



Exercise Programs Save Companies Money

From the Associate Press comes an article that reports on the benefits of corporations having their employees participate in wellness exercise programs.

"Enthusiastic participation in worksite wellness can yield a variety of health benefits," said Dr. Roy Shephard of the University of Toronto. These corporate programs put exercise equipment and "health advisers" close to the workers. The companies add an extra incentive by either paying for all or part of the program. Unfortunately, many workers still don't participate. But, among those who do the results were impressive and several areas of health benefits were noticed.

One of the benefits noticed was that workers who participated in the program lost an average of 13% body fat. Weight loss was 2% on average, and most participants were able to lower their blood pressure. Another benefit was that workers were able to increase their aerobic power. In this area women gained 7.4 percent while men gained 4.4 percent.

Probably most important to employers who pick up the tab for medical health insurance was that these programs showed a reduction in medical expenses for workers who participated. Studies found that medical claims were reduced on average from between \$100 and \$400 for those people who took part in the wellness programs. These workers also took less sick time than the average.

Between the reduction of sick days, and the reduction of medical claims, it was shown that these programs saved the companies who offered them an average of \$500 to \$700 per worker, more than enough to cover the cost of implementing these programs.