



Tackling Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) offshore

The challenge

Our client was grappling with how to improve the health and wellbeing of their offshore workers in North Sea operations. Data revealed that their areas of concern were musculoskeletal (back injury, pulled muscles, sprains and strains), gastrointestinal, and cardiovascular issues.

Our industry has an aging workforce with an average age of around 44, so it's no surprise that musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) topped the league table.

Everyone loses muscle with age, typically about 3%-5% each decade after age 30. Inactive people lose the most and if you are on a weight loss journey that does not include resistance training, the loss can be even greater. At 60, the process of muscle loss speeds up and after 80 studies suggest up to 50% of people have sarcopenia (the medical term for age-related muscle loss).

Our solution

In response to the data we adapted our annual programme to target these specific issues.

Our annual programme places equal weighting on physical fitness, mental fitness, and healthy eating. Supplementary themes include healthy habits, sleep, and hydration. We focused on developing inclusive, in person and technology enabled interventions.

Fitness challenges where teams set individual health goals and support each other to achieve them over a 6 week period

Medical referrals - anyone who was classified as having an at risk BMI or high cholesterol from their offshore medical were referred to us and offered exercise and nutrition advice.

Unique gym induction videos with a physical readiness self-assessment form for each asset

Wellbeing Workshops - continuing to raise awareness on a variety of health subjects

Engaging camp bosses - to support healthy eating challenges

MSD prevention videos - filmed in full PPE, with pre-manual handling warm-up exercises. These were also delivered in person when our Wellness Coaches were offshore

Morning stretch classes – in person, online, and recorded videos to get bodies physically ready for the day

Our Wellness Coaches hold multi-dimensional qualifications to engage individuals on physical activity, including injury rehabilitation support for MSDs, healthy eating, mental fitness, mindfulness, behavioural change, organisational change – and sometimes, just a sounding board for a personal matter or to let off a little steam.

Building trust with an offshore workforce takes time, they want to know you understand their working conditions in the most practical sense possible.

Additionally, our apps (powered by our Wellness Coaches) helped motivate and track behavioral changes.

The results

To engage individuals, Wellness Coaches were available both in person and remotely to create personalised lifestyle plans.

Case study 1: a 29 year old male with a sedentary job which meant he could be sitting down for 12 hours a day.

This left him feeling lethargic and concerned for his posture. He wanted to improve his habits around exercise and nutrition so we used our coaching app to:

- assign him posture exercises that could be done throughout his working day,
- track habits aimed at increasing his overall activity within the working day
- design home workouts
- log nutrition.

This tailored plan along with regular check ins both virtually and face to face helped him build a healthier routine.

Today he is maintaining this routine and now moves more, eats healthier, has improved his posture and most importantly feels healthier and happier.

Case study 2: a 43 year old male struggling with long term lower back pain.

We used our coaching app to assign him daily stretches and posture exercises that he could do in his cabin or in the gym. The main goal being to improve and then maintain posterior chain flexibility. Once lower back pain was reduced we added strength training with a resistance band that again could be completed in his cabin or the gym to improve overall strength. Today his lower back pain has been greatly reduced and we intend on progressing into strength training in the gym this year.

Case study 3: a 53 year old male who wanted to lose weight however really didn't like the gym.

We spoke about improving nutrition offshore and then put together a challenge that involved increasing daily steps and 'snacktivity' (very short bouts of bodyweight exercises as frequently as possible). Both of these could be achieved without stepping foot in the gym and over two trips (9 week period) he lost 9kgs to reach his ideal weight.

Today almost a year later he has maintained his weight and remained active both offshore and during his time off.

These results are not always going to show up in your data, but they do show up in productivity, positive workplace culture and ability to cope better with change in the workplace.

What did show up in the data was a 20% reduction in medevacs, reduction in severity of medevacs, and a staggering 74% increase in face-to-face engagement with the health & wellbeing programme.

Find out more

For more information please call us on [0771 585 2957](tel:07715852957) or Email us on info@healthoutfit.co.uk