



# THE STRATEGIC LINK™

## Employees with Balanced Diets Have 10 Times More Energy

*Medical News Today*

Encouraging healthy eating habits through your wellness program may lead to increased productivity levels amongst employees.

A recent workplace wellness study, conducted by ComPsych Corporation, revealed only 5 percent of employees with unbalanced diets had high levels of energy, while 50 percent of workers with balanced diets had high energy.

“Energy is a key factor in productivity,” said Dr. Richard A. Chaifetz, chairman and CEO of ComPsych, the world’s largest provider of employee assistance programs. “Lack of energy is also one of the most common health-related complaints we hear from

employees.” Given the connection between balanced diets and energy, organizations that promote healthy food - as part of a comprehensive wellness program - can expect to see payoff in terms of productivity and performance.”

To measure the impact of personal wellness and lifestyle choices of employees’ workplace effectiveness, ComPsych surveyed more than 1,000 employees across the U.S. from employers of all sizes and industries.

Additional findings from the 2008 Health and Productivity Index revealed:

- Of employees with healthy diets, 73% reported having high levels of productivity, compared to 24% of employees with poor dietary habits.
- 51% of ideal weight employees had high morale, while less than half that amount - 25% - of very overweight employees had high morale levels.
- 57% of healthy weight employees reported high levels of productivity, while only 27% of very overweight employees reported being highly productive.

### Inside this issue:

Employees with Balanced Diets Have 10 Times More Energy	1
Health Risk Assessments...More Valuable Than You Think!	1,2
Seven Habits (To Break) of Highly Effective People	2,3
B&A Buzz	3
Employers see link between wellness & productivity	4

## Health Risk Assessments...More Valuable Than You Think!

From time to time, we like to share success stories from our clients after they participated in Health Risk Assessments. As many of you know, Health Risk Assessments are the foundation to wellness programs. They provide aggregate information from which we are able to

benchmark our wellness efforts and determine improvements in health.

This success story takes place at Allis Tool, West Allis, Wisconsin, which is a new client of Burkwald & Associates, Inc. since early 2008. Bill York, Allis Tool’s President, communicated to his



employees that they were going to be implementing a

*(continued on page 2)*

## Health Risk Assessments...More Valuable Than You Think!

(continued from page 1)

non-tobacco policy, and Burkwald & Associates, Inc. would be facilitating the initiative along with other wellness initiatives. We met with the Benefits Task Force committee to explain the process for Health Risk Assessments. To ensure that employees would participate in the process, Allis Tool decided employees must complete a Health Risk Assessment in order to be on their company health insurance.

After Aurora Health Care, Health Risk Assessment Provider, came in to talk about the process with all of Allis Tool's employees, Mary Bova, Purchasing Manager, signed up for her Health Risk Assessment. The morning of August 12 arrived, and Mary went to participate in her screening and hand in her questionnaire. It had been over a year since Mary had visited the doctor. After the nurse did Mary's fingerstick, a small amount of her blood was collected and processed onsite. Mary's blood sugar (glucose) came back as being in the

borderline range for diabetes and the nurse suggested that she call her doctor to set up an appointment.

That afternoon Mary called her doctor to set up an appointment. After being tested again, she was placed on medication to help regulate her blood sugar. The doctor provided Mary with general education on what she could do to regulate her blood sugar through diet and exercise. Mary also decided to meet with a dietician. She is now watching what she eats and walking twice a day with her dog. Mary has an extremely supportive family who also is helping her along the way.

According to the American Diabetes Association, in 2007 the national cost of diabetes in the U.S. exceeded \$174 billion. This estimate included \$116 billion in excess medical expenditures that are approximately 2.3 times higher than the expenditures would be in the absence of

diabetes. Approximately, \$1 in \$10 health care dollars is attributed to diabetes. Indirect costs include increased factors such as absenteeism, reduced productivity, and lost productive capacity to early mortality.

Health Risk assessments not only help plan wellness initiatives for employers, but for employees they can reveal current health status and any potential conditions. This in turn can lead to fewer high-cost medical claims in the future.



The best recipe for a well-functioning healthcare system is for each of us to take responsibility for our own health and well-being, incorporating prevention and health choices into our lives.

- J. Barry Griswall,  
Chairman and  
CEO, Principal  
Financial Group

## Seven Habits (To Break) of Highly Effective People

*Saint Louis University Medical Center*

During tough financial times, many people try to demonstrate their value at work by working harder and longer. But if you don't also make time to take care of yourself, success may come at a hefty cost: your health.

"Many people feel like they have to push themselves to unhealthy levels in order to succeed. But high-pressure jobs and long hours take a real toll on your immediate and future health," says George

Griffing, M.D., professor of Internal Medicine at Saint Louis University.

Whether you're running for president, moving up the corporate ladder or juggling your family's activities, it's crucial that you take a break to care for yourself, he says.

These are the seven worst habits of workaholics, according to Griffing.

1) Forgetting to relax: While some stress can be good

because it keeps you alert and motivated, too much stress or chronic stress will take its toll on your body. In fact, stress can cause a wide-array of problems including: cancer, heart disease, headaches, upset stomach, sleeping problems, muscle tension, weight gain/loss, high blood pressure and chest pains.

2) Eating on the go: Between meetings, conference calls and deadlines, who has time to sit down for a healthy

(continued on page 2)

## Seven Habits (To Break) of Highly Effective People

(continued from page 3)

lunch? But a healthy, balanced meal of complex carbohydrates, protein, fruits and vegetables is exactly what you need to stay mentally sharp throughout the day. Beware of frozen meals, fast food and processed food; they can be high in sodium, calories and fat.

3) Putting off sleep for work: Even busy professionals need seven to nine hours of sleep every night. Skimping on sleep can cause irritability, difficulty concentrating, memory problems and poor judgment. It has also been linked to obesity. If you have troubles sleeping at night, avoid bringing work to bed, limit caffeine and alcohol consumption and develop a relaxing routine before bedtime, such as light reading or a warm bath. If you still cannot sleep, seek the help of an expert.

4) Not making time for exercise: Humans were not designed to sit at desks for eight hours or more a day. Getting at least 30 minutes of exercise most days is very important to your immediate and future health. In addition to reducing the risk for nearly every major disease, exercise has been shown to help fight anxiety and depression. By hitting the gym before or after work or walking during lunch, even the busiest person can find time to squeeze in exercise.

5) Working even when sick: Everyone has heard, "don't come to work if you're sick," yet that's exactly what many do. Whether you're worried about jeopardizing your job in an unstable economy or just anxious about getting behind, there are three common sense reasons to stay home:

Nobody wants your germs, you'll be less productive and you need your rest to get better.

6) Drinking (too much): The saying "too much of a good thing" certainly applies to alcohol. Research has shown that moderate alcohol consumption can reduce your risk for everything from heart disease to rheumatoid arthritis, with "moderate" being the key word. In general, men should have no more than two drinks per day (1.5 oz. of spirits, 5 oz. of wine or 12 oz. of beer) and women who are not pregnant should limit themselves to one drink per day. Remember, the risks of excessive drinking far outweigh the benefits of alcohol consumption and can lead to alcoholism, liver disease and some forms of cancer. Instead of drinking several cocktails to cope with stress or unwind after a busy day, try sipping herbal tea, meditation or yoga.

7) Skipping annual medical checkups: In order to detect problems early, prevent others from developing and get the best treatment if you have a condition, you need to know what's going on in your body. Depending on your age, family history and lifestyle, consider a comprehensive medical checkup and special screenings every one to five years. Consult with your doctor for more information.

"Eventually, something's going to give. If you keep burning the candle at both ends, the flame will burn out," Griffing said. "But if you maintain a healthy balance, you will be happier and healthier overall."



## The B&A Buzz

We would like to welcome two new members to the Burkwald Family, Tanya Damon and Candace Oberholtzer.

Tanya started at Burkwald in October in the newly-created position of Communications Coordinator. In addition to communications, this role will assist with current wellness initiatives.



Candace joined our team in November in the Benefits Analyst position that was formerly held by Lisa Ohrmundt.



Tanya and Candace are eagerly learning their new roles and look forward to working with you. We at Burkwald are very happy to be introducing you to the newest additions to our team.



**We are what we repeatedly do.**

**-Aristotle**

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*just good business.*

Life is not merely to  
be alive, but to be  
well.

- Marcus Valerius  
Martial

*Check out our website  
at [www.burkwald.com](http://www.burkwald.com)*



## Employers see link between wellness & productivity

No wonder employers are pushing wellness: They can expect a quick return on their investment. An employee who starts working out, for example, may curtail sick days and exhibit more energy after just a short time

### Relative importance of wellness program objectives



Source: Working Well: A Global Survey of Health Promotion and Workplace Wellness Strategies, Buck Consultants, 2007  
Although 466 employers of all sizes participated, the average respondent employed 12,500 employees.