

# How Employee Wellness Programs Can Positively Impact Companies' Bottom Line

---

The US government health agency predicted that by 2023, healthcare costs in the US will jump up to \$15,000 per employee per year. (1) The price inflation from healthcare providers coupled with the growing needs of employees makes this data even more tangible by showing a steady 5% cost-rise for companies each year.

The reality is that your employees are growing older. This increases their needs for medical care and sick leaves throughout the year. But age should not be the only factor to blame. The rise of chronic illness induced by a sedentary lifestyle and poor nutrition has highly influenced employee's relation to healthcare. (2) They are increasingly more depressed, and less productive. They put on weight, and find themselves experiencing chronic physical pain. As their physical and mental health decreases, it impacts their performance at work.

Thankfully, the above data relates to conditions that can be prevented when met with lifestyle changes. However, while transforming habits comes down to the employee's willingness to do so, studies (3) showed that **social support** and **integration** were a massive motivator in this process. As an employee spends an average of 8 hours a day at work, it makes sense that this social support partly comes from the workplace.



*Employee wellness programs have become a rising concept that focuses on nurturing employee's wellbeing as a preventive care.*

As a valuable addition to a company's culture, various studies showed that a wellness program implemented over the course of **6 months resulted in reduced healthcare costs for the company.**

Through this article, we will explore in-depth how a wellness program positively impacts the employees' health. We also dive into how and why these results are a strong return on investment for companies.

## Wellness Programs and Employees' Health

There are various wellness programs that a company could implement, some examples may include: wellness workshops focusing on stress reduction, yoga & meditation classes, access to healthy lunch & snack and more.

---

(1) <https://www.medixrx.com/blog/cost-of-us-healthcare-predicted-to-rise/>

(2) <https://www.nchpad.org/403/2216/Sedentary~Lifestyle~is~Dangerous~to~Your~Health>

(3) <https://www.verywellmind.com/social-support-for-psychological-health-4119970>

These practices, often structured by the wellness provider in a way that maximizes employee participation, offer a well of benefits to the employee's health.

While an employee's health is often affected by daily stress, poor nutrition, and lack of movement, it is important to understand how wellness practices at work can counter-balance these effects. Stress influences both our minds and our body on a daily basis. A Forbes study (4) noted that the emotions associated with chronic stress have a snowballing effect that can lead to physical illness. By implementing a wellness program, a company gets the chance to address their employee's stress with management practices such as meditation or yoga. These practices effectively process the daily accumulation of stress by regulating the "fight or flight" response of the body.

Yoga is a low-intensity exercise that focuses on involving controlled breath with movement. Firstly, yoga provides a gentle way to build strength, and flexibility, counter-balancing the effect of a sedentary lifestyle. Secondly, a regular practice demonstrated (5) to alleviate mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and chronic stress.

Along with that, meditation has shown to bring a positive ripple effect on one's mental and physical health. A study published by the University of Wisconsin (6) showed that meditating regularly influenced our cellular structure, resulting in decreased blood pressure, and inflammation in the body. Additionally, meditation proved to influence the brain's neurotransmitters (7), enhancing one's

cognitive abilities, which resulted in increased focus, and productivity.

A wellness program that includes weekly yoga and meditation classes, along with workshops around nutrition & stress-management, effectively address and enhance employees' health. This gives immense value not only to the employee themselves, but also to the company. Let's explore how.

## The Return on Investment of Wellness Programs

**The health of an employee has a direct impact on their performance at work.** When your employees are feeling burned-out, they lack productivity, efficacy, and direction. On the other hand, an employee nurtured with a wellness program is not only more motivated to be part of the company's growth, but also more productive at delivering high performances.

This can translate in various ways. (8) The Rand Corporation analysis noted that if your employees are dealing with customers, their wellbeing may influence a higher customer experience, and increase sales. Additionally, when employees are working as part of a team, their wellbeing can translate into stronger collaboration, generation of ideas, and a more positive work environment.



*A wellness program nurtures a positive company culture.*

---

(4) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stephaniedenning/2018/05/04/what-is-the-cost-of-stress-how-stress-is-the-business-worlds-silent-killer/?sh=83ab6f26e061>

(5) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5116432/>

(6) <https://news.wisc.edu/study-reveals-gene-expression-changes-with-meditation/>

(7) <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797612459659>

(8) <https://www.corporatewellnessmagazine.com/article/the-real-roi-for-employee-wellness-programs>

While this is beneficial both on the employee and its contribution within the company, we can also observe how a **wellness program can significantly reduce health care costs.**

A study from Harvard (9) observed a company's 185 workers throughout a 6 months wellness program. After a series of rehabilitation and exercise training, they observed that medical claim cost declined by \$1421 per participant. As the same company kept going with their wellness program, they calculated having saved \$250,000,000 on health care costs over 10 years. And they're not the only ones. Various companies (10) have also provided clear evidence that the cost of healthcare was lowered with wellness programs.



*Investing in an employee's wellbeing provides a strong return on investment for a company. This translates through better company culture, decreased health care costs and reduced absenteeism.*

## **Nurturing Employee's Wellness Through the Crisis**

These data are significantly more important to take into consideration since 2020. As the need for health care grew from the health crisis, providing employees with preventive care is imperative.

The current health crisis has created an immense strain on employee's mental health. A Forbes study (11) noted that 68% of employees experienced fear around contamination in the workplace, job-safety, and overall crisis-induced anxiety.

With wellness programs implemented onsite or online, a company still has the chance to **nurture their employees with mental health support, virtual classes, and a sense of collective.**

By encouraging employees to take full advantage of a wellness program, the above statistic remains (12) a strong return on investment, even with a hybrid workplace. No matter what shift your company experiences in the short or long term, **putting your employee's wellbeing at a priority level will positively impact your company's culture.**

With a wellness program that offers mental and physical health support, your employees can feel supported and connected to the company, resulting in stronger job engagement and productivity.

- Vibrant Yoga 2021

---

(9) <http://hbr.org/2010/12/whats-the-hard-return-on-employee-wellness-programs/ar/1>

(10) <https://www.wellsteps.com/blog/2020/01/01/health-and-wellness-in-the-workplace/>

(11) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adigaskell/2020/10/01/the-mental-health-challenges-for-workers-during-covid/?sh=2a8a2eb78918>

(12) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bryanrobinson/2021/02/01/the-future-of-mental-health-and-career-support-for-remote-workers/?sh=80fb61812e77>