

Invest in Your Wellness with Wellness Works®

Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive newsletter focusing on your biggest and most personal asset – wellness.

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Making the Most of Daylight

As November arrives, shorter days and earlier sunsets become part of our daily routines. With daylight saving time ending on November 1, many employees may find themselves finishing their workdays after dark.

Natural light plays an important role in regulating our internal body clocks, influencing energy, alertness, and mood. Making better use of available daylight can be a simple way to support employee well-being as the seasons change.

What's Driving the Need

As daylight hours decrease, employees who spend much of their day indoors may have fewer opportunities for natural light exposure. Morning commutes, full work schedules, and earlier sunsets can make it difficult to spend time outside.

Our bodies follow 24-hour cycles known as circadian rhythms. These internal processes help regulate functions such as hormone production, body temperature, and sleep-wake patterns. Light is one of the strongest signals guiding these rhythms, helping the body distinguish between periods of activity and rest.

Shorter days can also affect emotional well-being. Some people notice changes in energy or motivation during fall and winter, while others experience seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a form of depression associated with seasonal changes.

Although natural light is not a solution to every wellness challenge, understanding its influence can help employees and employers make thoughtful seasonal adjustments.

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Potential Benefits for the Workplace

Access to daylight is more than a personal wellness consideration. It can also be part of creating work environments that support employee health and performance.

Energy and concentration fluctuate throughout the day, and employees don't all experience peak alertness at the same time. Recognizing these differences can help employers approach scheduling, flexibility, and performance expectations more thoughtfully.

Making daylight a more consistent part of the workday may support wellness in several ways.

- Alertness: Daytime light exposure helps reinforce the body's natural daily rhythms.
- Mood and morale: Opportunities to spend time outdoors may support emotional well-being during shorter days.
- Movement: Outdoor breaks encourage walking and other forms of light physical activity.
- Workplace comfort: Access to windows and natural light can make indoor environments feel more welcoming.
- Daily routines: Planning activities around available daylight can encourage more consistent wellness habits.

These benefits don't require major changes to workplace operations. Small opportunities to enjoy daylight can become part of a broader approach to employee well-being.

How HR Can Support Daylight-Based Wellness

HR can help employees make better use of daylight by encouraging practical habits and creating workplace environments that support healthy routines.

Consider simple practices such as:

- Encouraging outdoor breaks during daylight hours when weather and job duties allow.
- Offering flexibility for short midday walks or outdoor lunches.
- Making natural light a consideration in workspace design and seating arrangements.
- Encouraging managers to support regular breaks during the workday.
- Sharing seasonal wellness reminders about daylight, energy, and mood.
- Considering how schedules and meeting expectations affect opportunities for outdoor time.

For remote and hybrid employees, these practices can be adapted by encouraging time outside before work, during lunch, or between meetings. Employees may also benefit from arranging their home workspaces to take advantage of available natural light.

A Note on Accessibility

Not every employee has the same access to daylight. Work schedules, geographic location, mobility limitations, weather conditions, and personal responsibilities can affect opportunities to spend time outdoors.

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Wellness messaging should offer flexibility rather than prescribe a single routine. Sitting near a window, opening blinds, stepping outside briefly, or adjusting the timing of an existing activity may be more practical for some employees than taking a midday walk.

It's also important to recognize that seasonal changes affect people differently. Employees experiencing persistent sadness, fatigue, or difficulty functioning should be encouraged to seek support from a healthcare professional.

The goal is to make daylight-based wellness accessible without adding pressure to already busy schedules.

Getting Started

Making the most of daylight can begin with small adjustments to existing routines. Employees might spend a few minutes outside in the morning, take lunch near a window, or schedule outdoor activities before sunset.

For employers, the first step may be as simple as encouraging daylight breaks or reviewing whether workspaces provide reasonable access to natural light.

As November's days grow shorter, we may not be able to extend the daylight hours, but we can be more intentional about how we use them. Small changes can help support energy, mood, and healthier daily routines throughout the season.

Book Review | Understanding the Power of Our Internal Clocks

Our daily routines are often shaped by work schedules, technology, and personal responsibilities, leaving little consideration for the biological rhythms that influence how we feel and function. *Life in Sync: The Science of Internal Clocks and How We're Disrupting Them* by Philippa Gander explores how our internal clocks regulate essential bodily processes and why understanding these rhythms matters for everyday health and well-being.

Gander, a sleep and circadian rhythm researcher, draws on decades of scientific research to explain how biological clocks influence alertness, energy, and physical health. She also examines how artificial lighting, irregular schedules, and the demands of modern life can disrupt the natural cycles that help our bodies function.

The book presents biological timing as an often-overlooked part of wellness. For employees navigating busy schedules, long hours indoors, and changing daylight patterns, its message is particularly relevant.

Book Highlights

One of the book's strengths is its accessible explanation of circadian rhythms and the role of light in regulating our internal clocks. Gander describes how the body responds to environmental cues, particularly the natural cycle of daylight and darkness, and how these signals influence when we feel alert or ready for rest.

Gander also explores the challenges of living in a society that operates around the clock. From shift workers and airline pilots to people managing demanding schedules, she examines how modern routines can conflict with biological timing and affect health and performance.

Another interesting aspect is the book's exploration of biological rhythms beyond humans. Drawing on examples from animals and the natural world, Gander illustrates how internal clocks are fundamental to life and why maintaining alignment with environmental cycles can matter for overall well-being.

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A Key Takeaway

One of the book's most important messages is that our internal clocks continue to influence our health and performance, even when our daily schedules don't align with them. Understanding these rhythms can help us become more intentional about how we structure our days.

For employees, this may mean making better use of natural daylight, maintaining consistent routines when possible, and recognizing that energy and alertness naturally fluctuate. Small adjustments can help support well-being without requiring a complete lifestyle overhaul.

For employers, the takeaway is that workplace wellness extends beyond traditional benefits and programs. Thoughtful scheduling, access to natural light, and consideration of different working patterns can help create environments that better support employees' biological needs.

Life in Sync offers a research-based yet approachable look at how biological timing shapes everyday life. For readers interested in employee wellness, it provides a useful reminder that supporting health isn't always about doing more. Sometimes, it's about understanding how our bodies naturally function and creating routines and environments that work with those rhythms rather than against them.

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