



Finnish Institute of
Occupational Health

Exercise - Physically strenuous work

OFF WE GO! HEALTH AT WORKPLACES- LIST OF TIPS

Energy from exercise for those who do strenuous work

Good physical fitness is essential in physical strenuous work. It helps you recover from work and protects you from work strain. Different jobs require different muscle strength, aerobic capacity, balance, agility, and flexibility.

TIPS FOR WORKPLACES: Which of the following are already in use at your workplace? What next?

- Exercise, sitting less and healthy lifestyle habits are addressed in induction training and performance appraisals.
- At our workplace, we have washing facilities and changing rooms which make active commuting easier, for example.
- Our workplace culture is exercise-oriented. No one wonders if you occasionally get up and stretch. Our supervisor encourages us to take exercise breaks.
- At our workplace, we are encouraged to exercise, and physical activities are arranged to develop the muscle groups and functional capacity needed at work.
- We take into account the overall strain of and recovery from work in our work and leisure-time physical activity by, for example, using different muscles during leisure time than at work.
- We can sometimes sit down and rest or lie down at our workplace.
- Occupational health services help us check our ergonomics.
- Our workplace has exercise options for different needs, for example, exercise groups for weight-loss, for those who have lost their motivation to exercise, or special physical activities for those with neck problems.
- At our workplace we simultaneously carry out exercise and improve ergonomics by, for example, strengthening the torso muscles and improving lifting techniques.
- We exercise together. This also motivates 'couch potatoes'.
- We have exercise break reminders. The instructions are motivating. Exercises for the neck and back (in Finnish): selkakanava.fi/jumppaohjeita-selalle-ja-niskalle.
- My workplace has exercise equipment. In our break room we have things like wooden poles, elastic bands or kettlebells to use during exercise breaks.
- Our workplace takes part in exercise promotion theme days, open classes, and campaigns such as the 'Exercise day of your dreams' event. <https://www.unelmienliikuntapaiva.fi/en/>. We choose and plan events together.
- We take advantage of free materials that encourage exercise, such as the Work Life Health Party materials (available in Finnish). www.yksielama.fi/tule-terveystalkoisiin
- Our employer sponsors employees' leisure-time exercise.
- We have one refreshing food break during the work shift. We go for lunch to a place at a comfortable walking distance.

Exercise invigorates you and is also good for the mind. Healthy lifestyle habits support each other. You may have noticed the importance of exercise for a good night's sleep

Occupational health services can help you exercise more! You can get more information on what physical activity is suitable for you and advice on exercising from occupational health services, fitness advisors, or instructors at sports facilities.

EXERCISE HELPS YOU RECOVER FROM AND COPE AT WORK.

What do already you do? What next?

- I think about what kind of exercise would help me recover from work.
- I do restorative exercise such as leisurely walking, yoga or stretching.
- I exercise in natural environments. Exercising in natural environments has many positive effects on health. It is also a good way of relaxing and recovering.
- Doing different kinds of exercise keeps me motivated. I sometimes try out new forms of exercise!!
- I set myself exercise goals. Even small goals help me exercise more and my motivation grows as I achieve them.
- I monitor my exercise habits. Self-monitoring using, for example, a pedometer, activity wristband or diary makes it easier to see my fitness level and to set goals. I avoid long periods of staying still during leisure time.
- I recognize the benefits of exercise in terms of work ability and health. This makes obstacles such as poor weather seem much smaller.
- My spouse, friends and colleagues support me in my exercise activities.