

Staying Healthy on the Job

8 tips to help keep you happy, healthy and productive in the office *By Tamer Abouras*

BETWEEN DIRTY DOORKNOBS, DUSTY keyboards and defective desk chairs, the average American's workplace can make it difficult to keep up with healthy habits.

Particularly during vulnerable periods, such as the winter months, you don't want to lose days stuck in bed sneezing, coughing or worse. But keeping yourself healthy starts long before your first sneeze; the healthy things you do when you're at your best can be the difference between catching the latest bug or not. Here are 8 tips to help you break the sedentary office habits and avoid using up all of your sick days.

1. Move: Walking is one of the easiest ways to keep your day a little healthier. Try walking or cycling to work — or at least park farther from your building's entrance and walk the rest of the way. If you work above ground level, take the stairs instead of the elevator. Don't forget to take a few short walks around the office throughout the day as a refresher.

2. Healthy Snacks: The workday is long enough that you're bound to get hungry at odd times between meals. Keep

handy snacks like nuts, fresh fruit and granola bars at your desk as opposed to candy, cookies or chips. These will help to satisfy your appetite and give you the energy to finish out the day.

3. BYOL: Bring your own lunch so you aren't tempted by less healthy offerings. Even something as simple as good old-fashioned peanut butter and jelly on whole wheat bread is better than the fast food around the corner.

4. Wash Your Hands: Large groups of people create the possibility for germs to be exchanged. In the workplace you're touching phones, computers, tables,

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desks, chairs, keyboards and many other things that may not be cleaned often, if at all. Keeping your hands as sterile as you can is one way of making sure you aren't transferring those toxins to yourself.

5. Keep Your Things Clean: No matter how vigilant you are with washing your hands, germ-carrying substances like dust and dirt can come into contact with desk items you inevitably have to use. Clean off your things once a day to help keep your space as germ-free as possible.

6. Do Not Share Phones, Desks or Other Office Tools: The fact of the matter is that there is no way of knowing whether or not your co-workers practice similar healthy habits. Although you wouldn't go through your day without washing your hands or keeping your own workspace clean and as germ-free as possible, you can't be sure about your office mates, so avoid using their phones, computers, desk space or any other tools from their cubicle.

7. Stop Touching Your Face: There are varying estimates as to just how often people do this, but one thing is clear: we touch our eyes, mouths, ears and noses an awful lot. The more you touch your face, the more likely you are to transfer germs. Your clean hands and clean workspace will not be able to account for every bit of contact you have with your face in a given day, so do your best to steer clear of this habit.

8. Get Vaccinated Against Seasonal Flu: The last thing you want to do is bring something as nasty as the flu to work with you; you'll feel dreadful and could easily spread it to others.

Keeping up with healthy habits can go a long way toward preventing illnesses and staying well at work.

Information for this handout was provided by the CDC and U.S. News & World Report.

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