

Hello, I'd like to welcome everyone to our session today, "Improve Your Health With Proper Ergonomics and Frequent Movement." My name is Katie Muhlhammer, and I'll be your behind-the-scenes technical person, making sure things run smooth from a technical perspective. Before I introduce our presenter, I want to mention a couple quick tools that you have to help you make the most out of your time listening in today.

On the left-hand side of your screen you'll see an option that says FAQs, or frequently asked questions. If you have a question, you might take a scroll through there to see if we have an answer for that for you. We also have an ask-a-question section where you can send us a question that will send it to us via email; I'll tell you a little bit more about that at the end. And we also have an event resources section with a couple handouts, including a copy of the slide deck that our presenter is using today.

So speaking of our presenter, let me go ahead and introduce her to you. We're very pleased to have Julia Kim presenting today's session. She's a National Board Certified Health and Wellness Coach, and she works with clients on a number of wellness topics, including life coaching, mindfulness, health and wellness, and tobacco cessation. She's also a Certified Breastfeeding Specialist and works with expecting and new moms to assist them. And currently she's a wellness coach and lactation specialist at Workplace Options. She's a perfect fit for this topic. I know she's got some great ideas and real-life examples to assist all of us. So Julia, I'm going to go ahead and pass it to you.

Thank you, Katie. All right, so today we're going to discuss the importance of proper ergonomics and frequent movement, apply ergonomic tips to your

work environment, discuss ways to incorporate frequent movement into your day, and identify exercises that you can do at your desk. And OK. So it's going to be broken down into two different parts, and part 1, we'll just be talking about proper desk ergonomics, and then we'll move into frequent movement. And for each section we'll be going over best practices.

So we're going to go ahead and start with the proper desk ergonomics. And before we even talk about it I just want to take a moment for you to think about what does that mean to you? You know, ergonomics and proper desk ergonomics? OK. Well, ergonomics, the basic definition is, it's the study of people's efficiency in their working environments. And it aims to improve workspaces and environments to minimize risks of injury or harm. And the reason it's so important—I mean, you think about it, it is—you know, you're spending so much time every day at your work, at your desk, and you know, things like low back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, eye strain, headaches, neck pain, you know they're all major health issues right now that we're facing. So, it really, you know, by having the proper desk ergonomics is really in your best interest, and it will make you more comfortable at work, and hopefully it will avoid a lot of those things.

OK, so I'll kind of go over what proper desk ergonomics sort of looks like. And you know, you've got the picture on your screen, and there's also a handout, "The Ergonomic Workstation Reference" kind of shows this. But let's just take a moment, and we'll go ahead and try this at your desk. So, what you want to do is, you want to have your feet flat on the floor, and... so you want to adjust the chair, because it's different for everybody, so you know it has to be the right height for you, so feet flat on the floor. Go ahead and take a moment now to do that. Have your feet flat on the floor, adjust

your chair, and then your knees and hips, you want them parallel to the floor, and your knees should be at a 90-degree angle. And you want to be seated, the back of the chair, you know, all the way back so that the chair supports your back. And the arm rest supports your elbows, and they allow you to type on the keyboard. So that's the sitting portion. So go ahead and just take a moment to do that. Get yourself really comfortable so that you feel supported by the chair, your feet flat on the floor.

A good ergonomic setup really will help you maintain proper posture while you work, while a bad one will have you kind of moving all over the place, and you know things that you shouldn't be doing throughout the day. You know, and then you may notice at the end of the day that your back hurts or you have neck strain. So, just really take the time now to kind of make adjustments if you're uncomfortable. You want to make it the way that you need it to be. You don't want to let your office space dictate how you work. And you also want to try to limit activities that put you in awkward positions or make your muscle tense, and take brief breaks from repetitive tasks.

And a good thing to remember, even in the most thoroughly ergonomic workstations, people who sit for long periods of time should change their positions at least once every hour. So even if you feel great, you got this set up really well, you do want to try shifting your weight from side to side, or even better stand up, walk around for a minute, do some stretching—and we're going to talk about that in the next section, but that, you know, that's helpful too. And then, you know, when you sit down again make sure everything is set up again. You're sitting the right way.

And then next let's take a look at your computer monitor. So that is really important too, because if that's not at a good level you will have a lot of neck and back strain. So the monitor should be at eye level or 1 inch below eye level; you don't want to be looking up. Even try that now—feel that, tilt your neck back and your head, look up. You know that puts a strain on the back of your neck, and after a while that will really start to irritate you.

So, go ahead and take a moment to look at your monitor, and if you have multiple monitors go ahead a look at all of them, and make sure they are at eye level or 1 inch below eye level. The monitor should be straight in front of you. If you've got more than one of them you'd want to move your chair when you start looking at the other ones; you're always looking straight at the monitor.

And then take a look at your keyboard. You want the legs down and wrist straight, so the key really there is comfort. OK.

All right, so now that you are sitting in a good position, your back is properly supported, your monitors are at good height, you want to now look at the rest of your workstation, your desk area. What are the items that you use most during the day? You know, think about it, look around. You know your mouse, your phone, maybe your pen, whatever it is that you're reaching for throughout the day, these are the items that you want to be closest to you. So, you want them set up in a way that works so that you're not reaching around and doing, you know, weird pulling motions throughout the day. You want everything to be within reach and comfortable. So go ahead and just take a moment, because look at your desk and think about the best setup for the items that you use most during the day.

OK, so now your workstation should be a comfortable place. You've got everything close to you that you need, you set your monitors to a good height, and you're sitting in a way that's supporting your body.

OK, another thing that bothers a lot of people throughout the day is eye strain. I know for one, I wear contact lenses, and so lots of times I find my eyes drying out or, you know, getting teary. And so I practice going to—my eye doctor brought it up to me, and I think it's a really important rule. It's called the 20-20-20 rule, and it will help you with eye strain and things like dry, watery eyes, blurred vision. You will get headaches from eye strain, or even you know, head and neck tension, face tension.

So the idea is that you—every 20 minutes you want to turn away from your monitors and look at something in the distance. You want to focus on something that's approximately 20 feet away. It doesn't need to be exactly 20 feet away; just make sure it's off in the distance, and it really depends on where, you know, what your work environment is like. You know, if you're lucky enough you've got windows, go ahead and like, you know, look out the window and focus on a faraway tree, or in the office just pick something that, you know, you can go ahead and focus on for at least 20 seconds. And the idea behind the 20 seconds is that it takes 20 seconds for your eyes to completely relax. You can do it for longer than 20 seconds, but you want to make sure that it's at least 20 seconds. And that should definitely be helpful.

Other things that you can do to prevent eye strain would be to sit farther away from your computer, and recommended distance is about 25 inches or so. Blink often, keep your eyes moist. Keep yourself hydrated. If you're

hydrated your eyes will be hydrated. And you want to keep your computer screen clean, because if it's dirty, it's got a lot of smudges on it, actually that makes it harder for your eyes to focus on it.

And so this is really important, you know, and I know a lot of people that struggle with eye strain throughout the day because, you know, we get involved in tasks and we don't look away; you know, we're really focused. And even in our off time lots of people are staring at their phones and other screens throughout the day, so the 20-20-20 rule is really important.

Think about, you know, your day. Do you ever notice any eye strain? Do you have dry eyes? Watery eyes? Do you feel any neck or head tension? How can you remember to kind of take those breaks every 20 minutes or so? You know, I've worked with a lot of clients on this, because this is a common problem that we suffer in our modern workplace. Some people come up with ideas like setting a timer on the phone, or putting like a sticky note on your computer. It can say like... write something down on it or maybe even a picture of an eye to kind of remind yourself—anything that's going to kind of help you remember to look away about every 20 minutes or so. And you know, once you start doing it, it becomes habitual, and then it will just be part of your day, and your eyes definitely will thank you for it.

OK, so we've talked about some different things, you know: Sitting comfortably in a chair that supports your body. You know, having your monitor set up. Having the things that you use throughout the day really close to you and then also trying to prevent the eye strain. What do you think would be the most important one for you to change right now? Or to work on? OK, and so you'll see on this slide we have a survey. I'm going to

pass you to Katie real quick, and she's going to tell you how you can complete this survey and then see what other people thought was important for them to work on as well.

Great, thank you, Julia. I've gone ahead and sent the survey out to everyone, as Julia shared, you know, which of those items do you feel, if you had to pick one, what is the one you want to start to work on today? So take a moment, select option A, B, C, D, or E. Go ahead and take a moment to read those, and then when you're done you'll be able to see a graph or a pie chart of all the other individuals, where they are, kind of which items are most popular, if you will. But again, focusing just on if you had to pick one, what's the one area that you're going to go ahead and focus on? So thank you, everyone, for participating in that, and I'm going to go ahead and pass it back to you now, Julia.

Thank you Katie. OK, so now that we've discussed proper workstation ergonomics, we're going to move on to the second section, where we're going to focus on frequent movement. And you know, before we start talking, think about your day, and how often you move and how often you sit. And what do you know about frequent movement, and do you think it's important to move a lot during the day?

Well, we're going on to the next slide. You'll see that it really is important, because they've done a lot of studies and this has become something that is really talked a lot about in wellness circles currently. Sedentary behavior is the fourth leading risk factor of death, for people all over the world. And you know, it's because we're finding ourselves sitting so much more than we did—probably our ancestors did, you know, back in the day. Exercise

does help, but planned exercise, you know, once a day does not compensate for sitting, you know, 8 to 12 hours or so every day.

And so think about it, you know, it's not just work where we're sitting at our desk, but most of us drive cars to work, we're sitting there, and then you know after the work day, we're sitting maybe at home in front of a computer screen or TV. You know, so think about it, really, the amount of sitting that you do in a day really adds up.

All of that sitting increases one's risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 90%. And additionally, they've, you know, researchers have found, believe it or not, that a sedentary lifestyle is just as or more harmful than smoking. And if you work in a sedentary environment for 10 years or more, you double your risk of bowel cancer, and you have an increased likelihood of developing obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Other side effects of a sedentary lifestyle include anxiety; depression; migraines; eye strain; high blood pressure; stroke; heart attack; elevated cholesterol; carpal tunnel syndrome; flexibility loss; chronic neck, shoulder or back pain; weight gain; diabetes, as we've already mentioned; varicose veins; soft bones; foggy brain – foggy headedness. So a lot of things, you know, when you think about it it's kind of like a little overwhelming, but there's something that you can do about that. You know, by incorporating frequent movement into your life, you can have a huge impact on your health.

Another exciting area of research is the impact that sitting has on our brain. And so, you know, this is something that's fairly new. People have been looking at, you know, how sitting affects our health overall, and now they're looking at our brain health as well. And there was one study done recently,

this year, 2018, in April by UCLA, and they studied 35 adults ages 47-75. And they found that sitting or sedentary behavior was associated with thinning of the areas of our brain that are key to memory formation. They did note that this study does not prove that too much sitting causes center brain structures, but instead, more hours spent sitting are associated with center regions in the brain. And they focused on the hours spent sitting but did not ask participants if they took breaks during this time. So obviously more research is needed, and they're hoping to follow a group of people for a longer duration to determine if sitting causes the thinning, and what role, you know, things like gender, race, or weight may play in brain health, related to sitting. So definitely more research needs to be done. This is, you know, probably something we'll be hearing about in years to come.

But you know, it's important to remember that it's not just your body, but your brain, too, that you're protecting by moving more. And you know, obviously, reducing sedentary behavior could limit your risk of things like Alzheimer's disease and even just memory, you know, issues and that foggy-headed brain that we were talking about before. So that makes it even more important, you know. You're talking about your overall health and wellness.

OK. So, thinking about it, you know, incorporating more movement is not just—we're not just talking about, you know, your time at work, although that's important. You know, we'll be focusing on that, but you need to think about your whole day, and what does that look like? You know, start with, do you drive to work? And you know, how much time do you spend in the car? How much time do you sit at work? What does your life look like in your free time? How much are you sitting? Because incorporating more

movement into your life is a whole-day approach or mindset. It's not just the idea of having one big, you know, workout each day. But I'm not saying not to do that, that's great keep doing that, keep working out.

But this is different, it's not about burning calories, you know; it's more about getting that blood flowing throughout each day so that you can avoid some of those health risks that we just talked about. And you know, how do you do that? It's really important to think about setting habits. And you know, we all know the research, you know, we keep hearing sitting is bad, et cetera, et cetera. But, you know, it's hard to change what, you know, the way we are and what we're doing.

And even here in my office—I work in a wellness office—we're always talking about health and wellness and, you know, ways that we can be healthier. And recently we had a new colleague who came in, and he really wanted to focus on getting us to move more throughout the day, and he came up with this great idea. He called it the body bell. And it would go off, it would ring every hour, and every hour we would get up and do planned exercises that he had created. And it was a way for us to really focus on what we tell other people to do all the time, more throughout the day. But we planned it, and it really worked out well, and he doesn't have to do the body bell any more every hour, because now we're all doing it just by habit.

So planned exercise is great, and we'll talk a little bit about more of that in a minute. But what can you do to just get more movement throughout the day? You know, even just getting up and standing at your desk and stretching every 30 minutes would be helpful. Or even like, you know, when you take your break to do the 20-20-20 rule and you're worried about your

eyes, get up and stand up and move a little bit while you focus on something 20 feet away. You know, walk to the copier. Instead of sending an email or instant message, get up and talk to your coworker. Get up and go get a glass of water and drink a lot of water, and then maybe you have to get up and go to the restroom, so that will kind of keep you focused on moving more without even thinking about it. Take the stairs if you have the opportunity. If there's stairs in your office, go ahead and use the stairs.

Even think about it before you start your day at the office. If you just, you know, drive into the office, if you have a longer commute and you've been sitting in your car for a while, park farther away so that you can have a nice little walk before you get in. You know, other ideas, even if you're talking on the phone and you're having a longer conversation, get up and just move while you're on the phone. The person on the other end is not going to know that you're moving around, so you know, use your headset and take that time for yourself to move around. Also using an exercise ball, if you have one available, is great. Using a sit/stand workstation combo is a good way to increase your, you know, movement. And also get your coworkers involved. Maybe think about like what we did at our office, or something else where you can encourage each other to move more.

OK, and I know I just mentioned the standing workstation. You know those are becoming more popular, and there's definitely benefits to them. You know they do reduce sedentary time, which is great. And users have reported increased sense of well-being and energy and decreased fatigue and appetite. And they did find that people were more productive as well.

But there can be some negatives. There was, you know, issues with prolonged standing. There was a study done by Curtin University in Australia and was published in the Ergonomics Journal. And they looked at adults who were standing for 2 hours while working, and they did find those positive things that, you know, we discussed, but also some of the negatives were overall body discomfort, an increase of 47%, especially in the lower back and in the lower extremities, and you know, we all know the issue low back pain is. Also they found diminished mental reactions time, which really wasn't that surprising, because people actually perform better on fine motor skills – on some fine motor skills—when sitting. Thus, you know, we sit when we drive.

So, there are pros and cons. Another pro actually, though, was increased creative problem-solving, which is good. So because, you know, there's good and bad, they really—what they found is the best is a combination approach, where you'd have like an adjustable desk. The idea really is to go from sitting to standing to moving. So if you sit for a little while, then maybe you stand for a little while, and then you move. And of course when you are using the standing, you know, standing at your desk, you can move around too, and that helps. So really the danger would be just prolonged standing in one sort of position.

And just to kind of let you know, too, that they're still working on research in that area, you know, standing desk is something that is gaining in popularity. And the study that was done by Curtin University was a small sample size, only 20 individuals, so they definitely need to keep looking into this, the benefits of the standing desk as opposed to you know, if there's any negatives.

But one thing that we do know, right, that we've already established, is that sitting for a long period of time has been proven to be very unhealthy for you. So, definitely, standing part of each day is recommended, and standing and moving is the best.

So, if you do have a standing workstation, we do have some tips for making the best of that. You would want to definitely wear shoes that have good support. And we're going to talk about – think about the ergonomics setup again. You want to make sure that your monitor is arm's length away. You don't want to use books or boards to adjust a desk height. And if you have more than one monitor, placement would depend on which one you use most often; it would be best if you could have them both at the same height, but use—the one that you use most often would be key. And you want to keep the keyboard and the mouse on the same surface. And use keyboard shortcuts to reduce mouse time. And again, you want to keep those items that you use frequently close to you; that would be in any setup. And if you're frequently on the phone, it's best to use a headset or a speaker instead of holding the phone. OK.

And if you wanted more information on that, there is a link here to a great diagram from the Mayo Clinic on proper standing workstation ergonomics. You can go ahead and look at that, and that will give you more tips for having a good workstation, standing workstation.

OK. So, you know, we talked about some easy ways to get more movement, you know, throughout your workday. And there's also—planned exercise at your desk is great too. It doesn't have to be anything fancy. So we are including a handout here, it's stretching exercises that you could do

at your desk. And you can go ahead and look at that. The key really is to remember to try to do this frequently throughout the day. You know, even getting up every 30 minutes just to stretch, but maybe every hour to get up and move around a bit.

You know, you could – it doesn't have to be anything fancy, like I said, you know, it could be one of those exercises on the sheet. Or you can just get up and, you know, walk or jog in place, do some jumping jacks, you know. Chair squats are great, you know, where you start sitting in your chair and then just stand up and sit back down and just keep repeating that, you know, up to 10 times. Pretend to jump rope.

One of the exercises on here that I love, I do quite frequently, are calf raises, where, you know, you're standing on the floor and you just raise your heels up and stand on your toes and hold that for a moment, and go back down on your heels. And doing that, you know, a couple times a day, a couple sets, it's really helpful.

Another idea would be if you have stretch bands or can get stretch bands, having some of those available at your desk and just, you know, doing some stretches.

If there's something that you already do exercise wise, say you practice yoga, you can do some of that, you know, a couple stretches, a couple yoga positions. Whatever you think is going to be good for you; I mean everybody's different, so maybe you just want to take a moment and think about what type of exercise do you like? What could you see yourself doing?

We, like I said, we have the handout and on here we even just have some stretches that you can do that would help with like neck and shoulder tension. You know, one that I do is the diagonal neck stretch, and that can be done standing or sitting. You can do that throughout the day, kind of helps with some of that neck tension, and maybe we'll just try that right now. So, you're sitting at your desk listening to the webinar, and hopefully you've got your feet on the floor, you're sitting back in the chair like we've discussed before. You want to feel relaxed. And turn your head slightly and look down as if you were looking at like a pocket on your shirt, and you can go ahead and start with your right side. You want to hold that for 15 seconds, relax, then center—go back to the center—and then repeat. And you would do that three times on each side, and you can alternate, too, if you want to do the right side and then the left side, and you know. And that definitely would help you with any neck tension throughout the day.

And you know, so even things like that are helpful, so kind of thinking about the exercises that appeal to you, what do you like to do? What can you see yourself doing throughout the day? The most important thing is really just to get up and move, no matter what you're doing. And the more you do that throughout the day, the more habitual it becomes and the more normal it will seem.

So we've talked about a couple different things today, and hopefully I've given you some things to think about. The first would be looking at your workstation and thinking about how comfortable you are in your workstation. Do you frequently have, you know, back pain or neck tension? If you do, you might want to take a moment and just think, is there anything that you need to change about your desk or workstation setup? And you

know, take a moment think about some of the things we discussed and give that a try.

And then secondly and very importantly, you want to think about that movement during the day. If I were to ask you, what is one thing that you could do this week, just this week, that would get you to move more? Start with that. And then as that becomes more habitual and you become successful at that, go ahead and continue to build on that until you reach your goal, whatever it is.

So, you know, new habits are really hard to create. Change, you know, takes patience, time, and practice. So go ahead and think about that one thing that you can do to give it a start, and then keep going in that direction.

All right. Well I'm going to pass it back to Katie to – she's going to talk to you a little bit about contacting your Employee Assistance Program and – but before I do that I just really want to thank you for listening to this webinar today and taking this time out of your day, and I hope you have a great rest of day. Thank you for your time.

And thank you so much, Julia, for sharing your expertise and a lot of great resources and practical suggestions. I know I've been jotting down some notes and also doing some chair squats and neck stretches as you've gone through, so we trust everyone who's listening has done the same and has come away with some very real takeaways. So thank you so much, Julia.

As Julia mentioned, we do want to remind you that you do have your Employee Assistance Program available to you, here 24/7. So any time of day, 365 days a year, whether it's a wellness or health concern, or question or looking for resources, or perhaps something related to child care issues,

or assisting an older loved one, or a legal or financial issue, or perhaps a life situation, or perhaps grieving—a lot of different situations we can assist you with. It is no cost to you to contact us, so just a reminder you have your EAP available 24/7. If you do not have that contact information, your human resources department will have that for you.

We also have, just to kind of wrap up, an ask-a-question box, which you should see on the left-hand side of your screen. You're welcome to ask us a question and click "Send." We do receive that via email, so it may take a few days for us to gather the information and reply back to you. But just know again, you have your EAP 24/7 live, so you can use that as well. But we do have that ask—a-question feature for you that you're welcome to use.

Some of the different handouts that Julia mentioned, you'll find those in the event resources on the left, and when you log off in just a second there'll be a brief survey, we'd appreciate you taking 30 seconds or less to do that and let us know your feedback.

So thank you. We trust this has been beneficial. We wish you all wellness and health, and thank you again, Julia.

Take care, everyone.