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Setting Up Your Office For "Health"

By Dr. Loretta Lanphier, ND, CCN, HHP

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If you work and are spending one third to one half of your day in an office setting then your surroundings there are as important as those in your home. Although we usually have little control over the buildings we work in, being aware of problems that can affect us will enable us to take counter-measures and may encourage the creation of stimulating and nurturing environments. Below are 10 steps that will help to provide an office that is balanced and conducive to good health and well-being, which will ultimately benefit your health and the health your company.

1) Ergonomically Correct Chair: Make sure that your chair is comfortable and has adjustable height and arms. When you are sitting straight with feet flat on the floor your arms should be at a 90-degree angle when typing on the computer. If you are having to strain or stretch to reach your computer then you are putting stress on the back and shoulder area. Chairs can certainly be expensive but in the long run it will cost much less than spending time at the chiropractor.

2) Green Plants: Plants do more than just enhance the beauty of your surroundings, many actually clean pollutants out of the air as they add oxygen and humidity to the indoor environment. New findings suggest, however, that they may add more than just color and interest. They also filter the air, and can fight against the common high-tech ill, sick building disease. Recent research undertaken by the NASA Space Administration in America has yielded some very interesting results. In a test lasting two years conducted by Dr. B.C. Wolverton at the Stennis Space Centre in Mississippi it was discovered that common houseplants are capable of converting chemical air pollutants into harmless substances. Ivy, one of the smallest of houseplants, does an excellent job of cleaning the air of toxins, especially benzene and TCE. The humble potted Chrysanthemum is another goodie. You can place a number of plants around your office or make up a high scoring clean-air cocktail by adding such plants as Peace Lilies and Parlour Palms. Better still are various forms of Dracaena, Dracaena Warnecki and Dracaena Janet Craig are real pollutant sucking types. Chinese Evergreen and the humble Philodendron are also two to watch out for.

Setting Up Your Office For "Health"

3) **Lighting:** Studies suggest that natural light increases human productivity and reduces fatigue and stress. By simply replacing your antiquated fluorescent tubes with full-spectrum tubes, you can instantly enhance your environment and your well-being! Full spectrum lighting emits a natural, balanced spectrum of light that is the closest you can get to sunlight indoors. Based on years of study not only do they bring out true, vibrant colors but they can also ease eye fatigue, improve your mood, reduce cortisol (stress hormone) levels, slow aging of the retina and reduce glare.

4) **Aromatherapy:** Aromatherapy is the practice of using volatile plant oils, including essential oils, for psychological and physical well-being. Not only does the aroma of the natural essential oil stimulate the brain to trigger a reaction, but the natural constituents (naturally occurring chemicals) of the essential oil are drawn into the lungs and can also supply physical benefit. Aromatherapy can help with a physical condition, can help with symptoms, can affect your mood, or help alleviate or temporarily eliminate stress or other psychological factors. Scenting your office with Lavender essential oil is said to reduce computer errors at least 25%. The following is a good blend to use in the office (must have

an aromatherapy diffuser): 2 drops of lemon, orange or bergamot; 2 drops of grapefruit; 1 drop ylang ylang, rose or neroli. Multiply your blend by 4 to obtain a total of 20 drops of your chosen blend. Add your oils to a dark colored glass bottle and mix well by rolling the bottle in between your hands. Add the appropriate number of drops from your created blend to your diffuser by following the manufacturer's instructions. There are also many "recipes" on the Internet to use during the cold and flu season when "office-air" can be extremely contagious.

5) **Air Quality:** The EPA informs us that 6 out of 10 buildings are "sick" and that indoor air quality is the United States' number one environmental health problem. A recent study by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture found that ionizing a room led to 52% less dust in the air, and 95% less bacteria in the air (since many of the pollutants found in the air reside on floating dust particles). The U.S.D.A. also performed another study to test the effectiveness of negative ionization at removing airborne Salmonella Enteritidis. The negative ions drastically reduced the airborne salmonella particles, prompting the following statement from the USDA. I recommend a negative ion air purifier for the office setting. These units are small enough to fit on a credenza or desk and are very modestly priced.

6) **EMF Protection:** Detrimental energies from electromagnetic fields emitted from high tension wires, industrial radar, microwave beams, electric current, computers, cell phones, televisions, fluorescent lights and other electrical appliances have been found to be dangerous to mental and physical health. When an individual sleeps or works for extensive periods within electromagnetic frequency zones, these energies create a constant source of stress (altering body polarity) which can lead to fatigue, frustration, tension and illness. Signs of exposure may include drowsiness, chronic aches and pains, sleep disorders, irritability, low energy and general malaise and may lead to more serious health situations such as cancer. These highly disruptive energy fields actually numb or dull our sense perceptions and adversely impacts brain wave activity. Studies have also shown electromagnetic fields (EMF) to induce mild depression in many subjects with the disruption of melatonin, dopamine, and serotonin levels. There are many devices that can be used in the office or put on the computer that will give EMF protection. I recommend the Safe Space II. It is designed to neutralize harmful electromagnetic fields, geopathic disturbances, as well as other detrimental vibrational energies in environments. It is a framed holographic grid (encased behind glass) 2" x 2" and can be attached to

Setting Up Your Office For "Health"

any surface...especially the computer monitor. The Safe Space II device clears a spherical area with a 9' radius. You can read more about it at www.ghchealth.com.

7) Colors: Color therapy has its roots in ancient Egypt. Scientific studies recognize that colors bring about emotional reactions to individuals. Our reactions and attitudes to colors differ from person to person. That color affects us all is an undoubted fact. Its significance has been investigated and the results utilized in merchandizing, selling, home decorating, the workplace environment, industry, plant growth, nutrition, physics, physiology, psychology, ecclesiasticism and art. In fact, color is so much a part of our lives that we tend to take it for granted. Colors that are useful in the office are: orange - stimulates creativity; yellow - intensifies the intellect and heightens motivation; red - energizes; blue - calming, fights physical and mental tension; green - fights irritability and has a healing effect on the body. For the office, use colors that you are drawn to as these are the colors that will benefit your health.

8) Music: Just about all offices have some type of music playing in the background. Music can affect emotional well-being, physical health, social functioning, communication abilities, and cognitive skills. Music in the workplace, either from piped-in music or from a radio, is sometimes used to mask sounds. Music can provide mental stimulation while performing monotonous tasks, which can help to reduce stress levels in the office. Some people, however, find music in the office intensely annoying,

especially if it is too loud or inappropriate. I have found that soft, up-lifting music is very essential to the office "atmosphere". There is literally a mirage of good background music available on CD's. Search out the Internet on what is right for your office.

9) Breaks: Even the most focused person needs a break at least twice a day. Change of scenery also helps with emotions. One of the best ways to eliminate stress and recharge the body is to go outside for a ten-minute walk. Focus on your surroundings and take deep breaths. This will give you a renewal of energy and will also aid in Vitamin D production. Walk by yourself and focus on clearing your mind. Walking will also get the blood and the lymphatic system flowing.

10) Organization: It is an excellent idea to look into Feng Shui for the office. Feng Shui is basically an environmental science and gives advice on how to create environments in which we feel comfortable and supported. For example, water energy plays a significant role in Feng Shui. Having a small fountain in your office can give a sense of calmness and peacefulness. Keep your office clean and organized. There is no excuse for clutter. Make sure that your desk is clean and that everything is put away before you leave each day. A well-organized, uncluttered desk leads to clear thinking and reduces stress. Make a habit of putting items back in their original place after you are finished using them.

Putting in the extra time, effort and money in getting your office environment "healthy" will pay-off with a multitude of health benefits. Of course, it is assumed that when you are out of the office, you are also taking care of yourself by eating a healthy diet, exercising the body and mind, taking good supplementation and getting adequate rest. All of this goes hand-in-hand in getting and keeping the body healthy. Remember to address your attitude as you travel the path to good health, as negative attitudes are self-destructive. Good health requires desire, determination and discipline in every aspect

Setting Up Your Office For "Health"

of your life.

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Setting Body Perfect Fitness Goals for the New Year

By Robert Adams

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Goal Setting 101

All of our lives, we have many things we want to accomplish, but somehow, someway, things just don't get done. That includes sticking with a lifestyle change that helps improve your overall fitness and health.

Each year the average American gains more and more weight, and yet there are more and more diet plans, weight loss schemes, exercise programs, and short cut methods that are supposed to support a Body Perfect solution.

Well I have a secret!!!

Life and success in your fitness and health goals, begins and ends with a between the ears process.

Yes, your MIND!!!

How you feel, what you think, what is going on between your ears, effects the net result of any lifestyle change, fitness program, or reaching any long term fitness or health goals.

So let's talk about Goal Setting and how important of an impact and focusing on establishing S.M.A.R.T Goals has on your future success in fitness and health.

So this is what defines S.M.A.R.T Goals.

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Robert Adams holds an Associates Degree in Culinary Arts from the Culinary Institute of America, is a Certified Coach in Coaching for Personal Development as well Interaction Management, is a member of NESTA– National Endurance Sports Trainers Association, and lives a healthy lifestyle through his Body Perfect Fitness philosophy of healthy eating and fitness focus.

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