

Workplace Health & Safety • No. 152 • 12/04

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General

Leopold, Ron. **Eight challenges facing the workplace.** *Journal of Employee Assistance*, v. 34, n. 3, September 2004, p. 15+.
“The aging of the workforce and a trend toward shifting healthcare costs to employees may drive increases in some health conditions, but could lead employers to hold insurance carriers more accountable.”

Stress

Seligman, Dan. **New crisis – Junk statistics.** *Forbes*, v. 174, n. 8, October 18, 2004, p. 118+.
Presents statistics that debunk earlier articles. Indicates that both the number of hours employees work in the US and their stress levels have decreased in recent decades.

Akst, Daniel. **White-collar stress? Stop the whining.** *New York Times*, September 19, 2004, Section 3, p. 6, Column 5.
“In news media coverage of job stress, the emphasis is usually on educated middle-class professionals who, in fact, have many choices.”

Underwood, Anne. **For a happy heart.** *Newsweek*, September 27, 2004, p. 54+.
“Those in work units with the most downsizing suffered twice the death rate from heart attack and stroke.”

Wharton, Linda. **Executive burnout – How to recognise it and how beat it.** *New Zealand Management*, July 1, 2004, p. 72+.

“Life, for many managers and corporate employees, is a daily battle against fatigue, exhaustion, stress and mood disorders. Why? And what can be done about it.”

Schwartz, John. **Always on the job, employees pay with health.** *New York Times*, September 5, 2004, Section 1, p. 1, Column 2.

“Growing stress and uncertainty of the office have a measurable impact on workers’ health and, by extension, on companies’ bottom lines.”

O’Connor, Anahad. **Cracking under the pressure? It’s just the opposite for some.** *New York Times*, September 10, 2004, Section A, p. 1, Column 5.

While stress causes serious problems for many people, some people thrive on it. For these people, involvement in their work and control seem to be important factors.

Numerof, Rita E.; Michael N. Abrams; & Bill Ott. **Align process with mission and maintain a contented workforce: Healthcare financial managers have felt steadily increasing pressures over the past decade to reduce costs.** *Healthcare Financial Management*, v. 58, n. 9, September 1, 2004, p. 114+.

“Redesigning processes to ensure alignment with the...mission is a critical responsibility of management,” especially when downsizing.

Wellness Program Validity

Brown, David. **Finding out the causes of poor health, first step to cutting benefit costs.** *Canadian HR Reporter*, v. 17, n. 18, October 25, 2004, p. 18.

“Recent research on wellness ROI by Buffett Taylor, taking into account everything from medical costs to lost productivity, found that for every dollar invested in a wellness program, the employer gets back \$4.50.”

Zeidner, Rita. **Fitness on the job: More and more companies offer wellness programs meant to trim employee waistlines and pare health costs. Why is it so hard to prove the incentives work?** *Washington Post*, August 17, 2004, p. F01.

Reasons for the lack of solid data vary from low employee interest and participation to studies that are not rigorous or may have researcher bias.

What’s wrong with wellness? Healthcare costs are soaring. But not health promotion programs. *Industrial Safety & Hygiene News*, v. 38, n. 10, October 2004, p. 28+.

Many “workplace health promotion programs fail, according to a recent Canadian study.” Explores why, and what can be done to increase the chances of success.

Makrides, Lydia. **Health promotion ROI better when targeting staff at risk.** *Canadian HR Reporter*, v. 17, n. 18, October 25, 2004, p. 6.

“Conducting health assessments enables organizations to identify at-risk employees and develop targeted wellness and fitness strategies that result in even higher returns on investment.”

Bastian, Kristen. S. **Workplace programs keep workers fit, costs trim.** *Northern Colorado Business Report*, v. 10, n. 2, October 15, 2004, p. 26+.

“Proponents say [a workplace wellness program] offers a relatively low-cost way to confine healthcare costs while increasing morale and productivity.”

Wellness Suggestions

Doheny, Kathleen. **Risk management and human resources team up to cut absence costs; personal experience brought insight and empathy to Osram Sylvania’s integrated program.** *Workforce Management*, November 1, 2004, p. 78+.

“The company shrank \$5 million in annual short-term disability costs to \$4.2 million,” due to their integrated disability-management program for managing absences.

Foster, Charles & Melvyn Hillsdon. **Changing the environment to promote health-enhancing activity.** *Journal of Sports Science*, v. 22, n. 8, August 1, 2004, p. 755+.

Some studies have “observed a weak effect of a simple environmental change to stimulate stair climbing while travelling or shopping.”

Pressler, Margaret Webb. **Catering to corporations: More institutional cafeterias are offering healthful choices.** *Washington Post*, July 20, 2004, p. E01.

“Companies...have been rapidly rolling out new food...in response to improving eating habits and stiffer demands from the corporate bosses who hire them.”

Grover, Nancy. **Time to supersize exercise: Employers encouraged to help fight obesity.** *Risk & Insurance*, v. 15, n. 13, October 15, 2004, p. 10+.

“Employers have the opportunity to provide a supportive environment that enables healthy lifestyle choices.” Includes a list of simple tips.

Barr, Stephen. **HHS is getting even tougher on tobacco use by employees.** *Washington Post*, November 12, 2004, p. B02.

The Health and Human Services Department is banning tobacco use on its campuses and is providing free counseling and products to help smokers quit.

Carey, Benedict. **Working long hours? Take a massage break, courtesy of your boss.** *New York Times*, September 7, 2004, Section F, p. 1, Column 1.

“Researchers are finding, among other things, that the benefits of stress reduction programs are generally short-lasting,” and may benefit employer more than employee.

Mayo Clinic. **Tips for shift workers: How to eat, sleep and stay fit when you work unusual hours.** *MayoClinic.com*. <<http://www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?id=HQ01388>>

“You can still get enough sleep, eat the right foods, be physically active and maintain social ties – even when you work the graveyard shift.”

Promoting employee resiliency. *Journal of Employee Assistance*, v. 34, n. 3, September 2004, p. 24+.

Employee Assistance “can support safety, accountability, commitment, and community within work organizations and thereby promote employee resiliency.”

Philchuk, Susan & Maria Vandenhurk. **Stress from workplace conflict.** *Canadian Underwriter*, v. 71, n.9, September 1, 2004, p. 40+.

“Workplace facilitation...is an effective strategy to assist employees and employers to...resolve conflict.”

Lowe, Cheryl. **Addiction in the workplace: Behavioral health professionals can help employers and employees alike increase productivity and improve workplace health.** *Behavioral Health Management*, v. 24, n. 5, September 1, 2004, p. 27+.

“Behavioral health professionals can play a vital role in educating employers and employees on how to address addiction.” Highlights why treatment is cost-effective.

On-site health, cut to suit. *Employee Benefits*, October 4, 2004, p. 19.

Discusses the cost-effectiveness of offering on-site occupational health services. The feasibility is determined not only by size, but also by other factors.

Safety

Smith, Sandy. **Safety is a way of life at America’s Safest Companies: Seventeen diverse companies that share a dedication to safe work and healthy employees are honored as the 2004 America’s Safest Companies.** *Occupational Hazards*, v. 66, n. 10, October 1, 2004, p. 27+.

Overview of what America’s Safest Companies have done to earn that distinction, and how safety and wellness impacts their bottom line.

DeJoy, David M.; Robyn R. M. Gershon & Bryan S. Schaffer. **Safety climate: Assessing management and organizational influences on safety.** *Professional Safety*, v. 49, n. 7, July 1, 2004, p. 50+.

Examines two studies which “suggest that organizational and management factors are important ingredients in achieving good safety performance.”

Spath, John P. **How to get employees involved in the safety program.** *Occupational Hazards*, v. 66, n. 9, September 1, 2004, p. 63+.

“Many find employee participation a nagging problem. These practical steps can help build participation and support by employees and supervisors alike.”

Battlo, Chris; David Rodgers; & David Matics. **Integrate AEDs into your worksite medical response team.** *Industrial Safety & Hygiene News*, v. 38, n. 9, September 2004, p. 48+.

Suggests “establishing workplace Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERT).”

Webb, Lucy. **EXIT strategies: Emergency plans to help you get your staff out of harm’s way.** *Washington Business Journal*, v. 23, n. 21, September 24, 2004, p. 38+.

Highlights what to do to be prepared in case of emergency, including the questions to ask in developing a plan.



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Loy, Beth & Linda Carter Batiste. **Evacuation preparedness: Managing the safety of employees with disabilities.** *Occupational Health & Safety*, v.73, n. 9, September 1, 2004, p. 112+.

“Many of the accommodations and products mentioned in this article may benefit all employees during evacuation.”

Workplace violence. *OSHA Fact Sheet*. US Dept of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 2002.

“Workplace violence is a growing concern.” See who is vulnerable, what to do to keep a safe workplace, what to do after violence occurs, and how to find out more.

Saul, Karen. **Domestic violence doesn't stay home.** *Credit Union Magazine*, v. 70, n. 10, October 1, 2004, p. 72+.

“How can management minimize the risk that domestic violence will result in harm, liability, and/or decreased employee productivity?”

Ergonomics

MacInnis, Patricia. **Ergonomics a good fit for ailing workers: One in 10 Canadians suffers from repetitive motion injuries, and experts warn the cost of avoiding symptoms could be long-term disability.** *Computing Canada*, v. 30, n. 12, September 10, 2004, p. 36+.

“Companies are beginning to recognize that paying closer attention to occupational ergonomics can pay dividends – in attracting and retaining employees, as well as in increasing their productivity.” Includes some simple suggestions.

Rittenberry, Ronnie. **Under the laptop.** *Occupational Health & Safety*, v. 73, n. 9, September 1, 2004, p. 22+.

“People who have used laptop computers literally – on their laps – have reported a burning feeling on their legs from doing so,” with at least one person suffering actual blisters.

Tapp, Linda M. **New ergo issues: High-tech work tools prompt.** *Industrial Safety & Hygiene News*, v. 38, n. 9, September 2004, p. 73+.

“Safety and health professionals who have had any ergonomics training know that bigger, more open hand grips are better than tight, closed pinch grips, and bigger hand movements are usually better than small or tiny hand movements. Yet most of the electronic tools that we now use require these smaller, tighter postures.”

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