

Sustainable Performance



How leaders can use wellness techniques to drive sustainable performance in themselves, their team and their organisation during the COVID-19 situation.



Focus on what you've got, not what you're denied

A central principle during the current situation is to focus on what you can control, and what you can be grateful for. While it is important to have daily routines and plans, it is also important to acknowledge that unproductive days happen and setbacks (professional or personal) are inevitable during such an unprecedented time.



Safeguard Sleep

When routines are disrupted, so can our sleep patterns. Sleep is crucial for mental agility and physical wellbeing and experts advise to set a scheduled time for sleep, reserve your bed for sleep-only, be careful with naps, get sunlight during the day and watch what you eat and drink.



Create new routines

Building a 'framework for the day' which creates new routines and rituals will help your mind relax. Setting yourself a set number of hours to work a day while building in breaks is important for establishing a 'new normal'. While there may be distractions and challenges to these new daily routines, having a daily framework in place allows the mind to concentrate and structure itself in relation to tasks.



Leave the 'office'

Stepping away from the desk to give your mind a rest throughout the working day is crucial and can help improve levels of focus and concentration. Without travel between home and work, it's also essential you leave 'the office' at least once during the day. Leaders should encourage their teams to set internal out-of-office messages to communicate when they are taking a break, thereby also encouraging the practice in others.



WELLNESS TIP

During the current situation, many fitness professionals are running daily classes for people of all levels for free online — try one that works for you.



Try and get some alone time

Being isolated with family or housemates 24 hours a day can be a stressful experience, particularly if you are also trying to build a new routine for children. If possible, try to take some time for yourself (and make time for your partner to do the same) each day to unwind — even the knowledge of an upcoming 'break' can significantly reduce stress.

YOU



COVID-19 brings unique considerations for leaders in the area of wellness:



Lead with facts, not fear

In times of uncertainty people gravitate towards both facts and rumour; it is up to the leaders to distinguish the two. Internal communications should be fact-checked and put in context by leadership. Appoint specific people in your organisation to keep abreast of the changing situation, and then have a defined structure to communicate that throughout the organisation.



Put time in the calendar to exercise

During one-to-ones, talk to team members specifically what type of exercise they would like to do, and what support they need to do it. Physical activities, such as getting outdoors for a walk, availing of an online exercise class or practicing yoga have a range of health benefits, and can help reduce stress, improve mood and assist with reducing anxiety levels.



Demonstrate your day

Leadership behaviours have a significant impact on the behaviours you will see throughout an organisation. By demonstrating that you are following your own advice and investing in your wellbeing, it will give people the safety to do the same. Share what you did for lunch that day or send a goodbye email at the end of the day to encourage people to switch off for the evening.



De-conflict early

New situations bring new challenges and new stresses. Some people within an organisation will settle into the new routine with ease, while others will find it overwhelming. This anxiety can lead to conflict quickly, and it requires skill from the leader to spot it early, de-escalate it early and provide solutions.



YOUR TEAM

YOUR ORGANISATION



Promote human connections

Loneliness is a very real outcome of the current situation. For some people, work is where they meet people, socialise and connect with others. That is no longer possible, so it's incumbent on leaders to create social outlets like informal virtual coffee-break sessions that can help fill this gap. In these times, people need more than ever, to switch off and take a break.



Communicate wellness techniques

During times such as the current crisis, we may need to create temporary stopgaps and routines to keep people in the organisation mentally engaged and happy. For example, for those cooking for the first time after years of takeaways, hold online cooking classes or run online quizzes and games on a Friday afternoon, leaving your people with a positive mindset going into the weekend.



Share challenges

While this is a unique situation, uniquely we are all experiencing very similar disruptions. Share your challenges and problems with people at home, or via digital means with people outside of your workplace, and you will not only provide comfort for people facing the same challenges, but also learn other tactics and techniques people are using successfully.



WELLNESS TIP

Have 'Wellness Champions' who will spread wellness techniques throughout the organisation, running online classes and sharing tips and tricks.



WELLNESS TIP

Schedule downtime in the calendar, such as a shared cup of tea on Friday before the weekend.

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