

FACT SHEET

It's easy to fall into bad habits. Working on-site can be physically demanding, and the pressure of delivering projects on time can take a heavy mental toll.

It's made that much harder when we fall into bad habits. Like professional athletes, good health is vital to our work and we should strive to take equally good care of ourselves.

Read on for some simple health tips and handy places to visit for advice on nutrition, fitness and managing stress.

DIET

FACT: Take your lunch to work, it saves you money and you will eat healthier

While many of us have an active work lifestyle and burn off plenty of calories during the day, it doesn't mean we can forgo a healthy diet. We should aim to have a balanced eating plan which is rich in nutrients and low in salt, sugar and fats.

A few simple swaps in our diet can help us to eat more healthily without sacrificing valuable energy throughout the day:

- Swap iced coffee for a smoothie or fresh juice
- Swap a sausage roll with a sushi roll
- Swap a chocolate bar for a piece of fruit
- Swap a bag of chips with a handful of nuts

[Calculate your health and fitness age with this helpful tool from Queensland Health.](#)

You might be surprised at the result!

ON THE JOB

FACT: A recent Harvard study found that 40% of construction workers over 50 years of age had chronic back pain

Taking good care of yourself begins at work. Whether it's lifting objects the correct way, using ergonomic tools, or balancing the weight of our tool belts, we should always adopt best practice techniques. Being diligent in these areas will not only assist you to prevent strains and sprains, it will help you to safeguard against more serious, long term injuries.

For some great tips on ergonomics at work checkout this handout [Ergonomics for Construction Workers](#). To help alleviate back pain, visit this useful information from [Health Direct Australia](#).

EXERCISE

FACT: A strong core section will improve your technique and posture when lifting heavy objects

Working in an active job gives you a great head start in establishing a base level of fitness, but you can still benefit greatly from some additional exercise. Basic strength training will help you utilise different muscle groups and improve your overall level of physical conditioning.

If you are doing heavy manual labour during the day you may want to consider a light weights workout as you don't want to risk exhausting your muscles. This [workout](#) from Men's Fitness Magazine is tailored for hardworking tradies.

Building your aerobic fitness is equally important for both your general health and stamina at work. After a big day you may not feel like a long run, but walking can be just as good for your fitness.

STRESS

FACT: Construction workers are twice as likely to suicide as the general Australian population

Mental illness is one of the most serious issues facing our industry. Sometimes it can be difficult to determine if feelings of anxiety, stress and depression are normal or indicators of a more serious condition. To help you better understand mental illness, work through this [checklist](#).

If you are going through a difficult time, the worst thing you can do is keep your problems to yourself. Talk to someone. Below are a several organisations that can assist you with free professional help:

[Beyond Blue](#)

[Lifeline](#)

[The Blackdog Institute](#)

[Anxiety Australia](#)

If you believe a colleague may need some support, you should make an effort to talk to them. [Mates in Construction](#) are an organisation that works to prevent suicide in the industry. Visit the MIC website to learn more about how you can help a mate who may be doing it tough.

