Wellbeing for GPs

Illeges are part of everyday life for GP surgeries, but GPs themselves are not immune to the stresses of the job. These seven activities can help you make small changes to improve your wellbeing that fit into your schedule.

Irish General Practitioners and their health

The Irish College of General Practitioners established a Doctor’s Health in Practice Programme in March 2000. This programme promotes and supports:

- Good physical health
- Occupational health
- Psychological health
- Wellbeing of GPs

Here’s how you can improve your own wellbeing as part of your working week...

**Before surgery hours**

1. Get a better night’s sleep
   - Get as much sunlight as you can through the day
   - Unwind earlier in the day, perhaps by taking lunch with colleagues
   - Avoid nicotine, too much alcohol and caffeine
   - Block out an hour before bedtime for relaxing pursuits like reading

2. Alternate between sitting and standing
   Irish people spend an average of 5.3 hours sitting each work day. Spend some time standing to counteract the negative effects of sitting for prolonged periods of time

3. Arrange your consultation room around you
   On average, effective workspace ergonomics reduce: Musculoskeletal problems by 61% Lost workdays by 88%

4. Meditate at work
   After every five or six patient sessions, take a minute to raise your gaze, concentrate on your posture and your breathing, and try to empty your mind for what feels like a minute or two

5. Leave work on time
   Fatigue caused by long working hours can impair doctors’ judgement and competence, and may result in harm to both patients and doctors.

**During surgery hours**

1. Get the heart pumping
   Exercise is a key weapon in the battle against fatigue and stress. Better concentration, faster learning and prolonged mental stamina can all be achieved from an active session as part of your lunch break

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6. Eat healthily and regularly
   • Swap caffeinated drinks for calming herbal teas
   • Add more protein to your meals (to aid with neurotransmitter development)
   • Eat wholegrain foods to increase fibre intake

**After surgery hours**

7. Leave work on time
   Fatigue caused by long working hours can impair doctors’ judgement and competence, and may result in harm to both patients and doctors.

Try these activities and fit in time to de-stress and relax during your working week. That way you can provide the best care to your patients while also taking care of yourself.

Sources:
1. www.icgp.ie/go/in_the_practice/doctors_health
4. www.ergonomics.org.uk/office-ergonomics

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