



## ARE YOU STRETCHING YOUR STAFF?

Since March 2020, working habits have changed dramatically. Office managers have focussed on enabling connectivity to support working from home and providing Coronavirus safe office environments. Many businesses have been prompted to look a little further into how sedentary working can impact on the wellbeing of staff.

Productivity has been made more visible with the, now common, use of online meetings e.g. Skype, Microsoft Teams and Zoom. These applications report on how often and how long we spend in meetings. Staff meetings - where information and ideas can be shared – are felt to be positive by the work force but only if the time spent doesn't impinge on their ability to get on and do the job. Too many meetings can damage moral. No agenda means no purpose. Focus on meeting quality rather than quantity.

### LIGHT, SPACE, TEMPERATURE, NOISE AND MOBILITY

These factors are now known to affect both physical and mental health in offices and when working from home. A simple air quality and temperature check is to look at how many staff are wearing coats whilst working or look likely to nod off to sleep in the afternoon! This could be caused by high levels of carbon dioxide or lack of mobility. Fresh air and exercise are vital to staff wellbeing. Sedentary behaviour is a major health risk that will most likely grow given the increasingly sedentary method of working.

### SO WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

- **Air quality:** Simply opening the windows and adding more plants into the office is a great solution as they both oxygenate the air and lift the spirits. Air purifiers can assist in removing contaminants from the air in a room to improve air quality.
- **Lighting:** If natural light is lacking try using daylight bulbs, especially at workstations.

- **Hydration:** Ensure there is a fresh water for staff to stay hydrated.
- **Colours:** Consider the colours used for walls and furnishings - are they up-lifting - or depressing!
- **Layout:** People feel a lot more comfortable with enough space around their workstation. We have found this whilst ensuring our offices provide safe, social distancing. Pictures and posters suitable for your office environment, can help create a more uplifting atmosphere and cheer a dreary wall!

Environmental psychologist and workplace wellbeing expert Dr Nigel Oseland\*\* said: "Office wellbeing is of paramount importance and it is clear that a person's work environment can impact significantly, not only on their health and wellbeing, but also on their performance. It is crucial that businesses embrace new technologies to ensure that the work environment, whether at home or in the office, promotes workplace wellbeing."

\*\* Research undertaken by Dr Nigel Oseland for Remark Group at [workinmind.org](http://workinmind.org)

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