

Top 12 Priorities

FOR WORKPLACE WELL-BEING



CBRE

Top 12 Priorities

FOR WORKPLACE WELL-BEING



INDOOR AIR
QUALITY



ACOUSTICS



THERMAL
COMFORT



LIGHTING



MATERIALS



MINDFULNESS



SAFETY &
PREPAREDNESS



NOURISHMENT



WATER



SOCIAL
CONNECTIVITY



WORKFORCE
FLEXIBILITY



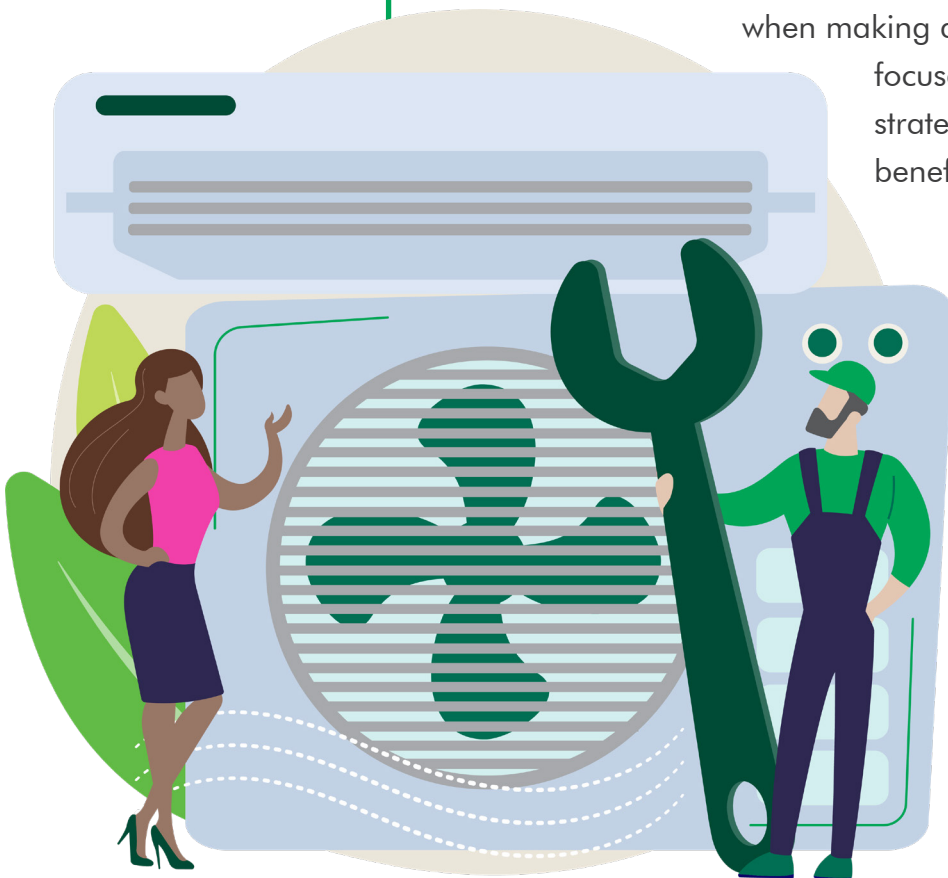
ACTIVE DESIGN
STRATEGIES

1

Indoor Air Quality

Indoor air quality (IAQ) is correlated to respiratory health and cognitive performance.¹ According to the EPA, indoor levels of pollutants may be up to five times higher than outdoor pollutant levels and have been ranked among the top environmental risks to the public.² Relevant to the current global pandemic, research has also illuminated the importance of IAQ parameters such as **filtration**, relative **humidity** and **ventilation** in mitigating the transmission of airborne infectious disease.^{3 4}

ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers)⁵ has issued general guidelines for recommended post-COVID HVAC mitigation strategies that building managers can utilize when making adjustments to their systems. While focused on current pandemic conditions, these strategies also provide proven long-term benefits to occupant health and well-being.



¹ <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/green-office-environments-linked-with-higher-cognitive-function-scores/>

² Seguel JM, Merrill R, Seguel D, Campagna AC. Indoor air quality. American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine. 2016;11(4):284-2895

³ Li, Y., et al. (2007). Role of ventilation in airborne transmission of infectious agents in the built environment – a multidisciplinary systematic review. Indoor Air, 17(1), 2-18.

⁴ Indoor Air and Coronavirus (COVID-19), EPA

⁵ <https://www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/resources>



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Acoustics

Acoustic distractions are a leading cause of occupant dissatisfaction in commercial office settings, and studies show that office noise can lead to decreased productivity and well-being.⁶ Controlling for distractions and interruptions can be accomplished by providing a balance of open and enclosed space to all employees and by focusing on the ABCs of noise attenuation. **A is for “absorb”**—using materials that reduce sound reverberation. **B is for “block”**—programming the layout of a floorplan to create sound barriers that prevent the “people warehouse” effect. And **C is for “cover”**—implementing sound-masking systems that provide white or pink noise.

⁶ WELL Building Standard v1 with 2017 Q4 Addenda; <https://www.ecophon.com/globalassets/media/pdf-and-documents/uk/leesman-review-issue-leesman-review-issue-17.pdf>

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Thermal Comfort

Hot and cold calls are often the number one complaint received by building managers,⁷ and thermal comfort correlates to employee performance. In a recent study at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, researchers found up to 10 percent relative reduction in performance when the temperature fell out of the **optimal range of 21-24 degrees Celsius**.⁸ Building managers can mitigate these fluctuations in temperature by integrating external shading, improving insulation, reducing solar heat gain and proactively monitoring thermal conditions.

⁷ <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674237971>

⁸ Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, "Effect of Temperature on Task Performance in Office Environment"

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Lighting

Access to natural daylight and views of nature have been shown to lower cortisol levels, contribute to increased alertness throughout the day and support healthier sleep habits; poor ratings of light quality and views in offices are also associated with a higher number of sick leave hours.⁹ Occupiers should focus on egalitarian **access to natural light**—often currently only accessible by those assigned to a perimeter office—and should also consider controlling the intensity, color temperature, and stimulus of indoor lighting via **circadian lighting systems**.

⁹ Elzeyadi, 2011





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Materials

Selecting responsible, sustainable materials for your space not only protects the environment but also protects occupants from harmful chemicals such as **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)** and a variety of associated health problems such as irritation and headaches, liver and kidney damage and even cancer.¹⁰ Some materials, such as copper, also have **anti-microbial** properties and can mitigate the spread of germs and disease¹¹ on high-touch surfaces such as bathroom fixtures and door handles.

¹⁰ <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/volatile-organic-compounds-impact-indoor-air-quality>

¹¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3067274/>

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Mindfulness

CDC studies suggest that mindfulness-based practices can “improve workers’ health and reduce employers’ costs by ameliorating the negative effect of stress on workers’ health.”¹² Integrating dedicated space for mindfulness such as quiet rooms, **wellness rooms** or **prayer rooms** provide passive reminders to employees to maintain healthy habits while navigating their busy work schedules. **Active company communications**, such as promoting healthy food choices, physical activity and handwashing reminders, are also recommended to educate employees and promote intentional behaviors throughout the day.

¹² https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2017/16_0034.htm





7 Safety & Preparedness

As the saying goes, by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail. Emergencies and unusual daily events can occur at any time and high-performing companies are making health and safety of their work environments a top-priority mission. Ensure the building provides safety measures such as **safe lighting, certified first responders**, access to **first aid** and **AEDs** and a clearly communicated **emergency preparedness plan**.

“CBRE’s Global Enterprise Risk approach gives us the ability to quickly understand, manage, and share thought leadership externally when emergencies arise—emergencies such as a global pandemic. Our Pandemic Plan was developed years ago in partnership with health, safety and well-being, crisis management, legal, and communications teams and is one plan of many that we continually use to anticipate our strategy during safety and well-being events.”

—Lacey Willard, Senior Director of Global Workplace Safety & Well-being



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Nourishment

Emerging evidence from behavioral economics research encourages the use of **choice architecture** to influence food choices.¹³ Placing healthy foods in prominent locations, subsidizing healthy foods, and making healthy options the default (i.e., salad as a standard side rather than chips) are all examples of choice architecture and provide environmental cues for employees to make better decisions.

¹³ Kimmons, J., et al. (2012). "Developing and implementing health and sustainability guidelines for institutional food service." *Advances in Nutrition* 3(3): 337-342.

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Water

Access to quality drinking water, available throughout the space and free from harmful contaminants, is crucial for occupant health and well-being. People who drink less than 4 cups of water a day are less likely to consume fruits or vegetables or meet recommended weekly activity goals.¹⁴ Workplaces can support employees in reaching the recommended 4-6 cups of water¹⁵ each day by considering the **distance** between each work seat and the nearest available water dispenser.

Making the experience more enjoyable by offering a **variety of options**, like sparkling water or a rotating selection of fresh fruit water in common areas can help encourage water consumption.

¹⁴ Goodman, et al, 2013

¹⁵ <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/how-much-water-should-you-drink>

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Social Connectivity

Connection is key to employee well-being, and social support has been shown to protect people from burnout.¹⁶ Allow for opportunities to connect with colleagues and establish and maintain positive relationships through **community cafes**, **break areas** and **activities** that promote collaboration. Remote workers can minimize **video call fatigue** by building variety into their day with meetings that promote movement or do not require video, by using the “hide myself” feature on meetings that do require video, and by being fully mentally present.¹⁷

¹⁶ Craig, L., & Kuykendall, L. (2019). Examining the role of friendship for employee well-being. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 115.

¹⁷ Opezzo and Schwartz, 2014





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Workforce Flexibility

Recent research shows that having a high sense of internal job control builds resilience in employees.¹⁸ Employers can support this sense of agency by empowering employees to **balance work and life**, as well as designing a **variety of workspaces** to meet their individual or task-based needs. Employees with workplace autonomy can exercise control over when, where, and how they work. This sense of control can reduce employee burnout and enhance job satisfaction.

¹⁸ Lee, Y., & Eissenstat, S. J. (2018). A longitudinal examination of the causes and effects of burnout based on the job demands-resources model. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 18(3), 337–354.

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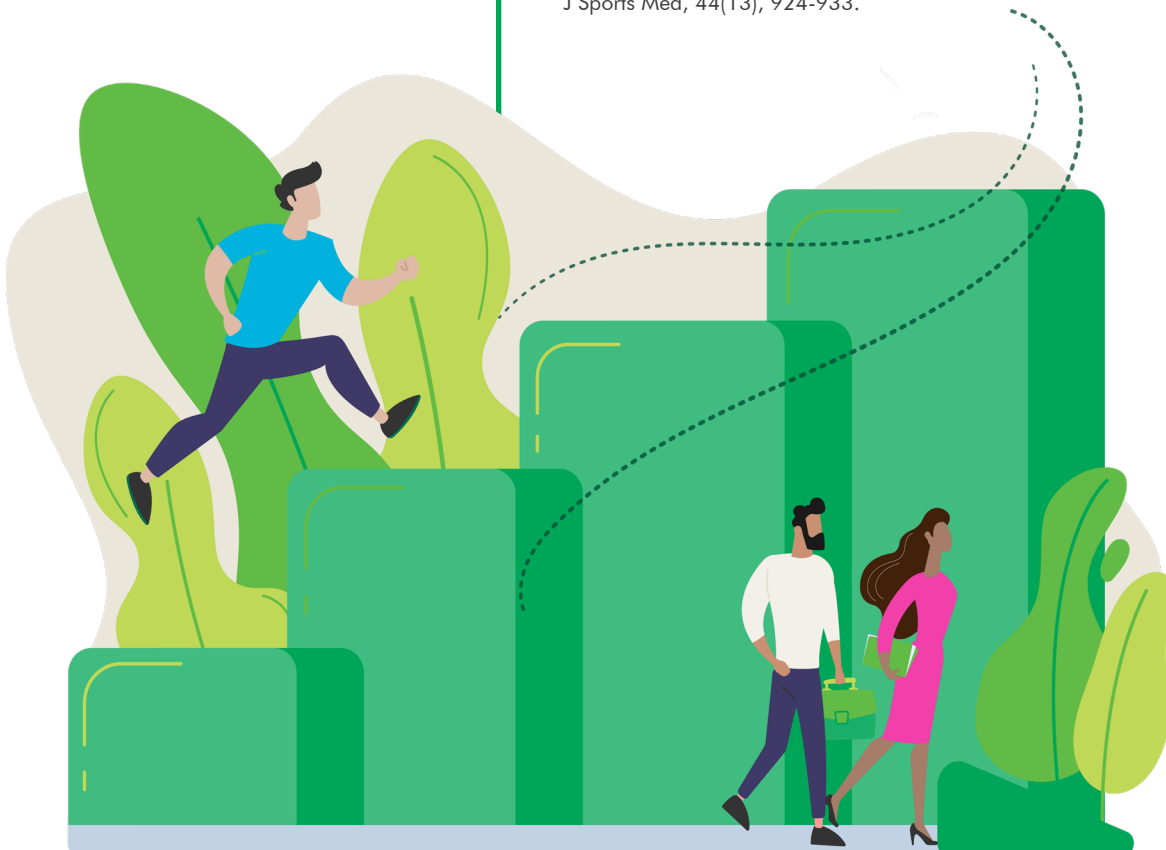
Active Design Strategies

Active design strategies are design features that promote physical activity for occupants and visitors, such as **internal stairwells** and **height-adjustable desks**. Two minutes of stair climbing a day burns enough calories to offsets average annual weight gain by more than 1 lb per year¹⁹ and ergonomic, adjustable workstations can help improve posture and reduce musculoskeletal pain.²⁰ Occupiers should consider the **outdoor features** of their workplace site as well. Enhancements to the pedestrian experience such as artwork, street trees and seating at the entrance support walkability.²¹

¹⁹ Zimring, Joseph, Nicoll, & Tsepas, 2005

²⁰ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324952427_Stand_Up_to_Work_assessing_the_health_impact_of_adjustable_workstations

²¹ Frank, L. D., Sallis, J. F., Saelens, B. E., Leary, L., Cain, K., Conway, T. L., & Hess, P. M. (2010). The development of walkability index: application to the Neighborhood Quality of Life Study. *Br J Sports Med*, 44(13), 924-933.



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