

Exercise at work: Is it possible and what are the benefits?

Small changes to an everyday routine at work can have major benefits when it comes to being healthy and improving work performance.

Working out at work used to be unheard of, but – that may be a thing of the past. We all know that exercise is good for us; aiding in maintaining a healthy weight or weight loss and improving moods. What may be news to some is that small workouts at work or taking a workout break in the middle of the day provide endless benefits. A workout or short exercise at work may improve job performance, productivity and the overall workplace environment.

An article from the Huffington Post named 13 benefits from working out. The highlights being: Reduced stress, improved brainpower, better memory, increased energy and improved creativity. All of these benefits could be tapped into at the workplace for improved job performance. What employer doesn't want their employees to have more brainpower, less stress, to be energized and creative with an awesome memory!?

Some workplaces have already tapped into this knowledge and give their employees time to go to the gym in the middle of the day. If this is your case, take advantage of it! It will not only improve your overall health and help with weight management but it may set you ahead of the crowd at your worksite. If you are able to exercise in the middle of the day, bring plenty of water and a healthy snack to stay hydrated and well-nourished throughout the day. Your workout will not be as effective if you come back to work dehydrated and hungry.

If it is not possible to take a 30-60 minute break to workout at work, there are some other things you can do to get the most out of your work day. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension recommends:

- Leg lifts while checking e-mails
- Park in the back of the parking lot
- Stand or walk around during a conference call
- Put your file cabinet across the room, making you get up when you need an item
- Use the restroom that is farthest away from your desk
- 10 push-ups every hour
- Walk around the building during your lunch break
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator

Feel like having some fun at your desk? Try swapping out your regular, boring chair for a big exercise ball. It's comfortable and will keep you moving all day without you even knowing. Sitting for long periods of time without moving is not good for our brains, as moving wakes our brains up and gets those creative, productive juices flowing again. Balancing your seat on an exercise ball is a great core workout too!

Working out at work is proven to increase energy, productivity and creativity while reducing stress. The workplace environment improves when employees take advantage of a middle-of-the-day work out by creating mood-boosted workers. If it is not yet possible to have an actual workout during

the workday, small exercises also make a big difference in maintaining health. The main goal is to just get moving!

Walk Across Texas begins in Parker County on April 2. Get your work staff, family or friends to sign up. You can form teams of 8 or walk individually. For more information or to register visit the website www.walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu.