

# Workplace FITNESS Challenge



Mark O'Reilly, FitVision

## Setting Specific Targets and Building Habits

One aspect of health we tend to neglect is our mindset. One of the main reasons why health and fitness gets pushed down the agenda following that health kick start in January, is because people neglect to create their own personal plan. Here are some top tips on how to stay mentally motivated.

### 1. What's your 'Why'?

Your 'Why' is your driver, your motivation. "I want to be fitter and healthier" is not enough, it needs to be driven by a specific goal. For example if you got an initial MET score for the 'Good' category of fitness you should set up a goal to move your MET into the 'Excellent' category. The Move Your MET app will assist you with recommendations of goals based on your specific MET scores.

### 2. Build your Exercise Circle

Build an effective 'wall of influence'. For example have a circle around you to support you in achieving your goals. Your chances of sticking with your fitness routine are even greater with positive pressure which can only help you to move forward and maintain new habits. Your 'wall of influence' could be a colleague, a friend or your family.

### 3. Maintain a Glass Half Full Attitude

Positivity is infectious. Surrounding yourself with positive people triggers a similar emotional state which translates to your physical health. Research shows that this can create a positive outlook and decrease stress levels.

### 4. Building Habits

The key to maintaining habits and motivation is to challenge yourself constantly; the memories of achieving things you felt you never could before can push you through the hardest times, if you have never run before aim to run 1.5 miles by the end of the Workplace Fitness Challenge. If 20 minutes of walking is not a daily activity for you aim to have this healthy habit cemented by the end of the 6 weeks. The sooner you start conquering these small challenges the sooner your mind becomes accustomed to achievement and the correlation between achievement and hard work becomes a habit. Finally remember that improving your Met Score by 1 can reduce your risk of a cardiac incident by 15% so all of us should have this as a target over the next 6 weeks.

### 5. Rest and Recharge

One of the most important yet overlooked, aspects of any exercise, training and work life is the recovery phase, or time spent resting. It is often thought that rest time is a period of doing no work. While you are not actually doing any physical work, physiologically your body is seizing the opportunity to repair itself to become stronger in preparation for the next exercise stress placed upon it. It is during rest that the body becomes stronger. Rest is not just physical rest we also need mental rest to ensure we avoid mental fatigue along with physical fatigue.

#### • The Exercise Side

While you exercise, your muscles work to meet the demands you place on them. During that work, muscles deplete their stores of energy and start to become fatigued. Recovery begins once you are finished exercising. Muscle energy stores get replenished, and the body begins the process of rebuilding and repairing those muscles. Time is necessary for this repair process as the body rebuilds the muscle stronger. This is how strength training, or any type of exercise training, works. Rest is essential to implement these improvements.



#### • The Mental Side

Just as the muscles need time to recover, so does the mind, particularly for those of you who are working in a high stress environment. In order to stay mentally charged we need to take the same approach to mental recovery as we do to physical. Taking time out each day to read and even meditate are ways in which we can relax the mind and recharge. Try downloading 'Headspace' the app which guides you through meditation and start with the 10 minute beginner exercise.

