



Develop Effective Workspaces that Boost Employee Wellness

**A business leader's guide to promoting workforce productivity
and well-being**

ergotron®

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Program Development	4
Equipment Selection	10
Orders & Installation	15
Ergonomic Adjustments	17
Behavior Change	20
Conclusion	24
References	25



INTRODUCTION

Concerns over the negative health, productivity and safety impacts of a sedentary workstyle have grown in the last decade. During the same period, employer-sponsored wellness programs have gained in popularity, driving a growing number of organizations to seek the health benefits of sit-stand desks, monitor arms, mobile desks and more. The transition is happening at record rates, with more than half of employers purchasing height-adjustable workstations.¹ If your organization is investing in active furniture, make the most of it by following the essential steps outlined in this guide.

Whether employees are office-based, remote or a hybrid of both, smoothly transition a workforce to ergonomic furniture with fewer surprises and better results.



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



chapter 1

Program development is the first step because a program provides structure and the chance to articulate goals, policies and processes. Effectively implemented ergonomic furniture programs stand a better chance of achieving intended outcomes and producing positive results.²

Define Your Why

Start by defining your why, or purpose, for making height-adjustable furniture available to employees. Rather than focusing on reducing healthcare costs or the need to stay competitive with other employers, try to connect with a deeper mission of supporting employee comfort, health and well-being.

Every minute spent working has the potential to positively or negatively impact health. Changing the design of the home or office workspace to incorporate better comfort and more movement is logical and backed by research. In contrast with a traditional sedentary workstyle, using sit-stand workstations and monitor arms can positively impact musculoskeletal conditions, job performance, work engagement, occupational fatigue, sickness presenteeism, and benefit psychological outcomes such as daily anxiety and quality of life.³ Active furniture infuses the workday with energy and choice in a way that naturally enhances productivity and makes the best use of technology.

POST-COVID PROGRAMS

The coronavirus pandemic quickly and drastically changed how and where people work, adding another layer of complexity to health promotion programs. As remote and hybrid workforces become common, it underscores the importance of starting a program that encourages movement, and supports the comfort and health of all employees, especially those working from home for the first time.

How Do We Feel About Sitting?



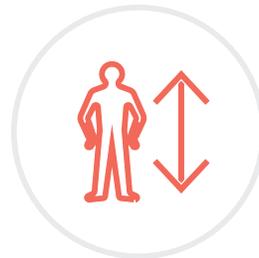
68%

must sit all day for
their job



61%

dislike sitting
all day



84%

prefer to be able to
sit and stand at will

Pain Prevalence Among Remote Workers



70%

had musculoskeletal
pain



41%

had low back pain



38%

had an increase
of low back pain
severity



50%

had worsened neck
pain when using
laptops without any
height-adjustable
support



86%

had a table that was
not adjustable in
height

Moretti A, Menna F, Aulicino M, Paoletta M, Liguori S, Iolascon G. Characterization of Home Working Population during COVID-19 Emergency: A Cross-Sectional Analysis. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2020 Aug 28;17(17):6284. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17176284. PMID: 32872321; PMCID: PMC7503869.

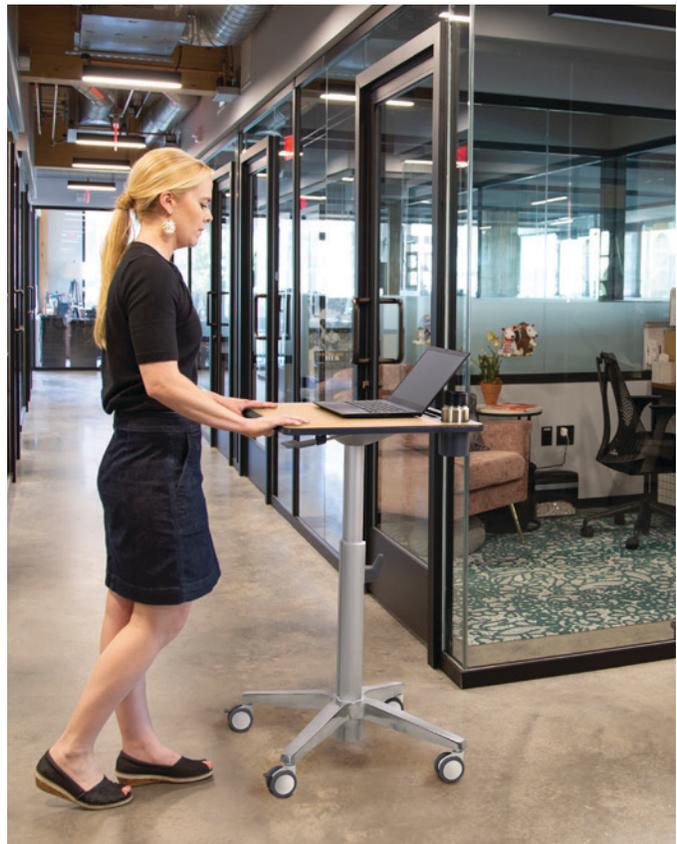
POST-COVID REMOTE WORK

Workplace injuries and musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) have long been a concern for employers. As remote work becomes common, it's necessary for employers to supply home office equipment that's comfortable, ergonomic, and encourages an active and safe workstyle.

The future of work is flexible, dynamic and collaborative, with spaces powered by technology and the fluid collaboration between people.

In addition to the health benefits, movement-friendly furniture improves the functional design of a space and empowers individuals and teams to do more by making collaboration easy and safer. Instead of anchoring technology in certain offices or at some workstations, organizations can fully leverage the increasingly interactive, mobile and dynamic nature of technology and work.

“When interior designers design now, we think about flexibility. We think about designing spaces that have built in adaptability to the future. By designing spaces that encourage movement and interaction, we create a more vibrant space that nurtures people, makes them feel welcome, comfortable, secure, happy and healthy.” – Dr. Ellen Fisher, VP for Academic Affairs and Dean, New York School of Interior Design



POST-COVID OFFICE WORK

More necessary than ever in our post-pandemic workplaces, mobile furniture allows for collaboration and isolation while improving productivity, safety and comfort. Personal items stay with individuals at their own workspaces, helping reduce the spread of germs in conference rooms and shared work areas.





ELEMENTS OF A WORKSPACE WELLNESS PROGRAM

Step 1: Set goals with measurable outcomes

Create a statement that articulates your vision. Use your vision statement to develop clear and measurable program goals.

Example

Vision statement: To provide employees with home or office workspaces that prioritize movement and comfort.

Goal: Provide all employees with the option to adopt a height-adjustable desk within the next 12 months.

Goal: Reduce physical inactivity during the workday by 15 percent, which means replacing approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes throughout the day with standing.

Goal: Reduce the frequency and severity of employee-reported muscle pain and strain.

Even small amounts of standing, stretching and walking during the day are associated with positive outcomes. Contrary to programs that focus on adding moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, a workspace wellness program aims to reduce sedentary time. Establish goals that support your vision statement and realistically define success.

Step 2: Create policies that support movement

Organizational permission to move more is a primary enabler to sitting less at work.⁴ Implement written policies that support a variety of movement opportunities during the workday. In addition to offering employees access to ergonomic, height-adjustable furniture, institute active meetings and normalize movement breaks during long meetings.

Consider the work environment of all your employees, on-site and remote, ensuring that policies give employees an equal opportunity to sit less and move more.

3

Step 3: Recruit and empower key players

Work with various groups within the organization, like wellness, IT, facilities and leadership, and discuss how each group or individual can support successful program execution.

Examples of key players and roles:

HR: Program creation and leadership buy-in

Wellness: Ergonomic product selection and ongoing training and support

IT: Placing orders for equipment and accessories

Facilities: Managing storage and installation

Managers and leaders: Encouraging participation and modeling active workday behaviors

4

Step 4: Communicate

Have an official kickoff to announce the program and get employees excited. Share the goals and how each goal will be measured. Provide participation instructions and additional educational opportunities.

5

This is also a chance to recognize the key groups and individuals from step 3 who are involved in making the program a success. Save time for questions and dialog. Create a new participant packet with the same information for future employee onboarding.

Step 5: Evaluate the results

Setting goals will determine what gets measured and help evaluate the success of the program.. Building off the example goals in step 1, measure how many employees were invited to participate in the program and how many accepted. Use surveys to track changes in sitting/standing and the reduction in muscle pain and strain.

In some cases, it's beneficial to collect baseline data in advance and highlight before and after differences. Consider collecting benchmark data before the program begins, then again after three months, six months and/or one year. Keep in mind that with a widespread transition to ergonomic furniture, researchers and furniture providers may be able to help you collect data to measure the impact.

EQUIPMENT SELECTION**chapter 2**

Equipment selection is one of the most critical steps when transitioning to height-adjustable furniture. The primary focus is to ensure the safety, comfort and ergonomics of users, whether in the office or at home. Dependability for program leaders is also important, which means choosing professional-grade products that are compatible in a variety of applications and durable for long-term use.

PRODUCT EVALUATION**Safety**

To evaluate the safety of a height-adjustable product, check for the absence of pinch points and stability hazards. Look for two-handed lift mechanisms that keep both hands in a safe place throughout the product's full range of motion. A worksurface loaded with equipment can pose a potential tip hazard when raised and lowered. Select products that move straight up and down and are steady and stable throughout the entire range of motion, even when loaded to their maximum weight capacity. In addition, choose solutions with secure and independently adjustable monitor mounts.

Adjustability

Products should be evaluated on their ability to easily adjust and accommodate the ergonomic needs of a wide range of users. Products with a greater amount of adjustability will work for a wider range of users and reduce the need for specialty accessories and solutions. This is especially important in shared workspaces when accommodating hybrid teams.



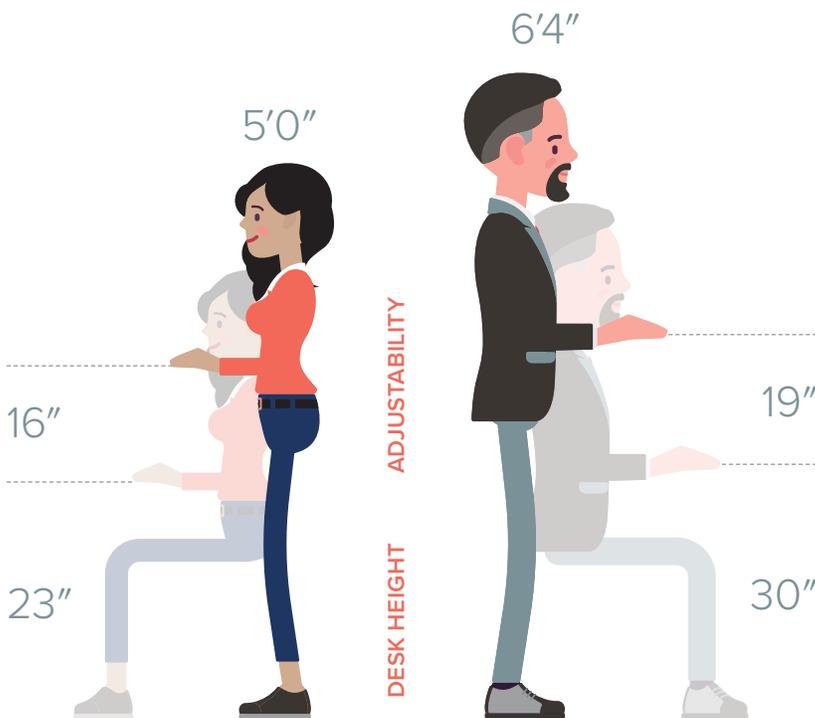
Monitor arms, drop-down keyboard trays and tall user kits add another level of ergonomic adjustability. Monitor arms help keep monitors at the right height and distance for each user. Choose products already equipped or easily customized with these features.

Another consideration is user force, or the amount of energy required to adjust a workstation from one position to another. Too much force is a barrier to switching between positions, which interferes with the program goals and has the potential to cause muscle strain or injury. Look for technology that counterbalances the weight of the desk and monitors, allowing for easy and instantaneous height adjustment.

ERGONOMICS MATTERS

Proper ergonomics reduces the risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders by allowing people to work in a way that naturally aligns the body, reducing stress and strain on the muscles, tendons and skeletal system.

The absence of ergonomics forces users out of alignment and into potentially harmful positions. Use chapter 4 as a guide for achieving neutral postures.



Ergonomics differs between individuals.

The key is to find equipment that adjusts to the needs of each user. When selecting a height-adjustable product, pay attention to the desk height and sit-stand range. An employee who is 5'0" needs a lower keyboard than someone who is 6'4". If desk surfaces are 30" from the floor, a shorter user will likely need a drop-down keyboard tray can help to achieve proper ergonomics when sitting.

DURABILITY MATTERS

In a professional environment, an annual failure rate of 5 percent in a 1,000 desk office can result in replacing 50 units every year, which is costly and disruptive. Products with safety certifications, cycle testing and high-quality construction minimize downtime.



Durability

Standing desk users commonly adjust their workstations several times a day or hour, creating hundreds of cycles in a month. Verify that manufacturers have cycle tested their products 10,000–15,000 times under fully loaded conditions to mimic real-world usage patterns. In addition, look for robust solutions that use professional-grade materials and offer a competitive warranty. Buying products from reputable manufacturers may cost more upfront, but will save time, money and headaches down the road.

EASY AT-HOME COMPATIBILITY

Mobile desks are a great option for remote workers. A mobile desk can be easily moved and repositioned throughout the home to promote workday productivity and well-being.



Compatibility

Compatibility refers to the space and equipment used in each set-up. Just as ergonomics fits the user, compatibility fits the gear. Start by determining what style of height-adjustable product is necessary, then check that it will accommodate the number and weight of monitors. Standing desk options that work with an existing desk are called desk converters and freestanding desks are referred to as full desks or mobile desks.



For desk converters, compatibility is based on the size and weight capacity of the desk. In some cases, the thickness and construction of the desk determine whether a front-mount, back-mount or surface-mount is most compatible. Desk converters support accessories like adjustable monitor arms and drop-down keyboard trays to match the ergonomics of a full desk.

Opting for mobile desks offers greater flexibility. These solutions work great in home offices, open areas and conference rooms, giving users the flexibility to move, collaborate and work independently.



THE EQUIPMENT SELECTION PROCESS

Step 1: Do your research

1

Identify products that meet the above criteria for safety, ergonomics and durability. This is a good time to consult with an ergonomics expert or manufacturers' representative. Before ordering samples, verify that the products you selected are compatible with your space and technology.

Step 2: Order products for in-house review

2

Test multiple products before standardizing your offering. Place an order for each unit that appears to meet your criteria. The initial investment will allow you to evaluate each product against its claims, potentially saving you time and money in the long run.

Step 3: Test with a real use case

3

Install each product. Mount monitors, run cables and add accessories. Use the product for a full day, making sure it functions as intended when sitting, standing and switching positions. Verify that user force is low and equipment is stable.

Pro Tip: During the set-ups and installation, make a list of any tools or accessories used. Later, use the list to create an installation kit to ensure that the product rollout is quick and easy.

Step 4: Standardize on the best products

4

Standardizing on a few products will simplify the selection process for users and guarantee that the products they select have been vetted for comfort, safety and compatibility. Include the models and accessories that will accommodate various technical set-ups, like single and dual monitors, and various use cases.

Step 5: Create a showroom

5

A showroom gives employees the opportunity to test products during the selection process, guaranteeing that the product they choose will be a good fit before order and installation occur. For remote workers, create a digital showroom with videos and educational information that describes the features and benefits of each product, or offer one-on-one video consultations.

ORDERS & INSTALLATION



chapter 3

Once your program is in place and products have been selected, create a plan for ordering and installation.

Some height-adjustable desks come in large boxes, especially when products are fully assembled. Before placing an order, talk to your shipping and receiving group. Products might arrive individually or on a pallet, so it's a good idea to have dollies or forklifts available to transfer them. The quantity of each order might depend on the availability of space to receive and store products. Don't assume that you can stack boxes along a wall or under a desk.

Work with your facilities team to dedicate safe storage space in advance with plenty of room to group and label products. If products arrive in protective brown boxes, add large labels with names and pictures so future identification is quick and easy. Ask the manufacturer or reseller about drop-ship options to send individual products directly to remote workers.

Installation

Installation requirements will vary from product to product, but often include mounting monitors, routing monitor cables, and adjusting the user force. Desk converters often require a two-person lift to remove from packaging and place on the surface of a desk. Identify team members that can safely help with the process. If your organization lacks internal resources to fill this role, consider purchasing a service program from a furniture manufacturer.

MANAGING ORDERS AND INSTALLATION



1

Step 1: Order the desks and accessories

Place an order for the necessary sit-stand desks, monitor arms and related equipment, like wireless keyboard trays and mice. Ordering products in bulk might qualify for volume discounts and economical shipping.



2

Step 2: Work jointly with managers and installers

When preparing for product installation, consult with leaders in every department to choose an installation schedule that will minimize disruption. Some organizations prefer to install products on weekends or after-hours, while others allocate several hours during the workday.



3

Step 3: Prepare for the installation

Place a label at each workstation identifying the products and accessories that will be installed or removed, and the date and time of the planned installation. In preparation for the installation, ask employees to shut down computers, clear desks and floors, and pack up items from any overhead shelves or cubbies being removed.



4

Step 4: Install and make fine-tune adjustments

Install each product per the instruction manual and adjust the tension (user force) when necessary. Make sure that the transition between lifting and lowering is smooth and effortless and that any mounted monitor arms easily lift, lower, tilt and pan.



5

Step 5: Clean up and initiate training

Remove and recycle product packaging and old office equipment. Leave a handout on each desk with instructions for getting started, which should include ergonomic tips and recommendations for starting a workspace movement routine.

ERGONOMIC ADJUSTMENTS

chapter 4

For many individuals, making ergonomic adjustments is a straightforward process. Using the fundamentals of good posture as a guide, adjustments can be made by the employee or a peer. For individuals who would like more assistance, a certified ergonomist can conduct individual assessments, live or virtual.

UNDERSTANDING ERGONOMICS

Three Key Principles

Ergonomics focuses on three key principles: neutral posture, voluntary motion and rest. A neutral posture minimizes stress to the body, leverages core strength, and optimizes breathing and circulation. Making voluntary (rather than repetitive) motions reduces pain and discomfort and increases energy and focus. Resting for brief and regular intervals allows the eyes, wrists and engaged areas of the body to relax.



What is Neutral Posture

Neutral body positioning is a comfortable working posture in which your joints are naturally aligned.

Hands, wrists, and forearms are straight, in-line and roughly parallel to the floor.

Head is level, forward-facing, and balanced. Generally, it is in-line with the torso.

Shoulders are relaxed and upper arms hang normally at the side of the body.

Elbows stay close to the body and are bent between 90 and 120 degrees. Feet are fully supported by the floor or a footrest may be used if the desk height is not adjustable.

The back is fully supported with appropriate lumbar support when sitting vertical or leaning back slightly.

Thighs and hips are supported and parallel to the floor.

Knees are about the same height as the hips with the feet slightly forward.



THE DIFFERENCE IS VISIBLE

Poor workstation design forces individuals out of neutral postures, inviting muscle fatigue and strain. A monitor that's too low might cause head tilt; a keyboard that's too high might cause shoulder lift and wrist flexing. Watch out for visible signs of poor posture and make adjustments to correct them.



MAKING ERGONOMIC ADJUSTMENTS

Step 1: Adjust the chair

Raise or lower the chair so feet are flat on the floor and hips are level or slightly higher than the knees.

Step 2: Check the keyboard height

The keyboard should be about level with the individual's elbows or slightly lower. Hands should be level with wrists and forearms, without flexing or bending. If necessary, raise the chair (with the addition of a footrest) or install a drop-down keyboard tray. If wrists are lower than elbows, consider using a keyboard with back-tilt.

Step 3: Adjust the monitors

Computer monitors should be roughly an arms-length away from the face, and a person's gaze should naturally fall near the center of the screen. Lift or lower monitors to achieve a neutral head position, where the head is level, forward-facing and balanced over the torso. Center the primary monitor in a two-monitor set-up.

Step 4: Make standing comfortable

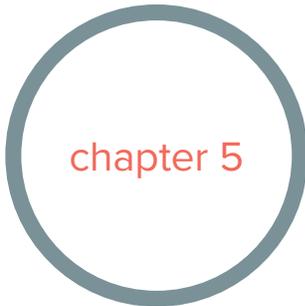
Wear comfortable and supportive shoes when standing. It's also a good idea to use an anti-fatigue standing mat. Double-check that the keyboard and monitors are in an ergonomic position when raised to a standing height and adjust if necessary.

Step 5: Add regular movement

Regular movement prevents the accumulation of stress or strain. Frequently change positions and adjust equipment to return to a neutral posture. Employees should follow the Sit-Stand Switch™ and alternate between sitting and standing every 30 minutes. They should also incorporate several minutes of light stretching every hour.

For more tips and a workspace planner tool, visit [Ergotron.com/ergonomics](https://www.ergotron.com/ergonomics).

BEHAVIOR CHANGE



The habit of sitting has been reinforced for years, so successfully using active furniture requires education, ample practice and strong organizational support.

Getting Started

Employees accustomed to a traditional way of working might be resistant to change. Reassure employees that the program is designed with their comfort and health in mind, and that participation is optional. Reinforce that sit-stand solutions don't replace seated work; rather, the furniture provides an opportunity to introduce more movement into an otherwise sedentary workstyle.

Provide training to address five common themes that motivate individuals to acquire a standing desk: pain management, health, the opportunity for movement, workspace flexibility, and productivity.⁵ Ask managers to support behavior change by making employees aware of the program and how to participate, designating time for training and questions, and by modeling an active workstyle.

“The key to successful long-term health behavior change is to build your newly formed health skills into habits you practice every single week, and in most cases, every single day.” – Michael O'Donnell, author of *Health Promotion in the Workplace*.

CREATING A NEW NORM

One of the biggest barriers to moving more while working is a cultural bias towards sitting. Our environments have long reflected and reinforced this preference, turning sitting into an unconscious habit. Successfully adopting height-adjustable furniture changes the built environment into a place that offers freedom of movement and choice. Still, furniture must be combined with strategies to change cultural norms and behavior.

“

THE EXPERIENCE AND SUCCESS STORIES
OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS CAN HELP EMPLOYEES
DEVELOP THEIR OWN INTRINSIC
MOTIVATORS TO CHANGE.

“I noticed increased energy and much less back pain/stiffness.”

**“I used to have knee pain ...
Now I can stand, and the knee pain has disappeared.”**

**“I feel stronger in my core, back and legs. I also believe that
my posture and back alignment have improved.”**

“I’m more awake and alert.”

“It’s easier to transition between job tasks.”

“I just plain feel better.”

Workplace Movement Assessment

”

Encourage leaders and managers to take an active role in changing workplace culture by normalizing new policies and behaviors. They have the power to create a company culture of movement where employees feel comfortable participating. What leaders say (and don't say) and how they model behavior sets the tone for success or failure. Leadership drives change.



The Sit-Stand Switch™

When using a sit-stand desk for the first time, standing should only account for a small portion of the day. Start by incorporating just a few minutes every hour. Gradually, as strength and comfort improve, standing can be increased to 30 minutes every hour, eventually reducing daily sitting time by half.

Ongoing Support

As the program progresses, use regular communications and actions to reinforce behavior change. Provide educational reminders on how to achieve the health-promoting benefits of an ergonomic, active workstyle. Be clear about expectations, underscoring the importance of breaking up long periods of sedentary work, not the elimination of sitting.

Send short emails with key messages and quick takeaways. Get creative with tips and recommendations, and share success stories from other participants. Communicate regularly and don't be afraid to repeat yourself. The repetition of core content, delivered in fresh ways, is key to decreasing training fatigue, increasing retention, and affecting lasting behavior change.⁶

Tips for Moving More:

Leave your workstation in the standing position at the end of the day.

Set a calendar reminder or desk timer that prompts you to move.

Start each meeting with one minute of standing stretches.

Add mobile standing desks to conference rooms.

Establish a fun company-inspired code word that triggers people to change postures.

Solicit new active workday ideas from leaders, managers and employees.

SUPPORTING BEHAVIOR CHANGE

**1**

Step 1: Educate and motivate

Teach employees about the many benefits of an ergonomic and active workstyle. Help employees overcome any negative assumptions and connect with meaningful, intrinsic reasons for participating in the program. Ask managers and leaders for ongoing support, communicating their commitment to an active workstyle and proactively fostering an active company culture.

**2**

Step 2: Grant autonomy and choice

Allow employees to voluntarily opt-in to the program when ready. Help them choose a height-adjustable solution that is appropriate for their ergonomic needs and workflow, from the products approved for safety, ergonomics, durability and compatibility.

**3**

Step 3: Start small

Encourage sit-stand desk users to make the transition slowly, initially standing up just a few minutes every hour. Setting small and easily achievable goals builds confidence that sustains behavior change. It also allows time for the body to comfortably adjust to an active workstyle.

**4**

Step 4: Encourage movement beyond the desk

Creating a culture where movement is normal makes habit formation easier. Start looking for additional ways to promote movement throughout the day, for example, by hosting in-person or virtual walking meetings. Reinforce culture change through a variety of communications and actions.

**5**

Step 5: Celebrate progress

Encourage continued participation and culture change by celebrating progress and major benchmarks, like effectively implementing standing meetings and changing corporate policies about work attire. Celebrate the achievement of program goals and congratulate employees for their contributions.

CONCLUSION

Launching a workspace wellness program at your company is a great way to improve employee comfort and ergonomics, and create an active workstyle that supports movement. Dedicating valuable time and resources to the initiative sends a powerful message to employees that you value their health and well-being. Prioritizing employee health and safety is a great way to build long-term trust while investing in the broader employee experience. Following the steps in this guide will ensure you develop and implement a workspace wellness program based on best practices and Ergotron's vast experience helping other organizations.

Congratulations on taking the first step towards championing a movement culture. For additional tools and resources, contact Ergotron's customer-obsessed support team.

Call 800-888-8458 or 651-681-7600

E-mail customerservice@ergotron.com



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Adopting a culture of movement is easier with the right tools. Ergotron's professional-grade solutions are designed to create workspaces that offer freedom of movement, choice and autonomy—the building blocks of a dynamic organization that's actively moving forward. Ready to make your move?

USING HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN PRINCIPLES
AND THE TECHNOLOGY OF MOVEMENT™,
WE BUILD ENVIRONMENTS
THAT HELP PEOPLE THRIVE.

MOVING YOU FORWARD



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