

Gympass

Good nutrition in the workplace



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A guide to help you create a thriving workplace

Many leaders and employees may not know, but [nutrition affects the health of organizations](#) as much as it does individuals. Providing safe and trustworthy information about food in your workplace is a way to significantly improve the health of your organization and the performance of your employees.

The good news is that taking action is relatively simple: companies can help support their employees by encouraging them to prepare healthier and tastier meals and recognizing poor choices, thus building their education around nutrition.

As well as relating nutrition to what we eat, it is also important to connect it with immunity and physical activity. A well nourished person is likely to feel better overall and find it easier to strike a healthy balance between their professional and personal life.

This guide aims to help you as a leader to endorse and practice the most effective habits to increase the quality of your employees' nutrition.



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What we eat impacts on how we perform at work

People have different body types and metabolisms, and that is the main reason why a personalized approach to nutrition is so important. Not everyone faces the same problems or difficulties. Poor nutrition can lead to insufficient energy, micronutrient deficiencies, excess weight and obesity – these factors have a decisive influence on an individual's performance at work. The first step towards improving nutrition is to understand what it is.

Do you know the basics?



Nutrients...

are substances that help the body grow, develop and maintain itself. Different nutrients exist in distinct types of food, and that is why it is essential to maintain variety in your diet. Vitamins and minerals are called micronutrients, which are needed in smaller amounts; whilst protein, fats and carbohydrates are macronutrients that should be consumed more frequently.

Food groups...

are a way to categorize types of food that carry similar nutrients such as bread, cereals, vegetables or fruits. We use food groups to balance how much of each category we need for each meal.

Calories...

a calorie is the name of the unit used to measure energy. They are present in all foods and are essential in giving us the energy to be active and complete the simplest of tasks.

How does a deficient diet affect a person's work-life?

Besides being more prone to facing long term illnesses, people with poor eating habits tend to lack energy leading to **lower productivity** and sometimes higher absenteeism. When looking at employee engagement, talent retention and acquisition, you should be mindful of how important nutrition can be.

In most western cultures, it is common for the workforce to adopt a diet with a substantial amount of highly processed or 'fast' food. Typically, these options are high in calories, saturated fat, sodium and added sugars.

Taking time to prepare healthy meals and being aware of nutritional choices can have a huge impact in helping to avoid some of the leading causes of chronic diseases, such as:

1. Obesity
2. High blood pressure
3. Diabetes
4. Heart disease
5. Osteoporosis
6. Strokes



- ▶ Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness and amputations.
- ▶ Bone injuries due to osteoporosis are most likely to occur in the hips, spine, and wrist and a minor fracture in these areas can result in major complications.
- ▶ Twenty percent of seniors who break their hip die within one year, and the ones who survive often require long-term care.
- ▶ Heart attacks or strokes can make the simplest of activities extremely challenging such as walking, bathing, or getting in and out of bed.

Our energy levels are determined by what we consume. The body breaks down the nutrients we ingest into glucose, which is the real fuel that allows anyone to perform everyday tasks.

Depending on what we eat, we may receive too much or too little glucose. Only a well balanced diet, rich in nutrients can provide the right energy levels and help the body stay consistent throughout the day.



How food directly links to your energy levels	
What we eat	How the body reacts
Pasta and dessert	Nutrients will turn into glucose quickly and provide your bloodstream with a burst of energy that will typically subside in 30 minutes.
Fruits and cereals	Nutrients will turn into glucose more steadily, with no spike or crash in energy, flowing into your bloodstream consistently allowing you to maintain focus throughout the day.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adequate levels of nourishment can raise national productivity levels by 20 percent. A study called Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength, written by the psychologist Roy F. Baumeister, provides an excellent example.

As part of the study, children skipped breakfast before going to school. Upon arrival, half of them were randomly selected to eat a nutritious breakfast while the rest went unfed. Unsurprisingly, the kids who had breakfast demonstrated fewer behavioral problems and better learning patterns than those who did not. And as soon as the children who went unfed were given a snack, their success improved as well.



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Promoting healthy nutrition for your workforce

Promoting healthy nutrition in your workplace will encourage better habits, and prevent nutrient deficiencies that may affect the productivity of your entire team.

What is the point of eating healthy?

- ▶ Improvement in health and wellbeing
- ▶ Reduction in workplace accidents
- ▶ Increase in employee retention
- ▶ Reduction of sick days
- ▶ Increase in productivity
- ▶ Improvement of morale



Inadequate meal programs and poor nutrition underlie many workplace issues: morale, safety, productivity, and the long-term health of the workers and nations. Providing healthy food at work is the best way to get people to eat at least one healthy meal a day.

Christopher Wanjed, author of *Food at Work: Workplace Solutions for Malnutrition, Obesity and Chronic Diseases*

When leading a company in search of higher productivity, the best strategy is to educate people regarding the benefits of the food they eat and endorse healthy lifestyle changes that will reward them along the way. If you are looking for a nutrition program, it's best to start with the basics.



Simple solutions to get started

Understand the challenges and introduce a nutrition plan by assessing the issues that your employees and organization as a whole face. Counting on the help of nutritionists and professionals is best to ensure that you can support your employees with a variety of issues.

Establish goals that will demonstrate why this issue matters so much to your organization. Finding similar objectives among coworkers will likely lead to better, more achievable and measurable results.

Prepare a list of tools that will be useful during their journey whether it is merely access to healthy recipe apps with videos and instructions or providing your employees with access to nutritionists, wellness coaches, and personal trainers.

Teach them the basics

Not everyone knows which foods give us the nutrients we need to. Some nutrients are directly linked to an increase in productivity.



Carrots provide a steady level of glucose for our brains to function.



Nuts and seeds are rich in vitamin-E and are full of antioxidants that decrease the pace of cognitive decline.



Blueberries are full of antioxidants that protect the brain from cell damage and help in the prevention of Dementia and Alzheimer's.



Avocado lower bad cholesterol and reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases, two major problems associated with inadequate nutrition.



Fish are rich in oil and omega-3, essential to physical and intellectual development and brain function, besides also helping in improving memory.



Dark chocolate contains antioxidants that slow down cognitive decline and provide healthy levels of caffeine, excellent for a boost in concentration.

Promote and facilitate changes in the workspace

Equip the office and support your employees by providing them easy access to healthy ingredients and equipment to prepare their own meals that will encourage them to get through the day without giving in to unhealthy temptations such as fast food or sugary snacks.

If your team is working on-site, try to **offer nutritious food** to everyone in the office. This could be through a local business, a common pantry or by developing a relationship with local street vendors who can provide healthy options.

Encourage breaks throughout the day and discourage your team from eating in front of their computers. It doesn't sound like a big deal, but when you stop and take the time to enjoy your food it makes it easier to avoid unhealthy options. Also, inspiring your employees to take advantage of a specific time to take a break and eat will encourage a mindful approach to food.

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Advocating for healthy nutrition goes hand in hand with corporate wellness

Offering employees a better understanding of what a healthy diet consists of is a significant step towards improving the overall health of your workforce. Reinforce how simple actions have the power to promote wellness and make it easier to overcome challenges. The key to productivity is more accessible than ever!





Eat better with Gympass.
Become a partner.

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