3 STEPS
FOR A HEALTHIER WORKPLACE

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Supported by:

Government of **Western Australia**
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Heart Foundation

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Introduction

A workplace health and wellbeing program can boost the productivity of an organisation. It can also support workers to make healthy lifestyle choices so that they can enjoy life at work and at home.

Workplace health and wellbeing doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. This practical guide has been developed to make it easier for all Western Australian workplaces to plan, deliver and review a successful health and wellbeing program.

Healthier Workplace WA wants Western Australian workers to be amongst the healthiest in the world. We provide free support to workplaces across the state to help them support and encourage their workers to make positive lifestyle changes.

This guide is just one of the many free resources available to workplaces. For more resources and access to suitable programs visit healthierworkplacewa.com.au or get in touch on 1300 550 271.

HWWA acknowledges the Department of Sport and Recreation's 'A resource kit for physical activity and health in the workplace' and Workcover Tasmania's 'Your Simple Guide to Workplace Health and Wellbeing' for providing the inspiration for some of the content in this guide.

What is a healthy workplace?

A healthy workplace supports and encourages healthy habits among its workers, making healthy choices the easy choice. A healthy workplace is one where employers and workers work together to support and promote good health and wellbeing.

A workplace health and wellbeing program involves:

- Developing ***health-related policies*** (e.g. a smoke-free policy)
- Creating a ***work environment*** that supports good health (e.g. providing kitchen facilities that encourage food preparation and storage)
- Encouraging active ***participation in activities*** (e.g. lunchtime walking group)
- Developing healthy attitudes and behaviours in workers through ***education*** (e.g. organising a talk by a health professional on the effects of drinking alcohol)

Using this guide

The aim of this guide is to show that workplace health and wellbeing doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. Look out for these icons, which will lead you through the guide and signpost you to free resources and programs to support your workplace health journey.

This icon will direct you through the three sections of the guide: Plan, Do and Review. Each section is colour-coded and the resources list on page 31 also uses these colours to show what online resources are available for each section.

Look out for this icon, which indicates that a useful resource is available online at www.healthierworkplacewa.com.au to assist you with this part of the process.

Healthier Workplace WA works with other health agencies to provide support and advice on a range of workplace health topics and issues. Look out for this icon, which indicates where a program is available.

The case for workplace health & wellbeing

An unhealthy lifestyle contributes to ill health, sick leave, lost productivity, and reduced ability to work. A workplace health and wellbeing program can boost your business' bottom line.[1]

Kris Ingham
Health & Wellness Officer, Rocky Bay

"As an organisation, our aim is to give our clients a better quality of life. A healthy employee helps us to achieve this."

Workplaces that implement supportive polices that promote healthy habits and create supportive environments might expect to see:

In a few months

- ↑ Worker morale and engagement
- ↑ Team cohesion

In 1 - 2 years

- ↑ Individual work performance and productivity
- ↑ Attraction and retention of staff
- ↑ Improved corporate and recruitment image
- ↑ Individual health knowledge
- ↑ Job satisfaction

In 3 - 5 years

- ↓ Workplace injuries and associated expenses
- ↓ Absenteeism and sick leave
- ↓ Incidence of attending work when sick
- ↑ Relations among workers and with management
- ↑ Return on training and development investment

Adapted from Workcover Tasmania's 'Your Simple Guide to Workplace Health and Wellbeing'

The research

Workplace health and wellbeing programs can increase productivity at work by

29%[2]

Healthy workers are

Happier and safer

workers[1,3]

Workplace health and wellbeing programs can reduce absence due to sickness by

21%[2]

Workplace health and wellbeing programs can improve overall worker health by

24%[2]

Poor health increases the likelihood of

Industrial accidents or injuries[4]

Workers who smoke can cost businesses in terms of

Lost productivity

due to smoking breaks and sick leave[5]

For more information on the benefits of workplace health and wellbeing see the 'The business case for workplace health and wellbeing' brochure.

Checklist

Use this checklist as you work through your program. Tick off the points as you go.

Plan	Complete online Workplace Health Check at www.healthierworkplacewa.com.au	
	Use the recommendations to identify areas that your health and wellbeing program will target	
	Gain support from management	
	Identify a coordinator	
	Consult with staff	
Do	Create health-related policy	
	Develop an action plan	
	Identify suitable strategies	
	Promote your program	
	Implement your strategies	
Review	Evaluate the impact of your program	
	Celebrate your successes and move forward	
	Apply to become a Recognised Healthy Workplace	

> Plan

Getting started

As you get started with your health and wellbeing program, first consider what your workplace actually needs. Are you starting from scratch or looking to improve on what you already have?

If you want to improve an existing program, think about what is already in place to support workers to be healthy.

This might include:

- *Policy* e.g. a smoke-free policy
- *Activities* e.g. a lunchtime walking group
- *Facilities* e.g. kitchen facilities for staff to store and prepare healthy lunches
- *Information* e.g. brochures on the negative/detrimental effects of alcohol

Take our online 'Workplace health check' at www.healthierworkplacewa.com.au. This will provide you with some specific recommendations for improving health and wellbeing in your workplace.

> Plan

Gain management support

Making sure people in the workplace are supportive of your health and wellbeing program is important. Getting the support of senior managers is especially important as they can commit money and people to the program and can help make it a success. If managers support the goals and participate in the program then workers will be more enthusiastic and motivated to join in.

A great way to gain management support is to provide evidence of the benefits of workplace health and wellbeing.

This can be done by:

- Accessing our online Workplace Health Savings Calculator www.hwwa.com.au/calc and record how much money a workplace health program could save your business
- Showcasing HWWA case study videos http://healthierworkplacewa.com.au/
- Developing a business case and presenting it to management

Tamara Smith
Director, 360 Environmental

"360 Environmental believes that the health and wellbeing of our employees is integral to the success of our business. The Directors of 360 Environmental have always been committed to providing a healthy workplace and this management support is a driving factor behind the success of our program."

For more ideas on engaging managers, see the 'Getting started' factsheet and the sample 'PowerPoint presentation for management'.

> Plan

Identify a coordinator

Identify a key person who will be responsible for making the program happen.

In larger organisations this could be the person who is already in charge of human resources or health and safety.

In a smaller organisation this could be a manager or a volunteer who is enthusiastic about health. Ensure that enough time and resources are given to the coordinator to deliver the program within normal working hours.

Workplace health and wellbeing champions

A workplace health and wellbeing champion is someone who is passionate about health and wellbeing. They volunteer their time to take the lead in encouraging others to make healthy choices. Champions can be vital in building enthusiasm and motivating other staff to get involved. A workplace champion may be the primary coordinator of activities in smaller workplaces or could assist with coordinating workplace health activities in larger organisations.

The role of the workplace health and wellbeing champion includes:

- Helping to spread the message by promoting activities to co-workers and motivating them to get involved
- Coordinating and leading activities for staff e.g. a lunchtime walking group
- Listening to staff ideas, issues and concerns and communicating this information back to management

We offer free training for people who coordinate workplace health programs. This includes face-to-face and online options. Visit hwwa.com.au/training for more information.

> Plan

Develop a working group

For medium to large organisations, developing a working group is a great way to get support from different levels of your organisation and to encourage participation in the program. Include people from all parts of the organisation.

The role of the health and wellbeing coordinator and/or working group is to:

- *Identify the most important needs* in the organisation by consulting with staff
- Find out what *resources, facilities and assistance* are needed
- *Identify potential barriers or concerns* that may stop things happening
- Develop an *action plan*
- *Organise and implement* program strategies
- *Evaluate the program* to see if the goals and objectives are being achieved
- *Find out* if workers are participating and are satisfied with the program

> Plan

Consult with staff

It is important to speak to staff and listen to their wants, needs and concerns about workplace health strategies. By engaging staff early on, you create a feeling of ownership and can collect information that will allow you to make better decisions about what approach to take.

Many workplaces choose to consult with staff through a survey. This can have limited use as you may find that only workers who are already interested in their health respond. It is likely that your workers' health behaviours and issues are similar to the general population. This means the main behaviours that you should be targeting are physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, smoking and alcohol consumption.

For smaller workplaces, consulting with your workers may be as simple as speaking to them. You could also ask for suggestions by email, at regular staff meetings or by creating an anonymous feedback box.

For medium to large organisations, getting feedback will take more time. You could speak to existing staff groups that meet regularly and are representative of all staff. This ensures that you are not just getting the opinions of workers with an interest in health. Asking open-ended questions in a meeting provides you with much richer information than multiple choice questions on a survey.

For more great ideas see the 'Consulting with staff and appendix questions' factsheet.

> Do

Create policy

A policy is a formal written document that sets out your organisation's intentions in relation to a particular area of focus. Creating policies that address things like healthy eating, physical activity, smoking and alcohol can demonstrate your organisation's commitment to providing a work environment that encourages good health.

Your policy should include:

- ***A mission statement*** of the organisation's commitment to health and wellbeing
- ***Clear objectives*** that demonstrate how your mission statement will be achieved
- ***Strategies that outline the steps*** that will help you to achieve your objectives. All strategies must be clear, specific and relate directly to each objective
- ***A scope*** that identifies who the policy applies to and the key roles and responsibilities of managers and workers
- The way you will ***communicate the policy*** to key stakeholders
- Details of how your policy will be ***monitored, updated and reviewed***

For more on creating your policy see the 'Creating a health and wellbeing policy' factsheet.
Visit www.healthierworkplacewa.com.au for a range of sample policies you can adapt and use.

> Do

Develop an action plan

Once you have decided on the priorities for your workplace, an action plan will allow you to describe what you will achieve and the steps required to do this. You can use this plan to keep track of your program's progress and successes.

Your action plan should include:

- An overall ***goal*** that describes the aim of your health and wellbeing program e.g. to improve the health and wellbeing of my workforce
- ***Objectives*** that state how the goal will be achieved e.g. to increase by 20% the number of workers achieving their daily 30 minutes of physical activity over the next 12 months
- The ***strategies*** or steps you will take to implement your objectives e.g. to create a lunchtime walking group
- Any day to day ***tasks*** you need to carry out in order to achieve your strategies e.g. form a working group to create policy
- Any ***resources and tools*** that may be needed to support the program, including materials, money and time
- The ***key people*** who will coordinate or be involved in running the program
- A ***timeframe*** that clearly outlines when and for how long activities will run
- The ***outcomes*** that you will use to evaluate the success of your program e.g. the number of people in your workforce completing 30 minutes of physical activity prior to implementing the lunchtime walking group, compared to the number of people completing 30 minutes of physical activity 12 months later

For additional help, see the 'Action planning' factsheet.

Do

Create a supportive workplace environment

Creating a workplace environment that supports healthy lifestyles can positively influence the behaviours of those who work there. Providing facilities to store, prepare and eat food (e.g. fridge, microwave and cutlery) can make bringing a healthy lunch from home easier than a trip to the local food vendor; and ensuring staff have access to showers and change rooms can encourage active travel and physical activity before, during and after work. A supportive environment can also have a positive impact on workers who choose not to participate in formal health and wellbeing activities.

Likewise, a workplace environment that doesn't support health and wellbeing can have a negative impact on workers' choices. For example, implementing a catering policy and educating staff on healthy eating is undermined if unhealthy food is provided in canteens, vending machines or at catered events.

Your workplace environment should support and reinforce your health-related policies, education and activities in order to make it easy for your staff to be healthy.

Hayley Ryan *(centre), Health and Wellness Consultant*

"The RAC supports a comprehensive wellness program believing the health and wellness of our employees is imperative for a resilient, engaged, productive and happy workforce."

For tips on increasing physical activity levels, see the 'Facilities checklist' and 'Best practice guide: Health and wellbeing strategies''.

Do

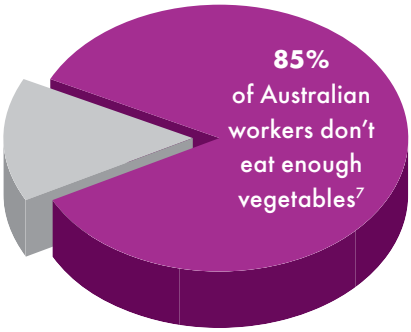
Identify strategies

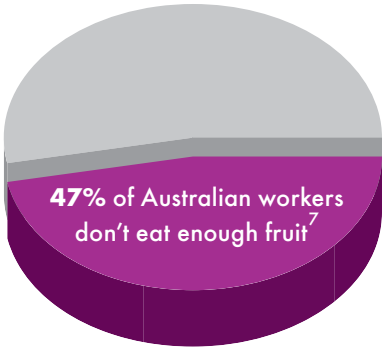
Strategies are the practical things that you can do to help achieve a healthier workplace and should cover policy, the physical environment, information and activities. Listed below are some strategies that you can put in place to encourage healthy eating and drinking, physical activity and smoke-free and alcohol-free workplaces.

Remember to look out for the symbol, which indicates that a relevant program is available for your workplace to take part in.

Promote healthy eating and drinking

Staff who eat well are more likely to be healthy, happy and productive, and have improved concentration, mental health and immune function. Unhealthy eating and drinking is linked to type 2 diabetes, heart disease, some cancers, excess weight and obesity, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and a range of other health conditions.[6]





For tips on strategies see the 'Best practice guide: Health and wellbeing strategies'

Do

Healthy Choices Healthy Futures provides advice and support on onsite café, canteen and kiosk facilities and can help with introducing healthier items into vending machines. Find out more at: www.hchf.com.au

My Healthy Balance is an online healthy lifestyle program that encourages and supports health behaviour changes related to healthy eating, physical activity and healthy weight. Find out more at: www.myhealthybalance.com.au

Recipes and posters are available online from www.livelighter.com.au/resources, www.eatforhealth.gov.au and www.heartfoundation.org.au/recipes

Strategies to promote healthy eating and drinking:

- Display messages like our 'drink water' or 'snack on fruit instead' posters (available at www.hwwa.com.au/resources) in key areas where decisions about eating and drinking are made
- Provide drinking water that is accessible to all workers and encourage the use of refillable water bottles in the office and in work vehicles
- Provide kitchen facilities to encourage food storage and preparation (e.g. refrigerators, microwaves, cutlery and crockery)
- Provide healthy food and drinks at work functions where refreshments are served, like meetings, staff lunches and celebrations
- Organise a social soup and salad group, where workers are rostered to bring salads in summer and soups in winter to share with their colleagues
- Organise fresh fruit and vegetables to be delivered to your workplace for free or at a subsidised cost

> Do

Identify strategies

Promote physical activity

Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers, and contributes to around 14,000 premature deaths in Australia every year.[7] The extended periods that many workers spend sitting also poses a significant risk to their health. Physical activity is vital in reducing the loss of productivity that occurs when workers come to work but are not fully effective because of illness or injury.

Get on Track Challenge is an online team challenge that uses fun and friendly competition to encourage workers to get active and eat well. Find out more at: www.getontrackchallenge.com.au

TravelSmart Workplace helps workplaces promote active and sustainable travel choices, for journeys to and from work, and for journeys during work hours. Find out more at: www.hwwa.com.au/take-action/tools-and-resources/free-programs

Walking@Work is a ready-to-implement group walking program for your workplace. Find out more at: www.heartfoundation.org.au/active-living/walking

Physical activity posters are available from www.hwwa.com.au/resources and www.livelighter.com.au/resources

Reduce sitting at work posters are available from www.hwwa.com.au/resources

Do

Strategies to promote physical activity and reduce sitting time:

- Display physical activity messages like our 'take the stairs instead' poster or reduce your sitting time at work poster (available on our website) throughout the workplace
- Start a lunchtime walking group or hold exercise sessions during lunch breaks
- Install sit-stand workstations
- Include activities like team games, super golf, bushwalking and lawn bowls in work social events
- Provide maps of local walking, cycling and public transport routes to and from your workplace
- Encourage workers to take part in local, state or national events like City to Surf, Run for a Reason, Bike Week and Walk Over October

Physical inactivity causes around 30% of heart disease, 27% of diabetes and 23% of breast and colon cancer globally[6]

> Do

Identify strategies

Promote smoke-free workplaces

Tobacco smoking is a leading cause of preventable death and disease[8], and is estimated to cost Australia a staggering $31.5 billion a year[9]. Tobacco smoking also has a big effect on business. Smokers are 1.4 times more likely to be absent from work due to sickness and ill health than those who have never smoked.[9]

Fresh Start Workplace Services has information, advice and support on becoming a smoke-free workplace and runs smoking cessation courses in the workplace www.hwwa.com.au/take-action/tools-and-resources/free-programs/fresh-start

Quitline offers free services and telephone support (13 7848) to individuals wanting to give up smoking www.quitnow.gov.au

Online resources and apps on the benefits of quitting are available from www.cancerwa.asn.au/tobaccoresources and www.quitnow.gov.au

Strategies to promote a smoke-free workplace:

- Develop a smoke-free policy
- Provide information on the benefits of quitting smoking
- Signpost smoke-free areas, including outdoor areas where smoking is not permitted
- Run a free workplace smoking cessation course for staff
- Allow flexible working arrangements to allow workers to attend quit smoking courses
- Advertise through email, the intranet and flyers the free services available to assist workers in quitting smoking

Tobacco smoking costs Australian businesses $8.25 billion annually in sickness and reduced productivity[9]

> Do

Identify strategies

Promote alcohol-free workplaces

Alcohol is the most widely used drug in Australia and can result in a range of physical, emotional and social harms. In the workplace, alcohol can also have a negative impact on safety and health. Alcohol reduces a person's ability to work safely by affecting the nervous system, coordination, motor control, concentration, alertness and the ability to exercise judgment.[10]

In 2011-12, nearly 1 in 5 adults consumed more than the recommended maximum of 2 standard drinks per day[8]

Do

The Healthy Workers Alcohol Program provides information, resources and specialist workplace support and advice on alcohol-related issues. Visit www.alcoholthinkagain.com.au/workplaces for more information

Strategies to promote an alcohol-free workplace:

- Consult with staff and develop a tailored alcohol policy that meets the needs of your organisation
- Make sure that alcohol is not provided to staff at your workplace or, if it is provided, limit the number of drinks per person to one or two standard drinks
- Organise work social functions at times where alcohol is not expected (breakfast, morning tea and lunch)
- Ensure work social functions are not organised around drinking – choose a range of activities like movie nights, team games or family fun days instead
- Display posters and brochures throughout your workplace that encourage workers to avoid harmful drinking
- Avoid giving alcohol as prizes, gifts or for fundraising and develop a policy or a stance to support this
- Where necessary, provide staff with free, independent and confidential counselling through an Employee Assistance Program

For more ideas, see the 'Best practice guide: Health and wellbeing strategies'.

> Do

Promote your program

It is important to promote your workplace health and wellbeing program so that more people get involved and you are able to achieve your program goals and objectives. Effective promotions can get your program off to a great start.

Program promotions will:

- Raise awareness of your program and generate staff interest
- Motivate staff to take part in the planned activities
- Advertise the details of specific events and activities
- Keep participants interested and involved throughout the program

You may like to try using:

- Print promotions, such as eye-catching posters and flyers, or an article in your staff newsletter
- Staff or tool-box meetings to promote the program face-to-face, allowing workers to ask questions and understand the purpose of the program
- A launch to create a 'buzz' before the start of your program
- IT and online methods, such as emails, desktop reminders and social media

For more information see the 'Engaging staff' factsheet and 'Evaluation Questions' factsheet

Review

Evaluate your program

Evaluation is an important way of telling whether your workplace health and wellbeing program is working in the way you planned. It is an organised way of collecting information on what has worked and what isn't working, so that you can improve things in the future.

Evaluation starts at the beginning

Think about evaluation right from the beginning. Gather information before you start on the behaviour that you are aiming to change. You can then check your progress at specific points during the program and at the end to see if it is working. Remember to share the results of your program with staff and celebrate your successes.

Basic

- Number of workers aware of the program and the specific activities
- Number of people participating and their satisfaction with the program and specific activities
- Changes to the workplace e.g. new policies, new procedures
- Management support for the program

Complex

- Changes in workers' health-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours e.g. increased physical activity levels, more people quitting smoking
- Changes in health measures e.g. body mass index, blood pressure, blood glucose and blood cholesterol
- Changes in health e.g. sick leave, absenteeism rates, injury rates
- The cost of activities against the savings to the organisation

For some simple steps on performing a detailed evaluation of your health and wellbeing program download our 'Evaluating your program' factsheet.

Review

Celebrate and move forward

Reflecting on your results will allow you to determine where to go next with your health and wellbeing program. In moving forward, consider:

- What additional expertise, knowledge or resources might you need?
- Are there better strategies to target a particular group?
- Is there a more cost-effective way of reaching your target group?
- Who else could have been involved?
- Was your promotion successful?

Review

Becoming a Recognised Healthy Workplace

It is important to celebrate success as it is a way of thanking staff for their ongoing participation. It also provides an opportunity for workers to share their healthy achievements. This could be done through hosting a healthy morning tea, a staff newsletter or on the organisation intranet. You may even wish to become a ***Recognised Healthy Workplace*** at www.hwwa.com.au/get-recognised.

Now is also a good time to consult with your staff again and see if their needs have changed. Look back at your action plan and work out what activities are no longer needed and where you might need to focus more attention. Reviewing your program regularly will allow you to keep workers engaged and motivated in creating a healthier workplace.

What is a Recognised Healthy Workplace?

The Recognised Healthy Workplace program aims to celebrate the achievements of workplaces in WA that have demonstrated a commitment to creating a healthy workplace. The program has been developed in collaboration with Unions WA and Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA.

The program recognises and celebrates workplaces that:

- Have implemented healthy policies and procedures
- Provide environments and facilities that support healthy behaviour
- Raise awareness and educate staff on good health practices
- Provide an opportunity for staff to participate in healthy behaviour

Levels of achievement

Gold Recognition

Organisations that have demonstrated excellence in workplace health and wellbeing

Silver Recognition

Organisations that have made significant achievements in workplace health and wellbeing

Bronze Recognition

Organisations that have demonstrated commitment to workplace health and wellbeing

List of tools and resources

Visit www.healthierworkplacewa.com.au to download these and other free resources:

To support coordinator:

Plan

- **Tool:** Workplace health check
- **Brochure:** The business case for workplace health and wellbeing
- **Tool:** PowerPoint presentation for management
- **Tool:** Workplace health calculator
- **Tool:** Online training videos
- **Tool:** Case study videos
- **Factsheet:** Getting started
- **Factsheet:** Consulting with staff and appendix questions

Do

- **Factsheet:** Engaging staff
- **Factsheet and template:** Action planning
- **Best practice guide:** Health and wellbeing strategies
- **Factsheet and sample policy:** Creating a workplace health and wellbeing policy
- **Sample policy:** Smoke-free policy
- **Sample policy:** Healthier eating and drinking policy
- **Sample policy:** Physical activity policy
- **Tool:** Healthy Choices Healthy Futures checklist
- **Factsheet:** Selecting a service provider

Review

- **Factsheet:** Evaluating your program and appendix questions
- **Factsheet:** Becoming a recognsied healthy workplace

For coordinator to distribute to workers:

Tool: Toolbox videos

1. How easy is it to get into your pants?
2. Portions affect your proportions
3. Scared sitless?
4. Are you drinking yourself fat?
5. Eat Brighter
6. Cutting back on the booze
7. Chasing Healthy Snacks
8. Do more to get more

Tool: Health Works newsletter and subscribe to E News or join our LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter community.

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Healthy Workplace ideas

Do you know what your workplace is worth?

Copies of this guide can be downloaded from the Healthier Workplace WA website or call us for a printed copy.
We welcome and value your feedback.

Contact details

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Healthier Workplace WA

Healthier Workplace WA

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