

# How to Exercise Right at Work

## HEALTH & AGED CARE

The health and aged care sector includes public and private hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, residential aged care, day procedure centres, GP practices, allied health services and veterinary services.

Every day in the healthcare industry is different from the next, and work in this field provides many rewards and challenges. Health

and aged care practitioners come in to contact with a range of people and patients each day and face high pressure situations that require efficient and effective management.

Hours of work vary and many nurses and doctors are often on-call for long stretches or working 12+ hour night shifts, and then have a few days off.



### + COMMON HEALTH RISKS FOR EMPLOYEES

Most workplace injuries in the health sector are musculoskeletal disorders caused by unsafe manual handling tasks such as lifting and moving people, as well as pushing and pulling patient trolleys and equipment.

For workers, this can mean pain and discomfort which sometimes lasts for years, affecting not only their work but their everyday lives, families and relationships. For employers, these injuries can lead to workers' compensation claims and

higher costs, and can diminish workplace morale and productivity.

Getting the recommended amount of sleep is also a big concern for shift workers, and probably the biggest barrier to exercise. Sleep of less than 6 hours per night has been directly linked to physical inactivity and obesity, with poor sleep associated with increases in the production of the "stress hormone" cortisol in the brain.

### ? WHY IS EXERCISE SO IMPORTANT?

Due to the nature of your job, the demands on your mental and physical well-being require attention.

The right exercise can assist in:

- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Boosting mood and energy levels

- Improving quality of life
- Increase mental alertness
- Increase blood muscles
- Improving quality of sleep and stress relief
- Assisting in the prevention and management of a variety of lifestyle related diseases



## EXERCISE RIGHT RECOMMENDS

### SCHEDULE EXERCISE AT A TIME THAT YOU CAN FOLLOW THROUGH WITH

When's the best time to work out? When you will actually do it! If you find yourself too exhausted after your 12 hour shift then get your workout done before you go to work, even if you only have twenty minutes! Alternatively, do it at and during work!

### PLAN OUT YOUR DAY

We understand your hours can be difficult. That's where planning in advance can really help. Spending 5 minutes identifying when and where you can add little bit of movement means you're more likely to actually follow through with it.

### EVERY LITTLE BIT COUNTS

An easy way to add activity into your day is to increase your bouts of incidental activity. Every step counts, so when moving around the hospital or clinic try using the stairs instead of the elevator. If you have a pedometer or fitbit, try counting your steps per day and see if you can beat 10,000. Why not try a squat or calf raise you're waiting for the kettle to boil?

### PRACTICE APPROPRIATE SELF-CARE

When you're looking after others it's important to execute proper self-care to ensure you are working at your best. When you do have that work break, try and exercise. Bring your running shoes to work and try to walk or run in your lunch break. Alternatively, use the time to perform core strength exercises in the lunch room.