

The Evolving Office: Empower Employees to Work Vibrantly in 2022



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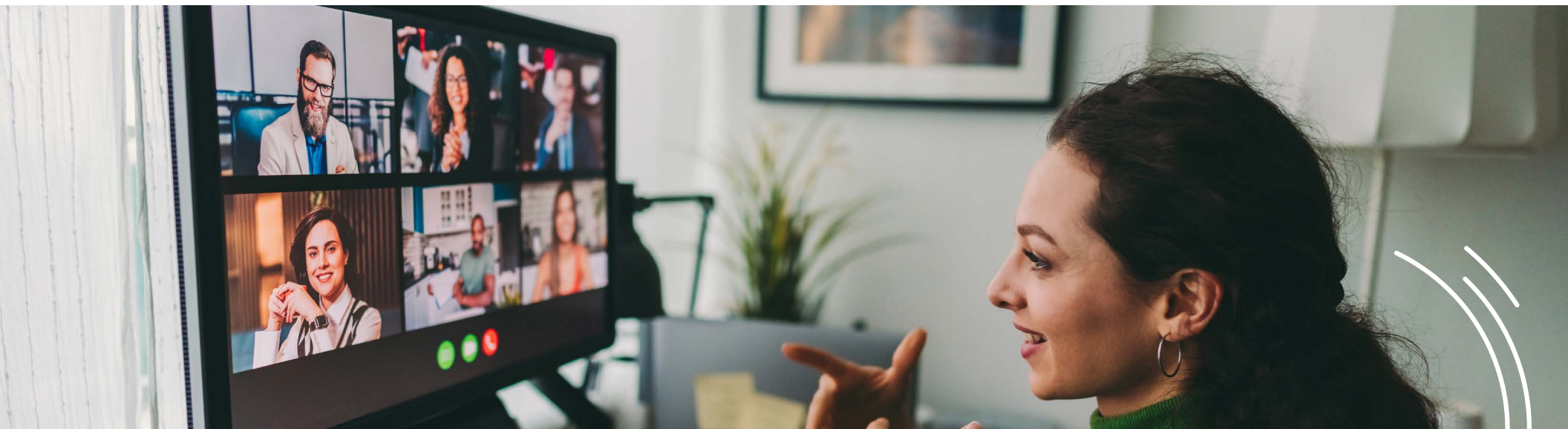
Introduction

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, employees have struggled to navigate a completely new working environment on top of caring for themselves and their families in the middle of a global health crisis. The rapid adoption of remote and hybrid work, in addition to other lifestyle changes, has placed a greater emphasis on health and wellness.

As office workers develop new routines, business leaders and decision-makers continue to navigate the best way to support this ever-changing work landscape and its impact on employee wellness. Business leaders are faced with several challenges:

How do we help employees balance work and life when the lines are completely blurred? How do we ensure everyone maintains physical health and wellness in the middle of a pandemic? How do we maintain company culture when we aren't all together?

To better understand the health and wellness impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on office workers, Ergotron surveyed 1,000 workers across the U.S. about their perception of their businesses' COVID-19 response and their outlook on the work landscape going forward. Several key themes emerged.



I. Wellness and the Remote Workforce

While the pandemic has created considerable challenges for the workforce, the implementation and normalization of hybrid and remote work arrangements have proven to be a silver lining. Organizations that were forced to adopt remote work due to

COVID-19 found greater benefits than just flattening the curve. Besides skipping the commute and swapping professional clothes for athleisure, there are a few notable changes that have proven to positively impact those who are working from home.



How Remote Work Impacts Employees Wellness

56%

reported **improvements in their mental health** as a result of remote working

75%

move more frequently and have a more active workstyle when working remotely

And while individual office workers adopted healthier habits, employers worked to support employee wellness as well. More than three-quarters of respondents (76%) revealed that their employers implemented wellness programs to support mental and physical health, with 30% of those being brand new since the onset of the pandemic. Some organizations such as [Bumble](#) and [LinkedIn](#) enforced company-wide weeklong closures to curb burnout, while Starbucks provided [employees with 20 free counseling sessions](#). Johnson & Johnson offered [stipends for home workout equipment](#) to ensure employees stayed active amid gym closures.

Even with this extra emphasis on wellness, working conditions remain high-pressure. Forty percent of respondents say that they are working more hours than they did in the office.

Does working from home mean working longer hours?



Overall, **40%** say they are working more hours now that they are remote/hybrid



More likely the case for men (**47%**) than women (**33%**)



More likely to be the case for employees at organizations with **more than 500+** (41%) than those **less than 150** (31%)

Here's how employees are incorporating movement into their day:



Of note, although three-quarters of respondents say that their work-life balance has improved as a result of a hybrid or remote working environment, it's more likely to be the case for those who are working more hours (81%). **This suggests that even though some employees are dedicating more time to their work, if they're able to fit it in and around other aspects of their lives, they feel the positive effects of a better work-life balance.**

It's important that organization leaders recognize the benefits and shortcomings of the remote work environment. When executed well, employees can feel more energized, balanced and in control of their mental health; however, the lack of separation can lead to working more than usual.

“Remote or hybrid work environments offer plenty of flexibility to take time for a quick walk or lunch break away from the computer. Employees can maintain productivity and boost their mental and physical well-being by integrating movement throughout their day.”

- Chad Severson, CEO, Ergotron

II. Work Vibrantly: Create a Wellness-Centered Work From Home Space

While commuting time may have decreased and flexibility increased, the transition from working in the office to working from anywhere did not fully curb the sedentary lifestyles of most

employees. Even though employees report being more active at home than in the office, they're still seated for much of the workday.



Even while working from home, employees are largely sedentary



63% of the average workday is spent in a seated position



Employees are sedentary for 5.04 hours of an 8-hour workday

Dedicating time to regularly step away from work to take a walk or stretch the body is a critical step to reducing long-term aches and pains. Long periods in a seated position can lead to discomfort, restlessness and brain fog. Employees reported taking, on average, five breaks from work during the eight-hour day, with **more than half (57%) revealing that they prefer to alternate between sitting and standing when working.** These findings are clear indicators that movement is an essential part of improving employees' daily routines.

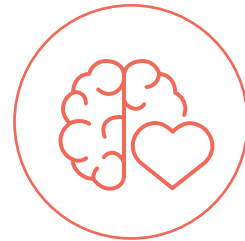
The rapid transition from working in an office to working from anywhere meant many employees created makeshift home offices to take the place of their properly lit workspaces, ergonomic desk chairs, and large monitor setups. The vast majority of surveyed office workers (90%) have a designated workspace in their homes to support remote work. After realizing that the pandemic has changed our work landscape for good, business leaders and employees alike understood that the quick fixes they had been using for their home workstations would not be suitable as a long-term solution.

Improving Work From Home Spaces for Wellness



88% of employees with a dedicated workspace at home enhanced their space to improve their well-being, comfort, and/or ergonomics

These office improvements resulted in more than just aesthetic upgrades. Changing the physical working space has made a positive impact on mental health and productivity.



Those who have enhanced their workspace are more likely to have seen improvements in their mental health (**62%**) compared to those who haven't (**36%**)



Within this group, those who cited improved mental health were more likely to have had these office enhancements funded by their employer (**15%**)

Interestingly, the data shows that the employees took on the costs of these upgrades, with just 31% of workers stating that their employer offered a stipend or reimbursement to update their home office space (to purchase, for example, a standing desk, computer monitors, monitor arms or an ergonomic desk chair). With employers placing greater emphasis on employee wellness (as indicated in part I), business leaders should strongly consider providing resources to ensure employees are working comfortably and in a way that supports their physical health.

Although some companies may head back to the office, many workers [prefer remote work](#), so the future of work will be blended. Understanding the effects that our remote workstations and daily habits have on mental and physical health is critical to ensuring the well-being of our workforce.

Is your workspace optimized for physical health? *Here are some tools to get started.*

- **Workspace Assessment**: Check the ergonomics of your desk setup.
- **The Ergonomic Equation**: Find out how ergonomics adds up to working comfortably.
- **Workspace Planner**: Enter your height to find out the proper chair, keyboard and monitor height for you.

“Staying mindful of posture is essential, especially when working from home. It’s easy to ignore the early signs of discomfort, whether that’s a sore back or tired eyes, but it’s your body’s way of saying, ‘I need a better way to work!’. By focusing on the ergonomics of a workstation and breaking up sitting time, you can minimize stress on the body and reduce the risk of injury.”

- Betsey Banker, Wellness Educator

III. Evolve Corporate Culture to Energize the Workforce

It has become evident that our pre-pandemic working styles were not as effective as they could've been. In fact, 43% of survey respondents indicated they don't want work to go back to what it was pre-pandemic, revealing there is room for organizations to evolve. And while the new hybrid and remote work environments are not without their challenges, the survey results demonstrate that flexible working arrangements have renewed collaboration and connection among colleagues.

Further, remote and hybrid work have opened up talent markets as we face "The Great Resignation," with people leaving their positions in droves in search of better opportunities and benefits. Forty percent of the global workforce is considering leaving their jobs, and some turnover trends can be mapped back to out-of-touch leadership.



How has remote work impacted culture?

88%

agree that the flexibility to work from home or the office has **increased their job satisfaction**

78%

feel that remote work has **improved collaboration with colleagues** at their organization

66%

say that **more emphasis on work-life balance is important** in improving culture in a post-pandemic environment

This leaves business leaders at a crossroads: how do you blend the best of both worlds and maintain what people like about in-office and remote work? Business leaders must be open to embracing the hybrid work environment long after the pandemic subsides. Championing employee well-being and helping team members stay comfortable and productive wherever they work must be a priority for all leaders, [including the C-suite.](#)

What benefits of a hybrid workspace are most important going forward?



As attracting and retaining talent remains top of mind, business leaders should consider providing stipends or reimbursements for ergonomic furniture and wellness programs. Sixty-two percent of respondents cite that workspaces with more comfortable, ergonomic furniture are important in improving company culture. Investing in the employee workspace, whether at home or in the office, creates a productive environment and demonstrates a commitment to employee health and wellness. Additionally, incorporating workplace wellness programs and providing access to health and wellness resources shows increased commitment to the overall well-being of employees.

“Looking forward in 2022 and beyond, prioritizing employee health and wellness will be critical to success. At Ergotron, our culture is grounded in healthy behaviors, like moving frequently throughout the day and utilizing adjustable, ergonomic furniture. As companies navigate the hybrid landscape, I encourage other leaders to provide the resources employees need to be productive, safe and healthy at work, and to bring employees into the decision-making process.”

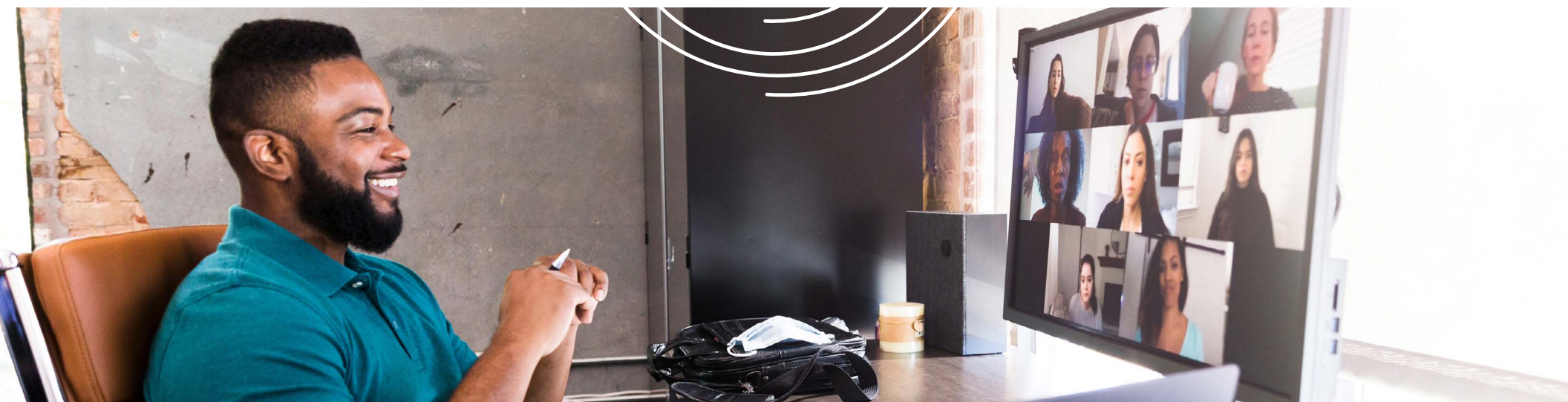
- Chad Severson, CEO, Ergotron

Looking Ahead: Build a Vibrant Workforce

Despite the challenges of the past two years, the pandemic empowered many employees to get up and move, adopting healthier habits than they did previously while in the office. For years, experts have stated that [healthy employees are engaged employees](#). This data underscores that the link between hybrid work and employee engagement, happiness and productivity is likely stronger than previously believed.

Even with positive outcomes, there is still room for improvement and many questions left for employers to answer—from considering the best way to use the physical office space to determine how to safely bring employees together to collaborate and connect. Employees are still largely sedentary at home, but many indicate that investing in more health-oriented workplace equipment could help improve their physical well-being and overall company culture, too. And small changes can add up—without the boundaries between work and home, employees may be left facing burnout, but with them, they could experience better health and more job satisfaction.

Many business leaders took positive first steps during the pandemic in adopting new wellness programs. Now, the task is to determine the long-term approach to continue fostering a positive workplace culture while supporting employee wellness. Companies that ensure their employees can set healthy boundaries and are comfortable and productive wherever they are—whether in the traditional office space or at home—will benefit in the long run.



Methodology

Ergotron commissioned independent technology market research specialist Vanson Bourne to undertake the quantitative research upon which this report is based. A total of 1000 office workers based in the U.S. were interviewed. Respondents were aged 18 and over, working full time in organizations of all sizes. Respondents were from all public and private sectors.

Interviews were conducted online using a rigorous multi-level screening process to ensure that only suitable candidates were given the opportunity to participate.

About Ergotron

Ergotron, Inc. is a global company focused on improving how people work, learn, play and care for others. Using human-centered design principles and the Technology of Movement™, Ergotron builds products and custom solutions that help people thrive in healthcare, education and contract furniture environments, and in office settings, both at home and on-site.

Through its 40-year history, Ergotron has served as an innovative industry leader known for professional-grade products and customer-obsessed service. The company has earned more than 200 patents and established a growing portfolio of award-winning brands including WorkFit®, CareFit™, LearnFit® and JÜV™. Ergotron is headquartered in St. Paul, Minnesota, with a presence in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific. For more information, please visit www.ergotron.com.

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