



Increasing your Bottom Line with Office Yoga

The Economic Incentives of Bringing some Zen into your Workplace



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Preface

As the number of sick days rise, cases of mental illness skyrocket and the obesity epidemic shows no sign of slimming down, there's never been a more **crucial time to invest in the well-being of employees.**

This eBook is meant to inform you about **the science behind the health benefits of practicing yoga** as they pertain directly to KPIs that will **increase your bottom line.**

Yoga's increasing popularity is not simply a result of another trendy workout activity, but rather because it's a practice that not only **helps people become physically strong** but also aids immensely in **strengthening their minds.** Along with stretching one's body, breathing exercises and other meditative techniques are utilized to **provide mental clarity and fortitude.**

Creating a company culture that incorporates **engaging wellness services** should be a **top priority for employers** considering **millennials** will soon make up the majority of UK's workforce and have been known to particularly **value work-life balance** when it comes to evaluating their employment.

A recent study done by Fidelity Investments found that 58% of millennials ranked the quality of their work environment over financial benefits.



Although the **ROI of introducing wellness activities** into a business can be difficult to calculate precisely, employee well-being often gets overlooked when companies are evaluating how to minimize their costs. Rather than the common approach of implementing a broad and unenticing wellness program that includes countless subpar services for employees, **Office Yoga classes offer employees an activity that is engaging and effective.**

The Science Behind the Health Benefits of Yoga

Yoga helps us to react rationally to stress stimuli

It has been well documented that yoga has existed since 3000 B.C. and new scientific research has now proven that practicing Yoga can provide even more health benefits than previously thought.

Leading psychologists and neuroscientists have begun to decode the **powerful effects of practicing yoga**. According to Dr. Mithu Storoni, a University of Cambridge-trained medical doctor and neuroscientist, **practicing yoga turns off our stress response, whilst triggering our relaxation response**. Therefore, practicing yoga helps to reduce our often exaggerated response to stress by allowing us to see the stress stimuli for what it is without becoming compulsive or overly emotional. This **self-awareness** helps to ensure that we **respond thoughtfully in a composed manner** rather than reacting erratically or irrationally.



One of the fundamental aspects of yoga is the entry into a pose- or asana- holding the pose in stillness, and then a controlled release.

Dr Storoni explains that doing these exercises requires a highly activated prefrontal cortex in order to maintain one's concentration and stillness which leads **to better self control when dealing with stressful situations**.

"As you hold a posture, your prefrontal cortex is countering the raised sympathetic signal as it keeps you focused. This is **how you train your mind to keep your stress signal under control**. As your mind learns how to do this, you get better at doing this even outside of the yoga room. Eventually, with practice, you will be able to maintain self-control in most stressful settings".

Yoga alters the chemical structure of our brains

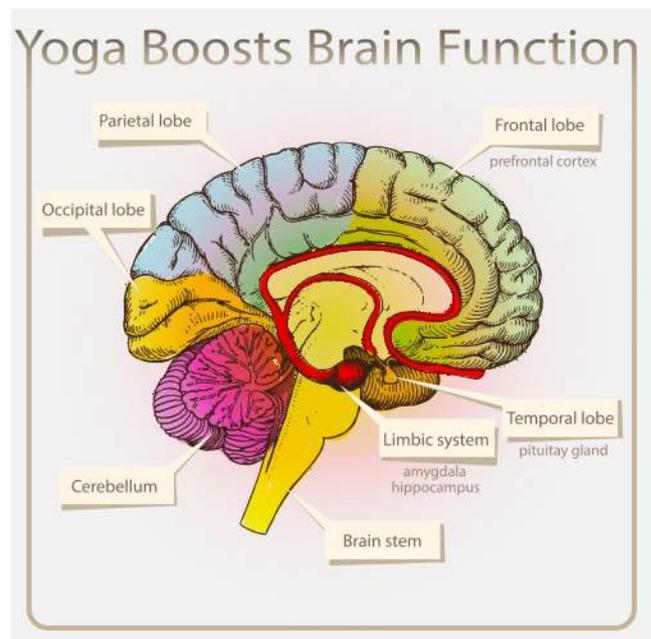
Yoga also helps to increase the levels of chemicals in the brain like serotonin and dopamine that **create a sense of well-being**. These chemicals, often referred to as the 'feel good' chemicals, are responsible for **feelings of pleasure and relaxation** and are most commonly activated during activities that are associated with pleasure such as drinking alcohol and sexual intercourse.

To produce these chemicals, many people also rely heavily on prescription drugs such as anti-depressants and anti-anxiety drugs.

Yoga therefore tends to be a much **healthier, more natural and less expensive way to produce these 'feel good' chemicals**, which contributes to its reputation of alleviating stress and reducing anxiety.

Yoga has also been proven to help with **balancing our emotions by stimulating our parasympathetic nervous system**; PNS 'rest and digest' which is responsible for calming us down. Activating the parasympathetic nervous system also helps to **restore and heal the body by allowing our blood to flow** more freely to our digestive organs, endocrine glands, and lymphatic circulation.

As a result, one's blood pressure and heart rate lowers, nutrients from the food we eat can be absorbed more easily and toxins are released from the body due to enhanced circulation.



Economic Incentives

Reduce Physical Complications and Injuries

Considering office workers spend on average over 30 hours a week sitting at a desk, **sitting down too long has become a new health hazard**. Humans were simply not designed nor have we evolved to spend such long periods of time sitting in chairs. Our shoulders and neck slump forward, our spine becomes hunched and our core becomes weak.

In the short term, back/neck pain and injuries are more likely to take place which translates to more absence. To add insult to injury, considering our spines are rudimentary to the functionality of our brains, sitting down for long periods of time with bad posture will also have a significant effect on one's mental aptitude and capabilities.

As for the long term, constant seated positioning may lead to heart disease, diabetes, strokes, high blood pressure and premature mortality. PriceWaterhouseCoopers research found that companies that **invest in employee well-being** have **50% less accidents & injuries**.



Reduce Absenteeism

According to the UK Department of Mental Health, **mental health issues** such as depression and anxiety account for almost **70 million days off sick per year**, the most of any condition. This translates to an average cost of over a **£1000 pounds per employee annually**.

A recent study conducted by PriceWaterhouseCoopers also exemplified 'a wealth of evidence' indicating a **positive correlation between wellness activities in the workplace and improved business KPIs**.

Companies that invested in **employee well-being** had **40% less absence**.

Economic Incentives

Boost Productivity

Investing in employee well-being through offering **office yoga classes** will provide employees with the opportunity to **clear their minds and refocus back on work with more concentration.**

Moreover, Yoga will also reduce the stress levels of employees thus allowing them to **remain calm and focused for much longer periods of time.** PWC's research showed that companies in their study with the highest well-being scores had a **45% lower cost of productivity** compared with those that had the lowest well-being scores.

Improve Morale

One of the most effective ways to reduce mental ill-health in the workplace is **through stress management.** Stress is the **number one reason for absence in the UK,** costing the economy **£4 billion a year.**

In a recent survey done by MetLife UK, almost a third of employees said that they would consider leaving their current role if stress levels in their organization did not improve. Furthermore, PWC's research found that companies that **invest in employee well-being** have **25% less staff turnover.** Unmanaged workplace stress is also likely to result in workplace conflict, reduced performance, customer complaints, staff replacement costs and of course, costly workers' compensation claims.

Instead of offering generic wellness programs that employees are unlikely to engage in, **office yoga classes will become a hot topic at work** because it's seen as a fun activity and something that truly makes employees feel like their company is committed to taking care of them. Considering comradery is a crucial component of enjoying work, office yoga classes will also bring co-workers together to bond in a meaningful and dynamic manner. **Stronger relationships and a healthier work environment** often means **happier employees and better collaboration** which will improve **performance and spark innovation.**





Conclusion

Considering the aforementioned information and statistics, it's clearly no surprise that **employee well-being is becoming a top priority on many companies' HR agendas.**

The recent studies that have been highlighted are meant to show that providing **yoga classes in the workplace will create a healthier work environment** and will improve the well-being of employees in an effective manner which will in turn have an immense and irrefutable **impact on your company's bottom line.**

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If you have any questions or enquiries, please feel free to call our Wellness Concierge - 0203 637 7061.

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