



# How to Make a Phenomenal Company Wellness Program

# Table of Contents

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**1 WHY HEALTH AND WELLNESS MATTER**

**6 FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

Resources

Employee Interest

Outcomes

**9 WHAT TO INCLUDE**

Physical Health

Mental and Emotional Health

Bonus: Social Health

**13 CONCLUSION**

# Why Health and Wellness Matter

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If you don't have a health and wellness initiative at your company, you've probably heard about them. Wellness programs are any company-sponsored activities designed to encourage or facilitate healthy habits both inside and outside of the workplace.

Workplace wellness programs are on the rise — but is all the hype worth it?

We're inclined to say yes.



**According to an Aflac Workforces Report, medical costs decrease by about \$3.27 for each dollar a business spends on wellness programs. Those savings can add up quickly.**



However, it's not just a monetary return that your business will gain from offering employee wellness initiatives: they can make your business a remarkable place to work, boost employee happiness, and help you compete with the Googles and Amazons out there.



## 4 Reasons to Have a Health and Wellness Program

### 1 INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

It's well documented that healthy employees will perform at higher levels, and they're more likely to be engaged. [Engaged employees](#) have an emotional commitment to an organization, and they really care about their company and the work they do.

Erika Cartagena, Director of Employee Success at Justworks, learned the importance of employee engagement and health firsthand after her own burnout at previous jobs.

"I realized that I had been sprinting for years and had not been practicing self care. Because of my literal breakdown — mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually — my brain stopped working," said Erika. "I realized that I had to shift everything."

As a result, she prioritized an ongoing workplace wellness program and biannual wellness days at Justworks. Those efforts, combined with other perks, benefits, and quality leadership, have helped Justworks win the award for [Great Place to Work®](#).

## 2 ATTRACT TOP TALENT AND REDUCE TURNOVER

In highly competitive industries, like tech and PR and marketing agencies, companies face especially [fierce competition for the best talent](#). Offering top notch perks will help you compete with all the Googles and Amazons out there (without the Google and Amazon price tag).

Better yet, advertising those perks on your website will help with recruiting efforts.

### Perks



#### MEDICAL, DENTAL AND VISION

Justworks fully covers all employee's medical, dental and vision insurance. Choose great plans from Aetna.



#### COMMUTER BENEFITS, GYM & MORE

Save on commuter benefits, and enjoy a free CitiBike membership and discounted access to NY Health & Racquet Club.



#### RETREATS AND TEAM ACTIVITIES

We have a vibrant company culture, including a volleyball team, Fall and Spring retreats and tickets to hockey games.



#### GREAT, DOG FRIENDLY OFFICE WITH UNLIMITED SNACKS

Our office is centrally located at 26th and 6th. It also comes with unlimited snacks and some cute dogs.



#### LEADERSHIP TRAINING

If you'd like to develop your leadership skills, you can apply for our leadership training program.



#### EMPLOYEE REFERRAL PROGRAM

Get paid for bringing in great people.

Justworks, for example, advertises our perks on our website to show how we care for the overall health and wellbeing of our employees.

## 3 REDUCE ABSENTEEISM

If you want your team to come into work regularly, employee wellbeing is a great place to start. According to a study by the [Institute for Healthcare Consumerism](#), companies that implemented a wellness program had a 20% reduction in employees calling in sick. And healthy employees won't only come into work more, they'll also be more productive while at work.

## 4 ENCOURAGE CROSS-TEAM COLLABORATION

Employee wellness programs are a great way for other team members to meet each other and build relationships that will foster the health of the company.

For example, group activities like weekly meditation classes or nutrition workshops get people talking to others outside of their teams. And some of those casual conversations turn into ideas for projects people within the company could collaborate on.

By offering more ways for your employees to enjoy each other's company, you'll pave a pathway to [better workplace communication](#).



# Factors to Consider

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Creating a successful wellness program requires more than choosing activities and making them happen. Here are the factors to consider before you nail down your plans.



## 1 RESOURCES

Evaluate the resources and budget you have available for a health and wellness program at your office. For example, how much are you willing to spend per employee, or overall on a monthly or annual health and wellness budget?



Also, what space limitations will you be working with? Are there any spots in the office amenable to a yoga or meditation class? Which companies or vendors are a good cultural fit with your organization?

If your friends or coworkers know people who offer exercise classes, for example, see if you can leverage those connections.

Justworks found several different vendors for health and wellness programs through our own customers and partners, from [Exubrancy](#) to [Smart Vision](#). This gave us the ability to offer a wide range of options to employees while supporting local businesses.

## 2 EMPLOYEE INTEREST

The program is for your team, so asking them what they want is a great start. “Take time to understand the population,” said Erika. “What are they passionate about and interested in?”



Pass along a questionnaire to find out what your team cares about and design programs around those results. Are they more into holistic care, aerobics classes, or biometric screenings? Once you have a better idea, you can create a data-driven program that works for the largest number of employees. Dig into how you can help make their lives easier and offerings more accessible.

Also consider remote employees. What initiatives can you offer team members who aren't onsite? Ask what they would be interested in, whether that's a stipend for their local gym or remote exercise classes like [ConBody](#).

### 3 OUTCOMES

As with any benefit or perk, return on investment is a primary concern. In order to create an employee wellness program that works, you'll need to prioritize a feedback loop within your leadership team.



Erika suggests tying employee wellbeing to metrics and real-time, with ongoing feedback. As you create the program, conduct pilots and focus groups, and continue to iterate. Make a point to track metrics and understand what's working. If something isn't gaining traction, replace it with something your employees are more interested in.

[Employee happiness surveys](#) before and during the wellness program launch, for example, can track the program's success.



**“ [Wellness programs] need to be important to the senior leadership team. If they don't value or support the programs offered, individuals will not feel supported or be inclined to participate. ”**

ERIKA CARTAGENA

DIRECTOR OF EMPLOYEE SUCCESS, JUSTWORKS

A woman with long brown hair, wearing sunglasses, a grey jacket, and a blue and white striped scarf, is riding a blue Citi Bike on a city street. The bike has a blue frame and a black basket with the 'citi bike' logo. The background shows a city street with buildings, trees, and other people. The entire image has a blue tint.

# What to Include

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Once you've determined your budget, resources, and employee interest, it's time to nail down what you actually want to include in your health and wellness program. This section will walk you through the various aspects of employee health and wellness to consider, paired with ideas to kick off the program.

# 1 PHYSICAL HEALTH

Traditional workplace wellness programs often focus primarily on physical health, and for good reason. Many white-collar workplaces are set up for sedentary days — and many of us have heard about how [sitting is the new smoking](#).

A wellness program is the perfect way to jumpstart your employees to action, and tear them away from staring at a screen all day long. Here are just a few different ideas of what you can offer:

**Gym subsidies**

**Bike share membership**

**Yoga**

**Aerobics**

**Health screenings**

**Flu vaccinations**

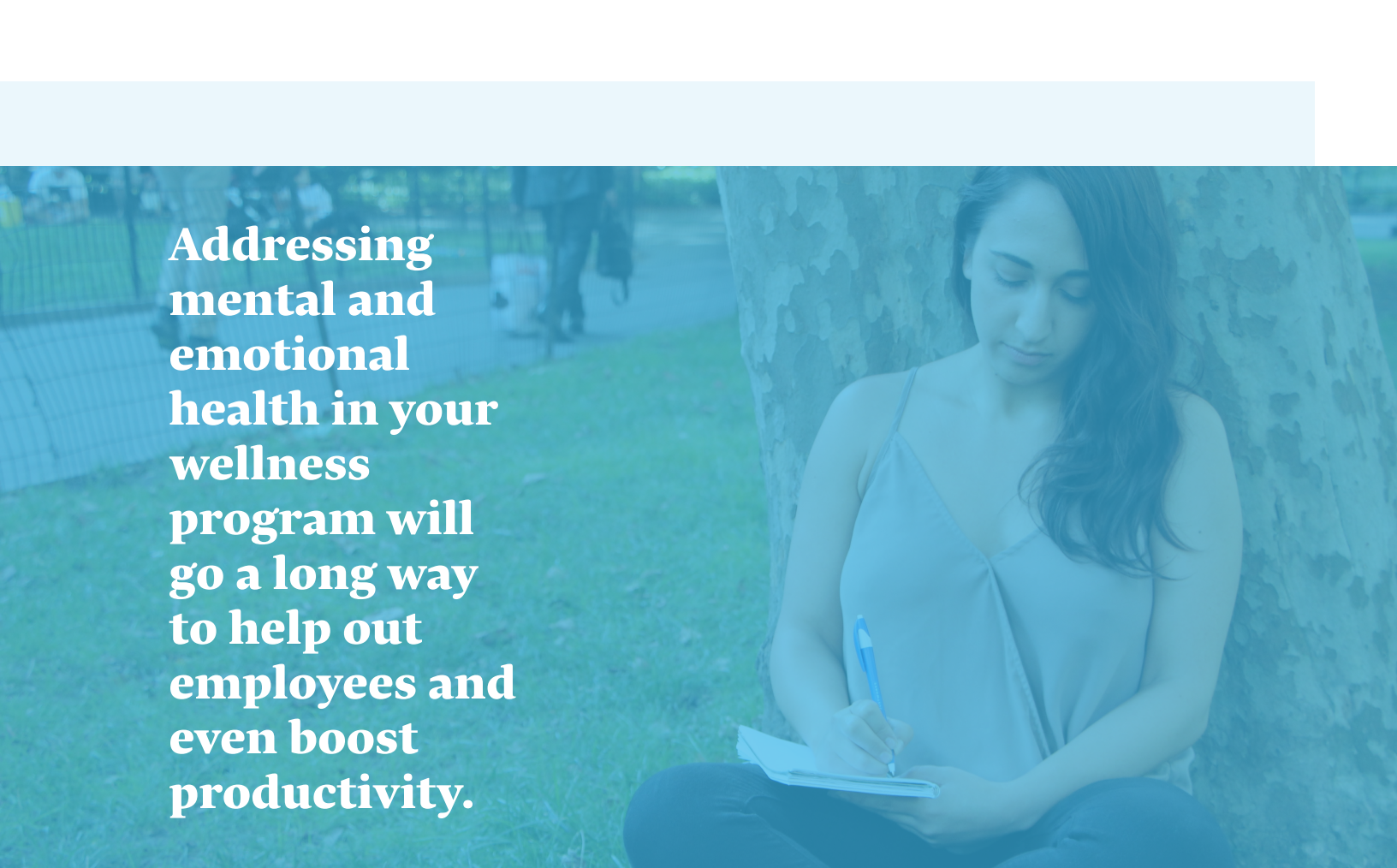
**Holistic health classes**

**Nutrition education**

**“Count it” (connect employees with wearable tracking devices and apps to power workplace fitness and wellness challenges)**

**Encourage Walk and Talks (walking one-on-one meetings)**

**Workshops on how to stretch at your desk**



**Addressing mental and emotional health in your wellness program will go a long way to help out employees and even boost productivity.**

## **2** MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, [one in five adults experience a mental illness](#).

Mental illness also impacts workplace attendance and people's ability to hold down a job. A study by the American Journal of Psychiatry estimated serious [mental illness costs the United States \\$193.2 billion](#) annually in lost earnings.

At Justworks, we've done an internal rollout of [Talkspace](#), an app that gives online access to therapists whenever needed. It's an anonymous and encrypted service where employees can chat online or even to video and phone calls with a therapist matched to their needs.

Some companies also offer anonymous employee hotlines where they can call for help on mental health issues. Others offer a free membership to [Headspace](#), which helps their team meditate. You can also consider offering weekly meditation classes or have a room for quiet reflection.

Regardless of which avenue you choose, addressing mental and emotional health in your wellness program will go a long way to help out employees and even boost productivity.

### 3 BONUS: SOCIAL HEALTH

One positive side effect of an office wellness program? Boosted social health in the workplace.

Activities like organized exercise and meditation help employees develop relationships outside of the traditional work setting. This increases workplace communication and is a net positive for everyone.

Take the extra step by extending wellness to dependents and family members, the community through volunteering, and a flexible work and PTO policy. Employees who have space to learn about career development — and build confidence and emotional intelligence — will vastly improve the overall social health of their work environment.



A photograph of two women sitting on the floor in a room with large windows and indoor plants, practicing meditation. They have their eyes closed and hands pressed together in a prayer position. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# Conclusion

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Once you've determined how you want to kick off your company wellness program, seek out feedback from employees and see what's working and what could use improvement.

Creating an inclusive and healthy space will make you stand out as an employer, and it's a special opportunity to invite the whole human into the workplace.

Employees spend most of their time at work, so they'll appreciate the thought — and you'll appreciate a more productive and happy team.

# About Justworks

Justworks helps you take care of your team with access to high quality, affordable benefits, seamless payroll, and HR support. We also offer perks that boost employee wellness initiatives, such as discounted gym and bikeshare memberships, and nutrition apps with One Medical. You can learn more about us at [www.justworks.com](http://www.justworks.com).