

# Tips and ideas for a healthier, more stress free workforce!

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Take action this National Stress Awareness Month by implementing Terryberry's Employee Wellness Program in your workplace. Let's work together to prioritize wellness and boost team engagement!

It's awesome that more employers and HR teams are becoming aware of the physical and mental impact of stress on workers, it's still an endemic issue in most workplaces. 77% of employees reported experiencing work-related stress in the past month, according to 2023 research from the American Psychological Association.

But with the right tools and strategies, work doesn't need to be a constant source of chronic stress. There are short-term and long-term solutions to make your organization a healthier place for everyone to work, and to reduce their stress levels to a healthier, more manageable degree.

How can you help your employees manage stressors and reduce the effects of stress in the workplace, both in April and all year round? We've got twelve data-backed ideas to try in April.

## Send Out Self Care Kits

What's better for managing stress than a little bit of self-care? You can send employees a kit with everything they need to incorporate more relaxation into their daily lives, like stress balls, gratitude journals, essential oils, candles, healthy snacks, delicious tea, or even some tasty chocolates – whatever would mean self-care for them.

This one is especially great for remote and hybrid teams, because these kits can be shipped to employees at home. It shows all employees that you're thinking of them and want to help them enhance their well-being.

Remind employees to practice self-care with thoughtful kits

## Host a Wellness Event

Employees might not be well-informed about how to use more coping skills and build resilience when stress hits. Having a wellness event at work where they can learn about things like the effects of chronic stress on the body and immune system, and healthy ways to manage their stress levels inside and outside of work.

You can have guest speakers come in and address your employees, or perhaps you have a medical or wellness professional on-staff who would be willing. If you have an employee well-being program in place already, this can be a regular addition to the program. Addressing issues like healthy coping mechanisms, managing emotional well-being, and the pillars of a healthy lifestyle are all great topics to address.

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## Schedule in Time for Meditation

Meditation has lots of great stress relief benefits, including lowering resting heart rate and blood pressure, and even easing digestive issues. But employees might not know how to take advantage of these benefits — how many times have you heard the people around you say, “Oh I’m just no good at meditating”?

You can educate employees on the how-tos and benefits of meditation, but it’s also critical that they have enough time to get their meditations in. Blocking off an hour for no meetings or calls can help them have enough time for this great stress management technique.

## Offer In-Office or Online Yoga Classes

Yoga is another wonderful way to manage stress and get moving to improve physical health. , And since so little equipment is needed for gentle classes, you can offer yoga classes to employees by simply finding a good local teacher.

If your office is mostly in-person, you can have in-person classes, but you can also offer online sessions to include remote and hybrid workers if that’s better for your organization. Even better? Scheduling time for these sessions during the workday, and ensuring employees have enough time in their schedules to attend.

## Fill the Break Room with Healthy Snacks

Snacks are a fun way to give employees a little break and a treat, but often the snacks offered by many companies are high in sugar and fats and give them a mid-afternoon crash. Instead, search out high-quality, healthy, delicious snacks and give them to employees in the break room, cafeteria, or in their self-care kits. They get a pick-me-up that won’t bring them down.

## Support Healthy Eating and Exercise HABITS

When employees get busy (or worse, burnt out), it can be very difficult to make time for the habits they know will benefit them most. You can offer ways to support their healthy eating habits by getting creative — I once worked for a company that had a small weekly farmer’s truck filled with fresh produce outside. Or you could incorporate healthier choices into your cafeteria meals, or give employees gift certificates for healthy meal kit deliveries.

The same applies to exercise: give employees discounts at local gyms or exercise studios to encourage them to attend, offer on-site classes if possible, and find ways to enable them to fit physical activity into their lives more easily.

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## Encourage Employees to Get Outside

Spending time in nature is great for stress levels and general mental health, but during a busy workday it can be hard to find the time. Encourage employees to have walking meetings when possible, plant a small garden where they can eat lunch, or designate an hour on Friday afternoons where there are no meetings and employees are encouraged to go for a walk outside.

## Give Employees a Paid Day Off

A paid mental well-being day for the whole company can go a long way towards reducing employee stress levels and even burnout. It gives employees extra time to rest and recharge, to spend time with their loved ones, to enjoy life without having to worry about work. And that's a key ingredient in stress reduction.

To make this day truly effective, be sure all employees can truly be offline, if possible: no catching up on emails or work, as that defeats the purpose of the day. Give them truly restorative time to themselves, and make sure your year-round time-off policy is generous while you're at it.

## Make Sure Employees are Aware of Your Mental Health Resources

You might already have excellent resources available to support employees, like an EAP or counseling, but do all of your employees know about these programs? And do they know how to access them? If not, it's time for an internal communications campaign to get the word out and encourage employees to make use of them as needed.

## Offer Stress Management Trainings

High levels of chronic stress are detrimental to health, but everyone's life has some level of stress at times, and knowing how to manage those stresses can make a big difference in mental health and well-being. Offering employees stress management training can help them to build their resilience levels at work and in life, and that's a valuable skill. Just be sure you're paying for the training and letting them complete it on work time, or it will just be another stressful to-do on their plates. These trainings can be a solid addition to your regular engagement activities too.

## Ensure Employees Aren't Heading for Burnout

If employees are feeling burned out, a month of wellness activities is not going to make headway against this very serious issue. Check in with employees if you suspect they're potentially burnt out and consider larger solutions, like hiring more staff or using contractors to fill in at busy times to reduce overwhelming workloads

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And check in with everyone across the organization — managers, leaders, and HR teams too — to see how they're doing. (Yes, even HR professionals get burned out, especially when they're tasked with fixing problems caused by broader organizational burnout.)

## **Create a Supportive Work Environment All Year Round**

Stress isn't only an issue one month out of the year, especially in the workplace: it's year-round and potentially even chronic. Getting ahead of ways to help employees manage their own stress, as well as ensuring your organization is doing all it can to lower their long-term stress levels too, makes your company stronger.

A lot of employee stress is caused by larger systematic issues such as understaffing, low productivity, poor management, and work overload, so be sure you're not letting these issues drive a stress epidemic among your employees that even the most amazing deep breathing tips or yoga session can't fix.

## **National Stress Awareness Month Takeaways**

While employee stress is high across most organizations, the solutions are within reach. Starting in April with some small steps can help you make a big difference in the stress levels and lives of your valued employees.

And if you're looking for a technological solution to empower and recognize employees for the everyday heroes they are, Terryberry is here to help.

[Schedule A Demo](#)