

ACCELERATE

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OUR NEWSLETTER FOR GROWING BUSINESSES

Healthy, wealthy workplaces in 2021

If there's one thing the year-that-shall-not-be-named brought home: wellbeing is a business issue. When it comes to health and safety in the workplace, is a policy, plan, and hazard register enough? An increasing number of small and medium Kiwi businesses are taking further action to ensure the health of their people and profit off the back of COVID-19.

Take this free online workplace wellbeing quiz to help you and your team rate your workplace and decide where to start: www.good4work.nz

What more can you do?

A physically and mentally healthy workplace has wide-ranging business benefits, so in this newsletter, we're going to outline the extra health and safety steps you can take in 2021.

- Keep you and your staff pain-free while sitting and standing at work
- Be a champion for a mentally healthy workplace
- Implement health and safety so it sticks
- Get the health and safety advice you need

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Keeping you and your staff pain-free in 2021

Whether you and your staff are sitting or standing at work, there are risks to physical and mental wellbeing that can be easily avoided. Here are some top tips from Erin Holland from [Active+](#), who's an experienced physiotherapist in occupational health.



What are the key health and safety risks when you're working in an office?

You're often sitting for large chunks of time in an office so the primary risk is not enough movement and breaks. If you're always static, you'll start to develop discomfort, pain and if left untreated - long-term injury to your neck, arm or hand.

What do business owners need to look out for?

- *Screen height.* Our bodies like to be neutral, not straining to look up, down, or on an angle for eight hours a day. You want the top of the toolbar at eye level.
- *Incorrect chairs.* Whether they're at the wrong height, old, broken, or sloping, seat position is an easy fix and makes a huge difference. If you're buying work chairs, check their seating tolerance. You need one that can withstand 6-8 hours of use.
- *Mouse overuse.* The mouse is more problematic than the keyboard. By having your hand and finger poised to press the button, the muscles in your forearm are always activated. To avoid tendinitis, move the mouse closer to you and only use it when you need it.
- *Posture.* Make sure you work with a neutral posture. This means head and shoulders are lined up, and hips, knees and elbows are at 90-degrees.
- *Lack of movement.* Make sure you and your team are moving regularly, even if it's just getting up for a cup of tea, chatting with workmates, or going outside for fresh air. Regular movements prevent injury and pain.
- *Laptop users.* Ideally, you have a laptop stand, separate keyboard, and foot stand to create an optimal sitting position.

And if you're driving...

- *Seat position.* Getting this right is really important. Check lumbar support is adequate because if you're sitting with arms and legs extended, it puts pressure on your nervous system and can cause back problems and sciatica.
- *Steering wheel height.* Some people get a sore neck after driving because they've had their hands on the steering wheel and their neck and arms are rigid. Stay neutral to avoid sore lower back and shoulders.
- *Fatigue.* If you're slow to respond, have difficulty making decisions quickly, drifting off, or don't notice you're speeding (or getting somewhere and not remembering driving there), you need a break. Remember, it's not the same as being tired, it's when your brain isn't processing things as it should be, and without awareness, you could make mistakes on the road.

What are the key health and safety risks when you're standing a lot for work?

The chance of discomfort, pain and injury is underestimated in workplaces where people are on their feet a lot, like in a warehouse. If you're walking around you won't have too much of a problem. It's the static standing that can cause sore feet, knees, hip and back. Long-term effects can be debilitating, including inflammation to the arch of your foot (Plantar Fasciitis), which can cause so much pain it becomes impossible to stand, and it's tricky to fix.

What do business owners need to look out for?

- *Footwear.* Make sure everyone has appropriate, well-fitted footwear. Consider orthotics, heel cups, or gel inserts to take off some of the pressure.
- *Movement.* Make sure staff are moving and walking, not just standing.
- *Rubber mats.* Anti-pressure mats create a softer surface to stand on, which can make a huge difference. Or offer a seat so they can sit down and take a load off.



Lead by example – be a mental health champion

Did you know the main reason people take time off work is due to [poor mental health](#)? So, it's in your best interest to promote positive mental health at work. Plus, stats show investing in building and maintaining good mental wellbeing at work boosts productivity, sales, creativity, and customer satisfaction.

Here are some straightforward, effective ways to lead by example:

1. Foster a culture of mentally healthy behaviours. Reinforce positive ways of working, whether it's an afternoon meditation or eating lunch away from your desk. Offer resources and promote activities or exercises that support positive mental health. [Take a look at the Five Ways to Wellbeing resource.](#)
2. Role model trust-based conversations and actions by following through on what you say, and stamping out rude behaviour.
3. Promote connection between staff members. Whether it's during or outside work hours, bringing people together helps them feel safer, less stressed, and less anxious.
4. Keep it fair. Provide support and work accommodations as you would for any physical health issue or personal situation.
5. Promote an 'ask for help' workplace. Make talking about emotions easy and have support on hand when people need it.
6. Build staff strength. Recognise people's strengths and find ways for them to use those strengths in their work.
7. Bring on more champions. Many workplaces have wellbeing champions who will enthusiastically help organise events and activities and spread the word about wellbeing.

Implementing health and safety so it sticks

Have a health and safety policy and plan in place? Great! But how can you ensure everyone's 100% on board? Here are four simple steps from [Livewire HR](#) to get your crew on the same page.

1. **Make it relatable.** To engage staff in health and safety at work, they need to understand why health and safety is important (imagine they're injured during a work day, how would it impact their life?), understand what health and safety is, how to do it properly (this requires regular training), and be involved in making decisions that impact their life and work.
2. **Keep it simple.** Start with small things that are easy to implement, like team meetings with health and safety on the agenda, where you look at both physical and mental health.
3. **Have a 'no blame policy'.** If something happens, you want your staff to tell you so you can fix it, train them, or take appropriate action. Make sure they feel comfortable to tell you about a situation, even a near-miss.
4. **Strong leadership.** If management doesn't take health and safety seriously then their team won't. Business owners need to be role modelling what good health and safety is. We need to be constantly learning about it (especially industry-specific health and safety), and filtering our learnings to our team. Sometimes having a conversation using open questions is more engaging than a PowerPoint presentation.

Health & Safety: Do I need help getting it right?

Since the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 came into place, specialised advisors and consultants have been popping up all over New Zealand. But how do you know who's genuine? We talk to Rebecca Jenkins from [Livewire HR](#), who says it's all about doing your groundwork.



What should businesses look for when seeking help?

The old saying 'you don't know what you don't know' is very true. It starts by asking questions and learning about health and safety. Then find someone you trust who can advise you clearly about what you actually need. Check to ensure they have qualifications in H&S, NEBOSH ([National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health](#)) or at least Level 6 in Health and Safety. Interview them just like you would an employee.

Are there any misconceptions about what consultants do?

Yes, that it costs an arm and a leg. Definitely the higher the risk you have in your business, the more you need and the more regularly you need to be covering it (and hence higher costs). But covering the basics and doing those well in most businesses is completely and realistically achievable without it costing the earth. We're not here to make life hard, so talk to us about what would work for your business and we'll try our best to incorporate that in your normal activities.

Can people call and have a chat for free?

We always offer a free 30-minute consultation to answer questions. We're experts in HR and H&S, which means we can advise on both and how they interact with each other. For example: Does your job description include expectations around H&S? Many don't.

How can people get their ducks in a row to save money and time on health and safety?

The more planning you do, the easier and cheaper my job is. So, have copies of your job description, employment agreements, and any health and safety you already have in place. Secondly, get some training. A one-day course to gain an understanding of what the law requires is about \$250, which is a small price for valuable information.

Final word...

- Get valuable health and safety information from [WorkSafe](#)
- Find a health and safety professional at www.register.hasanz.org.nz
- Check out [Active+](#) for workstation assessments, occupational health advice, and more.

KEY TAX DATES – FEBRUARY 2021

Date	Category	Description
5 February	PAYE	Large employers' payment due. File employment information within two working days after payday.
9 February	Terminal Tax	Terminal tax due for clients who we do not file tax returns for (that are not on our agency list)
22 February	PAYE	Small and large employers' payment due. File employment information within two working days after payday.
22 February	RWT	RWT return and payment due for deductions from dividends and deductions of \$500 or more from interest paid during January.
22 February	NRWT / Approved Issuer Levy	Payment and return for January.
1 March	GST	Payment and return for January.