

The five-minute exercises that could make you happier at work

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A new study by academics from the School of Psychology and Exercise Science at Murdoch University and Ludwig Maximilian University could help to make you happier at work.

The [seven-day online wellbeing programs](#) have been devised by a team of psychologists to increase [happiness](#) and wellbeing in the workplace – and they only take five minutes a day to complete.

The exercises are based on scientific findings from the field of [positive psychology](#) which focuses on the scientific understanding of human flourishing, strengths and wellbeing, and the promotion of happiness.

Participants can sign up online for the exercises and answer questionnaires about their experiences to help researchers compare the effectiveness of two differing [exercise programs](#).

"Research has shown that people who actively boost their wellbeing and happiness are healthier, have a stronger immune system, are more productive and creative, have longer lasting and more satisfying relationships, and have higher activity and energy levels to meet challenges at work and in their home lives," said Lena Neumeier, who is carrying out the research for her masters degree.

"Mental [health issues](#) are unfortunately on the rise, resulting in businesses and organisations losing billions of dollars in lost working hours. The increase in mental health problems is a burden not only for the economy, but also for families, communities and society as a whole.

"There should be a switch in thinking about mental health – we should be more proactive in trying to prevent it rather than dealing with issues only when they arise. In the workplace there should be a greater focus on the promotion of wellbeing and the prevention of [mental health issues](#) respectively, and employers should be more aware of their responsibility.

"The techniques we are using in the programs can help to build resilience against any [mental health problems](#) that can occur.

"Just like normal physical exercise, you need to do the wellbeing exercises on a regular basis in order to feel the benefits. So participants should continue to use the exercises they learn from the study to reap the full rewards."

Although Ms Neumeier cannot reveal the specifics of the exercises to ensure the feedback to each of the programs is as accurate as possible, she said both programs would be easy to integrate into the daily work

routine.

All instructions are sent via email so participation is possible with any web-enabled device.

If Ms Neumeier and her team can successfully show that their programs have a positive impact on participants, they will recommend that organisations and businesses integrate such programs into their employee policies.

"This kind of program is a cost effective way of promoting wellbeing at work," she said.

"It's a method that requires no personal contact and it could be translated to be used in offices all over the world."

Ms Neumeier emphasised that the program would not be able to solve all [mental health](#) issues in the workplace and she is not claiming that it is the crucial key to happiness.

"However, we think that by participating in the program you can get at least one step closer to your happiest possible self at work," she said.

"Companies like Facebook and Google are examples of workplaces that already take a holistic approach to their employees' wellbeing. Studies have shown that these methods lead to increased productivity and a higher return for a firm's investment in their employees. They in turn are more loyal, more motivated and more willing to give something back.

"Of course, the benefits are not only palpable for companies but also for employees themselves, who are supported to lead a happier and healthier life. Facilitating high standards of wellbeing and happiness in the workplace is a win-win."

More information: To learn more about the workplace wellbeing study and to sign up for participation, just visit the project's website: www.wellbeing-at-work.info.

Provided by Murdoch University

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