

**1 September 2015**  
**Media Release – Workplace Stress Getting on Top of You?**  
**From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals**



## **Workplace Stress Getting on Top of You?**

Are you feeling overwhelmed at work, and looking to improve your health and decrease your work stress levels?

The problem of workplace stress is not new; in fact it's an area of concern that organisations here and across the world have been investigating over the last few years.

For most of us, reducing stress at work by changing jobs is not a reality. Instead we need to look at how we manage stress and also look at getting meaningful support from employers and workplaces as well.

Under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, employers have an obligation to try to prevent and reduce work related harm amongst their staff. This includes mental or physical ill health due to workplace stress. While we can all manage stress when it occurs irregularly, it is the slow build up of workplace stress that we cannot escape from that tends to have the most significant negative effects.

It doesn't help when a workplace is desk or office based and there is little room for movement and physical activity, which is one of our bodies way of dealing with the hormone response caused by stress.

One of the consistent messages around managing stress is the contribution physical activity can make. As most people are aware, exercise and lifestyle changes can play a huge role in managing debilitating stress levels. Adopting an effective programme of exercise can therefore result in a win/win situation for both employees and the business they work for.

The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment is very clear that when it comes to workplace stress and, the need for workplaces to consider the impact on staff. Employers can face action for a breach of obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 if they fail to adequately address workplace stress. With the research showing exercise contributes to stress management, and workplaces obligated to reduce stress, it makes sense that employers should encourage staff to get active through a structured exercise stress management programme.

One of the issues in workplace stress management is that while many employers can see the benefits, they have lacked the resources, or the incentive to take the step to get their team healthy. In 2014, the industry association Exercise New Zealand, endorsed a stress management programme for workplaces to improve the health, and reduce the stress levels of employees.

The Stress Management Exercise Association Endorsed Programme (SMEAEP) requires exercise professionals to meet certain criteria which then allows them to offer the programme to businesses for a fee that is not subject to Fringe Benefit (FBT) Tax.

For the workplace and stressed workforce this provides a couple of key benefits:

- It reduces the cost of providing stress management
- And it gives workplaces an assurance that the money they do spend is going to result in a programme designed and implemented by REPs Registered Exercise Professionals who are qualified and experienced.

So if you are interested in reducing your work stress levels you aren't alone. Over 60% of businesses consider improving employee wellbeing to have a level of priority over the next 12 months (as reported in a recent 'wellness in the workplace' study).

Your first step? Go to the following website and check out how you can benefit.

<http://www.stressmanagementexercise.co.nz>



References:

ACE <http://www.acefitness.org/acefit/fitness-fact-article/2596/exercise-and-menopause/>

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**Who is the NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)?**

REPs is an independent non profit organisation administrating the New Zealand exercise professionals register to ensure that the public receive safe and effective exercise advice.

Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the "Warrant of Fitness Check" that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver exercise advice and instruction.

REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - [www.icreps.org](http://www.icreps.org)

