



W@W

Winning @ Wellness

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Be Healthy @ Work: Stretching

Adapted from *Stretching in the Office*, by Bob Anderson.

The advances in technology that have made our lives easier have also left us with a few side effects. Increasing numbers of people must spend more and more time sitting at a desk using a computer, but often do little or nothing to counteract the negative effects that sedentary office work have on their bodies. If you work at a computer there is a good chance you will eventually suffer from wrist or back pain, stiff muscles, tight joints, tension and stress.

Stretching is a very simple and gentle activity that can make you feel better. If done correctly, it can prevent many computer-related problems before they start and if an injury has occurred, can help with healing. Stretching:

- Can be done almost anywhere and at any time.
- Requires no special equipment, clothes or skills.
- Can often be done while doing something else such as sitting in a meeting, talking on the phone or waiting for the computer to process information.

Often times, we have the best intentions for taking care of ourselves, but get caught up in the stress of meeting deadlines or become engaged in a project. Setting reminders through your calendar is a great way to make stretching a habit. The benefits come from consistency. There is also computer software to remind you to stretch and may even include a stretching routine; making it all the more likely you will follow through.

StretchWare, developed by stretching expert Bob Anderson, author of the classic best-selling fitness

book is one example (<http://www.stretchware.com/index.html>).

The Right Way to Stretch

- Breathe easily
- Relax
- Tune into your body; focus on muscles and joints being stretched
- Be guided by the feel of the stretch
- No bouncing!
- No pain!

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Benefits of Stretching

Regular stretching throughout the day will:

- Reduce muscle tension
- Improve circulation
- Reduce anxiety, stress and fatigue
- Improve mental alertness
- Decrease the risk of injury
- Make your work easier
- Tune your mind into your body
- Make you feel better



“What preventative measures do you take to take care of yourself?”

“Since my grandmother had breast cancer and my sister’s and my treatment of thyroid cancer I’ve scheduled yearly exams, mammograms, and skin cancer screenings. Getting a flu shot is on my to-do list every fall as well. I make every effort on a daily basis to get more fruits and veggies in my diet and to be more physically active at work on breaks and at home in the evenings and weekends. My daughter and a buddy system at work seem to keep me motivated to be a healthier ME!” Brenda Buschjost

“As far as preventive care, I make sure to get an annual exam, the flu shot, and follow any recommendations from my physicians – blood work, mammogram, vitamins, vaccines/immunizations. I never leave my doctor’s office from an annual well-woman, well-child, or 6-month dental check without scheduling the next appointment. I know it will be a year or 6 months away, but I have the appointment and will get a reminder from the doctor. This way I won’t forget!

It’s not only important to look out for yourself, but your family members as well. The spouse or parent who doesn’t like the dentist or the doctor – gentle nudges to go or even setting the appointment for him/her. And don’t forget the kids. Talking to them about why it’s important to go to these places and what they will experience seems to help, at least for my 3 year old it does. Plus preventive care is covered at 100% through most all insurance so why not get it all checked out!” Carrie Haley

We want to hear from you for the next Employee Buzz! “How do you fit in an active lifestyle along with your commitments to work and family?” Email your response to worksitewellness@health.mo.gov. Please tell us if you do not want your name included with your quote.

Eat Smart @ Work

Indian Caviar

(Recipe compliments of Lisa Miller, DHSS employee)

- 1 can black beans, rinsed
- 1 can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 can black eyed peas, drained
- 1 can shoe peg corn, drained
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 4 green onions, chopped
- ¾ bottle Italian salad dressing (try a low fat variety)
- Scoop tortilla chips

Mix together and serve with baked whole grain tortilla chips.



(continued from page 1)

Keep the following points in mind when stretching:

- Always stretch within your comfort limits, never to the point of pain. Any stretch that grows in intensity or becomes painful means you are overstretching.
- Keep your breath slow and steady. Do not hold your breath.
- Take your time. The long-sustained, mild stretch reduces unwanted muscle tension and tightness.
- Do not compare yourself with others. We are all different. Comparisons may lead to overstretching.
- If you are stretching correctly, the “stretch feeling” should slightly decrease as you hold the stretch.

When to Stretch

Stretching every hour or so throughout the day can help you avoid stiffness, and muscle

soreness. It may boost your energy level too. You can stretch:

- On the job, to release nervous tension
- While your computer is processing something
- Whenever you feel stiff, sore or tired
- When you need more energy
- Whenever you want to focus and do your best

Where to Stretch

You can stretch in a variety of places. Here's your chance to be creative. For example, you can stretch:

- At your desk
- While on the phone
- At the copy machine
- While waiting for your lunch to heat-up
- At the filing cabinet or drinking fountain
- At office meetings
- While standing or waiting in line
- Before getting up to go anywhere

Move More @ Work:

Copy Machine Stretches



Who says you
can't do two
things at once!

Stretching in the Office ©2002
Robert A. Anderson, Jean E. Anderson & Shelter Publications, Inc.
www.shelter.com

"Take 3" Actions to Fight the Flu

Flu is a serious contagious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urges you to take the following actions to protect yourself and others from influenza (the flu):

#1 Take time to get a flu vaccine.

- CDC recommends a yearly flu shot as the first and most important step in protecting yourself against getting the flu. **Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine as soon as the yearly vaccines are available.**
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important. People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.
- Getting a flu shot is also important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people.

#2 Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also may have vomiting and diarrhea. Someone may be infected with the flu, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

#3 Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor orders them.

- Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) and are not available over-the-counter.
- Antiviral drugs can lessen symptoms and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious complications.
- It's very important that antiviral drugs be used early (within the first 2 days of symptoms) to treat people who are very sick (such as those who are hospitalized) or high risk persons with flu symptoms.

Visit CDC's website <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm> to find out what to do if you get sick with the flu and how to care for someone at home who may have the flu.

Worksite Wellness News

Blood Pressure Wednesdays

October 5, 12, 19, 26
November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Lunch-N-Learns

All Lunch-N-Learns are from 12:00 to 1:00 pm
September 26th —Successfully Negotiating
Life's Twists and Turns

October 26th—Maintaining Joint Health

November—Tips for Conserving Energy

December—Seasonal Affective Disorder

Note: With supervisor approval, employees may participate in worksite wellness sponsored Lunch-N- Learn programs for 30 minutes and special events for up to 1 hour on no more than one day per month without being charged leave. Attendance beyond this must be during the employee's lunch break or charged to annual leave or compensatory time. (See DHSS Administrative Policy, Section 14.3.)

New! Upcoming Events

Maintain, Don't Gain!

The Holiday Weight Maintenance Challenge starts November 21st

On-site Mammography Screening

Ellis Fischel Cancer Center's Mammography Van will be on-site March 14, 2012. More information to come.

Have suggestions for topics or recipes for future newsletters?

Email worksitewellness@health.mo.gov.

Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan (MCHCP) 2012 Benefits Support Your Wellness

In 2012, MCHCP, the state employee health insurance plan is making some positive changes. For the first time ever, MCHCP will offer a combination of healthy living incentives that will save up to \$40 (\$80 for an employee and spouse) on your monthly premium. Below is a brief description of each incentive. If you have additional questions, please visit MCHCP's website at <http://www.mchcp.org/stateMembers/openEnrollment.asp>

Tobacco-Free Incentive

MCHCP will offer a tobacco-free incentive of \$25 per month for each non-Medicare subscriber and covered spouse starting January 1, 2012. To receive the reduced premium, members and covered spouses must confirm during open enrollment or when they first enroll in an MCHCP insurance plan that they do not use tobacco or are participating in an MCHCP-approved tobacco cessation program. A waiver may be given if a member provides physician documentation noting that a medical condition prevents them from achieving tobacco-free status.

MCHCP-approved tobacco cessation programs are:

- StayWell Tobacco NextSteps phone coaching through *Lifestyle Ladder*, 866-564-5235
- Missouri Tobacco Quitline, 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)
- American Cancer Society Quit for Life, 866-QUIT-4-LIFE (866-784-8454)

Members actively participating in the Tobacco Cessation NextSteps phone coaching program can receive up to 90 days of physician-ordered medication and up to eight weeks of over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapy at no cost. To learn more about prescription medications, call ESI at 800-797-5754. To learn more about non-prescription nicotine replacement therapy, call StayWell® at 866-564-5235.

Lifestyle Ladder Program

For 2012, MCHCP is again offering employees the opportunity to participate in the *Lifestyle Ladder* wellness program which promotes physical activity, better eating habits and less tobacco use. Changes to *Lifestyle Ladder* include:

- A reduced wellness premium of \$15 per month (\$30 per month for employee and spouse)
- New deadlines for earning points for easier payroll adjustments
- Expanded point options to capture more of the activities you are already doing

Lifestyle Ladder focuses on health education and behavioral change. It encourages you to take responsibility for your health behaviors. To participate, you must be enrolled in a MCHCP medical plan. In order to receive the monthly wellness premium, you need to:

- Take the online Health Assessment (HA). Complete the HA during open enrollment in order to take full advantage of the wellness premium. However, you can take the HA any time throughout the year.
- Earn at least 100 points per quarter in your Point\$ Bank. If you do not earn 100 points during a given quarter, you will not receive the wellness premium for the following quarter. The points you did earn can be used toward earning the incentive in a future quarter.

Options for adding points to your Point\$ Bank include:

- Taking the online Health Assessment (HA)
- Participating in disease management or NextSteps Coaching programs
- Completing a six week self-paced healthy living program
- Participating in health action campaigns
- Participating in a local fitness activity
- Completing quizzes from the health and family centers
- Taking preventative health measures, such as getting a flu shot