



Fit for work

You spend a lot of time at work, so why not make that time happy and healthy? By **Linda Drummond** and **Nicola Conville**.

We don't want to scare you, but did you know that if you work full-time it's entirely possible that you spend more waking hours at your desk than anywhere else on earth? Eek. So wouldn't you want to do your best to make those hours as happy as possible? Here is our guide to workplace wellness.

Clutter busting

There is no such thing as organised clutter. Make this the week to bust the clutter. Start small. Give yourself 15-minute brackets to clean out one thing at a time, whether it's your email inbox or a pile of papers that needs filing. Feng shui expert **Liz Wiggins** says: "A cluttered desk reflects a cluttered mind, so clear your desk and as soon as you've finished a project, file any remnants away." For tips on how to organise your office the feng shui way visit www.fengshuiliving.com.au

Breath of fresh air

Wiggins also emphasises the importance of fresh air. "Get outside some time during the day, which will give you a breath of fresh air," she advises. "This offers the double benefit of giving your body a dose of natural light and the accompanying vitamin D. If you go for a walk for a couple of blocks it loosens your body up a little too."

Naturally nourished

Healthy, low-GI meals will help you get the most out of your working day without peaks and troughs in energy and concentration. Nutritionist **Catherine Saxelby**, co-author of *Zest: The Nutrition For Life Cookbook* (**HardieGrant**), recommends breakfasts of muesli or wholegrain cereal with low-fat milk or yoghurt, poached or boiled eggs with wholemeal toast, or a banana or strawberry smoothie with a spoonful of lecithin, wheatgerm or LSA mix (linseed, sunflower seeds and almonds) thrown in.

Fuelled up

A nutritious lunch with salad, low-fat protein and wholegrains can fuel you for the afternoon's work, and healthy snacks can boost your

energy levels, says Saxelby. "Look for meals that have low-GI carbs and protein, as this combination seems to keep you fuelled up longer than just carbs alone."

To keep your stomach satisfied longer, snack on healthy options every three hours rather than waiting until you're starving and your blood sugar levels have plummeted. Saxelby recommends preparing healthy snack packs at home. She suggests:

- A small tub of dried apricots and mixed, unsalted nuts.
- A punnet of cherry tomatoes.
- Celery and carrot sticks with hummus.
- Two large rice cakes spread with peanut butter.

Clock watching

Breaking tasks up into manageable portions is a much easier way to get through the day. Andrew May, author of *Flip The Switch* (Messenger Publishing), says: "Stop making endless to-do lists. Instead, kick-start each day with a 'will-do' list and complete what's most important."

It's all about getting your priorities straight, says May. "Spending 10 to 15 minutes prioritising tasks at the start of each day is a great way to get a clear picture of the day ahead. Then control your time as much as possible and focus on your action list."

Action stations

Get active, not reactive. May says to ask the following key questions:

- What are five things I can do today that will make the biggest difference to my job/role/organisation/sales volumes and so on?
- What do I do best? How can I stay on this and get support for/outsource the rest?
- Is there anything that needs doing urgently that I'm better off getting someone else to do for me?
- Am I setting up my day to maximise energy levels and boost productivity?

Putting on the brakes

May adds that time off is vital. "An essential component of 'flipping the switch' involves learning to press the 'off' button," he says. "You need to take time out to refuel and reinvigorate. It is impossible to be on 24/7, and remain at your peak. Practise being on when you have to and off when you can."

A piece of green

Plants around the office don't just help bring the outside in, they can humidify and remove chemicals emitted from computers and air-conditioning. It's essential

to choose a variety that can cope with low levels of natural light such as the peace lily (*spathiphyllum cv*) which, as well as being a leafy delight, also efficiently removes bio-effluents from the office atmosphere.

Bend and stretch

Sitting at a desk or standing in one position all day long is not what our bodies are designed to do. Michael Long from Stretch Now says: "The average person with a full-time desk job will spend 60,000 hours in their lifetime at their desk, so you should get up at least once an hour to get the tension out of your body. If you're having a one-minute break every hour you could do three stretches, so at the end of the day you won't feel so fatigued." Visit www.stretchnow.com.au for ergonomic products or to order a [wellness@workstretching](mailto:wellness@workstretching.com) poster.

Well watered

Air-conditioning and sitting at a computer screen can seem to suck the moisture from your body. You need to keep hydrated to boost your skin, productivity and brain cells. Have a one-litre bottle or large glass on your desk, and refill it regularly. Try to sip slowly from two litres of water per day.

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Gossip begone

Something that makes the working day go by far more smoothly is having good workplace relations. While you don't have to be friends with everyone, a bit of civility goes a long way. Ditch the office gossip, and keep your emails civil. Either make your complaints reasonable and direct to the person you're having a problem with, or save your moaning for after work.

Get a move on

Just because you're at work all day doesn't mean you can't fit in a spot of incidental exercise. Peta Bee, author of *Integrated Exercise* (Simon & Schuster), says we can all squeeze a little exercise into our day:

- Use the stairs instead of the lift.
- Stand up when talking on the phone.
- Use the toilets furthest from your desk.
- Suggest a walking meeting to your colleagues – the fresh air may trigger more creative thought.
- If you drive to work, park at the farthest end of the car park and walk the rest of the way.

For more on brightening up your working life head to our website sundaytelegraph.com.au