

#RemoteWorkplace

How remote work has affected the physical health of employees

Berlin, December 2022

Remote work and hybrid work are part of the new normal. Although this change was welcomed by much of the workforce, it has also affected both the mental and physical health of employees.

The last People Mobility Alliance event covered #RemoteMentalHealth. You can read up on the findings from that discussion [here](#). However, the most recent event turned the magnifying glass on physical health and wellbeing.

Event moderators and PMA founders, Mira Pathak and Daniel Zinner, were joined by HR specialist, Danit Gal, in a lively discussion about the effects that working from home can have on the physical health of employees.

Once again, the event was hosted at the Deel Berlin offices and sponsored by [Hofy](#) and [Safety Wing](#).

Flexibility - not just a buzzword.

The discussion centred around several important topics related to physical health at work, but one key point that emerged was the concept of "flexibility" in the workplace and what that really means.

It was agreed that flexibility is not simply a buzzword. It needs to be understood by both employees and employers that a flexible work environment means having a choice.

Ergonomics are important to physical health.

As more and more people are working from home, the question of how to maintain proper ergonomics in a home office setting has become increasingly important. While some may have a dedicated home office space, including a desk (perhaps even a standing desk) and office chair, others may be working from their kitchen table, their couch or even their bed. Having a suitable desk and chair is vital in maintaining proper

ergonomics. For example, a desk that is too high or too low, or a chair that does not provide adequate support can lead to discomfort and even long-term health problems.

Even without a dedicated home office setup, it is still possible to create an effective workstation from the kitchen or living room. Using a laptop stand or other ergonomic equipment can help maintain the correct posture wherever employees are in their homes.

The challenges lie in funding these setups...

How can employers help their employees with their physical health?

Some companies are adding funding for remote work setups into their budgets, but many are finding that this funding is not entirely used. Reasons for this could be a lack of communication on the employer's behalf about the initiative. It could also be that employees do not understand what type of equipment is best for them and therefore cannot make an informed decision about their setup.

Another rising trend that could solve this issue is for companies to implement a professional desk assessment that ensures the home office setup of employees is conducive to good posture and eye health.

When it is not possible for companies to carry out full professional desk assessments, then providing guidelines and resources on how to set up a home office in a way that promotes good ergonomics is advisable.

Companies still need to do more about remote work setups.

Overall, the shift to remote work, while beneficial for many, has brought along many new challenges for both employers and employees. While many companies may be focused on offering remote work as a benefit, they also need to consider the ergonomic needs of their workforce and consider the challenges that come with working from home.

The rules and regulations around this subject are still new and blurred, therefore do not sit top of the agenda for companies.

By providing some guidance and resources, companies can at least make a start on helping their employees maintain a healthy and productive home office environment.



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