

Wellbeing *at work*

Is your job as a PA more of a health hazard than a health boost? Meg Lancaster looks at how you can stay fit and healthy while in the office

We spend most of our waking hours at work, our job has a significant impact on our physical and mental well-being and so, unsurprisingly, it can be at the cause of a myriad of health issues. The importance of feeling 100 per cent is recognised by experts all over. When we feel well we take fewer days off sick, have better concentration, more energy and are emotionally more stable. An estimated two million people suffer from ill health caused by work, while 18 million working days are lost every year due to sick leave as a result of work. Interestingly, it's only now that the issue is reaching crisis point that efforts are being made. ICAS (Independent Counselling Advisory Service) have launched a wellbeingworks programme where workers are encouraged to complete an on-line health risk assessment and then individual feedback is given to help employees stay healthy and avoid the pitfalls of working life. So read on to see how you can avoid some of the health concerns related with your job and how to lead a happier, healthier life.

Are you sitting comfortably? Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) is one of the key conditions that can affect PAs, and left untreated, it can lead to permanent damage. Working at a computer and repeating the same movements over extended periods can put you at risk, so take action now. adjust your workstation so that equipment is within easy reach and ensure that your chair and computer are in the correct position. Likewise sitting awkwardly for long periods of time can cause backache so ensure your chair is at the right height, your legs are at right angles to the floor and your legs can touch the ground. Try to sit upright and avoid crossing your legs, as this can put your spine out of alignment.

Location, location, location

It may sound a little far-fetched, but the building that you work in could actually be making you sick. A NOP survey found



that at least 40 per cent of office workers have symptoms linked to Sick Building Syndrome, (SIS), including headaches, fatigue and sore eyes and throat. Theories on SIS include; chemical pollutants being drawn in through windows and vents; in-door chemical pollutants such as carpets and office machinery; extreme humidity levels and poor ventilation. If you suspect that you may suffer with SIS then improve air flow by opening windows and doors and use plants to counteract the ozone given off by computers, faxes and printers.

The eyes have it

When you use a computer your blink rate drops, which means the eyes are not as well lubricated as they should be resulting in dry, sore eyes. When you are working for long periods of time on a VDU try to blink regularly and take frequent rest breaks, to allow the eyes time to recover. You should also take advantage of the free eye tests you're entitled to, to make sure your eyes are in good health.

On the spot relief

The boom in complementary therapies coupled with today's time-stressed employees means all you need to do is pick up the phone and soon you could be in a state of extreme relaxation! Sense is a UK based company who offer on-site therapies such as chair massage, reiki and Indian head massages. Whatever

treatment you choose it can easily be slotted into your lunch hour and prices start from around £12 a treatment. The chair massage is carried out on a fully supportive massage chair. So as to not disrupt your day the therapy is performed while you are fully clothed and no oils or creams are used, so your hair stays intact.

Contacts

Sense Massage Therapy
Enquiries: 0800 488 0606
www.sensemassage.co.uk

Visit Sense's web site for answers to frequently asked questions, prices and lots more on stress.

Prices
www.sensemassage.co.uk/quote

Stress Test
www.sensemassage.co.uk/test/