

Step 3. Needs assessment

Healthy Places Survey

The Healthy Places Survey helps you assess your workplace environment. It helps you identify the resources and facilities available as well as the changes you can make to support wellness in the workplace.

This survey takes about 15 minutes to complete.

The Healthy Places Survey asks questions about:

- › existing activities or programs
- › the physical, policy and cultural environments
- › communication and promotion.

Questions are grouped around health topics:

- › physical activity
- › healthy eating
- › social and emotional wellness
- › reducing alcohol consumption
- › quitting smoking.

How to complete the survey:

- › Complete one survey for the entire workplace. If your workplace is large or has several locations, you can complete one survey per business unit or worksite.
- › For each question, select the response that best describes your workplace currently, either 'yes' or 'no'.
- › There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers as all workplaces are different.
- › Use the 'Planning notes' column to jot down your thoughts and ideas.
- › You may wish to tally your responses for your own records.

Use the survey results to encourage discussion and guide the planning of your workplace wellness program. For the most effective outcome, combine the results with the outcomes from an employee needs assessment.

Completing the survey annually is a useful way to evaluate your workplace wellness program. This creates a cycle of continuous improvement.

Adequate physical activity requires accumulating 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week and being active on most, preferably all, days of the week.¹ Sedentary behaviour is defined as sitting for 7 or more hours each day. Being sedentary leads to increased health risks. This applies even if the recommended amount of physical activity is achieved.²

Healthy Places				
Physical environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	have gym or recreational facilities on site or an agreement with local gyms or clubs (such as subsidised memberships or discounts)			
2	have showers and/or change room facilities			
3	have lockable storage areas for employees in safe and convenient locations			
4	have indoor facilities that employees can use for physical activity, such as room for yoga classes or table tennis			
5	have outdoor facilities employees can use for physical activity such as parks, walking areas or a basketball hoop			
6	have clean, attractive and safe stairwells available for employee use at any time			
7	have standing work stations?			
Policy environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	have a written policy or procedure that supports employees to be active, e.g. flexible work options?			
Cultural environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	support walking meetings			
2	encourage employees to move more at work (e.g. walking to a colleague's desk to speak rather than phoning or emailing)			
3	encourage active transport options (i.e. walking, cycling or public transport) for employees travelling to and from work?			

Healthy People

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	provide onsite physical activity classes such as yoga or walking groups			
2	run initiatives to encourage physical activity, e.g. 10,000 Steps Workplace Challenge < www.10000steps.org.au >, corporate teams or Ride2work Day < https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/general/programs/3025/ >			
3	provide public transport, walking and cycle path information and maps			
4	have regular information sessions about getting active?			

Communication and promotion

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	provide information and promotional materials about physical activity, such as benefits, tips or email reminders to stand and stretch			
2	provide prompts near stairwells or lifts to promote stair use (e.g. posters, signage or footprint stickers)?			

Total physical activity tally (optional)

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Healthy eating is about eating a variety of foods, including fruit and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and reduced fat dairy products. It's also about limiting the amount of foods we consume with saturated fat and added salt and sugars.

Healthy Places

Physical environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	provide access to healthy food options or snacks, including foods that are low in saturated fat, added salt and added sugar (consider canteens, visiting food vans, vending machines and local shops)			
2	have vending machines that include healthy options			
3	provide access to drinking water			
4	make kitchen equipment available for food preparation and storage, such as a fridge, tables, cutlery and a microwave			
5	provide employee dining areas or break rooms?			
Policy environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	have a healthy food and drink options policy for canteens and/or visiting food vans			
2	have a healthy catering policy that requires healthy food options at meetings, events and other functions			
3	have a healthy vending machine policy?			
Cultural environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	encourage employees to prepare fresh, healthy food during breaks			
2	encourage healthy food choices at morning teas or employee celebrations?			

Healthy People

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	hold regular information sessions about healthy eating, such as cooking demonstrations or workshops			
2	run initiatives to encourage healthy eating, like an employee healthy recipe book, a healthy eating challenge or a healthy lunch club			
3	host support programs for weight management?			

Communication and promotion

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	provide information and promotional materials about healthy eating			
2	provide prompts for healthy food choices, such as messages near canteens, vending machines and break rooms?			

Total healthy eating tally (optional)

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Social and emotional wellness is important for functioning at our best. It includes being able to realise your abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and contribute to your community.

Healthy Places

Physical environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	provide a space for employees to socialise			
2	provide a space for employees to access privacy and quiet when required?			
Policy environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	have a written policy or procedure to address social and emotional wellness (e.g. flexible work options, family friendly workplace, work-life balance or return to work)			
2	have a written policy on creating a culture of respect/eliminating bullying behaviours?			
Cultural environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	organise social functions for employees and their families to help build social networks			
2	provide managerial training on supporting social and emotional wellness (covering topics such as leadership, trust, respect or workload management)			
3	have a recognition scheme to award employee achievements			
4	encourage employees to have a say in the way they and the organisation work (e.g. self-managed work teams, participative decision making or employee feedback)?			

Healthy People

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	hold regular information sessions about social and emotional wellness, such as managing stress or resolving conflict			
2	run initiatives to support employee social and emotional wellness (e.g. relaxation classes, support groups or a work-life balance program)			
3	provide access to an employee assistance program?			

Communication and promotion

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	provide information and promotional materials about social and emotional wellness			
2	promote telephone support services throughout the workplace, such as beyondblue or Lifeline?			

Total social and emotional wellbeing tally (optional)

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Drinking alcohol at risky levels over a lifetime can result in cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancers. Risky drinking on a single occasion is harmful for your health and can lead to road traffic injuries, violence, falls and drowning.²

Healthy Places

Physical environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	encourage low-risk alcohol consumption at work events? For example, you may provide low-alcohol drinks, non-alcoholic drink options, healthy food, safe transport options and refuse service to intoxicated people.			
Policy environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	have a written policy or procedure that addresses alcohol in the workplace and at work related events?			
Cultural environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	provide an alternative to drinks after work, such as sports competitions or attending local cultural events?			

Healthy People

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	hold regular information sessions about harmful alcohol consumption, such as risks, tips or low-risk alcohol guidelines			
2	provide access to an assistance program for employees with alcohol-related problems?			

Communication and promotion

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	provide information and promotional materials about low-risk alcohol consumption			
2	display low-risk alcohol guidelines at work related events			
3	promote support services available for alcohol-related problems, such as the Alcohol and Drug Information Service, Lifeline or local GPs?			

Total alcohol tally (optional)

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Smoking causes 3,700 deaths each year in Queensland.² Quitting at any age is beneficial. Quitting smoking increases life expectancy and improves quality-of-life.

Healthy Places				
Physical environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	restrict tobacco smoking in the workplace, including in work vehicles			
2	display 'No Smoking' signs where appropriate?			
Policy environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	have a written policy or procedure about a smoke-free workplace			
2	advise visitors and contractors of the smoke-free policy?			
Cultural environment		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	support participation in quit smoking programs during work hours?			

Healthy People

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	hold regular information sessions about quitting smoking, such as the benefits of quitting or available support services			
2	offer initiatives to support employees wanting to quit smoking, such as counselling, peer support groups or subsidised nicotine replacement therapy?			

Communication and promotion

		Yes	No	Planning notes (possible actions, priorities and ideas)
Does your workplace:				
1	provide information and promotional materials about the benefits of quitting smoking			
2	promote support services available for quitting smoking, such as Quitline or local GPs?			

Total quit smoking tally (optional)				
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Congratulations on completing the survey

You've now identified activities, resources and facilities in your workplace that support or have the potential to support the health and wellbeing of employees. (Please remember, not all the survey questions will have been relevant to your workplace.)

Interpreting your results

Before you begin interpreting your survey results, first identify which stage you are at in implementing a workplace wellness program. This may influence how you use your results.

Choose the category that best suits your workplace.

a) Just starting out

Your workplace environment has lots of potential for making changes that support the health and wellbeing of employees. Use the results of this survey to identify priority areas for action. Share these ideas with senior management and/or your wellness committee.

Ask employees about their health needs through an employee needs assessment. Add this information to these results to develop your action plan.

For a step-by-step guide to developing a wellness program, see 5-Steps to workplace wellness <workplaces.healthier.qld.gov.au>

b) Building your wellness program

Develop or enhance your workplace wellness action plan by identifying new changes you can make to the physical, policy and cultural environments.

Look at activities that your workplace can offer. Promote these to your employees and communicate health information.

If you answered 'yes' several times on one or two health topics only, expand your action plan to include other health topics.

c) Improving your wellness program

You may have an established wellness program that has made many positive changes to the work environment. Consider enhancing existing programs and the physical, policy and cultural environments.

Increase communication and promotion to improve participation and use by employees, or expand your actions to include more health topics. Draw on examples of innovative wellness strategies from other workplaces.

It may be time to review the progress of your wellness program and plan new actions or celebrate successes.

Where to next—developing an action plan

This survey is a needs assessment tool designed to help you with your action planning. It helps you identify the resources and facilities available and changes you can make to support wellness in the workplace.

Identify your workplace health topics

For the best outcomes, use your survey results in conjunction with an employee needs assessment. Combining your survey results with the health needs and interests of employees will help you prioritise the most important health topics for your workplace. You can then develop goals and objectives around these health topics. For example, your goal may be to encourage employees to increase their level of physical activity.

Create strategies and actions

Your survey results will help you to develop the strategies and activities in your workplace wellness action plan. You could use the Healthy Places items in the survey to develop Healthy Places strategies and activities in your action plan.

For example, you may have noted that your workplace doesn't provide facilities employees can use for physical activity. A strategy in your plan could be to provide facilities that support physical activity. Installing lockers and a basketball hoop for employees could be the activities connected to this strategy.

Understand you workforce characteristics

When developing your action plan, consider the characteristics of your workforce. Understanding who makes up the workforce can help you to design wellness strategies that are inclusive of all employees.

Workforce characteristics to consider include:

- › employment status (e.g. full-time, part-time, casual, contract)
- › work hours (e.g. shift workers, overtime)
- › gender balance (e.g. predominantly male or female)
- › literacy levels (e.g. education, English as a second language)
- › travel (e.g. regular overnight business trips).

Annual evaluation

Completing this survey annually is a useful way to evaluate your workplace wellness program. Use the findings from your first survey as baseline data. When you complete the survey again you can compare the results. This will help you identify your progress, areas that need improvement and further ideas for implementation.

1 Department of Health. *Australia's physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines*. Australian Government, Canberra.
2 Queensland Health. *The Health of Queenslanders 2014. Fifth report of the Chief Health Officer Queensland*. Queensland Government, Brisbane 2014. <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/cho_report/>