

# MANAGER AND SUPERVISOR GUIDE

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**Supporting Wellness at Work**  
University of Wisconsin–Madison



# WISCONSIN

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

The University of Wisconsin–Madison is committed to promoting the health and wellness of students, faculty, and staff. This guide gives recommendations for managers and supervisors to lead, promote, and encourage well-being in the workplace.

Managers and supervisors are uniquely positioned to support, model, and create a safe and healthy workplace. This guide will focus on how you, as a manager or supervisor, can create a positive and healthy culture in your unit, division, or department.

We hope the Manager and Supervisor Guide will be useful in promoting health and well-being in your unit/department and throughout campus.

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## Introduction

Managers and supervisors are uniquely positioned to model, promote, and create a safe and healthy workplace by constructing a culture of wellness and supporting staff who want to achieve and/or maintain healthy lifestyles. The benefits of having healthy employees are numerous, from improved health and productivity to lower healthcare costs and risks. Your staff spends at least half their waking hours at work, and identifying ways to support their well-being and quality of life is key to maintaining a high performing workforce. Invest in your most valued asset – your staff – and help move UW–Madison towards a healthier culture and working environment.

### KNOW YOUR CAMPUS HEALTH AND WELL-BEING RESOURCES

- Employee Wellness Leader
- Well-being Champion Program
- Well Wisconsin StayWell
- RecSports
- Hoofers Outdoor Recreation
- University Health Services
- Employee Assistance Office
- Silver Cloud
- Disability Accommodations
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Office for Equity and Diversity
- Title IX Office
- Learning and Talent Development Classes

- On-site flu shots
- WheelHouse Studios
- ETF Financial Fitness Program
- Office of Human Resources Benefit Counseling
- Meditation Classes
- Transportation Services
- Office of Childcare and Family Resources



## Leading Towards a Healthy Culture

Leaders can learn to support wellness by sharing the well-being vision, serving as effective well-being role models, and aligning cultural touch points. Successful organizations combine support for individual change with supportive environments.

Well-being programs must add culture change strategies whereby healthy behavior becomes *the way we do things around here* vs one more program/activity to do. A “well” culture makes it more likely that employees will succeed in achieving both their personal and professional goals. Leaders at all levels have a responsibility for shaping the workplace culture. That responsibility includes fostering a workplace culture that supports an employee in all areas of their well-being.

## STRATEGIES

- Involve employees in creating a vision for what well-being looks like in your department, including how well-being is defined, why it is important and how employees can participate in the initiative.
- Serve as a role model by participating in the well-being program and by adopting a healthy lifestyle.
- Align cultural touch points which are formal and informal policies and procedures such as rewards, communication and training with well-being.
- Monitor and celebrate success so that individual and group-level well-being goals are set and progress recognized.
- Explain worksite well-being programs and how they can be accessed.
- Announce your support for practicing stress relief, taking breaks and caring for your own well-being at work.
- Remind employees about well-being ways they can care for their well-being such as taking vacation, flex scheduling, eating healthy meals, completing the WellWisconsin program.
- Include a conversation about healthy lifestyles and the well-being during a new employee's first days of employment and during regular check-ins.

## WELL-BEING TRADITIONS

Specific acts and traditions carry special meaning in a culture. Such traditions and symbols should be aligned with well-being. Some senior leaders, for example, have shown their support by moving their designated parking spot away from the front entrance. A daily tradition such as a stretch break can be a powerful statement in support of well-being. Other traditions could take place annually, such as participation in an annual celebration. These symbolic acts explicitly show that employees and their health are genuinely valued in the work culture.

## MAKING THE HEALTHY CHOICE THE EASY CHOICE

In a culture of well-being, healthy choices should be the most affordable, convenient and attractive alternatives. Do employees have the time, space, equipment and other resources needed to pursue positive practices? Proper resources can eliminate barriers and show that health is a priority in the workplace.

*Source: Human Resources Institute, LLC (2011)*





## Modeling Healthy Behavior

Creating healthy habits that you incorporate into your day is an essential component to living a healthy life. Once you develop a habit, you don't have to think about making that healthy decision continuously or rely on willpower. It will become automatic. Your habits may be different than those of your coworker; the key is to find a few that fit into your day and help you reach your individual goals.

### HEALTHY HABITS AT WORK

- Take time to get to know your co-workers. People with a strong social network and support system are better able to manage stress.
- Keep a pair of walking shoes at your desk so you never have an excuse not to take a walk (better yet, wear comfortable shoes every day!)
- Have an Ergonomics assessment completed to avoid discomfort due to your office environment. Contact the campus ergonomist to set up an appointment today!
- Try creating a standing workstation space in your area so you can periodically stand throughout the day. It doesn't need to be fancy; it could be a simple file box sitting on your desk. Just make sure it is stable and secure.
- Office desks can be dirty places! Unless you regularly disinfect them, your keyboard, computer mouse, and phone are covered in germs. Keep some disinfecting wipes at your desk to wipe down your surfaces on a weekly basis (Maybe right after you organize your workstation).
- Research shows that an organized office increases productivity and motivation. If your desk is cluttered and messy, take a few minutes each day or week to organize your workspace.

- Spend all day working at a computer? Your eyes need a break too. When you get up to take a short walk around the office, make sure you focus your eyes on something far away and look side to side.
- When you talk on the phone, avoid cradling the phone between your ear and neck. Try using a headset or the speaker phone instead (and maybe stand up too).
- Your muscles get tight from sitting in one position all day. [Check out this guide](#) for stretches that you can do at your desk.

## EATING HEALTHY AT WORK

Roughly half of your weekly meals are consumed during the time you spend at work. Set yourself up for success and make eating healthy a little bit easier even when you are at work. When a snack attack hits at 3pm, will you be ready?

- Think ahead! If you have nothing else to eat and are hungry, you will get the candy bar out of the vending machine.
- Keep popcorn, dried fruit, nuts, or jerky in your desk for easy, healthy snacks that won't spoil quickly.
- But put it away and maybe up high! Research shows that having food sitting in plain sight may lead to eating more, even when you are not hungry.
- Consider keeping some perishable items in the office fridge: yogurt, cheese, and fruit are all great options.
- Bring a reusable water bottle to leave in your office. When you are thirsty, fill it at the fountain instead of grabbing a soda out of the vending machine. Maybe even fill it up in an adjacent building for a few extra steps.
- If you eat at your desk, pay attention to what you put in your mouth. Mindless eating while multi-tasking can lead to overeating without even realizing it.
- Bring your lunch to work. When you plan ahead and pack a lunch before you are hungry, you are more likely to make healthy choices.
- Think about food safety, keep your lunch in the office refrigerator or in an insulated lunch to keep your lunch from becoming a bacteria haven.

Healthy options include:

Breakfast	Lunch	Snacks
fresh fruit	vegetable soup (ex. tomato basil, minestrone)	fruit
whole grain bagel thin/toast with peanut butter	romaine or spinach salad	baby carrots
yogurt*	turkey, tuna, or chicken sandwich on whole grain bread/wrap	cheese and crackers
oatmeal with fruit and nuts	pasta salad with vegetables	nuts



egg sandwich on whole grain bread (no bacon)	chicken and vegetables	trail mix (no M&M's)
hard boiled eggs	leftovers from dinner	popcorn
		yogurt*

## MOVE MORE AT WORK

One study found that sitting for 11 or more hours each day increased the risk of death by 40%, regardless of any other activity during the day. Unfortunately, even a daily trip to the gym can't undo the effects of an entire day spent sitting. To keep your body functioning properly, you need to move your body in a variety of ways all through the day.

- Stand up to do some tasks. Need to take notes or brainstorm, try standing up.
- Stretch and move during conference calls and webinars.
- Use your cell phone and a set of headphones to walk around campus during a conference call.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Try a [walking meeting](#). Not all meetings need to happen in an office. Creative and brainstorming meetings can be more successful while your body is moving. Click [HERE](#) for information about walking paths on campus.
- By drinking the minimum eight glasses of water a day, you'll be back and forth from your desk to the water fountain to the bathroom.
- Use CtrlWORK software on your computer to remind you to take breaks to move. You should spend at least 3-4 minutes moving for every hour you spend sitting at your desk.
- Stand while talking on the phone.
- Don't keep a printer in your office. Print to a printer down the hall so you can get up and move.
- Wear a pedometer or fitness tracker to hold you accountable, synch your device to your [StayWell](#) account to earn your wellness incentive or compete with co-workers to earn the most steps while you are at it!
- Take stairs every chance you get and walk to meetings instead of driving. Many times you can walk quicker than driving to a meeting (we all know parking can be hard to come by).
- Stretch your shoulders, neck and back throughout the day to overcome some tightness from typing on a computer all day.
- Find a walking partner to make walks fun and create accountability!

### Benefits of regular, physical activity:

- More energy, improved focus
- Lower stress levels
- Better mood, positive outlook
- Easier to move

- Feel and look better
- Builds stronger bones and muscles
- Helps manage weight
- Prevents sprains and strains
- Reduces risk of chronic disease
- Raises good cholesterol (HDL)

#### Considerations:

- Safety is important. If you are just starting, take it slow at first and gradually build.
- Always wear comfortable walking shoes that give good support.
- Consider opportunities for the work unit to come together. Studies show those who are physically active with a partner or group are most successful in sticking to a program.
- If you plan to start a vigorous program and are a man over 45 or a woman over 55 with a chronic disease or risk factor (see below), check with your physician before starting an exercise program.

## **STRESS MANAGEMENT AT WORK**

While there is no way to remove ALL of the stress from work, you can take some daily steps to help lower and manage the stress from your job.

- Connect with others in your office and around campus. Developing friendships with co-workers can help you better manage the negative effects of stress.
- If you see the downside of every situation and interaction, you'll find yourself drained of energy and motivation. Try to think positively about your work and avoid negative co-workers.
- In stressful moments, give yourself a 2-minute break from what is bothering you and focus instead on your breathing. Sit up straight, close your eyes, and put one hand on your belly. Slowly inhale through your nose and out your mouth. Try to make your hand on your belly raise and lower.
- A good belly laugh does more than distract you from your stress; it helps you better able to manage it. Laughing lowers your body's stress hormones while increasing chemicals that boost your mood. Have you laughed today?
- Not only does a clean desk help increase your productivity and motivation, but can relieve stress. Spending a little time to get organized can save you time and unnecessary stress.
- Take a few movement breaks throughout the day. Movement gives the body a chance to practice dealing with stress. It forces the body's systems - all of which are involved in responding to stress - to communicate more closely than usual. The more sedentary we get, the less efficient our bodies are in responding to stress.
- Keep a simple stress ball on your desk for those times when stress gets out of hand. It lets you fiddle while your mind wanders, which is good for your hands and wrists as well as your stress level.
- Get other points of view. Talk with trusted colleagues or friends about the issues you're facing. They might be able to provide insights or offer suggestions for coping. Sometimes simply talking about a stressor can be a relief.

- Have an outlet. Set aside time for activities you enjoy — such as reading, socializing or pursuing a hobby.



## Supporting a Culture of Well-being

- Identify the Well-being Champion for your work unit/department. Well-being Champions are volunteer staff or faculty who play a vital role in communicating and promoting health and well-being activities, programs, and events to create a culture of health.
- Put well-being on staff meeting agendas. Take the time to assess your workplace culture, identify interests/needs, and discuss ideas to integrate wellness into the workplace. If you don't have a Well-being Champion, share responsibilities among staff to announce current programs and lead discussions.
- Follow the [UW-Madison Healthy Meeting and Event Guide](#) to ensure the healthy food choices, exercise opportunities, and mindfulness at meetings and events within your department.
- If possible, support [flex time](#) to give staff more control over their daily schedules. For example, supporting time for exercise, participation in programs, and balance of work/life needs.
- Create a culture that encourages and supports active lifestyles and prevents injury:
  - Promote standing, changing positions, and moving every 30 minutes. Build this into the workday with walking meetings, taking the stairs, or finding a walking partner
- Communicate and promote campus well-being programs:

- If you do not have a Well-being Champion, email the [Employee Wellness Leader](#) for more information.
- Is your department struggling with creating a culture of well-being or don't know where to start?
  - Contact the Employee Well-being Leader for a consultation on how to move your culture forward.

## SUPPORTING STAFF

- Orient new employees to the well-being programs offered.
- Encourage and support staff to take advantage of the well-being programs available on campus.
- Encourage staff to care for themselves through breaks, time away from work and seeking support when needed.
- Arrange for workshops and programs for your department or staff meetings such as activity breaks for meetings and events and more!
- Share health and well-being educational materials

## HEALTHY CULTURE AUDIT

Assess your department's culture by completing this audit tool and learn how your work environment can be **improved to support healthy lifestyle habits** for faculty and staff. This tool can guide you to create a healthy workplace and identify priorities for your department.

### Healthy Culture, defined:

"In a culture of health, employee well-being and organizational success are inextricably linked. It aligns leadership, benefits, policies, incentives, programs and environmental supports to reduce barriers to active engagement and sustainability of healthy lifestyles across the healthcare continuum." After completing the audit, review the results with your department leaders, managers, and others that can help you champion for a healthier work environment and culture. [Access audit here.](#)