

Study reveals dual impact of technology on worker's mental health

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Led by researchers from the University of Sydney Business School, the peer-reviewed research synthesizes existing studies on how technology-driven changes at work will impact workplace mental health and

employee wellbeing.

"While technology can streamline many aspects of work, its continued use with few breaks can be really draining, especially when the boundaries between work and [home life](#) are blurred," said co-author Dr. Shanta Dey from the Discipline of Work & Organisational Studies.

The study highlights key self-care strategies including:

- following a regular routine that includes [physical exercise](#),
- taking regular breaks and
- customizing notifications on various digital devices.

Co-directors of the Body, Heart and Mind in Business Research Group, Associate Professors Helena Nguyen and Anya Johnson, said managers have a critical role to play in modeling health behavior for employees, especially as many Australians start working from offices again.

"It's important that managers and supervisors embed systems for routinely checking in on the wellbeing of their employees. This can be especially difficult without in-person contact," said Associate Professor Helena Nguyen. "Managers' increasing confidence to initiate conversations about mental health and wellbeing has been a silver lining of this pandemic, and will be even more critical as they navigate returning to offices."

Associate Professor Anya Johnson added, "Employees need to be involved in the decision-making process around the implementation of new systems and procedures. Having some level of control and actively participating in change are important protective job design features for [mental health](#). This is even more important when so many of the factors impacting people's work in recent months has been dependent on controlling the spread of the virus."

Co-author on the paper, Professor Nicholas Glozier from the University's Brain and Mind Centre, said: "For many people, new working patterns may challenge the [daily routines](#) that help keep our body clocks stable."

The multi-disciplinary team of researchers concluded in the paper, "Mental health needs to be higher on the work agenda."

More information: Anya Johnson et al. A review and agenda for examining how technology-driven changes at work will impact workplace mental health and employee well-being, *Australian Journal of Management* (2020). [DOI: 10.1177/0312896220922292](https://doi.org/10.1177/0312896220922292)

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