



Yoga in the Workplace

A trial to improve MSK & general wellbeing in the work force

This template is for submissions to Public Health England's Musculoskeletal Health Case Study collection. Sub-questions are for guidance only and are not mandatory.

1) Title (word count 65 characters with spaces) and author

Yoga for MSK and general wellbeing in the workplace.
Sarah Nunn

2) Summary / Abstract [Word limit: 140 characters with spaces]

We trialed a 10-week yoga course in 8 local businesses to see if it had a positive impact on staff with MSK issues and general wellbeing. The results showed an increase in wellbeing and a decrease in MSK symptoms. Staff really enjoyed the intervention and 100% wanted it to continue.

3) Project Timescale [Word limit: 20]

The project ran from June to September 2019

4) Target Population and Setting [Word limit: 100]

The intervention targeted Essex workplaces and employees, aging from 16-65 and all genders.

5) Purpose of project [Word limit: 100]

To see if yoga would prove a suitable intervention for staff suffering with MSK issues and whether it could improve staff wellbeing.

6) Why did we decide to take action? [Word limit: 100]

Data from HSE states that 8.9 million working days were lost in Great Britain due to work related musculoskeletal disorders and 12.5 million working days were lost due to work related stress, depression or anxiety in the financial year 2016/17. We know that the workplace is one of the priority settings for health promotion. Yoga could be a cost effective, inclusive, sustainable intervention to promote a healthier workforce.

7) What did we do? [Word limit: 200]

We sought interest from 8 local businesses across Essex and put them in touch with a local Yoga teacher. They arranged a time for the classes that suited staff, either before work, at lunch time or after work. The 1hr classes ran for 10 weeks and we paid all teachers £40 per class, with the total cost of the intervention reaching £3200. Participants completed a pre course questionnaire which featured; questions to establish current physical activity levels, the PAR-Q questionnaire for physical activity readiness, the Short

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS) and the Numeric Pain Rating (NPR) scale. Once the 10-week course had finished, participants completed another questionnaire which included the SWEMWBS and NPR. Participants were also invited to give qualitative feedback and asked to tick whether they would like to see the sessions continue or not.

8) Outcome [Word limit: 100]

The SWEMWBS and NPR scores were totaled and compared before and after the intervention. The results showed that the average wellbeing score increased by 4 points, whilst the average pain scores decreased by 2. The feedback was qualitatively analysed and themes such as 'feeling relaxed afterward', 'really enjoyed the class', 'it was convenient' and 'Noticed the benefits gained from stretching and exercising'. One participant also commented "Having the class every Monday was a fabulous way to start the week. I felt significantly less stress during these weeks and as a result was more productive".

9) Evaluation, reflection and lessons learnt [Word limit: 500]

An area of learning for us was around encouraging all sorts of participants to take up the intervention e.g. those who may not be physically active, as the pilot tended to attract those who already do physical exercise. We would also look to do more positive marketing about yoga and dispel any myths/preconceptions that people may have. We also felt there could be opportunities for other activities that could provide strength and stretch based exercises with a mindfulness and relaxing focus, such as Pilates, Tai Chi and body balance.

10) Future Work [Word limit: 100]

We would like to explore other interventions that could promote wellbeing and physical activity in the work place, e.g. Tai Chi,

11) Further information [Word limit: 100]

There are specialist yoga interventions that have also been evaluated for more info visit <https://yogainhealthcarealliance.com/> and <https://www.yogaforbacks.co.uk/>

Contact Details: Sarah.nunn@essex.gov.uk

Date: 19/12/19

Revision date(s):