

# Wellbeing newsletter

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**Making People Better**



In this edition of the newsletter, we explore ergonomics in the workplace, the power of switching off, and how to stay healthy when the weather gets hot.

This newsletter contains information about sensitive and potentially triggering topics.

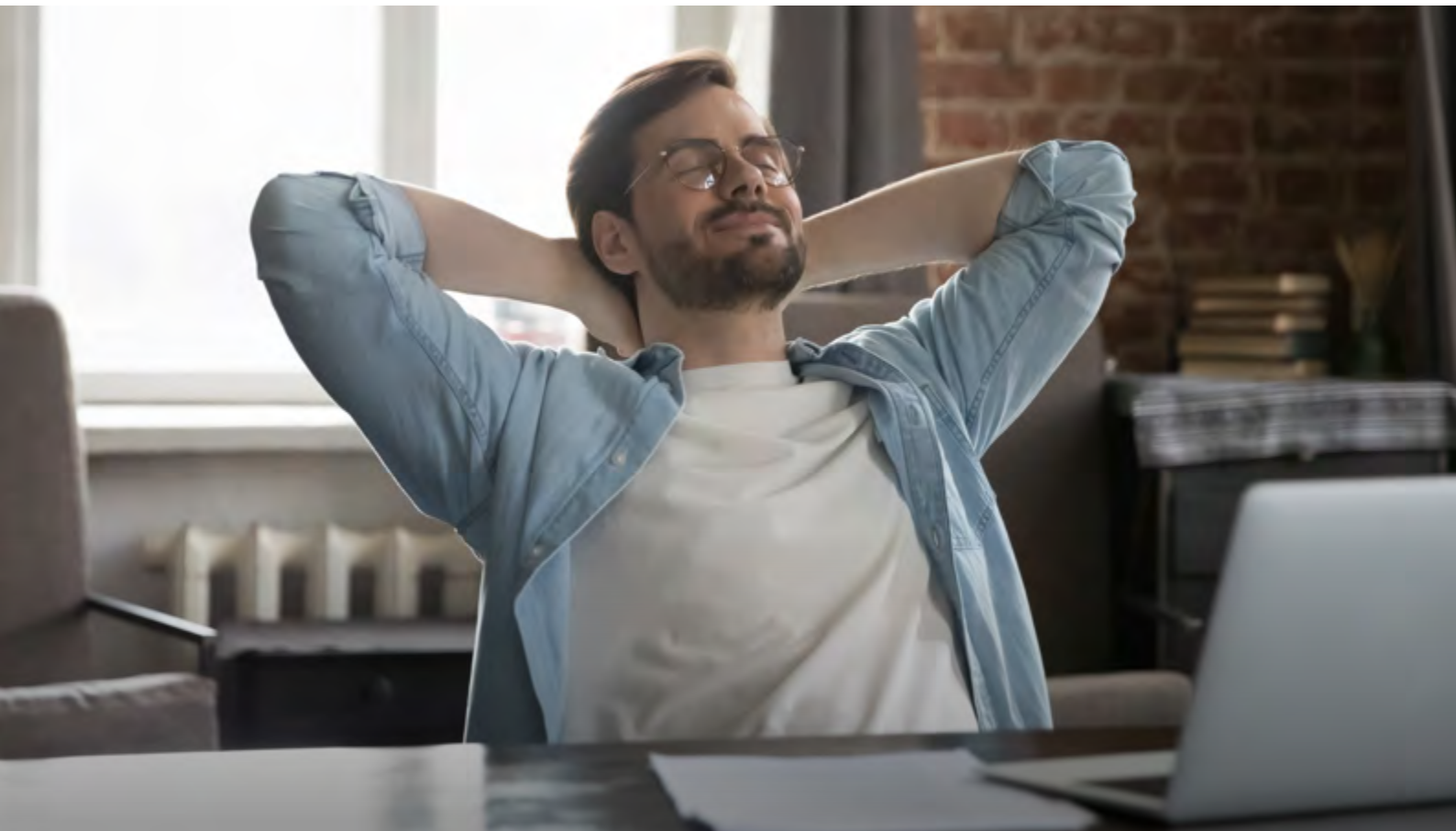
## Ergonomics at Work: Small Adjustments, Big Impact

### Why Everyday Discomfort Isn't "Just Part of the Job"

For many of us, discomfort at work has become something we quietly accept. A stiff neck at the end of the day, tight shoulders after long periods at a screen, or an aching lower back can feel like a normal part of working life. It's easy to brush these off as minor inconveniences - something to push through rather than address.

But these signals are worth paying attention to. More often than not, they're early indicators that your working environment or routine isn't supporting your body as well as it could be.

Ergonomics is about shifting that dynamic. Rather than expecting people to adapt to their environment, it focuses on shaping the environment around the individual. When that balance is right, the benefits aren't just physical - they influence how you think, feel and perform throughout the day.



## The Link Between Comfort and Performance

It's easy to underestimate how much physical discomfort can affect mental performance. Small distractions - adjusting your chair, stretching your neck, leaning forward to see your screen - all add up. Over time, they interrupt concentration and drain energy in ways that aren't always obvious.

When your body feels supported, those distractions fade into the background. You're able to focus more consistently, maintain energy for longer periods, and finish the day feeling less fatigued.

There's also a longer-term benefit. Addressing discomfort early can help prevent musculoskeletal issues developing over time, particularly in areas like the neck, shoulders, and lower back. In that sense, ergonomics is as much about prevention as it is about comfort.

## Optimising Your Desk Setup

For desk-based roles, the fundamentals are often simple - but making small adjustments can have a disproportionate impact.

**A helpful starting point includes:**

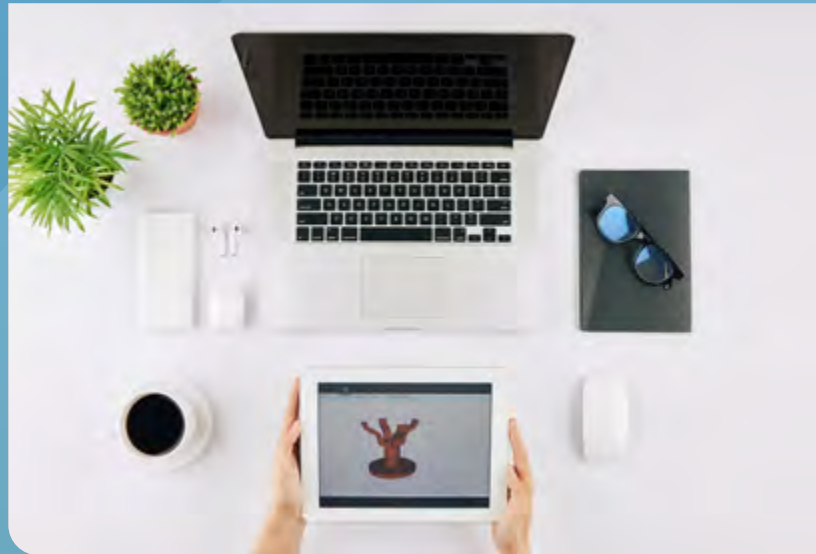
- Feet flat on the floor, with knees level with your hips
- Screen at roughly eye level to avoid leaning forward
- Keyboard and mouse close enough to keep elbows relaxed
- Lower back supported by your chair or a cushion

However, even with a well-adjusted setup, staying in one position for too long can still lead to discomfort. The body isn't designed to be static, and even a good posture can become a strain if held for extended periods.

This is where movement becomes just as important as setup.

A useful way to think about it: your best posture is your next posture.

Regularly shifting position, standing briefly, or stretching between tasks introduces variation that helps reduce tension and keeps muscles engaged in a healthier way.



## Ergonomics in More Active Roles

For those in physically demanding roles, ergonomics tends to show up in how tasks are performed rather than how a workstation is arranged.

Repetition, lifting, and fatigue all influence the risk of strain or injury. Even small inefficiencies in movement, when repeated throughout the day, can build up over time.

**Key principles that support safer movement include:**

- Keeping loads close to the body when lifting
- Avoiding unnecessary twisting, particularly when carrying weight
- Using available equipment or assistance where possible
- Recognising when fatigue is starting to affect technique

Pacing also plays an important role. Injury risk often increases towards the end of a shift, when energy levels dip and concentration starts to fluctuate.

## Hybrid Working: Bridging the Gap

With many people now splitting their time between home and the office, ergonomic consistency can be harder to maintain. Office environments are typically designed with posture and support in mind, while home setups are often more improvised.

Working from a sofa or kitchen table may feel comfortable in the moment, but over time it can encourage awkward positions that place strain on the body.

The good news is that small adjustments can make a meaningful difference. Raising your screen to eye level, adding lower back support, or using a separate keyboard and mouse can significantly improve how your setup feels - even without specialist equipment.

## Building Everyday Ergonomic Habits

Ergonomics isn't about one major change - it's about small, repeatable habits that support your body over time.

Simple actions can include:

- Taking short movement breaks every 30-60 minutes
- Noticing early discomfort and adjusting position accordingly
- Staying hydrated to support muscle function and reduce fatigue
- Speaking up or seeking advice if something doesn't feel right

These habits build awareness, which is often the most important factor in preventing issues from escalating.

## The Takeaway

Ergonomics doesn't need to be complicated or rigid. At its core, it's about paying attention to how you work and how your body responds.

By making small, practical adjustments and staying responsive to discomfort, you can create a working environment that supports you - helping you feel more comfortable, more focused, and better equipped to sustain your wellbeing over time.

# Staying Well in Warmer Weather: Hydration, Heat and Energy

## When Warmer Weather Starts to Affect Your Workday

The arrival of June often brings a welcome change in pace. Longer days, brighter mornings, and warmer temperatures can have a positive impact on mood and motivation. But alongside these benefits, warmer weather also introduces subtle challenges that can affect how we feel at work.

You might notice concentration dipping earlier than usual, or tasks feeling slightly more strenuous. Energy levels can fluctuate more, and by the afternoon it may feel harder to maintain focus. Often, these shifts are linked to hydration and how the body is responding to heat.



## How Heat Impacts the Body

As temperatures rise, the body works harder to regulate itself. Sweating increases as it tries to cool down, which leads to fluid loss that needs to be replaced.

If hydration levels drop, even slightly, the effects can begin to show. These may include:

- Difficulty concentrating or staying focused
- Headaches or a feeling of mental fog
- Increased fatigue or sluggishness
- Irritability or reduced patience

What's important is that these symptoms often develop gradually, making them easy to overlook until they begin to affect performance more noticeably.

## Hydration: Small Habits, Big Difference

One of the simplest ways to support your wellbeing in warmer weather is to build consistent hydration habits. Rather than drinking large amounts infrequently, it's more effective to maintain a steady intake throughout the day.

**Practical ways to do this include:**

- Keeping a bottle of water within easy reach
- Taking small sips regularly, especially between tasks
- Increasing intake during physical activity or time in warm environments
- Including foods with high water content, such as fruit

It's also worth remembering that thirst isn't always the earliest signal - by the time you feel thirsty, your body may already be slightly dehydrated.



## Adapting to Warmer Working Conditions

Different roles present different challenges when it comes to heat, but small adjustments can make a big difference.

In desk-based environments, simple steps like improving airflow, avoiding prolonged exposure to direct sunlight, and stepping away from screens for short breaks can help regulate comfort.

For physically demanding roles, a more proactive approach is often needed. Pacing activity, incorporating regular breaks, and wearing suitable, breathable clothing can all help reduce the impact of heat across the working day.

It's also important to recognise that individuals respond differently to temperature. Being aware of your own limits - and respecting them - plays an important role in maintaining wellbeing.

## Recognising When to Pause

Common indicators include:

- Feeling dizzy or light-headed
- Unusual tiredness or reduced coordination
- Difficulty concentrating
- Excessive sweating or feeling faint

Taking action early - such as resting, cooling down, and rehydrating - can prevent more serious symptoms from developing.

## Food, Energy and the Summer Shift

Warmer temperatures often change how we feel about food. Heavier meals can feel less appealing and, in some cases, can contribute to feelings of sluggishness during the day.

Lighter, balanced meals eaten more regularly can help maintain energy levels without placing additional strain on the body. Fresh foods, particularly fruit and vegetables, can provide both hydration and essential nutrients that support overall wellbeing.

## A Simple Daily Reset

Rather than making major changes, a few small check-ins throughout the day can help keep things on track:

- Are you drinking regularly, even when you're busy?
- Have you taken time to step away and cool down?
- Are you noticing any early signs of fatigue?

These simple questions can help you stay ahead of potential issues.

## The Takeaway

Warmer weather doesn't have to disrupt your working day. With a little extra awareness and a few consistent habits, it's possible to stay comfortable, maintain your energy, and keep performing at your best.

By prioritising hydration, adjusting to your environment, and responding early to how your body feels, you can navigate the summer months in a way that supports both productivity and wellbeing.



# Switching Off: Why Mental Recovery Matters

For many people, the boundary between work and personal time has become increasingly blurred. Notifications, emails, and ongoing demands can extend the working day well beyond its intended endpoint, making it harder to fully disconnect.

At first, this might feel manageable - even productive. But over time, the lack of clear separation can lead to a steady build-up of mental fatigue.

Unlike physical tiredness, mental fatigue isn't always easy to recognise. It tends to develop gradually, showing up in subtle ways that can affect both work and home life.



## What Mental Recovery Really Means

Mental recovery is the time your mind needs to rest after sustained periods of focus, problem-solving, and decision-making. It allows the brain to process, reset, and prepare for the next period of activity.

Without sufficient recovery, the effects can begin to surface. You might experience:

- Reduced concentration and focus
- A sense of mental exhaustion
- Lower motivation or engagement
- Difficulty switching off at night

These are common responses to sustained cognitive demand - and they're a sign that recovery time is needed, not a reflection of capability.

## Why Boundaries Matter More Than Ever

With hybrid and remote working now more common, physical separation between work and home has decreased. This makes it more important to create intentional boundaries that help signal the end of the working day.

These boundaries don't need to be rigid, but they do need to be consistent. Finishing at a set time, avoiding checking emails in the evening where possible, or creating a simple "end of day" ritual can all help reinforce the transition away from work.

Even something as small as closing your laptop and stepping away from your workspace can provide a clear psychological cue.

## What Switching Off Actually Looks Like

One of the common misconceptions about switching off is that it means being inactive. In reality, effective recovery often comes from doing something that engages your attention in a different way.

**This might involve:**

- Spending time outdoors and getting fresh air
- Connecting with friends or family
- Engaging in hobbies, creative activities or interests
- Taking intentional time away from screens

The key is giving your brain a break from work-related thinking, allowing it to shift focus and reset.



## The Power of Breaks During the Day

Recovery doesn't just happen after work - it should be part of the working day as well. Short breaks can prevent mental fatigue from building and help maintain a more consistent level of focus.

### Stepping away, even briefly, can:

- Improve concentration when you return
- Reduce feelings of stress or overwhelm
- Help you approach tasks with a clearer perspective

Over time, these small pauses can significantly improve how manageable the day feels.

## Starting Small: A Practical Approach

If switching off feels difficult, it's often most effective to start with small, manageable changes rather than trying to overhaul your routine.

### For example:

- Set a clear finish time for your day and stick to it where possible
- Take at least one meaningful break away from your workspace
- Reduce screen exposure in the evening
- Make time - even briefly - for something you enjoy

These actions may seem simple, but over time they build a more sustainable rhythm between work and rest.

## Creating a Culture That Supports Recovery

While individual habits are important, workplace culture has a strong influence on how easy it is to switch off. When organisations encourage breaks, respect boundaries, and promote open conversations about workload, it becomes easier for individuals to take the time they need to recover.

This shared understanding helps create a more sustainable approach to work.



## The Takeaway

Mental recovery isn't optional - it's essential for maintaining focus, wellbeing, and resilience. Taking time to switch off doesn't reduce productivity; it supports it.

By building in space to rest and reset, you give yourself the opportunity to return with greater clarity, energy, and balance - benefiting both your work and your overall wellbeing.

## Contact us

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