



RPAY Active Workplace News

Creative Workplace Health Promotion

Read RPAY's interview with the Whitehorse General Hospital about their workplace wellness strategy.....

In a study of escalator vs. stair use, researchers placed a sign of a cartoon figure shaped like a heart in front of the escalators at a shopping mall. The... heart was out of shape, sad-looking, holding on to the railing, and obese. Next to the out-of-shape heart was a cartoon of a fit heart trotting up the stairs, with the caption: "Your heart needs exercise: here's your chance."

The researchers observed more than 21,000 people and found that these simple cartoons increased stair usage in the shopping mall by 13% to 16%.

Most interesting is that obese people's use of the stairs quadrupled.

-taken from Sheldon Persad (sheldon@personalbest.ca), in Barrie Shepley's Personal Best Weekly Update, April 4/05



Click [here](#) to download free posters – put them up at an elevator near you!!



Q: What health programs do you have in place?

A: *A Working on Wellness program which focuses on physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual support.*

Q: What motivated your company to employ these initiatives?

A: *Reduced absenteeism, better health and well-being, employee recruitment, productivity, and cost savings.*

Q: What strategies are in place to ensure program success?

A: *We have a committee consisting of 10 people, an action plan, policies - which include things like self-scheduling to better accommodate employee lifestyles, and an established budget.*

Q: What changes have you seen in your workplace as a result of the programming?

A: *Increased health and well being in our employees. We plan on gathering statistical data to use in the future to help with monitoring.*

Feeling Stressed Out?
Take 30 seconds to "palm your eyes":

- 1) Cup your hands
- 2) While resting your elbows on the desk, cover your eyes without direct pressure on the eyes
- 3) Hold position for 30 seconds ensuring all light is blocked
- 4) Breathe naturally
- 5) Remove hands and open eyes slowly

Ever wonder exactly how much physical inactivity is costing your workplace? The Active Living Leadership website contains a “Physical Inactivity Cost Calculator” Click [here](#) to try it.

Workplace Health Links

[Lifestyle Information Network](#)

[Canadian Physiotherapy Association](#)

[Institute for Work and Health](#)

Chronic stress at work and the metabolic syndrome

-taken from “News and Analysis” at www.grahamlowe.ca

On January 20, 2006 the *British Medical Journal* published a study that investigates the association between stress at work and the metabolic syndrome which involves obesity, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Researchers on the team (led by Tarani Chandola) followed 10,308 British civil servants for 14 years. The test subjects were both male and female and between the ages of 35 and 55 years.

The study concludes that employees with chronic work stress are more than twice as likely to be at risk. This study provides evidence for the biological link between psychosocial stressors from everyday life and heart disease.

For a link to this article and the *British Medical Journal* [click here](#).



Stress Reduction Tips

-taken from “50 Ways to Reduce Stress” by Rebecca Greer

- 1) **Walk everywhere you can.** Exercise has a soothing effect – especially when it permits you to avoid traffic jams, crowded buses and costly taxis.
- 2) **Take advantage of your body rhythms.** If you’re at your best early in the morning, that’s the time to schedule complicated tasks that require concentration. If you don’t reach your peak until later in the day, start with easier things that don’t require much thought. It doesn’t matter when your peaks and valleys come as long as you plan accordingly.
- 3) **Take time out to breathe deeply,** stretch your muscles, nap, meditate or do a few tension-relieving exercises. If you can’t arrange a brisk walk, try raising your shoulders in a high shrug, hold ten seconds, release and repeat.
- 4) **Find enjoyable ways to exercise.** Experts agree on the benefits of aerobic exercise – the kind that raises your heart rate and makes you breathe hard. But if you hate to jog or jump rope, you’ll create as much stress as you relieve. Try swimming, cycling, aerobic dancing, racquet ball or a few fast sets of tennis instead.
- 5) **Schedule more fun.** Don’t give up seeing friends and doing things you enjoy because you “have too much to do”. Pleasurable activities are important. And work goes faster and produces less stress when fun comes first.
- 6) **Have a massage.** Tension just melts away under the touch of experienced fingers. But a talented amateur, a friend for whom you perform the same or an equivalent favour, perhaps can do almost as well.

For more information on healthy lifestyles, visit www.rpay.org or call our Active Living Coordinator at 668-2328