

Scientific research on how a workplace gym will reduce absenteeism, stress, and staff turnover



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Scientific Research Document

A report published by the Health and Safety Executive showed that:

- The cost of work related injuries and illness to the UK economy is between £14.5 billion and £18.1 billion per year.
- More than 27,000 employees are forced to give up work because of injury or illness and 24.3 million working days are lost every year due to illness.
- There has been rise of 122% in reported illness in the workplace and 1.3 million people each year suffer work-related ill health.
- 4.2 million working days were lost due to musculo-skeletal disorder costing employers between £208 million and £221 million.
- 50% increase in the number of employees claiming that they are overworked.

a) Other Reports:

- Indicated that 183,000 people in England and Wales alone believed they were suffering from stress or depression, which has been caused or made worst by their work over the previous twelve months. And 57% of that number said that their stress or depression had been caused by their employment.
- Health and Safety Executive, in its publication “Stress at Work: a Guide for Employers,” stated that “in time, continuous repeated occupational stress can lead to physical illnesses and psychological disorders.”
- A report by the Health and Safety Executive says you are likely to suffer from lower back pain wherever you work.
- Stress at work is such a problem that it is now regulated under health and safety law. Being under pressure can improve performance but when demands and pressure are excessive they lead to stress – which causes physical and mental ill health.
- The cost to society and industry through illness is between £14-18 billion annually.



- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSRA) says 1.2 million people have muscular and skeletal disorder caused by work. The worst hit, are computer users and drivers, who tend to work for long spells in poor sitting positions. The accumulative pain can get so bad that sufferers can no longer work.
- The Institute of Personnel and Development state that the most important aspect of employee management is that employees are present and fit to work, they are not much use if they are not there.
- The Institute of Personnel and Development also states that apart from the cost of absenteeism, companies with healthier workers can save on insurance cost and on litigation payoffs from work-related illnesses.



A fitness gym will increase your staff productivity

NASA found that participants in an exercise control programme had improved stamina and work performance, and enhanced concentration and decision-making powers. When compared to the average office worker whose efficiency decreased 50% for the final two hours of the working day, the exercise adherents worked at full efficiency all day. This amounted to a 12.5% increase in productivity.

The Association for Fitness in Business 1991, Company Sponsored Employee Fitness Programme.

Job performance was strongly correlated to exercise adherence in a study of 3231 white-collar workers. Those who received the highest performance rating from supervisors were most likely to adhere to exercise programmes.

Bernacki, E. and Baun, W., Journal of Occupational Medicine, July 1984; 26(7): 529-531.

According to 80% of those surveyed about a company-sponsored health and fitness programme, exercised increased personal work productivity, relieved work-related tension, and improved co-worker relationships. Even non-participant responded positively, citing the programme as proof of the company's support for employees.

Rudman, Fitness in Business, August 1987; 2(1): 2-8.

Dallas Police noted a 39% increase in commendation after a fitness-lifestyle programme was introduced to officers.

Mealey, "New Fitness for Police and fire-fighters." The Physician and Sports Medicine, 1979; 7:96-97.

A nine-month analysis of decision-making capabilities, exerciser showed a distinct advantage – 70% greater performance over non-exercisers.

Brosmer, R. and Waldron, Health and High Performance, 1991.

Executives who work out regularly are actually better decision-makers. Dr. Gavriel Salvendy of Purdue University tested decision-making capabilities of 80 people over a nine-month period of time. At the end of the test period, the fitness levels of the exercisers had risen 22%, while the ability to make complex decisions had increased 70% over that of non-exercisers."

Robert, J. Brosmer, Deborah, L. Waldron, Health and High Performance, 1991.

Union Pacific Railroad found that 75% of their employees thought that regular exercise helped them achieve a higher level of concentration and relaxation at work. 80% believed that their exercise programme helped them be more productive at work.

Leutzinger, J. Blake, D. Health Values, September/October, 1991.



The Canadian Life Assurance Company reported that 47% of participants in a fitness programme were more alert, had better communications with co-workers and supervisors, and enjoyed work more than those who did not participate. 63% of participants indicated that they were more relaxed, more patient and less tired during workdays.

Thompson, D. Personnel, March, 1990.

In a study by Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising, 63% of employees enrolled in its fitness programme cited improved productivity and 75% said it boosted morale.

Johnson & Johnson, Good Health Good Business, second quarter, 1990.

Studies show that health promotion programmes reduce absenteeism and employee turnover while bolstering employee morale and commitment. Surveys have demonstrated that high quality, comprehensive health promotion programmes consistently rank as one of the benefits most appreciated by employees.

Barker, F. The Journal of Business Strategy, Fall, 1987.

Mental performance after exercise was significantly better in the physically fit than in the non-fit. Fit workers committed 27% fewer errors on tasks involving concentration and short-term memory as compared to unfit workers.”

Sjoberg, Hans. Ergonomics, 1983.



A fitness gym will decrease your staff turnover

The Canadian Life Assurance Company found turnover among fitness programme participants was 32.4% lower over a seven-year period compared with non-participants.

Leatt, P., et al, Canadian Journal of Public Health, January / February, 1988.

British Columbia Hydroelectric employees revealed a turnover rate of 3.5% for fitness programme participants, compared with a company average of 10.3%.

Cigna, Benefit of Employee Health Programmes, 1991.

Tenneco found that those who participated in its corporate fitness programme were 13% less likely to leave than other employees were.

Doherty, K., Business and Health, February, 1989.

Toronto Life Assurance found that employee's turnover during a ten-month period was substantially lower from programme participants than for non-participants – 1.5% versus 15%.

Shepherd, R., Economic Benefits of Enhanced Fitness, 1986.

Tenneco found over a ten-year period, it attracted a population of people more health-conscious than average and claimed that this gave it an advantage over its competitors.

Bernacki, E., Fortune, September 1989.

Fitness programmes may help attract and keep good people. This is a benefit many employees want.

Russell, L., Business and Health, February, 1989.

Many experts in the field of corporate fitness believe that the real benefits to a company that promotes employee health is recruiting a workforce of high achievers.

Brosmer, R. J., Waldron, D. L., Health and High Performance, 1991.

In fact, companies that have experience high turnover rates are now viewing these programmes as one way to keep employees more satisfied with their jobs. On the flip side, employees see the programmes as proof that the company values their services.

Barker, F., The Journal of Business Strategy, Fall, 1987.



A fitness gym will decrease your staff absenteeism

General Electric found that employees who exercised were absent from work 45% fewer days than employees who didn't.

Bailey, N. Business and Health, November, 1990.

Mesa Petroleum's absenteeism was over 50% lower than the national industry average as a result of its fitness programmes – 1.6 days per year compared with the national industry average of 3.4 days per year

Mesa Inc. Mesa Corporation Health and Fitness Programmes 1990.

Northern Gas Company employees who are in a corporate exercise programme have 80% fewer sick days than non-exercising employees.

Riverside Occupation Health Services, Health Promotion and Education Programme, 1991.

General Mills found that participants in its employee's fitness programme had a 19% reduction in absenteeism compared with 69% increase in non-participants.

American Journal of Health Promotion, February, 1989.

The Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company of Newark, New Jersey showed that workers who exercised miss 40% fewer work days than those who don't.

Waldrop, J., American Demographics, June, 1991.

Toronto, Canada Municipal employees missed work 3035 fewer days in the first six months of their "Metro Fit" fitness programme than employees not enrolled in the programme.

The Association for Fitness in Business, Company Sponsored Employee Fitness Programme, 1991.

DuPont showed that blue-collar employees in its corporate fitness programme used 14% fewer disability days than non-participants, resulting in a total of 11,726 fewer net disability days for the company. DuPont also reduced absenteeism by 47.5%.

Bertera, R., American Journal of Public Health, September 1990; 80(9): 1101-1105.

The Dallas, Texas, Police Department reported a 29% decrease in sick leave for its fitness programme participants, while non-participants' sick leave increased by 5%.

The Association for Fitness in Business, Company Sponsored Employee Fitness Programme, 1991.



Northern Telecom employees averaged 2 fewer absences a year and 1 fewer physician visit and their average hospital bill dropped by £445.50, all resulting from its corporate exercise programme.

Rosen, R., Healthy People, Healthy Companies, 1988.

Messa petroleum evaluated an exercise programme effect on absenteeism after two years found that in the first year £234 per employee was saved and £454.50 in the second year.

Gettman, L. R., Fitness in Business, August 1986; 1 (1): 11-17

Similarly a comprehensive "worksite health promotion programme" produced remarkable savings. The attendance improvement of 2546 participants resulted in a one-year savings of £224,367.

Blair, S., Smith, M., Collingwood, T. R., Reynolds, R., Prentice, M. C., and Sterling, C. L., Preventive Medicine, 1986; 15: 166-174

A study of several companies reported a correlation between fitness levels and absenteeism. Employees with "high" levels of cardiovascular fitness averaged 1.72 days absent per year, employees with "good" levels averaged 2.09 days, those with "fair" averaged 2.32 days and those with "poor" averaged 2.72.

Tucker, I., Aldana, S., Friedman, G., American Journal of Health Promotion, November/December 1990; 5(2): 140-145.

DuPoint reduced absenteeism by 47.5% over six years because of its corporate programme participation.

Edington, D.W., Health Behaviours, March, 1992.



A fitness gym will increase your Company's profit

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Indiana found that its corporate fitness programme had a 250% return on investment. Over a period of five years the return was £2.51 per £1 invested.

Pelletier, K., American Journal of Health Promotion, March/April 1991; 5(4): 311-315.

The Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company of Newark, New Jersey showed that workers who participated in their corporate fitness programme have average medical claims that are 70% lower than non-participants.

Waldrop, J., American Demographics, June, 1991.

The Coors Brewing Company saved £2.1 million over six years from lower health care cost as a result of starting a fitness programme.

American Journal of Health Promotion, September / October, 1989.

Control Data saved £2.7 million over seven years due to the reduced medical claims and absenteeism as a result of starting a fitness programme.

National Wellness Institute 19876, Health Promotion Evaluation: Measuring the Organisational Impact.

Tenneco found that the average annual medical claim was at least 50% lower for participants in its employee fitness programme versus non-participants. For women, £958 versus £2302 and for men £841 versus £1504.

Baun, W. Bernacki, E. Tsai, S., Journal of Occupational Medicine, 1986.

General Motors found that employees in their physical fitness programme has a 50% reduction in job grievances, 50% reduction in on the job accidents, and a 40% reduction in lost time.

Commercial Magazines, October, 1988.

Wellness programmes in general, and fitness programmes in particular may be the only employee benefit which pay money back. When more people come to work, you don't need to pay overtime or temporary help. When people stay at their jobs longer, training cost go down, lower health care claims cost you less if you're self insured and health care insurers as well as some companies are already beginning to create premium based on fitness levels.

Edington, D. W., University of Michigan, March, 1992.



The Coors Brewing Company found that in 1990 it's returned £6.15 for every pound spent on its corporate fitness programme. This was the sixth year of its fitness programme with annual returns ranging from £1.86 to £12.49

Wellness Councils of America, This Is Corporate Wellness and its Bottom-Line Impact, 1991.

Kennecott Copper Company showed that over four years, for every pound invested in its corporate fitness, the company returned £5.78.

American Institute of Preventive Medicine, The Cost Effectiveness of Corporate Wellness Programmes, 1991.

Equitable Life Assurance realised a return on investment of £5.52 per £1 in the first year of its corporate fitness programme.

Kaman, R., Fitness in Business, October 1987; 2(2): 39-44.

General Mills found in its first year of its "trihealthalon employees fitness programme" a return of £3.10 per £1 invested. Its second year return increased to £3.90 per £1.

Wood, E., Olmstead, G., Craig, J., American Journal of Health Promotion, November/December 1989; 4(2): 128-133.

Motorola returned £3.15 per £1 invested.

Fitness Systems, The Economic Impact of Employee Health and Fitness, 1990.

PepsiCo found its corporate fitness programme had a 300% return on investment, £3 per £1.

Fitness Systems, The Economic Impact of Employee Health and Fitness, 1990.

DuPoint over a six-year period had a return of £2.05 per £1.

Edington, D. W., Health Behaviours, 1992.

Prudent Life Insurance found in a five-year study, its returns to be £1.91 per £1 invested.

American Institute of Preventive Medicine, The Cost / Effectiveness of Corporate Wellness Programmes. 1991.

Johnson & Johnson averaged a 30% return on investment from its live for life employee fitness programme over a twelve year period, 1978- 1990. Both exercise and health education are components of the lifestyle improvement programme.

Breslow, L., Fielding, J., Herrman, A. D., and Wilbur, C., "Worksite Health Promotion: Its Evolution and the J& J Experience." Preventive Medicine, January 1990; 19 (1): 13-21.



Steelcase showed that medical claims cost were 46% lower for corporate fitness programme participants than non-participants over a six-year period, an average of £717.91 for participants Vs £1304.97 for non-participants.

Tze-ching Yen et al, American Journal of Health Promotion, September/October 1991; 46-54.

The Scoular Grain Company reduced health care cost by over £1.5 million in 1989, the first year of its fitness programme or £2250 for each of its 600 employees.

Wellness Councils of America 1991, This Is Corporate Wellness.

General Electric reduced health care cost for members of its fitness programme by 38% in an eighteen-month period, while non-member health care costs rose 21%. Cost for members averaged £1135 annually and cost for non-members were £1411.

Bailey, Business and Health Promotion, November 1989.

Mesa Petroleum found that as a result of instituting a corporate fitness programme health care cost per employee rose 4.8% compared to the national average of 10.5%. Health care cost per employee were £1681 in 1988 compared with the national average of £5340.

Mesa, Inc., Report on Mesa Corporate Health and fitness programme, 1990.

The City of Birmingham, Alabama reported that annual medical costs per employee decreased from £3145 to £3112 during a five years when an integrated programme for 40000 employees and their dependants was implemented. Funded with a matching grant from the National Institutes of Health, the programme also major reduction in all risk factors, occurrence of illness and reduction in mortality. Smoking from 53% to 31.8%, cholesterol (over 200mg) from 55.8% to 44.5%, blood pressure (over 150/90) from 11.4% to 9.6%.

Whitmer, W., Business and Health, March 1992; 60-66

Harvey, M., Whitmer, W., Hilyer, J., Brown, K., American Journal of Health Promotion, 1993; 7(4): 296-303.

Blue Shield of California indicated that a low cost, mail delivered health promotion programme for California's active and retired public employees saved £12 million in claim cost over a twelve month period for 54902 participants.

Fries, J., Harrington, H., Edwards, R., Kent, L., Richardson, N., American Journal of Health Promotion, in press.



Bank of America calculated that health promotion geared to retirees saved approximately £6447 per person per year. Even in highly disperse group, risk assessment and mailed materials decreased total direct and indirect costs 11%, compared to a 6.3% increase in non-participants.

Leigh, J., Fries, J., Inquiry, 1992; 29: 44-54.

Leigh, J., Richardson, N., Beck, R., et al, Archives of Internal Medicine, 1992; 152(6): 1201-1206.

Traveller's Insurance noted a marked effect of its worksite programme on participant's health status. In 1990 alone, savings were estimated to reach £1,620,000.

Golaszewski, T., Snow, D., Lynch, w. et al, Journal of Occupational Medicine, December 1991.

Mesa Petroleum reported the active programme participant's averaged only £259 per year for health care services compared with £585 for non-participants. Employee health care cost rose 4.8% compared with a national average of 105% during the study period.

Mesa, Inc., Report on Mesa Corporate Health and fitness programme, 1990.

Tenneco reported 50% lower annual health care claims for its employees who participated in their programme, £1344 lower for women and £633 lower for men.

Baun, W., Bernacki, E., Tsai, S., Journal of Occupational Medicine, January 1986; 28(1):18-22.

Adolph Coors' wellness centre, which opened in 1981, produced estimated health care cost savings of £2.1 million in six years.

Henritze, J., Brammell, H, McGloin, J., American Journal of Health Promotion, September/October 1989; 4(1): 25-31.

DuPoint found that in a three-year study it saved £2.4 million in the first year of its fitness programme. £2.25 million in its second year and £4.5 million the third year.

Bertera, R., American Journal of Public Health, September 1990; 80(9): 1101-1105.

