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COLUMBIA ASIA

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## CORPORATE WELLNESS





# EMPLOYEE HEALTH

CARING FOR OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE

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BY DR.CHANDAR MOHINI



The prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), especially cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer, is on the rise in Malaysia. Modifiable risk factors such as sedentary lifestyle, poor diet and excess body weight are having a large effect on the risk of NCDs.

A 2012 study in the journal Population Health Management found that employees who consume unhealthy diets were 66 percent more likely to experience a loss in productivity than their counterparts who regularly consumed fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

The majority of the world population is in the working-age group. This group spends most of their waking hours at workplaces. Achieving healthy eating habits and reaching physical activity goals are virtually impossible. Worksites, which are communities with their own social networks and infrastructure, can provide opportunity to deliver messages that encourages healthy eating behaviours.

Well-designed worksite-based health programmes have shown positive impacts on employee health. Environmental changes that support low-cost, healthy food choices, places for physical activity and group-based health education classes have been demonstrated as components of successful worksite interventions.

Employees are aware of the importance of healthy diets and are willing to choose healthy foods if they are tasty, convenient, reasonably priced and of good quality. Barriers to healthy eating at worksites identified by earlier researches include high cost, limited choices and the unavailability of healthy foods, heavy workload as well as stress-related eating.

Other causes implicated include difficulty in changing eating habits and the preference for fried foods in Malaysian culture. According to the World Health Organization, "Workplace physical activity programs can reduce short-term sick leave (by 6 to 32 percent), reduce health care costs (by 20 to 55 percent), and increase productivity (by 2 to 52 percent)."



## **THE FOLLOWING ARE TIPS ON HOW EMPLOYEES CAN EAT HEALTHY FOODS AND BE ACTIVE AT WORK:**

### **Healthy cafeteria options**

Provide appealing and healthy options at workplace and cafeterias that meet healthy nutrition standards at reasonable prices. Also, provide attractive, colourful salad bars at reasonable prices and display or make nutrition information readily available to employees.

### **Restaurant partnerships**

Develop partnerships with local restaurants in the area to provide low-cost healthy alternatives (i.e. lunch specials) for customers during work hours.

### **Shift schedules**

Extend lunch periods to allow time for physical activity. The extended lunch time can easily be made up in the morning or evening. Alternatively, allowing workers to start or end their days earlier can help them access an outside fitness class not otherwise available.

### **Individual empowerment**

Change yourself and believe that you are in control of your own habits and health. Actively engage in physical activities: walking, using stairs, taking active breaks and movements throughout the day. Promote at least five to 30 minutes of daily exercise.

### **Workplaces should include programmes such as:**

- 1) Conducting semi-annual physical screenings of blood sugar, blood cholesterol and blood pressure in addition to routine medical services.
- 2) Promote physical and mental health camps/activities as part of the organizational retreat to reduce stress, manage weight, curb obesity and create support networks. Conduct daily active and happy breaks at the workplace.
- 3) Offer ways to do monthly self-assessment of physical activity level.
- 4) Encourage staff to join sports events, use fitness centres or participate in exercise sessions provided by the organization.







# Fit to Function

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**By Sakinah Aljunid**

Employees undergo medical check-ups in order for them to secure employment. After signing on the dotted line, it would be ideal for them to continue staying healthy and not indulge in unhealthy habits such as consuming fatty foods or not exercising at all. If they do, obviously their health would be at risk.

There are companies that understand how important it is to have healthy employees. Healthy employees mean higher productivity, which is great for business.

However, keeping healthy at the office does not come naturally to everyone. There are several reasons for this:-

## **"There's nowhere healthy to eat."**

If lunchtime is only an hour, it takes a bit of effort to drive out for healthy lunch options, assuming there are no healthy options nearby. Most of the time, convenience and cost win over health. Read: fast food, rich curries, and fried everything. Double read: processed carbs, oils and fats. Heart attacks on a plate, so to speak.

Perhaps, upon reaching a certain employee headcount, companies can provide a staff canteen that serves healthy food. More fruits, vegetables, salads, steamed, grilled or boiled dishes; making up the bigger option than what is currently available.

Another way for employees to eat healthy is to make collective orders for healthy food delivery. There are companies that run this at affordable prices like Epic Fit Meals and Yumscious.

## **"No time for exercises after work."**

Then let's get employees to exercise at work (that's one less excuse for not exercising).

There are Japanese companies that schedule exercises for their employees during working hours. Apparently, in Japan and China, there are radio stations that are specifically for keeping workers fit on their feet. The stations play music to exercise to, with instructions on how to carry out basic group exercises.

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***Employee Health & Wellbeing Specialist, Scott Lister of Sport Link Ltd cites a case study in this excerpt from his 2015 article, Exercise in the Workplace: "What Japanese companies can teach us".***

"One of the first experimenters with this approach was Honda. When they hired new employees for the assembly line, instead of putting them to work immediately, they enrolled them in two weeks of exercise classes designed to simulate the movements they would need to perform on the job. Their on-the-job accident rates dropped significantly, the workers' productivity increased, and the employees logged far fewer sick days."

**"Stress? What stress?"**

Physical health is an important thing but just as important or probably more important is the taboo subject of mental health. Nobody wants to talk about work-related stress, depression or mood swings for fear of being judged. The preferred step to take is apparently, to ignore it and give the impression that everything is under control.

Mental health is real and needs to be taken care of, just as how you would take care of your body. Feed it well (brain food include raisins and virgin coconut oil), give it some exercise (learn new skills or indulge in challenging puzzles) and give it time to rest (meditate or just sleep!). Employees who realise the importance of a sound mind, organise workshops on how to handle stress at work because even brilliant minds can cave in under pressure. In fact, physical exercises are de-stressors too.

**Be a participant**

There are several ways employees can look into their health and fitness without relying on employers. See following suggestions :-





1. Organize group exercises after work, like Zumba or Yoga. If you don't plan on bringing in an instructor, log onto Youtube where there are many beginner workout videos. This is teamwork too and great for camaraderie among colleagues.

2. When your chair feels a bit warm or if you are dozing off while facing your computer, it's time to get up and move. Walk to the pantry, printer, colleague's desk or toilet; with or without a reason. Depending on what your job is, sitting for too long is a risk for blood clots and heart diseases, among other ailments.

Having your limbs at a certain position for a very long time repeatedly each day can bring about painful elbows and knees. Set an alert to remind yourself to get up and walk every half an hour.

3. In the movie *Working Girl* starring Melanie Griffith, the opening scene shows the main character taking the train to the city and walking to work. She wears a pair of trainers and changes into her high heels when she reaches the office. In the name of daily cardio, public transport too can play a part.

4. Lunchtime or after-work workouts at the nearest gym! \*Maybe companies can consider taking on a corporate package with a reputable gym to benefit its employees? A bit much? Just a thought.

5. Exercise at your desk! Wave your arms in the air like you don't care! In this month's issue, there is an article by Sharmaine Annet Dorai of Shape Shifters gym showing how one can exercise in the comfort of one's cubicle. See page ?





## MENANGANI STRES DI TEMPAT KERJA DENGAN YOGA

Oleh : Feexa Nicoll

Stres itu normal. Tiada manusia di dunia ini yang hidup tanpa stres. Stres adalah ibarat permainan perasaan. Anda tidak mungkin boleh menghapuskan stres dari hidup anda. Namun cara anda bertidakbalas terhadapnya akan mempengaruhi kehidupan anda samada menjadi positif atau negatif.

Bagaimana kita bertindak balas terhadap situasi yang sukar akan mempengaruhi kesan stres terhadap kehidupan kita. Seseorang yang merasakan mereka tidak ada daya untuk menghadapi situasi tidak pasti dalam kehidupan, akan mempunyai reaksi yang negatif terhadap stres. Ini akan mencetuskan masalah kesihatan. Stres mempengaruhi individu dengan cara yang berbeza.

Bagaimana pula jika anda mengalami stres di tempat kerja? Ini juga adalah perkara biasa. Apa tidaknya. Jika masa anda hampir seluruhnya dihabiskan di tempat kerja, sudah pasti ada yang tidak kena. Maka adalah penting untuk anda menerima seadanya bahawa stres akan berlaku bila-bila masa. Apa yang penting, anda perlu pastikan yang stres tidak mengawal kehidupan anda dan memakan diri anda.

Kenalpasti punca tekanan dan stres di tempat kerja supaya anda boleh mengambil langkah berjaga-jaga bagi mengurangkan tahap tekanan sebanyak mungkin. Stres di tempat kerja boleh disebabkan oleh beberapa faktor – bebanan kerja yang berat, konflik dengan rakan sekerja, perasaan diri dibuli, perasaan rendah diri, tidak dinaikkan pangkat dan bermacam-macam lagi.

Di sinilah yoga dapat membantu untuk mengurangkan gejala stres dan membuat anda rasa lebih baik jika ianya diamalkan secara konsisten. Yoga di tempat kerja boleh dibuat dengan pelbagai cara; melalui pergerakan, pernafasan, pembetulan postur bahkan meditasi. Semua ini boleh diadaptasikan di pejabat mengikut kesesuaian tempat dan waktu.

Melakukan amalan yoga di pejabat dapat meningkatkan ingatan dan tumpuan serta memberi anda ketenangan fikiran yang diperlukan untuk menghadapi 'deadline' (atau rakan sekerja yang serabutkan minda!). Bermeditasi juga amat baik kerana ia sangat membantu dalam menguruskan tekanan. Justeru itu, anda boleh tidur dengan lebih baik pada waktu malam.

Mari kita lihat apakah rutin yoga yang senang dan boleh dilakukan di pejabat apabila anda menghadapi stres. Kita boleh juga panggil pergerakan ini 'Yoga di atas Kerusi' atau 'Chair Yoga'

### Amalan Pernafasan Yoga dan Meditasi

Cara paling mudah untuk mengamalkan yoga dalam mengurangkan stres di tempat kerja adalah dengan mengamalkan pernafasan yoga yang mendalam sambil bermeditasi. Apabila sesuatu keadaan menyebabkan stres, duduk tegak di atas kerusi, letakkan kaki anda di atas lantai, dan bernafas dengan dalam dan tenang. Tarik dan hembus nafas anda melalui hidung. Pastikan perut anda dipenuhi oksigen sepenuhnya apabila anda menarik nafas dan mengempis bila anda menghembuskan nafas. Ulang sebanyak lima kali. Sambil mengulangi pernafasan, anda juga boleh bermeditasi dengan memikirkan perkara yang indah-indah.





### **Pergerakan Yoga - 'Neck Stretch', 'Cow/ Cat pose' dan 'Forwardbend' pose**

Semua ini boleh dipraktikkan (secara relatif) mengikut kesesuaian dengan melakukan pose ini di atas kerusi anda di pejabat. Ia mampu memberi ketenangan dan juga kelegaan untuk leher yang penat. Ia juga baik untuk sakit belakang yang diakibatkan oleh duduk terlampau lama di hadapan komputer. Bahkan, pose-pose ini dapat membaikpulihkan postur bila diamalkan secara konsisten.

Untuk pergerakan yoga yang mudah, cuba rutin 'Chair Yoga' ini. Jika anda melakukannya tiga hingga empat kali sehari selama lima minit, anda akan merasakan perbezaan ketara. Ingatlah, cara paling mudah untuk melawan tekanan atau stres adalah dengan mencegahnya sebelum ia berlaku dengan melakukan pergerakan yoga.

### **Yoga Neck Stretch/Yoga Tegangan Leher**

Mula-mula, lakukan pernafasan. Perlahan-lahan tolehkan kepala anda ke bahu sebelah kanan anda. Rehatkan otot leher dan bernafas sebanyak dua atau tiga kali. Ulangi rutin yang sama dengan menolehkan kepala ke arah bahu kiri pula.

Kembali ke tengah. Sekarang tarik nafas dan dongakkan kepala ke atas semaksima mungkin. Kemudian hembuskan nafas sambil menundukkan kepala ke arah dada. Bernafas dengan tenang sebanyak dua atau tiga kali. Leher anda akan meregang dengan selesa. Ini akan mengurangkan kelenguhan. Ulangi langkah ini beberapa kali. Pergerakan ini amat melegakan dan akan mengurangkan stres.



## Yoga Cow Pose & Cat Pose

Peregangan ini memberi kelegaan kepada mereka yang menghabiskan sejumlah besar waktu setiap hari di kerusi pejabat. Duduk di atas kerusi anda dengan kedua-dua kaki rata di atas lantai. Tarik nafas anda dan hembus keluar nafas sambil membulatkan belakang anda sambil menjatuhkan bahu dan kepala ke arah dada. Pastikan kedua-dua tangan berada di atas peha. Ini dipanggil 'Cow Pose'.

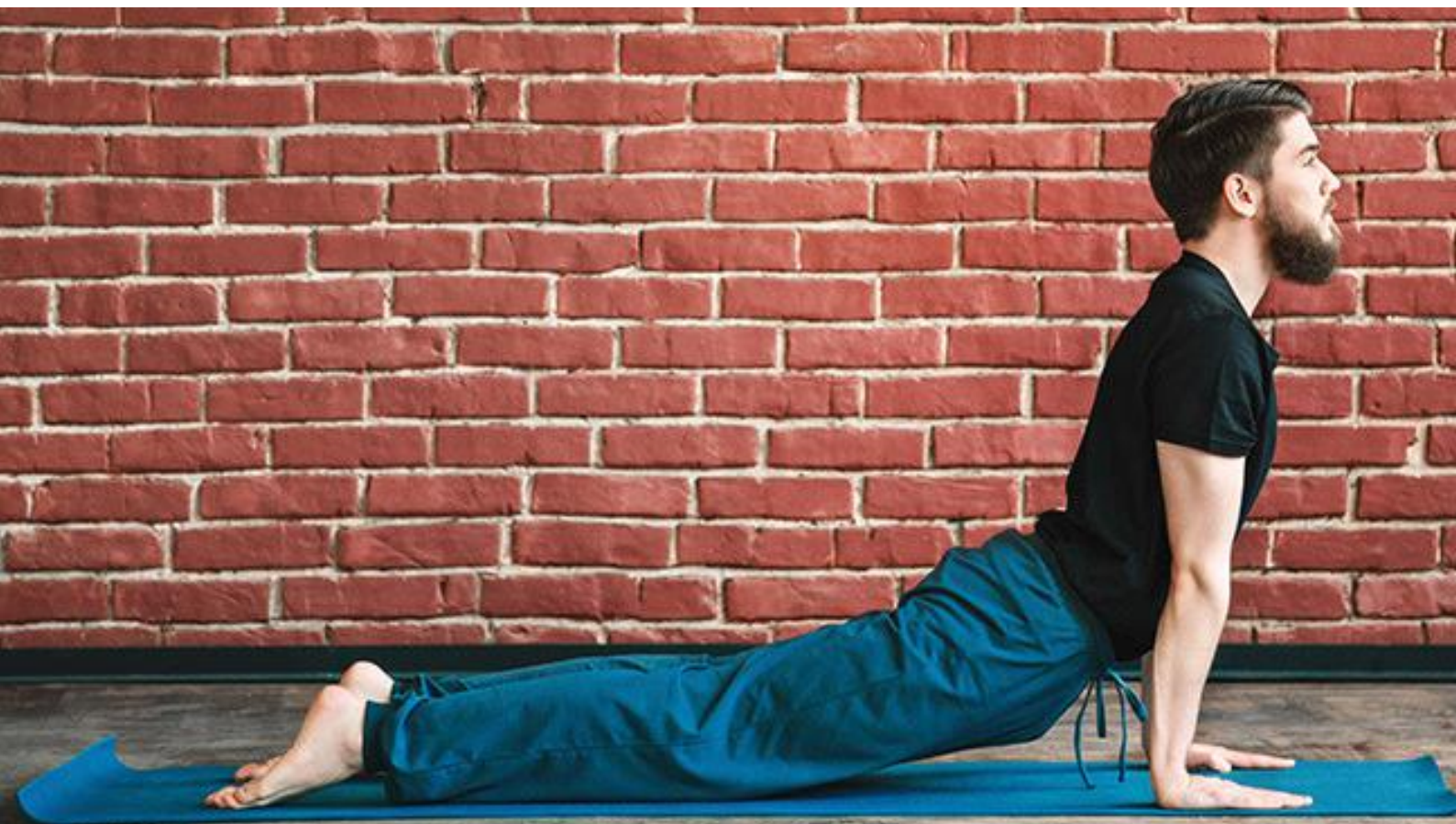
Kemudian, tarik nafas anda sekali lagi dan dongakkan kepala ke atas semaksima mungkin dan lentikkan belakang anda sedikit dan pastikan bahu ditarik jauh kebelakang untuk regangan yang maksima. Selepas itu, hembuskan nafas anda dan kembali ke asal. Inilah yang dipanggil 'Cat pose'. Tangan anda masih lagi diletakkan di atas peha. Lakukan lagi empat kali.

## 'Forward Bend Pose'/Pose Tunduk ke Hadapan

'Forward Bend Pose' membantu melegakan otot belakang di bahagian bawah. Duduk dengan selesa di atas kerusi pejabat anda. Tarik nafas dengan dalam dan perlahan. Semasa anda menghembus nafas, gerakkan dada anda ke arah paha dan tunduk sejauh mungkin membawa tulang belakang anda ke bawah .

Kemudian tarik nafas anda kembali dan perlahan-lahan hulurkan tangan keatas mencapai setinggi mungkin di atas kepala. Hembuskan nafas anda sambil menurunkan tangan. Ulangi sebanyak empat kali. Lakukan sekerap yang mungkin bila perlu.

Terakhir sekali, ketahuilah bahawa ketawa juga membantu mengurangkan stres. Ketawa menguatkan sistem kekebalan tubuh, melegakan otot yang tegang, mengurangkan tekanan darah tinggi dan mengurangkan pengeluaran hormon stres. Jadi jangan lupa untuk sentiasa ketawa bila di tempat kerja!



# EXERCISES AT THE WORKPLACE

BY COACH SHARMAINE DORAI



An employee typically spends 40 hours a week sitting on a chair. These 40 hours affect the human body in a negative way.

According to recent studies, those who sit for long hours experience:-

- a 112 per cent increased risk of developing diabetes.
- a 147 per cent increase in cardiovascular events.
- an increased chance of death by cardiovascular events.
- a drop in enzymes that help break down fat.
- a drop in calorie-burn at a rate of one calorie a minute.
- a drop of 20 per cent of good cholesterol level after sitting for two hours

So, here are some workout routines you can do without leaving your cubicle.

\*For exercises using a chair, ensure its wheels are locked before attempting any movements.

## Leg Extensions

**Target: Quadriceps/Thigh muscles**

Lift one leg off your seat and extend it up towards the front. Hold this straight for three seconds and then lower it. Stop just before your foot touches the floor. Hold this for several seconds. Repeat 20 times per leg in three sets.

## Tricep Chair Dips

**Target: Triceps/Underarm muscles**

Place your palms on your chair and your feet on the floor. Bend your elbows and lower your body. Straighten your arms to return to the starting position. Repeat 20 times in three sets.

## Elbow to Knee Crunches

**Target: Abdominal/Core muscles (stomach muscles)**

Sit leaning slightly backwards on a chair with your knees together, bent at a 90-degree angle. Place your hands behind your head and tighten your core muscles. Lean back until your back slightly brushes the chair. Engage your core and lean your chest forward. Return to starting position. Repeat 30 times in three sets.

## Inclined Push-Ups

**Target: Chest & Triceps**

Stand facing your desk. Place your hands apart on the edge of the desk, slightly wider than shoulder width. Hold your body with your forefoot away from the desk, with arms and body straight. Your arms should be perpendicular to your body. Push your body up until arms are extended. Repeat 20 times in three sets.

## Seated Box Squat Jumps

**Target: Quadriceps and Gluteus/Thigh and butt muscles**

Sit on your chair with feet shoulder-width apart, as if you are squatting. Jump as high as you can. Land with soft knees and return to starting sitting position.



# HEALTHY MEAL PREPS

## SCRAMBLED TOFU

- 1 tsp nutritional yeast
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1/4 tsp ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- 1 Tbsp water
- A pinch of sea salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- Olive oil
- 1 scallion, finely diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 package firm tofu, completely well-drained
- 1 Tbsp finely chopped parsley

1. In a small bowl, mix nutritional yeast, turmeric, cumin, paprika, water, salt and pepper.
2. Mist a frying pan with olive oil and place it over medium heat. Once heated, add scallion and garlic. Saute till fragrant for about two minutes.
3. Crumble tofu into the pan, breaking it up with your fingers. Pour seasoning over tofu. Mix well. Cook until tofu is hot.
4. Toss in parsley and continue to stir for another one to two minutes.
5. Serve with sides such as sliced avocado, whole-grain crackers or multigrain toast.

## CRUNCHY ASIAN RAMEN NOODLES SALAD

- 1 (16-ounce) bag coleslaw mix
  - 1 handful of ramen noodles, crumbled
  - 1 cup shelled and cooked edamame
  - 1 avocado, peeled, pitted and diced
  - 1 mango, peeled, pitted, and julienned or diced
  - 1/2 cup thinly-sliced almonds
  - 1/2 cup thinly-sliced green onions (scallions)
1. Heat oven to 425°F.
  2. Spread out the ramen noodles and sliced almonds onto a baking sheet.
  3. Bake for five minutes.
  4. Remove baking sheet and give the mixture a good stir to toss.
  5. Return it to the oven and toast for an additional three minutes.
- \*See that the mixture does not burn.





### ASIAN HONEY VINAIGRETTE DRESSING

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup avocado oil (or vegetable oil, or any cooking oil)
  - 1/4 cup honey (or your desired sweetener)
  - 1/4 cup rice vinegar
  - 2 tsp soy sauce
  - 1/4 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
  - A pinch of salt and black pepper
- \*Whisk all ingredients together until combined

1. Add ingredients (including the vinaigrette) together in a large bowl.
  2. Toss until combined.
- \*Can be kept refrigerated up to three days.

### BLACK BEAN RICE

#### Ingredients

- 2 tsp canola oil
- 1 small onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground chilli powder
- 2 oz green chilli peppers
- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 15-oz can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper

1. In a large non-stick frying pan, heat the oil over medium-low heat.
2. Add onions and cook until soft and translucent. Stir in the garlic, cumin, chilli powder and green chilli peppers. Cook for two minutes.
3. If the rice is cold, break it up with your hands as you add it to the pot. Stir well to combine the rice and onion mixture. Cook and stir for two to three minutes until the rice is warmed through.
4. Add in black beans and stir gently, until the beans are evenly coating the rice.
5. Season with salt and pepper.

\*Serve warm or cold. To serve cold, cool completely and refrigerate.

\*\*To reheat, add a few drops of water and microwave.





# A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

BY COACH SHARMAINE DORAI



It is no doubt that physical health is indeed important in terms of diet and exercise. However, one must also take into account the state of mental and emotional health. These are vital to help create and maintain good relationships with bosses and colleagues.

## **Get enough sleep.**

Sleep is essential if you want to be able to function the next day. Get your necessary amount of sleep. Try preparing tonight what you need for tomorrow so you can sleep in a little bit more.

## **Exercise**

After a long day at work, going to the gym sounds dreadful. Still, exercise is important because it releases endorphins and boosts your mood. Try moving around during the day by getting out of your chair and going for short walks around the office. Try to walk outside during lunch to enjoy the fresh air. You could even take the stairs.

## **Pack lunch.**

The night before work, try to pack your lunch and include healthy homemade food. That way, you won't be in a rush in the morning to make your lunch and you can make better choices about what to pack for lunch. Also, this reduces the temptation of going out to buy fast food and then eating it quickly during your break.

## **More water, less coffee.**

Most working people drink coffee as it has become an essential drink that is provided in the office. Although it provides a necessary jolt in the mornings, too much coffee can make you feel jittery and have trouble sleeping. Stay hydrated by drinking at least one cup of water for every cup of coffee you drink. Don't drink more than two or three cups a day. Try to drink those cups before noon. That way, you can lower your caffeine dependence and stay hydrated.

# WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES AT WORKPLACE

BY COACH JESPUVAN SINGH

Malaysia is the 'fattest' country in South East Asia with a rising obesity rate 1. The working population is not spared either.

According to the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO), 73 per cent of workers who are above 40, were found to be either overweight or obese 2.

Excess weight is a serious problem. It increases the risk of major health problems. Those who are overweight or obese are more likely to have a heart attack, stroke, diabetes, cancer or even depression.

This leads to an increase in medical costs and a decrease in an organisation's profit.

Weight Management must be part of your next wellness initiative. This is how you can promote it:-

## 1. Health screenings.

Communicate with your health care professional to organise at least a biometric health screening. Measure body mass index, waist to hip ratio, glucose and cholesterol levels, blood pressure and other related measurements.

You will immediately be aware of the group that you need to work with. Plan an action plan with a reasonable time line. Remember to inspire and motivate so participants stick with the programme.

## 2. Lunch and learn.

Organise lunch talks to create the awareness of healthy eating. Food and nutrition play a critical role in weight. Employees need to understand the connection.

Introduce simple and easy tips that they can work on immediately. Provide guidelines in healthy-cooking and reasonable eating-out strategies.

## 3. Move more.

Start physical activities and sports sessions. Have 'Power Walk' programmes to get everyone to start moving. The majority of employees are desk-bound and generally don't clock enough steps in a day. Have time for sports — futsal, court games, etc. It creates an active culture, which is a good way to promote physical activity.

Get moving!





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# 7 HEALTHY HABITS THAT MAKE YOUR WORKPLACE AWESOME!

## A HEALTHY BODY, MIND, AND SOUL

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**BY COACH FELICIA WONG**

For many of us, a large portion of our days is spent at work. In fact, the average person will spend 90,000 hours at work over a lifetime. That's 1/3 of our lives spent at work. It's safe to say your job can make a huge impact on your quality of life.

Everyone has a role to play in creating a healthy workplace, and simple strategies can help achieve this. Every workplace is unique so your approach needs to be tailored to fit your workplace.

We can start small with two or three colleagues in the same department and work towards taking action across multiple areas. Let's work on making our workplace a better place to be at. Here are 10 healthy habits you can implement to ensure a healthy body, mind and spirit.

### **1) Create a healthy pantry.**

What we eat can affect how we feel both immediately and in the long term. A diet that is good for your physical health is also good for your mental health.

It can be hard to keep up a healthy pattern of eating at work. Regular meals, plus plenty of water, are ideal. Try and plan for mealtimes at work – by bringing food from home or choosing healthy options when buying lunch.

For busy times, or times when you are feeling low or stressed out, try reducing or giving up caffeine and refined sugar. Make sure there is a ready supply of fruit/vegetables and snacks like nuts or trail mixes that provide ready nutrients. To start the ball rolling, you can start announcing a theme of the week example, 'Bring A Fruit Week'. Everyone can hang around eating and sharing fruits even!

Be aware that some people find public-eating at work very stressful because of past or current eating disorders. So if someone doesn't want to come to work dinners, or makes different food choices in the office, don't pass comment or put pressure on them to join in.

### **2) Organize a weekly exercise gathering.**

In recent team buildings, I noticed those who spend an hour working out together at least once a week, to do activities such as yoga or go to the gym, bond and work better together in their department. This may be a great way for seniors to bond with juniors in the company too as physical exercise is a common interest for most people.

Start small. It does not need to be a competitive sport. You can hire a Zumba teacher or group together a running or walking club and do it at least once a week.

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Since most of us may be busy with family chores in the evening, scheduling fitness activities with your colleagues may be most convenient. On top of that, if you are facing stress or tension at work, you may want to release it during the exercise and then go home to your family with a smile on your face.

### **3) Use icebreakers at meetings.**

Meetings are often a weekly activity or even daily for some workplaces. Sometimes we may have a teammate who may not be able to focus at work.

Why not set aside five to 10 minutes for employees to share a random fact or the week's update? During these times, they can express themselves and be heard.

As a team working together on a project, this is the kind of gesture that will be much appreciated.

One may also share a good achievement like closing a deal, or even something fun, like picking up a new interest or trying out a new experience. This allows individuals to express themselves and perform better at work!

### **4) Share something good and positive about a fellow colleague.**

The world is so full of judgements these days. Social media is often the platform to share news and negativity.

When will we get the time to address positivity and goodness? We could do that via simple things such as messages on a simple whiteboard in the pantry or post-it notes in a designated corner of the office. "You have a great smile today, Puan Siti!" or "Let's do our best today, team!", or something like "Have nice day people!" A sweet and genuine compliment goes a long way.

It's also a great way to promote positivity in your workplace!







## **5) Promote and share a healthy habit routine.**

Workplace is not just about getting your work done. It's a great place to promote weekly health or wellness tips. It is also great to acknowledge a fellow colleague whose health has been progressing by creating a 'Healthy Employee of the Week' poster on the office bulletin board. This employee can share his or her top three tips with other colleagues like eating an apple a day or taking a 30-minute walk three times a week.

## **6) Promote hobby clubs.**

Start hobby clubs that get active at lunchtime. Try and get away from your desk to eat. You could try a lunch club at work - where you come together to share meals and try new things. You can nominate a colleague with a skill or talent, and you can call it Lunch & Learn. He or she will be the speaker of the day during lunch.

Create different topics and hobbies to discuss. This also takes away the stress of just discussing about work during eating time.

## **7) Volunteer to do charity work as a group.**

One of the best ways to create a healthy environment at work is to collaborate and become volunteers for charity work on a small scale. One can also include their family members as volunteers.

Besides just organizing trips or teambuilding outings, volunteering is a simple but impactful activity to indulge in with your colleagues.

Volunteering benefits you and your team in a few ways; it makes you feel happy and able to combat anxiety, stress and anger. Professionally, it helps you develop industry-related skills, the ability to work in a team and overall leadership.

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# ***CORPORATE WELLNESS***

**BY COACH SHAFIQ AZHAR**

Hectic schedules can make it seem impossible to fit workouts into our busy week. The prospect of packing a gym bag, trudging to your local gym, working out, showering, changing and trudging back to where you came from takes an awful lot of time. The modern workplace is wreaking havoc on your health. Spending long hours hunched over a computer, sitting through endless meetings and commuting to and from the office disrupts the body's natural alignment.

As a result, your shoulders lurch forward, placing undue stress on your neck, hips and back. When one or both of the hip flexors are locked up — a natural result of sitting all day — your body sends signals to the opposite muscles.

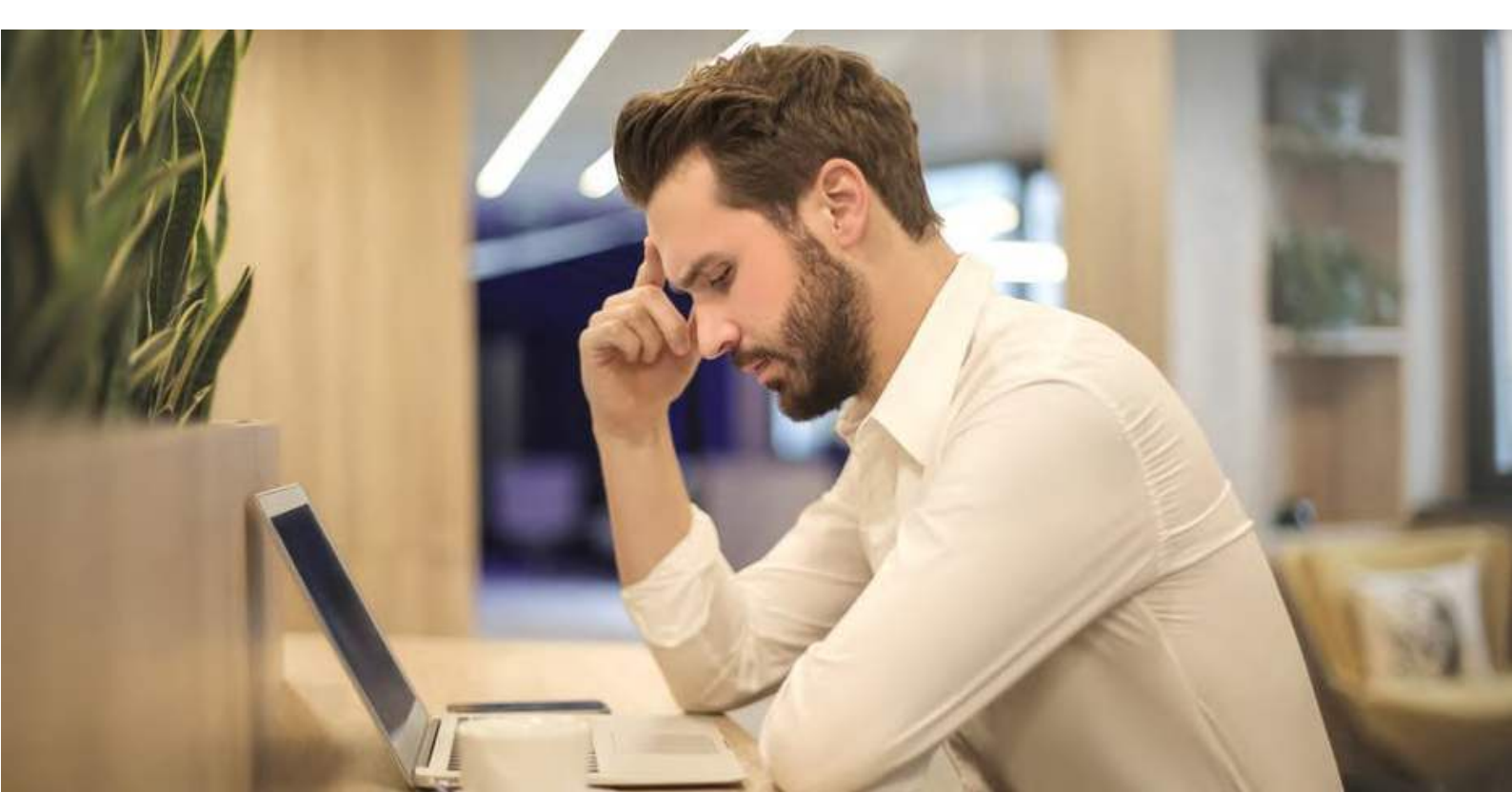
This shuts down your glutes and makes the hamstrings less efficient. It creates a relationship where the hip flexors are dominant and the glutes submissive, which inevitably leads to back pain

## **First, fix your posture.**

You already know sitting all day is bad for you. Don't make it even worse with bad posture. Re-set your posture frequently throughout the workday.

If you're standing with perfect posture, your ears should be in line with your shoulders, your hips aligned with your knees and your knees directly over your ankles. If you're seated, there should be a straight line between your ears and hips. To reset your body's alignment, start with your glutes. Squeeze your left butt cheek, and then the right. "Unless you reactivate your glutes, no buns-of-steel workout is going to make a difference,"

Next, pull your shoulder blades back and down, as if drawing them into your back pockets. Finally, pull your bellybutton away from your belt without holding your breath. This activates the transverse abdominis, the first muscle that fires during movement, and protect your lower back.







Make it a point to perform this series of posture checks throughout the day, especially when you're stuck in a meeting, sitting in traffic or on a rambling conference call.

## Desk-ercise.

Remember the days when 'work' meant manual labor with a side of blood, sweat, and tears? Neither do we. These days it seems we're more likely to log hour after idle hour with our bums glued to our seats. And while you may be an Excel champ by day and gym rat by night, recent research suggests that the recommended 30 minutes of cardio five times per week may not undo the health risks of a sedentary lifestyle .

So what's a worker chained to his or her desk to do? Luckily short bouts of aerobics, strength exercises, and stretching in between conference calls and chats can help improve fitness levels and heart health . While these desk-ercises, or desk exercises for the cubicle-bound, won't promise Olympic mile times or six-pack abs, they might just improve strength and burn a few extra calories to boot. So whether it's Powerpoint, Photoshop, or emails on that to-do list, we've got 33 sneaky exercises for a healthier (and happier!) workday.

If you thought stretching at your desk was awkward, what do desk workouts look like? But researchers have found that even one-minute spurts of activity throughout the day can be beneficial. Here are some ideas for subtle workouts at your desk

- 1) Flex or tighten your abs and hold for 30 seconds. Release, and repeat 10 times.
  - 2) Squeeze your glutes and hold for 30 seconds. Release, and repeat 10 times.
  - 3) Buy a hand gripper and use it at your desk to work out your forearms and hands.
  - 4) If you're at a standing desk, do calf raises for one full minute.
  - 5) The Wall Sit. Wall sits are great for building strength and endurance
  - 6) The Stair Master. Want to avoid elevator small talk in favor of elevating the heart rate? Take the stairs!
  - 7) Use your water bottle as a dumbbell and curl it for your biceps, Triceps or maybe shoulder exercise
- There are so many ways of exercise if u are at workplace. These are only less than a half of technique or deskercise u can try for beginning.
- Instead of just wonder around or chat with your friends or on the phone, why not start to do all this deskercise while u chat and who knows your friends might join you and it's gonna be fun!



# RECONNECTING YOU TO AN ACTIVE LIFE

## MOVE BEYOND SPORTS INJURIES AND KNEE JOINT PAIN

**BY DR. ANG HOCK LEONG  
DR. SIDIK CHE KOB**

We often take our ease of movement for granted. However, when sharp pains shoot through our joints and limit our daily activities, we may need to consider seeking professional help.

Dr. Sidik Che Kob, Consultant Orthopaedic and Sport Surgeon and Dr. Ang Hock Leong, Consultant Orthopaedic and Joint Reconstruction Surgeon at Columbia Asia Hospital, Klang discuss about treating sports injuries, knee osteoarthritis and helping patients on the road to recovery.

### Pain from sprains and injuries

"The knees, ankles, wrists, shoulders and elbows are susceptible to injuries from the likes of football, hockey, gymnastics, tennis and golf, or even motor vehicle accidents and falls. Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) or overuse of one body part (i.e. the elbow in golf and tennis) without treatment can also lead to chronic tendon or muscle pain," Dr. Sidik explained.

In his practice, Dr. Sidik also sees Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) tears as one of the commonest non-contact sports injuries especially in football or futsal games. "Shoulder pain is common after sports activities that involve repetitive movements such as thrower's shoulder in baseball games.

Sprains and strains involving the ankle, calf, thigh, back and elbow muscles are also common but they usually heal with rest, medication and physiotherapy," he said. "Rotator cuff tears in shoulders is commonly found in the older age groups (above 40 years old). It occurs most often in people who repeatedly perform overhead motions.

Examples include painters, carpenters and people who play baseball or tennis. Runner's knee or Patellofemoral pain syndrome (PFPS) is common among runners, which may warrant urgent medical treatment if it gets severe."





## Pain from knee osteoarthritis

Speaking of knees, Dr. Ang highlights a common condition among Malaysians - knee osteoarthritis, a wear-and-tear in which the cartilage, the natural cushioning between joints at the surface of bones wears away. The bones of the joints eventually rub closely against one another with less of the shock-absorbing benefits of cartilage. The rubbing results in pain, swelling, stiffness, decreased ability to move and sometimes, varus deformity (bowl knees).

Both Dr. Sidik and Dr. Ang explained that for these injuries, surgery is only recommended when non-operative measures fail to address the problem. "For severe cases such as fractured bones, you may require fracture fixation or corrective surgery. To decide, we would consider your pre-injury activity level, desire to return to high demand sports and your own expectations as well," Dr. Sidik explains.

For symptomatic arthritis, Dr. Ang said "painkillers are the first line treatment for all patients while rehabilitation, exercise and wellness activities through supervised exercises and home programmes have shown the best results. Hyaluronic acid joint injections, oral glucosamine and chondroitin, offloading braces and insoles are also available treatments." If these conservative treatments fail, the patient would be advised to undergo surgery," Dr. Ang adds.

## State-of-the-art surgery

According to Dr. Sidik, current surgical procedures using arthroscopic technique is routinely carried out for most sports-related injuries. Examples include shoulder rotator cuff, cartilage and meniscus tears, ACL and other intra-articular ligaments injuries. "The surgeon makes two to three small stab incisions (arthroscopic portal) on the patient's skin in the knee, shoulder or ankle region respectively.

A pencil-sized instrument containing a small lens and lighting system to magnify and illuminate the structures is used and inserted through the portal incision to visualise the joint. The torn ligament is then reconstructed and the torn meniscus or cartilage is repaired with the help of a special instrument through this tiny incision," he explained.

For knee osteoarthritis, Dr. Ang clarified the various surgical options. "Arthroscopy is used to delay the more serious joint replacement surgery while an osteotomy is recommended for younger patients with damage primarily in one area of the knee.

Knee replacement surgery entails the replacement of a diseased knee joint with an artificial prosthesis which is made of metal and special plastic."

## The road to recovery

Dr. Ang cautioned that some wear will occur in all joint replacements but great advances have been made to prolong the life of an artificial joint. Post-surgical care in the form of acute pain relief, prophylactic antibiotics, mechanical calf pumps and blood thinners for deep vein thrombosis (DVT) prophylaxis, early ambulation and physiotherapy can contribute towards a patient's successful recuperation. "The anaesthetic team takes care of post-operative pain while the physiotherapy team helps patients carry out post-operative strengthening and rehabilitation," Dr. Ang said.

"For sports injury patients who have undergone surgery, we understand that getting back into the game as soon as possible is important. That's why the team of certified orthopaedics, therapists and service teams need to communicate closely to design personalised programmes for patients to safely support and restore their abilities in the best time frame possible," said Dr. Sidik.

This article was brought to you by Columbia Asia Hospital – Klang







ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO WELLNESS

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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**Wellness is simply the process of being aware of and actively working towards better health**

Columbia Asia has been providing their corporate clients with a variety of wellness programs (health talks, on-site screenings, events etc.) for over a decade. Now, they have decided to move forward to a more sustainable wellness initiative.

In October 2016, Columbia Asia gathered a team of experts to design a program which they called Make-A-Difference Lifestyle Modification and Health Intervention Program.

In February the following year, the M-A-D program was launched as the first pilot project in collaboration with one of Malaysia's leading GLCs. The result was astonishingly positive. That motivated Columbia Asia to further its initiatives with a more comprehensive and inclusive program – the Corporate Health Transformation Program.



## Health and Wellness in Malaysia

Chronic disease is the leading cause of death in Malaysia. Poor health among working-age individuals costs the country about 7.1% of total GDP (Victoria Institute of Strategic Economic Studies, 2016). Most of this poor health constitutes various chronic diseases.

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# CORPORATE HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM

BY COLUMBIA ASIA

## The Only Solution

A study done by the World Health Organization (WHO podcast, 1st podcast—2009 episode number 56] found that 60% of all deaths annually are due to preventable, non-communicable diseases like cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. These diseases have common risk factors which include inappropriate diet and physical inactivity, both of which are related to lifestyle and personal choices. The same WHO study reported that lifestyle intervention via small modifications to people's behaviour, is the best and only answer to the problem.

## Corporate Health Transformation Program

To create real, achievable, measurable and cost-effective preventive solutions, comprehensive lifestyle modification is necessary. This involves altering long-term habits, typically of eating or physical activity, and maintaining the new behaviour indefinitely. Lifestyle modification can be used to treat a range of diseases, including obesity.

Towards realizing the vision 'A passion for making people better', Columbia Asia has taken the initiative to start and lead the movement towards prevention in corporate healthcare in Malaysia.

The first important step has been to design and develop a personalised lifestyle modification and health intervention program for its corporate clients. By working directly with corporations and their employees, Columbia Asia is helping to create a culture of health that can mitigate the rising costs of healthcare faced by individuals, companies and insurers.

Columbia Asia's corporate health transformation program has two phases.

## Phase One - Corporate Health Transformation Program

Employees health assessment and screening will be done at the company's premises. An online comprehensive health survey will be conducted. Employee test results are provided to respective employees and they receive doctor consultation at their offices. Prevention classes will be set up and topics that will be discussed will depend upon the overall test results.

## Phase two - Make A Difference Program

Make-A-Difference (M-A-D) is a comprehensive result-oriented series of workshops/ programs that promote healthy living at the workplace. It encompasses lifestyle management and disease management interventions to create a well workplace.

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# MAKE-A-DIFFERENCE



The M-A-D initiatives are best derived from the Health Risk Assessment and are conducted to reduce the prevalence of lifestyle-based diseases.

The employees that would be eligible for this program are those that took part in phase one of the program and test results show that they need to take better care of their health.

This 3-month program consist of 12 weeks of physical and mental sessions. The sessions are usually once a week at the client's premises;


Physical session will include a certified trainer and equipment's both indoor and outdoor activities will be included.

Mental sessions will include certified mind set change trainer, Nutritionist briefing and doctor's briefing (briefing will depend upon what the overall employees test results show).

Most of the engagements are done via WhatsApp and social media and it is a 24 hour service which gives participants 24 hours access to wellness team (Nutritionist, wellness doctor, fitness trainers and couches).

Another screening is done after the 3 months to gauge the employees improvements. Graduation to celebrate employee's achievements.

To create a culture of health this program provides continuous enrolment in batches. After each batch is completed, the next batch is enrolled immediately.



The focus of the Program is more on disease management and intervention rather than on things like weight loss, although employees do see a reduction on their overall weight and some do experience muscle gain. Participants with higher cardiovascular risks, high cholesterol, diabetes and stress disorders are the suitable target for this lifestyle intervention program. The lifestyle and disease management programme can be tailored based on the needs and wants of the organisation.

### **Benefits of Make -A - Difference Program**

Some of the main benefits of M-A-D program includes:

- 1) Reduced health-care cost
- 2) Reduced absenteeism
- 3) Reduced presenteeism
- 4) Improved health status of employees
- 5) Reduce turnover
- 6) Increased engagements among employees
- 7) Increases productivity

### **Conclusion**

Corporations in Malaysia recognize the importance of health interventions as it is estimated that for every \$1 spent on prevention, \$3 can be saved. The interest in the Program has been overwhelming and that signals a significant shift in the healthcare industry which is moving towards preventive care. It also highlights an important shift among corporations who are actively engaging with employees to put their health first.



## ABOUT THE WRITERS



### **Coach Shafiq Azhar**

Certified and experienced Personal Trainer with 8 years experience conducting one-on-one training session and group training. Expert in designing and monitoring exercise programs based on client needs, goals, abilities, and anatomy. Advanced training in metabolic testing, nutrition, and weight management consulting. Adept at creating a warm environment in which clients of all ages can successfully achieve health and wellness goals. He believes learning should always be active and fun.



### **Coach Felicia Wong**

Felicia Wong is a lifestyle coach. She began her journey 10 years ago with her personal wellness transformation with proper approach to nutrition and active lifestyle. She is also a certified fitness instructor and personal trainer, and Level 1 Sport Science Coach. Through continuous self development and years of working in the field hands-on with clients, she believes in educating individuals from indoor workouts to outdoors running and hiking, and healthy grocery coaching.



### **Coach Sharmaine Annet Dorai**

Sharmaine is a Certified Personal Trainer (Since 2013). Fitness is her true passion. Her mission is to change people's mindsets & help transform their lifestyle into a fitter, healthier and better way of life. She likes to teach people to enjoy exercise, prepare & eat healthy easy & delicious food. Whether it's in the home, at the gym or even outdoors, her focus is to help guide them through their fitness journey.



### **Sakinah Aljunid**

Sakinah Aljunid is former Editor of Her World Malaysia. She has been writing professionally for 26 years. Among her previous employers include RTM, NST, Marie Claire and EH where she used to cover lifestyle features and general news. She is currently the Marketing Manager at Columbia Asia Sdn Bhd of which she joined in 2012.

## ABOUT THE WRITERS



### **Dr. Chandar Mohini**

Dr Chandar Mohini obtained her medical degree from Gajra Raja Medical College Gwalior, India in 1991. She did her medical training in Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi India and at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kota Kinabalu Sabah. Dr Mohini has also completed her Nutritional Certification with SAHAMM (Society for the Advancement of Hormones and Healthy Aging Medicine, Malaysia). She has great passion towards preventative medicine.



### **Coach Jespuvan Singh**

Jespuvan has a Master of Science in Sports Science from Universiti Sains Malaysia. He's well known in his research on coconut water being a sport drink. Jespuvan has been an active member of the training community in Malaysia and has served local and international organisations over the span of more than 13 years. He's been responsible in designing, developing and delivering programmes, such as healthy-living, weight loss, disease management, nutrition and exercise workshops and stress management programmes.



### **Dr. Sidik Che Kob**

Consultant Orthopedic, Trauma & Arthroscopy Sports Surgeon MBBS (Pakistan), MMed (Orthopedic) (USM), Fellowship in Arthroscopy Knee & Shoulder Surgery (Austria), Sport Surgery (Malaysia)



### **Dr. Ang Hock Leong**

Consultant Orthopedic, Trauma & Joint Replacement Surgeon MBBCh BAO (Ireland), MS (Orthopedics) (UKM), Fellowship in Adult Joint Reconstruction (Singapore)



## ABOUT THE WRITERS



### **Feexa Nicoll**

Feexa is an Associate Image Consultant. An Affiliate certified by IITTI ( Institute of Image Training and Testing International Canada). She is also a Certified NLP Practitioner certified by the National Federation of NLP Florida USA. She has hosted and starred in her own three season Yoga series aired by Astro Ria, TV2, TV3 and NTV7.- Currently she is the CEO of Richness and Wellness Group of companies.

**HEALTH STARTS  
FROM THE INSIDE**

