires you to work when most people are sleeping. Whatever your schedule is, keeping a routine wake and sleep time every day is helpful.
2. Make your room as dark as possible. Close the shades and turn off laptops, television, and other electronics that light up, or simply keep your sleep area free of these electronic devices. Try to avoid the urge to check email, look at online websites, or use social media apps close to bed time.
3. Minimize distractions before bed by turning off the television, computer, and phone. Even if you feel tempted to check work email right before bed, resist that urge. If you have work issues on your mind, you may have a hard time falling asleep or your sleep can be interrupted.
4. Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing, stretching, or taking a warm bath to rest your mind before bedtime.
5. Keep your living and sleeping space clean and organized. A clean and organized space can help your morning routine and help you feel calm and prepared for the next day. Some people like to lay out their clothes, set up their grooming products, or get the coffee/tea ready for when they wake up.

STRENGTHS (record on page 17)

List some things that help you get a good night's sleep.

List some things that get in the way of you getting a good night's sleep.

What would you like to change or improve about your sleep and rest, to help you do well at work? (record on page 18)

Physical Activity

Physical activity is any body movement that works your muscles and uses more energy than you use when you're resting. Working in the time each day to do something active with your body can help alleviate stress, boost your energy, and clear your mind. Most jobs require some level of physical activity and all jobs require attention and energy. Your morning routine and the activities you perform on the job are impacted by how physically well you feel.

How would you describe your typical level of physical activity?

Very active

Somewhat active

Not at all active

What do you do now for physical activity?

How many days each week do you currently exercise on purpose each week? _____ days

When you exercise, how long do you exercise each time, on average? _____ mins

What types of exercise or physical activity do you enjoy?

Check all of the items below that apply to you:

- I have good balance.
- I have the physical strength I need to do the kind of job I have or want.
- I have the energy I need to do the kind of job I have or want.
- I have the physical flexibility I need to do the kind of job I have or want (I can bend down or stretch up as needed, lift things, sit or stand for extended periods of time).
- I am able to do the daily tasks required by the job I have or want without feeling fatigue.

Ideas for Increasing Your Physical Activity

1. Walking is one easy and inexpensive way to add physical activity to your life. Some people use their break time at work to take a brief walk. Others do simple stretches at their desk.
2. Try different physical activities. Variety will help keep you motivated and prevent boredom.
3. Choose activities for balance, strength, and flexibility as well as for building your stamina and endurance. Many of the exercises that help increase flexibility and balance can be done sitting in a chair or in a small space like your office or cubicle. Taking the stairs instead of the elevator is one small change that can make a difference over time.
4. Build up gradually. Start small, like walking only 5 or 10 minutes a day, a few days each week during the first couple of weeks. Once you have a good schedule and feel comfortable and confident, pick up the pace, or increase the length of time you walk.
5. Try adding physical activities into your day, like stretching, a stand-up break, or extra steps by taking a slightly longer route when you are walking somewhere. If you take a bus or train, getting off one stop sooner on the route to work could help add many steps to your commute.

STRENGTHS (record on page 17)

List physical activity strengths:

What physical activity changes would help you do well at work? (record on page 18)

Relaxation and Stress Management

Stress management includes any technique that can help you cope with or lessen the negative physical and emotional effects of your everyday life pressures. *Relaxation* is the refreshment of the body and mind, and may include activities that provide entertainment and a diversion from your daily tasks. No matter how balanced our life may be, stress happens. The challenge is being able to identify and manage stress. Work may feel stressful at times so it is important to focus on what helps you to manage stress and feel calm and relaxed.

How do you manage stress right now?

Very Good

Somewhat Good

Not Good at All

What activities help you to relax?

List tools and resources help you manage daily stressors, especially those that are (or might be) work-related.

Check all of the items below that apply to you:

- I do not let simple things bother me.
- I can handle criticism well.
- Deadlines and “to do” lists are helpful to me, not stressful.
- I laugh and joke with others.
- I practice positive self-talk.
- I know when to take a break from work tasks or home chores.
- I consciously practice some form of relaxation.

Ideas for Relaxation and Stress Management

1. Use a calendar and a “to do” list so you don’t feel stressed by trying to remember all of your tasks and responsibilities. It helps to prioritize work tasks so you are tackling the most important things first.
2. Keep a journal to get your thoughts out of your mind and onto paper. Using a journal to express how you feel can also help you to think through the best way to handle situations in life and at work.
3. Do something every day that makes you laugh and lifts your spirits. Work can be stressful at times. You might want to call a friend, read something that you find funny, or use affirmations that help you to think positively.
4. Make time for yourself every day to do the things that help you to wind down and clear your mind. This may be especially important during a workday. Use your breaks to do a positive activity for your health and mood.
5. Try deep breathing, yoga, meditation, mindfulness or other mind-body practices to help you connect with your inner self and stay centered. These are practices that you can do anywhere, including work.
6. Use positive thoughts and positive talk in place of the negative ones to change your stress level as you react to a situation. Working with others requires you to manage negative thoughts and emotions. Taking a moment to clear your mind before you respond to others is a very important skill.

STRENGTHS (record on page 17)

What do you do now that helps you to manage stress?

When you think about work, what stresses you now or might cause you stress in the future?

What would you like to change or improve about your relaxation and stress management, to help you do well at work? (record on page 18)

Eating Well

Eating well includes having regular meals with “healthy” foods, such as lean meats, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products. It also means trying to reduce or limit the amount of caffeine, sugary, or energy type drinks that can make you feel jittery or cause your energy level to “crash”. Portions also matter and the time of day that you typically eat your meals can affect how you feel. Paying attention to how food and drinks affect you can assist you when you have to prepare for a workday.

How many glasses of water do you drink each day? _____

How many servings of vegetables do you eat each day? _____

How many servings of fruit do you eat each day? _____

How many days per week do you buy meals to eat (restaurant or take out)? _____

How many cups of caffeinated drinks do you have each day on average? _____

Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, energy drinks, and many types of soda (Coke®, Pepsi®, Barq’s®).

How many sugary drinks do you have each day on average? _____

What would you pack for a lunch and snack for work?

Check all of the items below that apply to you:

- I choose whole grains, such as brown rice and whole wheat bread, instead of refined grains, such as white rice and bread.
- I eat lean or low fat protein sources such as tofu, beans, turkey, or chicken without skin more often than high fat protein sources such as cheese, pork, or red meat.
- I eat moderate portion sizes.
- I have breakfast most days of the week.
- I have most of my meals at regular times.
- I choose healthy snacks like fruits or nuts instead of sweets or chips.
- I rarely eat late in the evening.
- I can prepare at least one meal each day to take to work.

Ideas for Eating Well

1. Eat a good breakfast on the days when you will be busy. This is an especially important routine for workdays when you will need to have the energy and stamina to start your day.
2. Eat meals at regular times each day and avoid eating too close to bedtime. Eating late at night can disrupt your regular sleep patterns and make it difficult to wake up in the morning.
3. Avoid sugar and limit caffeine to keep your energy steady, without peaks and valleys. A typical work day requires you to sustain your energy over a period of time. Concentration can also be affected if you feel drowsy.
4. Decrease your intake of sugary beverages such as soda and sweetened iced tea. Limit fruit juices (eat fruit instead). Just like caffeine, sugar affects the way we feel and our ability to maintain our focus as we plan to get and keep a job.
5. Bringing at least one healthy meal to work each day can save money and ensure you get the nutrients you need.

STRENGTHS (record on page 17)

What are some of the things you do to eat well?

What would you like to change or improve, to help you do well at work? (record on page 18)

Medical Care and Screenings

Medical care and screenings are an important part of staying well. Knowing your numbers like cholesterol, blood pressure, and body weight can help you to better monitor your overall physical health. Some jobs require a physical exam, an eye exam, or some other check-up before starting work. However, it is best to arrange for routine and preventative care on an ongoing basis, not just when the job requires it.

Do you have a primary care doctor? (*circle one*) YES NO

Do you have a dentist? (*circle one*) YES NO

Do you have an eye doctor? (*circle one*) YES NO

Do you know of any place nearby where you can get free or low-cost medical care and screenings? (*circle one*) YES NO

If you have health insurance, do you know what medical care and screenings are covered, and whether you have a co-pay? (*circle one*) YES NO

Add the dates for your most recent screenings for each item below:

Screening	Month/Year
Annual physical	
Dental Exam	
Eye Exam	
Blood Pressure Check	
Blood Sugar Check (Glucose)	
Cholesterol Level Check	
Other recommended testing* or check-up (specify)	

**Examples of beneficial screening tests include hearing test, colonoscopy (after age 50), mammograms and PAP test (for women), prostate exams (for men). Certain medical conditions or medications require regular medical follow up, such as blood tests.*

List your current medications:

List your current health conditions:

Check all of the items below that apply to you:

- I make sure to get a physical exam once a year and have my blood pressure, blood sugar, weight, and cholesterol checked.
- I have a yearly eye exam and can access new eye glasses/contact lenses when needed.
- I have a yearly dental exam and get cleanings at least two times per year.
- I know my numbers (blood pressure, weight, blood sugar, and cholesterol).
- I see my gynecologist and follow through with recommended exams once a year.
- I have a list of all the medications I take, including the dosages.
- I know my family's medical history and any diseases they may have had or have.
- I am able to access specialized health care if needed (podiatry, urology, endocrinology).

Ideas for Staying Well

1. Carry the phone numbers of your doctor and dentist. If you need to make an appointment or ask an important question, it is a good idea to have these numbers accessible to you if you are at work or away from home.
2. Make a list of questions before attending a medical or dental appointment. If you are diagnosed with a medical condition, get the answers to these* questions:
 - What is my main problem?
 - What should I do about it?
 - Why is this important?
3. If you are nervous about seeing a doctor or dentist, ask someone to go with you to help you keep your appointment and stay calm. A person you trust could also help you to write down important information or instructions the health care provider may give.

STRENGTHS (record on page 17)

What are some of your strengths?

**What would you like to change or improve related to medical care and screenings?
(record on page 18)**

My Physical Wellness for Work Summary: Strengths

Strengths can help you get and keep a job you want. Review the chart below and then look back at the strength that you have listed for each of the areas of physical wellness.

These strengths are the things that you do every day or every week to stay healthy. List your strengths in each of the areas under column one, *Physical Wellness Strengths*.

Physical Wellness	Physical Wellness Strengths
Habits and Routines	1. 2. 3.
Sleep and Rest	1. 2. 3.
Physical Activity	1. 2. 3.
Relaxation and Stress Management	1. 2. 3.
Eating Well	1. 2. 3.
Medical Care and Screenings	1. 2. 3.

Physical Wellness for Work Summary

- What would you like to improve or change if you were to get a job or if you want to remain successful at your current job? List what you would like to improve or change. Then list all of the supports and resources you need to be successful.

Physical Wellness	Areas to Improve or Change	Supports or Resources I Need
Habits and Routines		
Sleep and Rest		
Physical Activity		
Relaxation and Stress Management		
Eating Well		
Medical Care and Screenings		