

Inspire

Monthly newsletter | May 2021

Ideas to inspire better health.

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Five corporate wellness trends for a post-pandemic world.

By Janice Evenson, Team Manager – Client Programs, TELUS Health Care Centres

The Canadian work landscape has changed dramatically as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic — and corporate wellness programs must follow suit. Canadians have new priorities, new needs and new challenges, which employers have a large role in helping to solve.

With the expectation that a hybrid work-from-home/onsite model will continue indefinitely in many industries, employers now have the expanded responsibility of ensuring the wellbeing of their work-from-home employees. Flexible work schedules, childcare programs and wellness check-ins are just the tip of the wellness iceberg; corporate wellness programs must evolve to encompass enhanced mental health support for all employees, meaningful engagement activities for work-from-home employees, and a change in benefits programs to meet people wherever they are on their health journeys.

Here are five corporate wellness trends to consider for your workforce in our post-pandemic world:

1. Robust mental health offerings. The mental health index by Morneau Shepell measured the impact of COVID-19 in Canada and found that a startling 80% of Canadians reported the pandemic had a negative effect on their mental health.¹ Leaders need to re-evaluate their employees' needs and adopt comprehensive programs that encourage physical and mental health, while providing resources and treatment for a variety of mental health issues, ranging from financial stress to insomnia to anxiety and depression.



2. Expanded technology-based fitness and wellness programming. A survey by Enterprise Technology Research predicted that the percentage of full-time remote workers will double in 2021.² Creating a sense of community and a culture of wellness will continue to be an online effort for many corporations.

Whether employees work onsite or remotely, many are yearning for the “water-cooler effect”; connecting with co-workers informally to build relationships and share ideas. Employees working onsite will benefit from day-to-day co-worker contact, the ability to ask questions and informally discuss work situations. For remote workers, this task is more challenging. Employers should seek apps, [online team challenges](#) and virtual sessions such as fitness classes that include a post-activity chat session to bolster employee communication. Think cooking demonstrations, workshops, book clubs, gardening sessions, coffee break chats and craft clubs, which can help foster a feeling of community.

3. Flexible wellness spending accounts. Largely by necessity, employees have changed the way they consume wellness programs. Flexible wellness spending accounts are becoming the norm, allowing employees to access the health support they need now.³ Instead of a gym membership, employees may choose to invest in home equipment or virtual personal training. Instead of massages, they may opt for nutrition counselling or a home-workstation ergonomic assessment. WFH employees may also seek wellness spending options such as claiming internet costs for streaming virtual programming.

4. Global wellness programs. The pandemic has shown that digital platforms can connect employees around the world. Corporations will now consider offering wellness programs enterprise-wide, to both remote and onsite workers, uniting employees in a way that did not exist pre-pandemic. A true global community will be achieved with employees in different countries enjoying the same virtual programs.

5. Top-down wellness initiatives. With the lines between work and home life blurred, wellness measures to minimize stress and promote health will be critical. Wellness initiatives are far more likely to succeed with management support and participation.⁴ Leaders set the tone by promoting wellness programs such as those mandating meeting-free-time-zones before 9:00am, between 12:00 and 1:00 pm and after 4:30 pm, and ending meetings 10 minutes before the hour to encourage employees to take a movement break. Managers leading stretch breaks, taking part in internal fitness challenges, and sharing their own WFH coping strategies also sets a positive tone. Training managers to foster good relationships, encourage employees to take control of their health and continuously remind employees of the programs available to them through benefits and the EFAP can help lead to increased trust and, perhaps, employee retention.⁵

Learn more about our corporate wellness programs

1. Morneau Shepell. 2020. “81% of Canadians say coronavirus is negatively affecting their mental health”. 2. Chavez-Dreyfus, Gertrude. 2020 “Permanently remote workers seen doubling in 2021 due to pandemic productivity – survey.” Reuters. 3. Banjaree, K. 2020. “Workplace Wellness after COVID-19.” Zenefits. 4. Global Industry Analysts Inc. 2021. “Corporate Wellness - Global Market Trajectory & Analytics.” 5. Weins, D. 2020. “The future of corporate wellness – how to engage remote employees in the COVID era.” HR Daily Advisor.



Chicken souvlaki with homemade tzatziki.

Prep time: 40 minutes

Makes 6 servings of chicken and 3 cups of tzatziki

Equally delicious grilled or baked, this chicken souvlaki recipe is bound to become a staple in your meal rotation for years to come. Homemade tzatziki takes this classic dish to the next level.

Ingredients

For the souvlaki:

1.5 pounds uncooked boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces.
5 cloves garlic, peeled and minced.
2 Tbsp. olive oil.
1 Tbsp. dried oregano.
1 Tsp. Kosher salt.
½ Tsp. freshly-cracked black pepper.
Juice of 1 large fresh lemon.

For the tzatziki:

2 cups plain Greek yogurt.
4 garlic cloves, peeled and minced.
1 English cucumber, seeded and grated (about 1 cup).
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh dill (do not use dried dill).
1–2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice.
1 Tbsp. olive oil.
½ Tsp. sea salt.
¼ Tsp. freshly-cracked black pepper.

Method

1. Soak wooden skewers completely in water for at least 30 minutes before cooking to prevent burning (or use metal skewers).
2. Combine chicken pieces, garlic, olive oil, oregano, salt, black pepper and lemon juice in a large Ziplock bag or mixing bowl and toss until the chicken is evenly coated. Seal/cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes, or up to 1 day.
3. Remove chicken and discard the leftover marinade. Thread chicken onto skewers.
4. To grill: preheat grill to medium-high. Place skewers on the grill and cook for 6-8 minutes, turning once, until the chicken is cooked through and no longer pink inside. Transfer skewers to a plate and serve immediately.
5. To bake: Preheat broiler and place the rack about 6 inches from the top of the oven. Place skewers on a large baking sheet, and broil for 6-8 minutes, turning once, until the chicken is cooked through and no longer pink inside. Transfer skewers to a plate and serve immediately.

To make tzatziki

1. Place grated cucumber in a fine mesh strainer and squeeze out as much liquid as possible.
2. Stir all ingredients together until combined. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary.
3. Serve immediately or refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 2 days.

Nutritional information per serving:

272 calories, 4g carbohydrates, 2g sugar,
1g fibre, 36g protein, 12g fat (3g saturated)

Recipe adapted from Gimme Some Oven.

Learn more about
our nutrition services



How to overcome needle phobia.

By Dr. Rhonda Low, Family Physician, TELUS Health Care Centres

A fear of needles can create a sense of dread for many Canadians as they prepare to roll up their sleeves for a COVID-19 vaccine. While most needle-averse people steel themselves against a moment of pain, some are so severely phobic that it may impact their ability to seek healthcare. If this sounds like you, know that you're not alone, and it is possible to overcome your fear.

Here are some strategies to help you or a loved one overcome needle phobia:

1. Practice needle exposure. The book "Overcoming Medical Phobias" by Drs. Anthony and Watling is one that I often recommend to patients experiencing needle phobia and other medical-related fears. One of the authors' suggestions is to expose yourself to visuals of needles and people getting vaccinated in the weeks and days leading up to receiving a vaccination. I have seen success with this technique first-hand.

2. Practice "applied tension". In the moments leading up to vaccination, try contracting the large muscles in the body including the legs, arms and torso to increase blood flow. This is another recommendation from Drs. Anthony and Watling and it can be particularly effective for the approximately 50% of needle-phobic patients who tend to faint during vaccination.¹ Another defense against fainting is to make sure you arrive at your appointment well-hydrated and well-fed.

1. Carmin, C.2019. "How to overcome your fear of needles." Wexner Medical Center.

3. Reframe worst-case-scenario thoughts. Especially in adults, needle phobia can be complex: from fear of the needle itself to the fear of the subsequent reaction that it might produce. Reactions to these fears can be intense, with heart palpitations, sweating, and a dry throat. Some people may become dizzy, sick to their stomachs, or in severe cases, some may feel like they are going to die.

One strategy that can help in these cases is to consciously reframe thoughts about “the worst thing that could happen” by replacing them with a more realistic one: “the needle will hurt for a moment, and I will most likely experience no serious side effects.”

4. Try a topical anesthetic cream. To decrease the pain of a needle in adults and children, a topical anesthetic cream can be purchased at a pharmacy over the counter. Simply place the cream over the injection site and cover it with a bandage about 60 minutes prior to vaccination. This can provide a fair amount of relief for those who worry about injection pain.

Needle phobia will not reverse overnight but taking a proactive role in your healthcare by practicing some of these strategies can help restore a sense of control about the situation.

Looking for a family physician?
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It's not unusual for kids and teens to be struggling right now.

From psychoeducational assessments to play therapy, get specialized support from our team of licensed child and youth counsellors and psychologists.

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telushealth.com/mentalhealth
or call 1-604-200-2969.

What's happening: Programs and events to nurture wellbeing.



Virtual event | Mini mindfulness session.



Join TELUS Health Care Centres' mindfulness coach Heather Feldmann for a 20-minute mid-day mindset reset. She'll share an introduction to mindfulness followed by a guided meditation to help you create mental space for a more productive and peaceful afternoon.

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

12:00 pm PDT / 1:00 pm MDT

Please note that this event is currently available for BC and AB residents only.

[Register](#)

Complimentary

Virtual course | Mindfulness and meditation for beginners.



Dedicating time to relax can be a powerful coping strategy, but what if your brain won't let you unwind?

Learning to practice mindfulness and meditation can help create mental space, promote deep relaxation, reduce stress, increase resiliency and more. Our mindfulness and meditation for beginners course was designed to teach you how.

Mondays - June 7 to 28, 2021

10:00 - 11:00 am PDT / 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT

Please note that this program is currently available for BC and AB residents only.

[Learn more or register](#)

Cost: \$200.00 plus tax



E-challenge | 30-day no sugar challenge.



Canadians consume an average of 88 pounds of sugar each year. That's more than twice the daily limit recommended by Diabetes Canada.* Are you ready to make a change?

Back by popular demand, our 30-day no sugar challenge has been updated with more delicious recipes, lifestyle strategies and fun quizzes to help you ditch added and refined sugar for 30 days — and ultimately reduce your consumption for life.

Pre-register now. The challenge launches soon!

[Pre-register](#)

Complimentary

Virtual service | Ergonomic assessment.



A poorly designed workstation can lead to frustration, pain and fatigue. Our kinesiologists can help you make simple adjustments to optimize your workspace and help prevent the onset or development of acute or chronic conditions. The one-hour virtual assessment includes:

- A comprehensive ergonomic assessment of your workstation
- Expert advice to help improve your setup using household items
- A customized exercise and stretching program to help treat and prevent pain or discomfort
- Posture checklist
- Personalized report including assessment results and recommendations

[Learn more or book an assessment](#)

Cost: \$275 plus tax

Webinar | The digitization of occupational health and wellness.



Have you digitized your company's care delivery ecosystem?

In this one-hour webinar, TELUS Health Care Centres occupational health and safety scientist Dr. Farrell Cahill will review the current landscape of occupational health service delivery and discuss the essential technologies for providing a full circle of care to today's workforces.

Tuesday, June 1, 2021

10:00 am to 11:00 am PDT / 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT
1:00 pm to 2:00 pm EDT / 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm ADT

[Register](#)

Complimentary

Virtual sleep and wellness group.



This 4-week psychoeducation and skills-building group will provide participants with valuable information about the science of sleep, and share skills to help enhance their sleep and overall wellbeing. By the end of the group, participants can expect to:

- Understand various factors and contexts of problematic sleep
- Understand important aspects of sleep and motivations for better sleep
- Practice some skills for enhancing sleep and wellbeing

Wednesdays - from June 9 to 30, 2021

9:00 - 10:30 am PST

Please note that this program is currently available for BC residents only.

[Register](#)

\$404.25 including tax





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