



# **HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Physical activity and sports**

## Objective of the module:

- The main objective of this model is to define the importance and role of **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS** in the workplace as well as to present some practical ideas in encouraging it among employees.



## Aims:

This topic aims to identify the role of physical activity and sports in regards to employees' productivity in the workplace as well as to provide practical ideas and examples to managers of how to encourage employees to have more physical activity throughout the day.

## Objectives:

- The importance & role of physical activity and sports
- Benefits of physical activity and sports at workplace
- How to encourage employees to have more physical activity
- Practical ideas and examples of physical activity at work



# The importance & role of physical activity and sports

Physical inactivity is a major concern that impacts society. It has been linked to an increased risk of a range of health conditions including, coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke, osteoporosis, cancer, type 2 diabetes, obesity and mental health problems.

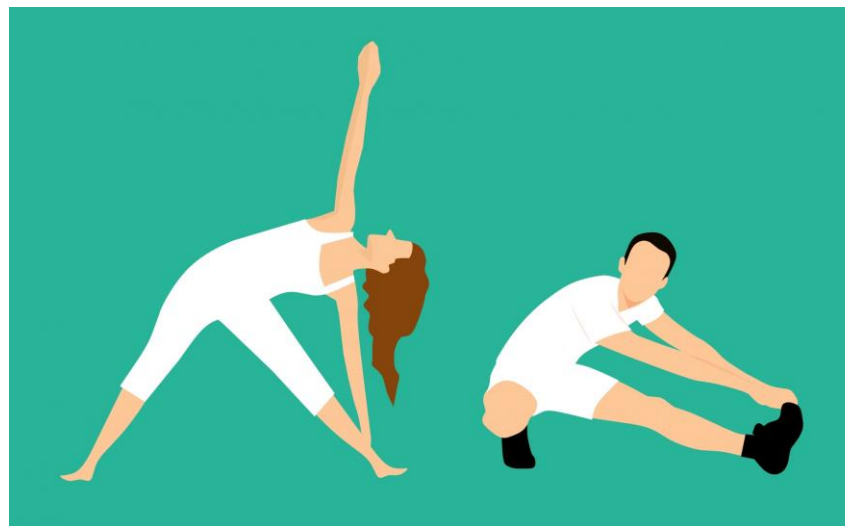
Staff ill health has cost implications for businesses through loss of production, early retirement, staff turnover and absenteeism (both through long term sick pay and the cost of temporary staff).



# The importance & role of physical activity and sports

Some of the serious illnesses that 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day can offer protection against include:

- ✓ Heart disease
- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ High blood pressure
- ✓ Stroke
- ✓ Various types of cancer
- ✓ Depression



## The importance & role of physical activity and sports

According to Eurobarometer on Sport and physical activity (March, 2018): most physical activity takes place in informal settings, such as **parks and outdoors (40%)** or **at home (32%)** or during the journey between home and work, school or shops. Still, **15% of Europeans do not walk for 10 minutes at a time** at all in a weekly period, and ***12% sit for more than 8.5 hours per day.***

These figures emphasize the crucial role that employers have in addressing and encouraging physical activity at the workplace.



## The importance & role of physical activity and sports

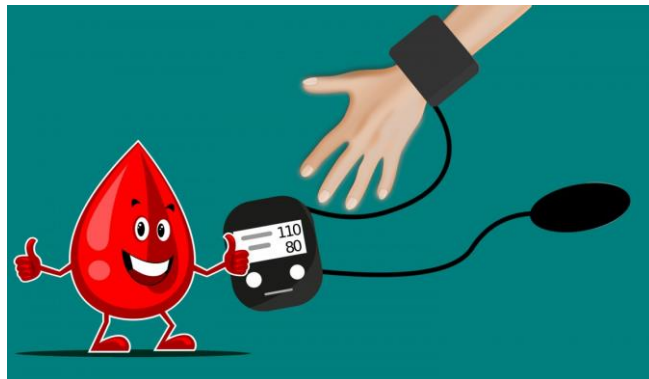
A recent study called *“Physical activity at the workplace – Literature review and best practice case studies”*, carried out at the initiative of the European Commission, is reporting a growing evidence that physical activity at the workplace has a positive effect on physical activity behaviour in general.

- ✓ **Build strong relations** – participation in company-organized group activities indoors or outdoors is an excellent way for reinforcing team spirit and team work
- ✓ **Develop sense of contribution and belonging** – being part of a team and having a common goal to strive for develops valuable sense of contribution and belonging which is easily transferred to work tasks



## The importance & role of physical activity and sports

- ✓ **Enhance creativity** – as a result of physical activity human's body is energized and toned, the mind is open to new ideas ; “thinking out of the box” mindset is triggered



- ✓ **Feel good from endorphin release** – it has been proven that sports facilitates hormones of happiness to flourish which is quite beneficial also for the work process, happy workers are more productive and efficient





## The importance & role of physical activity and sports

- ✓ **Reduce stress** – sports and physical activity are shifting the focus from problems and challenges into happiness and positivism, which help employees to find solutions easier and faster
- ✓ **Discover something they love or are good at** – an opportunity to find a new hobby or sport activity: trust me your employees will be grateful to you for that 😊



## Benefits of physical activity and sports at workplace

- ✓ improve employee morale
- ✓ reduce employee absence from work
- ✓ increase employee productivity
- ✓ maintain and/or increase employee retention and lower turnover rate
- ✓ enhance your reputation as an employer who is seen to value employee health and wellbeing
- ✓ make a contribution to the health of the wider community
- ✓ improve mental health and wellbeing
- ✓ improve concentration and mental alertness
- ✓ help employees to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ prevent a number of chronic diseases and other health problems



You know that your employees need physical activity to stay healthy.  
**But did you know it can help them feel better right away?**



Boost their mood



Sharpen their focus



Reduce their stress



Improve their sleep



## How can employers help employees increase physical activity?

1. Build a culture of health.
2. Leaders should provide strong, active, and visible support
3. Develop partnerships and social support
4. Use existing resources first.
5. Create a community-wide educational campaign
6. Promote the benefits of physical activity at key informational points at workplace



There are different approaches in providing physical activity and sports to employees – employers can either offer a gym membership or multisport card to their employees to be able to exercise at a third party premises or they can organize and provide such activities in their premises on their own terms, i.e in the office or outdoor. A combination of both is also possible and would be highly appreciated.

### Outsourced

- > Gym membership
- > Sports cards
- > Sports competition access

### In-house

- > Sports equipment/recreation facilities
- > Sports challenges
- > Energizers (sports breaks)





# Practical ideas and examples of physical activity at work:

- Installing an on-site gym or including gym membership as part of salary packages
- Organising team walks during lunch breaks or walking meetings
- Encourage workers to get out of the office at lunch



## Practical ideas and examples of physical activity at work:

- Set up printers and other commonly used office accessories away from workstations to encourage people to get up and move.
- Providing information about local team sports and exercise classes
- Organize a competition between company departments /sports challenge/



## Practical ideas and examples of physical activity at work:

- Form in-company sports societies where employees can sign up and group together to practice their favorite sport
- Promote the use of stairs, such as by using signs or by making stairwells safe and attractive
- Promote “active transport” (bicycling or walking to work), such as by offering bicycle storage. Provide showers and/or changing facilities





## Practical ideas and examples of physical activity at work

Sports challenges are another great way to encourage employees to undertake some physical activity. It is also a way to trigger motivation, team spirit, competitiveness, drive to win and ultimately **productivity**.

- Walking challenge – make your employees split into teams and encourage them to make the most steps for a certain period of time, tracking their activity through a wearable tracking device such as the GPS watches
- Climbing to the top – split into teams (it can also be by departments) employees are encouraged to climb to a certain mountain hill for the shortest time possible
- Running marathon



## Practical ideas and examples of physical activity at work

Multisport card is a great way to ensure physical activity of your staff. It is a preferred option for many companies and their employees. The card is giving access to a wide network of gyms and other activities.

### Some of the main benefits of multisport cards are:

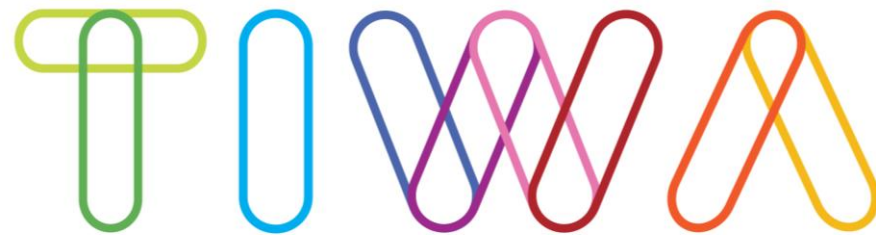
- ✓ Employee is free to choose on their own terms which gym to visit
- ✓ Apart from gyms it offers access to a wide range of other activities such as tennis, swimming, badminton, different group exercises, etc.
- ✓ Outdoor activities such sailing, canoeing are also offered



## References:

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