



## Developing an Effective Wellness Program

In order to achieve real improvement, you first need to set goals and devise a reasonable strategy for reaching them. To start:

1. Gain management support. Meaningful change will only occur if driven from the top.
2. Create a wellness team to assess the needs and interests of employees. The size of this will be determined by your number of employees.
3. Create a supportive workplace by engaging mid-level management and supervisors. These individuals are the direct links between the workers and upper management and have a lot of ability to influence whether the program succeeds or fails.

### Program Design:

Establish clear principles to focus priorities, guide the program and direct resource allocation. Prevention of disease and injury supports worker health and well being.

- Eliminate recognized occupational hazards as a fundamental principle of improving the safety of the work environment.
- Tailor the program to the specific workplace and the diverse needs of your workers. Workplaces vary in size, sector, product, location and worker characteristics such as age, physical and mental abilities, education, cultural background and health practices.
- Adjust the program as needed. The relationship between work and health can be complex. The consequences of change may be unforeseen, so the program must be evaluated to detect unanticipated effects and adjusted based on the experiences.
- Make sure the program takes a long-term outlook to assure sustainability. Your program must be aligned with the core values of the enterprise.
- Be sure the program meets state and federal regulatory requirements such as HIPAA, ADA, etc. If workers believe their information will not be kept confidential, the program is less likely to succeed.
- Keep the program simple and inexpensive for your employees. For example, one company purchased \$5 pedometers for all their employees and encouraged them to take 10,000 steps a day.

### Program Evaluation:

- Measure the results. If the goals are not reached, it may be necessary to change the interventions or make the environment more supportive.
- Adjust or modify the program based on both the results and employee feedback.

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