

## Simple Preventative Maintenance for Your Most Important Asset

In business it is important to maximize productivity, whether it be with equipment or human assets. We all know how important preventative maintenance is for machines and equipment, but often this same philosophy is not taken with a company's most important asset, its people. I think we would all agree that a company's most important assets are qualified, healthy employees, who are maximizing their potential every day. To perform optimally takes a sound mind and body. Stresses from inside and outside work lead to a slow breakdown of the body and mind. There are a few simple ideas and strategies, which are very inexpensive to implement, that can be followed to maintain health and maximize daily performance.

### **Increase physical activity/movement:** (Especially in sedentary jobs)

The body is meant to move and this in turn increases blood flow throughout the body that improves mental performance and actually reduces physical fatigue.

- Take regular breaks and increase different movements during the day.
- Consider having 30-minute slow walking meetings during the day if possible. Research is showing that this increases mental alertness and productivity and helps to break up the day.

### **Avoid extended awkward or static positions (sitting):**

Awkward or static positions increase stress on the body and this results in reduced performance and increased risk of injury. Sitting is a static position that causes a significant amount of stress to the body. Extended sitting is a significant factor in tension headaches. There is a reduction in blood flow to the body and especially the brain/mind.

- Don't sit for hours at a time without breaks. Getting up for 1-2 minutes every 1-2 hours and for longer periods of time every 3-4 hours is the best way to increase mental and physical sharpness with seated occupations.
- Active workspace: Breaking up position with standing desks. Changing positions from seated to standing throughout the day is ideal.

### **Encourage adequate sleep:**

Sleep debt or deficit causes fatigue, judgement errors, and decreased productivity. Severe sleep deficit can produce mental judgements similar to moderate alcohol consumption.

- Encourage employees to get at least 6-8 hours/night.

### **Proper Hydration:**

Hydration increases alertness and improves overall health.

- Drink 8-10 glasses of water/day. Especially in work environment is hot or physical activity is high. Providing easy access to water at work is important.

The return-on-investment for educating and advocating for employees to follow the four simple ideas above can be enormous.

**Need help?** Consider on-site hours where employees can check in or visit with a qualified occupational health provider. This can be done weekly or monthly but gives your employees a chance to ask questions about health issues, get screened for musculoskeletal aches and pains, or get heart rate or blood pressure checks. These sessions demonstrate to employees that their employer cares for them and improves overall employee health and productivity. **That's Preventative Maintenance!**

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