

walk **the** BLOCK

17 MAY 2011

Step away from your desks and onto your feet!

Did you know that 73% of Victorian workers report inadequate physical activity, that is less than 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day?

Combat physical inactivity in your workplace - *Walk the Block* on Tuesday 17 May.

To register your workplace or find out more visit:
www.victoriawalks.org.au/walktheblock



Victoria walks



73% of Victorian workers report inadequate physical activity (i.e. less than 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day)¹

40% of Victorian workers have a high or very high risk of developing type 2 diabetes or cardiovascular disease¹

The direct and indirect costs of obesity and obesity-related illnesses to the Australian economy in 2008/09 were estimated to be \$37.7 billion⁵

Walk the Block

Many of us spend around a third or more of our day at work. This often involves sitting at a desk or in a relatively confined space for hours on end. This is having lasting, adverse effects on our physical and mental health. Recent studies show a direct link between prolonged periods of sitting and increased incidence of cardio-vascular diseases, even for people who are generally healthy.

Victoria Walks is aiming to combat workplace physical inactivity by developing the event-*Walk the Block*. The aim is simple: to get people away from their desks and onto their feet.

Walk the Block will be a fun and lively event that brings together employees from corporate organisations, government departments and other workplaces across Victoria to walk their block on Tuesday 17 May.

The event has been developed by Victoria Walks to promote four simple workplace walking ideas:

- 'In your stride' - quick and easy tips to keep staff moving at work
- Walking meetings - step out for active and productive conversations
- Walkabout inductions - for new staff to learn what is close by
- Walking groups - regular walks for fit and friendly workplaces.

Resources for each of these initiatives will be sent to workplaces so that walking can easily be incorporated into organisations' working culture.

Why should workplaces care about getting employees active?

It is estimated that:

- Return on investment for workplace wellness programs could be as much as 3 to 12².
- Workplace physical activity can reduce sick leave by up to 32% and increase productivity by up to 52%³.
- Poor employee health and absenteeism is costing Australian business \$7 billion annually.⁴

Need more evidence? Various international studies show that employers who actively encourage physical activity experience the following:

- Improved productivity
- Fewer insurance and worker compensation claims
- Reduced absenteeism
- Decreased accidents
- Reduced staff turnover
- Lower-cost related to retirement, training and orientation
- Higher staff morale
- Improved ability to cope with workplace changes.

¹ WorkSafe Victoria WorkHealth checks, May 2010

² The World Economic Forum Working Towards Wellness, PWC 2007

³ Health & Development through physical activity and sport, WHO 2003

⁴ The Health of Australia's Workforce, Medibank 2005

⁵ Obesity in Australia: financial impacts and cost benefits of intervention, Medibank March 2010