

Steps to Improve Employee Health & Wellness: 15 Benefits to Consider

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Build Your Benefits with Obsidian HR



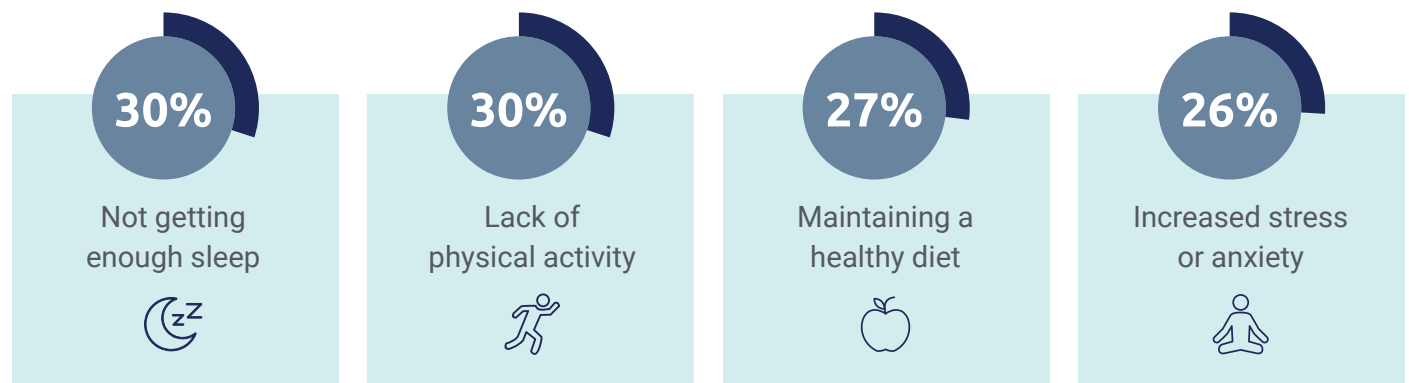
Now more than ever employees are focused on their health and wellness. Whether it's weight loss, mental health, better time management, or saving money—we all have things we want to improve. Employers have a unique opportunity to support and promote their employees' health and wellness in a way that provides benefits to them and their team members.

WHY HEALTH & WELLNESS SHOULD BE TOP OF MIND FOR EMPLOYERS

Gallup recently asked employees what they look for most in an employer. The results showed all generations ranked “the organization cares about employees' well-being” in their top three criteria—for Generation Z and Millennials, it was number one.³

That's because workplaces are changing. The great resignation, burnout, and the pandemic have shined a light on the need for more health and wellness benefits. But according to a study conducted by the American Journal of Health Promotion, only half of employers offer a health or wellness program.

The main health challenges employed adults are facing outside of work:



¹ Source: MOBE, 2021 Workplace Wellness Action Index

It's become clear that employees are struggling. Only 44% of workers felt optimistic about their well-being before the pandemic hit.² As a result, employees are placing more focus on how a job supports their well-being.

² Source: Alight Solutions, Employee Well-Being Mindset Study, 2020

³ Source: Gallup, State of the Global Workplace, 2021

Luckily, focusing more on employee health and wellness is a win-win for everyone. Businesses who do a good job of promoting well-being among their staff see:



Better productivity: Healthier employees are happier employees! Employees are more engaged and less likely to miss work when they have the resources they need to manage their health.



Improved retention: Employer-sponsored health and wellness programs show team members that you care which improves the employee experience and positively impacts morale—and consequently—retention.



Reduced costs: Health and wellness benefits make for healthier employees which reduces healthcare costs—but they can reduce workers' compensation and disability-related costs for the organization as well.

When employees believe their employer cares about their health and well-being, they are:



⁴ Source: Quantum Workplaces & Limeade, Workplace Well-Being Report

Workers are facing more challenges to their well-being, but many aren't receiving the care and benefits they need to overcome them. **There is a disconnect between what employees want in terms of health and wellness benefits—and what employers are offering.** Luckily, more than half of HR decision-makers plan to invest more in health and wellness benefits this year. Will you be one of them?

It's important employers are investing in the benefits and programs that will make a difference for their employees and not just checking a box with them. As a result, this guide was written to highlight the importance of health and wellness benefits and provide a starting point for businesses and HR teams to brainstorm new and better ways to support their employees in all aspects of their lives.

TYPES OF HEALTH & WELLNESS

Before we share the variety of benefits that you can use to improve your employees' health and wellness, it's important to understand what health and wellness are.

Health is a state of being, while wellness is the process of living a healthy lifestyle. We may not be perfectly healthy—especially as some things are out of our control—but if we are constantly working towards better health, we have a positive state of wellness. **There are three different types of health and wellness: physical, mental, and financial health and wellness.**



Physical Health & Wellness

When we think of health and wellness, the physical aspects come to mind first, such as our:

- Weight
- Eating behaviors
- Exercise habits
- Sleep
- Chronic conditions



Physical health and wellness aspects are important because they are impacted by the work environment. Some work environments are more likely to lead to illness and injury than others—such as hospitals and chemical and manufacturing plants.



Mental Health & Wellness

Our mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social wellness. It affects how we think, feel, and act. And if poor mental health goes unchecked for too long, it can lead to an inability to handle stress, make good choices, and relate to others.

Employee mental well-being has become more important as society breaks down the barriers and stigma around mental health. And with the pandemic and other current events, work stress is affecting more people. So it's an important part of our overall health.



How to Deal With Work Stress In Healthier Ways

[Read more](#)



Financial Health & Wellness

Financial health includes a variety of factors that relate to one's current standing and relationship with money. Those doing financially well have the freedom and ability to handle their present and future financial needs.

Financial wellness has become more complex over time. As consumers have easier access to student loans, lines of credit, buying homes, and investing—their financial wellness is put at risk. And as automation and technology make buying a variety of goods easier, accumulating too much debt is a common problem.

By understanding the types of well-being, employers can determine all the different ways they can promote their employees' health and wellness.

3 STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR EMPLOYEES' HEALTH & WELLNESS

There are many ways that employers can promote physical, mental, and financial well-being. Efforts will rely on providing benefits, offering resources, and encouraging employee participation.

STEP 1: PROVIDE BENEFITS—15 BENEFITS TO CONSIDER

There are so many programs and tools available that make it easy to provide your employees with some sort of health and wellness benefits package. You don't need to provide every benefit out there. Gather feedback from your employees and mix and match what makes the most sense to support their physical, mental, and financial well-being.



Mental Health & Wellness Benefits

- 01 Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs):** EAPs provide employees with outside counselors or resources during difficult times. You can get access to low-cost options from a variety of providers. Though employees don't have to participate in the program, having it available provides peace of mind and instant support.
- 02 Counseling services:** Some healthcare insurance plans now provide mental health services—such as therapy—under employer-sponsored health plans. But organizations can also partner with telehealth companies that provide therapy services. In fact, 69% of mid to large-sized companies are now offering teletherapy.⁵
- 03 Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):** Employee resource groups are company-formed, but employee-led networks where employees can discuss relevant issues such as mental health. They're meant to create a more inclusive environment and platform for discussion. Creating one in your organization shows you care about the topic and creates an opportunity for employees to develop a deeper understanding of one another, and they usually lead to more engaged employees.

⁵ Fidelity Business Group, Annual Health and Well-Being Survey, 2020

04 Flexible work arrangements: Encouraging breaks, offering flexible schedules, and leading by example are a few ways to promote a healthy work-life balance. But at the end of the day, the employee will need to learn to set some boundaries as well. So offer solutions to disconnect and limit business communications outside of working hours.

05 Mental health days: While you may offer vacation or sick days, provide an additional one to two mental health days. If encouraged, mental health days can lower employee stress and improve productivity—but only temporarily. Mental health days should be combined with other strategies to support your employees' mental health, as they're just a quick fix for particularly stressful times.

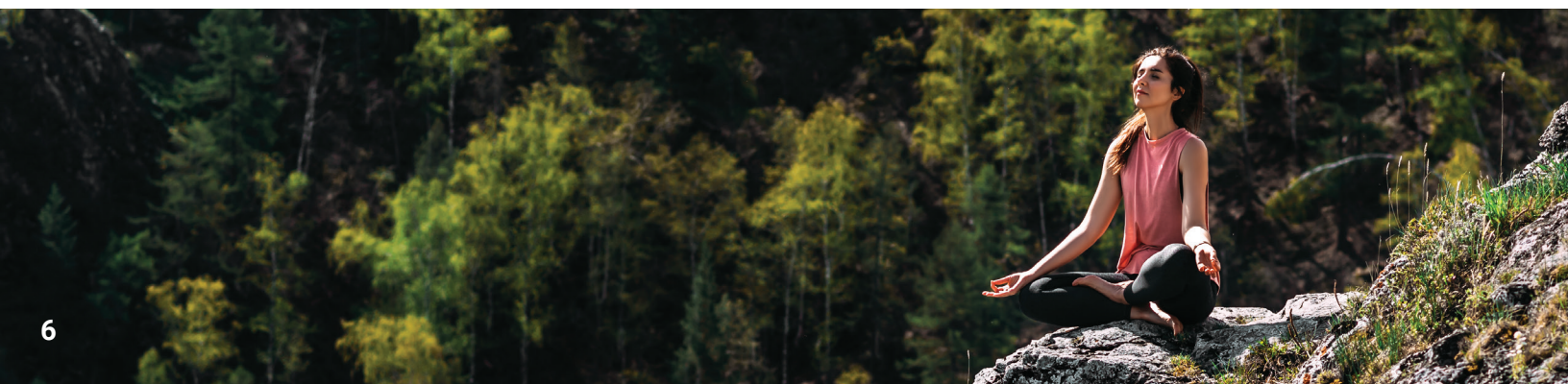


Physical Health & Wellness Benefits

06 Health insurance: Health insurance is one of the most desired benefits. It does a lot to support employees and their families. Health insurance provides peace of mind to manage accidents, life changes, or chronic conditions.

07 Perks: Perks like free healthy snacks and drinks in the office or discounts on gym memberships are low-cost and fun ways to encourage a healthy lifestyle. Businesses can also host company events or competitions that include physical activities and help employees achieve a health-related goal.

08 Wellness programs: Some healthcare insurance plans come with a wellness program. Wellness programs include resources and tools that help employees improve and track their health and fitness. But if your insurance plan doesn't have one, you can create one for your workplace. Look into an online platform or app where your employees can track goals and progress and find ways to encourage their participation—such as using rewards!



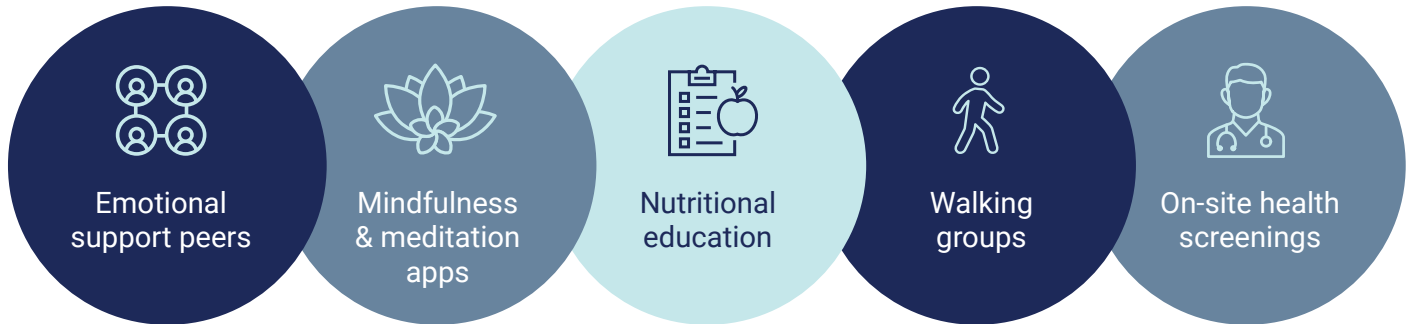


Financial Health & Wellness Benefits

- 09 Retirement plans:** Whether you can afford to match contributions or not, just the option to have a retirement plan and contribute through automatic payroll deductions makes it easier and more likely that employees will opt-in. And in some cases, this is a required employer benefit.
- 10 Healthcare Savings Accounts (HSAs):** Certain healthcare plans offer HSAs which provide tax discounts and employer matching options so you can contribute to your employee's funds and make it easier on them when paying for healthcare.
- 11 Financial reimbursements:** Tuition or student loan repayment plans, caregiver or child-care support funds, professional development stipends, or commuting assistance are low-cost way to support your employees' financial needs while managing benefit costs.
- 12 Financial consultant:** Regardless of whether employees have plans in place to take care of financial obligations, having the means to talk through them can alleviate stress. Having an expert on-hand to answer their questions and talk through a financial plan can help employees feel more in control of their finances.
- 13 Employee purchasing programs or discounts:** Pool your employee purchasing power or develop relationships with other businesses to get discounts on the products or services your team may regularly purchase for work or life.
- 14 Safety net insurance:** Safety net insurance can include many things but most commonly is life and disability insurance. Safety net insurance has become more valuable after the pandemic. Since this benefit isn't a huge cost for employers, many companies include this in their financial wellness benefits.
- 15 Emergency funds:** A survey done last year by PwC found that 38% of workers have less than a thousand dollars in savings to deal with emergencies. An emergency savings account can be set up and funded through payroll deductions. These accounts can be set up like any savings account and connected to a debit card. Funds are deducted from employees' paychecks like a retirement account, but employees can access funds whenever, without penalties. It just helps employees save that much more in case of an emergency.

STEP 2: OFFER RESOURCES

Organizations don't always have the financial means to provide benefits to support employees' physical, mental, and financial health. If that's the case, there are still ways to support your employees with other resources. Beyond tangible benefits, employers can provide access to employer or employee-led resources, such as:



Consider one or more of these options to provide your employees with access to health and wellness without a huge investment.

STEP 3: ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Many of the benefits above don't require a huge investment. But they may require some effort on you or your HR team's part to make sure employees are using them.



To make sure your employees are taking advantage of everything you have to offer, your management should be trained on how to exhibit healthy behaviors, identify potential mental illnesses, stress, or burnout, and communicate appropriately with employees on the topic of health and wellness.

Companies that regularly communicate about their health and wellness programs see more participation. But sometimes providing an incentive is what's necessary to get employees to engage. For example, you could cover more of your employees' healthcare premiums if they participate in at least one or two of the wellness programs or benefits you offer.

Taking the steps above creates a culture and environment built around health and wellness. And as the past couple of years have shown, employee health and wellness are critical to a successful business.

BUILD YOUR BENEFITS WITH OBSIDIAN HR

It takes a lot of time and effort to build a benefits program and administer it on an ongoing basis. Obsidian HR can help you build the right program and mix of benefits and handle many of the maintenance activities associated with benefits. Working with us, you also get access to richer, more quality benefits—particularly when it comes to healthcare plans. With the rising cost of premiums and limited plan options for small to medium-sized businesses, this can be a huge advantage.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Obsidian HR teams up with top healthcare providers, like Aetna and Kaiser Permanente, to curate and customize the right plans and benefits for your business. Obsidian HR identifies health plans you may be eligible for and assists with the underwriting process. Businesses that meet eligibility minimums of employer size and plan participants can get access to large group health plans—plans not typically available otherwise.

Obsidian HR provides you with access to the benefit choices and coverage your employees want at the value you need. And you can save time and focus on more aspects of your employees' health and wellness while Obsidian HR enrolls and manages your employees' healthcare and benefits.

[Assess Your Options Today!](#)





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