

TOTAL WORKER HEALTH®

ADVANCING WORKER SAFETY, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING

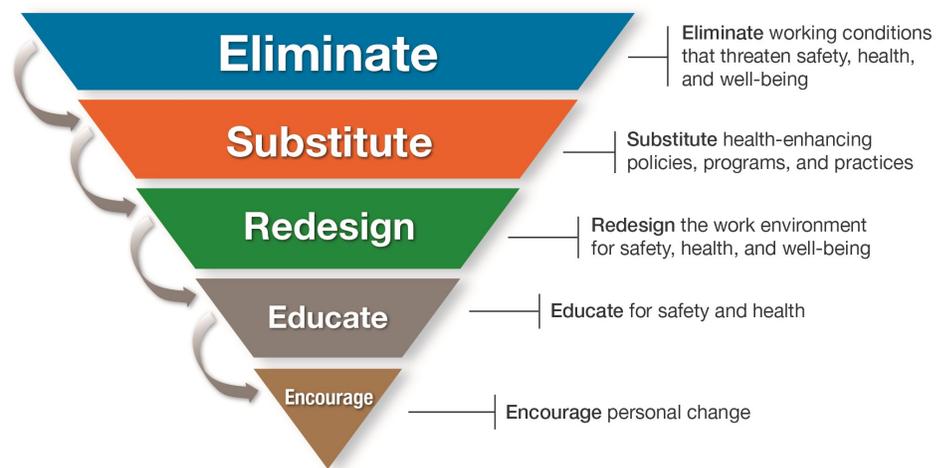
Q: What is *Total Worker Health*®?

A: *Total Worker Health*® (TWH) is defined as policies, programs, and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with promotion of injury and illness prevention efforts to advance worker well-being. The TWH approach seeks to improve well-being in the American workforce for the benefit of workers, employers, and the nation by protecting safety and enhancing health and productivity. TWH is part of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Q: What is the Hierarchy of Controls Applied to NIOSH TWH?

A: The Hierarchy of Controls Applied to NIOSH TWH provides a conceptual model for prioritizing efforts to advance worker safety, health, and well-being. This applied model is based on the traditional Hierarchy of Controls well-known to occupational safety and health professionals. As in the traditional Hierarchy of Controls, controls and strategies are presented in descending order of anticipated effectiveness and protectiveness, as suggested by the cascading arrows. The Hierarchy of Controls Applied to NIOSH TWH expands the traditional hierarchy from occupational safety and health to include controls and strategies that more broadly advance worker well-being. The Hierarchy of Controls Applied to NIOSH TWH is not meant to replace the traditional Hierarchy of Controls, but rather is a companion to this important occupational safety and health model. It serves to illustrate how TWH approaches emphasize organizational-level interventions to protect workers' safety, health, and well-being.

Hierarchy of Controls Applied to NIOSH *Total Worker Health*®



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

By AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION NEWS

Researchers evaluated 5,566 employed workers to determine how many met the ideals for blood pressure, body mass index, total cholesterol, blood sugar, physical activity, smoking and diet quality.

Some of the occupations that registered the worst numbers were:



1. **Police and firefighters**



2. **Service occupations**
(Includes people who prepare food, do building and grounds keeping, cleaning, and deliver personal care—hairstylists, animal care, makeup artists, funeral services, healthcare support, and entertainment.)



3. **Sales, office and administrative support**

Some of the occupations that registered the best numbers were:



1. **Management and professionals**



2. **Healthcare practitioners**
(doctors and nurses)



3. **Arts, entertainment, sports and media**

Sources: REasons for Geographic And Racial Differences in Stroke Study, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the Centers for Disease Control, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Q: Why use an organizational approach to worker safety, health, and well-being?

A: Today's employers and workers are challenged not only by well-recognized risk and hazards—such as traumatic injuries and chemical exposures—but also by complex, emerging issues such as shifting employment relationships, work-related stress, an aging workforce, and increasing rates of chronic diseases. Workers in some industries and occupations fare far worse than others, likely due to the built-in risk factors associated with the working conditions they face each day. Evidence-based TWH strategies may help improve your workers' health, safety, and well-being *and* your organization's bottom line.

Making the Business Case for *Total Worker Health*[®] : Addressing Cardiovascular Disease Risks

Providing training for supervisors on approaches to reducing stressful working conditions can improve employee health, reduce turnover, and increase employee retention.

- Research shows that high stress levels, especially for prolonged periods of time, can lead to **hypertension, cardiovascular disease**, obesity, and diabetes. Work-related stress can also lead to depression, which contributes to absenteeism, presenteeism (workers going to work when they are sick), disability, and unemployment. Further evidence demonstrates that employees who report stressors such as low job control or high job strain have an increased incidence of **ischemic heart disease**. All of these outcomes have substantial cost implications for both organizations and workers.
- Employees with supportive managers report less pain, sleep more, and have **lower risk of cardiovascular disease**.



Providing walking work stations or implementing active meetings may promote health and lower risk of chronic disease among workers, reducing absenteeism and presenteeism.

- Nearly 50% of Americans have at least one chronic health condition. According to research, **10% to 20% of all causes of deaths related to cardiovascular disease** among working-age populations can be attributed to work.

Designing and providing ergonomically friendly work environments can promote productive aging and support a healthier, safer, more age-friendly workforce.

- By 2020, one in four American workers will be over age 55. TWH can provide more strategies to promote productive aging, thereby supporting the employment and retention of critical elements of the workforce. Learn such strategies from the NIOSH [National Center for Productive Aging and Work](#) (NCPAW).



Organizational and management policies that give workers more flexibility and control over their schedules can remove impediments to well-being, thus leading to healthier, more productive workers.



- Overly demanding work schedules can lead to “time poverty,” because they limit daily opportunities for sleep, physical activity, and healthier nutrition practices. Lack of control over work can also lead to **ischemic heart disease**.
- Nonstandard work arrangements can be considered unpredictable. Although many employees thrive on flexible schedules, others consider their work precarious, which can have significant health effects. Recent studies have shown that precarious employment, downsizing, and job insecurity are associated with poor physical and mental health, absences due to sickness, and disability pensions.

Offering paid sick leave for employees may help reduce prevalence of employee nonfatal illness and injury, reducing the economic burden on your organization.

- A NIOSH study found that workers with access to paid sick leave were 28% less likely overall to suffer nonfatal occupational injuries.

To learn more about making the business case for *Total Worker Health*, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/business.html>.