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15-Minute Wellbeing for Busy SME Teams — Practical Guide & Action Workbook

A non-clinical UK SME guide and workbook for choosing small, flexible actions around meals, movement, work patterns and ordinary sleep habits, while separating personal options from employer work-design responsibilities.



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Practical Guide & Action Workbook

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A practical, non-clinical guide for choosing small, stoppable actions around meals, movement, work patterns and rest. Fifteen minutes is an option, not a promise or a test.

Important boundaries

This guide is general educational information. It is not medical, nutritional, psychological or exercise treatment; it is not diagnosis; and it is not a substitute for advice from a qualified professional. The examples are illustrative, not prescriptions. Choose only what is suitable for you, adapt or stop if it causes pain, distress, dizziness or unusual breathlessness, and seek appropriate professional advice when you have concerns. Do not use this workbook to assess, rank or monitor another person's health, fitness, mood, sleep or performance.

For teams, personal routines cannot replace safe staffing, realistic workload, clear roles, reasonable control, support, respectful relationships or well-managed change. HSE identifies demands, control, support, relationships, role and change as six work-design areas that employers should assess and act on [1].

How to use this workbook

You can read it in order or choose one page. A low-capacity day is a valid day. "Not today" is a useful decision. You may write privately, speak with a trusted person, or leave a question blank. Do not put sensitive health information, employee disclosures or health scores into shared documents, workplace trackers or AI tools.

A 15-minute menu

Choose one option, or choose none:

- **Plan:** identify one meal component, one movement opportunity or one work-design conversation.

- **Prepare:** put a simple food option where it is easy to find, clear a safe space, or write tomorrow's first practical step.
- **Move:** walk, use an accessible seated movement, stretch gently, or do a low-impact bodyweight option at a comfortable level.
- **Pause:** look away from a screen, change position, take water, or sit quietly. A breathing exercise is optional; ordinary breathing and other alternatives are always acceptable.
- **Review:** notice what was workable, without scoring wellbeing or treating a missed action as failure.

There is no required sequence and no health or productivity guarantee.

1. Start with reality, not a perfect plan

Busy periods can narrow choice. Work, caring, disability, shift patterns, finances, travel, shared kitchens, pain, fatigue or limited control over a day may all matter. A useful plan fits the conditions you actually have.

Capacity check

Tick any that describe today:

- ☐ I have about 15 minutes.
- ☐ I have less than 15 minutes.
- ☐ I can pause but cannot leave my workspace.
- ☐ I have limited privacy or a shared home.
- ☐ I am working a shift or at an unusual time.
- ☐ I am caring for someone or responding to an urgent need.
- ☐ I need a seated, still, quiet or no-equipment option.
- ☐ My workload or work environment needs attention before a personal routine.
- ☐ The kindest choice is to rest, ask for help or postpone.

Today's smallest workable action (or "none"):

What could make this easier or safer?

The two-level plan

Write a **usual option** and a **low-capacity option**. Both count as information about fit; neither is a measure of worth.

Area	Usual option	Low-capacity or access alternative
Food	_____	_____
Movement or position change	_____	_____
Work boundary or conversation	_____	_____
Evening wind-down	_____	_____

2. Food in a flexible 15 minutes

This section offers a meal-building heuristic, not personalised nutrition advice. A meal can be assembled, bought, shared, reheated or skipped in favour of another suitable option. Cultural preferences, allergies, intolerances, religious practice, budget, appetite, medication, disability and eating-disorder history may affect what is appropriate; ask a registered professional for personal advice where needed.

Build from choices, not rules

Choose one or more items from each column if useful. You do not need every column at every meal.

Something filling or substantial	Fruit or vegetable option	Flavour, texture or extra
Beans, lentils, eggs, fish, poultry, tofu, yoghurt, cheese or another preferred option	Fresh, frozen, tinned or pre-cut vegetables; fruit; salad; soup	Bread, rice, pasta, oats, potatoes, wraps, herbs, spices, sauce, nuts or another preferred option

Use what is affordable, available and safe for you. A convenience food can be part of a workable meal. The aim is a practical choice, not a “perfect” plate.

Three-minute food audit

- ☐ What food is available now?
- ☐ What needs using first, according to its label?
- ☐ What can be eaten without cooking?
- ☐ What can be assembled in 15 minutes?
- ☐ What is a safe alternative if I cannot cook?

- ☐ Have I checked allergies, dietary requirements and cultural preferences?

Illustrative combinations (adapt, substitute or ignore): beans with a wrap and salad; eggs with toast and frozen vegetables; yoghurt with fruit and oats; soup with bread; or a supermarket meal with an added fruit or vegetable option. These are examples, not complete-nutrition claims.

Shopping and preparation prompts

Choose only the prompts that fit your household:

- ☐ List two foods that can be used in more than one meal.
- ☐ Choose fresh, frozen, chilled or tinned options according to access, cost and preference.
- ☐ Keep a short running list, on paper or a private device, of staples you actually use.
- ☐ Plan one “no-cook” or “little-cook” option for a difficult day.
- ☐ If batch cooking, label and date containers.
- ☐ Check the product label, use-by date and storage instructions.
- ☐ Cool cooked food safely and refrigerate or freeze it promptly, following official food-safety guidance [4].
- ☐ Reheat leftovers until steaming hot throughout and only reheat once, following official food-safety guidance [5].
- ☐ When in doubt about food safety, do not eat it.

One flexible food plan for the next few days:

- Food I already have: _____
- One option I can assemble quickly: _____
- A low-capacity backup: _____
- Safety or dietary check: _____

3. Movement as an option, not a test

The NHS says adults aged 19–64 should aim for activity across the week, including 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity, strengthening activity on at least two days, and breaking up long periods of sitting [2]. These are population-level guidelines, not a requirement to complete this workbook. A short session can be a starting point or a way to break up sitting; it does not replace weekly guidance or make a particular outcome inevitable.

The NHS describes moderate activity as activity that raises heart rate, breathing and warmth while still allowing conversation, and vigorous activity as breathing hard and fast with only a few words possible [2]. Very vigorous activity such as HIIT uses short bursts of maximum effort with rest [2]. This workbook does not require very vigorous exercise.

Choose a level

- **Gentle:** change position, roll shoulders within comfort, move hands or feet, walk slowly, or use a seated movement.
- **Moderate choice:** a brisk walk, dancing, cycling, water exercise or another familiar activity where talking remains possible [2].
- **Optional intervals:** alternate a comfortable movement with an easy recovery. Keep effort self-selected; there is no required pace, repetition or progression.

Five-minute low-impact menu

Choose one or combine a few. Keep a stable surface nearby and clear hazards.

- Seated or standing march, with support if helpful.
- Wall push-away or hand press, without forcing a range.
- Sit-to-stand from a stable chair, or a smaller weight shift.
- Slow step-touch, side-to-side movement or a short walk.
- Gentle shoulder, ankle or wrist movement within a comfortable range.
- A non-movement alternative: change posture, adjust equipment, look away from the screen or take a quiet pause.

Stop if you feel pain, dizziness, faintness, unusual breathlessness, chest discomfort or anything that feels wrong. Rest and seek appropriate medical help for concerning symptoms. If you have not exercised for some time, or have a medical condition or concern, the NHS advises speaking to a GP first and choosing activity and intensity appropriate to your fitness [2]. Pregnancy, postnatal recovery, disability, pain, injury and long-term conditions may require individual advice; this guide does not prescribe adaptations.

My movement choice

- Activity or alternative: _____
- Comfortable level or talk test: _____
- Accessible setup or support needed: _____
- Stop signal I will respect: _____

- “No movement today” alternative: _____

4. Habits that can bend

A cue can help you remember an optional action: “After I make tea, I will put tomorrow’s food container by the door.” Implementation intentions are a planning method, not a guarantee. Habit formation varies widely; a peer-reviewed review reports an average plateau around 66 days with substantial individual variation, so do not use a fixed timeline as a promise [3]. Missing an action is information, not failure.

Make it easier to begin

- Put an item where it is safe and visible.
- Reduce steps without creating a burden for someone else.
- Use a private calendar tick or note if that helps; do not collect health scores.
- Create a backup that works on a shift, travel day, caring day or low-capacity day.
- Review the environment, not your character: what is making this difficult?

Optional if–then plan

If happens,

then I may .

If that is not possible, I can .

5. Workload and work design: a team responsibility

Personal routines are not a substitute for changing unsafe or unreasonable work. HSE says employers have a legal duty to protect workers from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it [1]. Acas lists excessive or conflicting demands, poor conditions, limited control, lack of support, bullying or conflict, unclear roles, low trust and organisational change among possible causes [6]. Workers do not have to disclose personal problems to an employer; support may include a conversation, time off or temporary changes where appropriate [6].

Six-area team check

Use this to identify a work question, not to score people. Keep responses proportionate and do not ask for diagnoses or health details.

HSE area	Private planning prompt	Possible team action
Demands	What work, deadline or pattern is competing?	Re-sequence, reduce scope, resource or extend a deadline.
Control	Where can the person or team choose how work is done?	Clarify decisions, priorities and escalation routes.
Support	What practical support, training or cover is missing?	Arrange a check-in, buddying, training or cover.
Relationships	Is there conflict, bullying, low trust or difficulty speaking up?	Use the appropriate policy, manager, HR, union or formal route.
Role	Which responsibility or priority is unclear?	Confirm ownership, boundaries and what will not be done.
Change	What change is creating uncertainty?	Explain what is changing, when, why and how questions are handled.

One work-design issue to raise:

Specific request (resource, decision, boundary or support):

Who should own the next organisational action?

A manager may offer a private, voluntary conversation and signpost support, but this workbook must not become a staff standard, fitness-to-work test, wellbeing scorecard or requirement to disclose personal information. The ICO explains that worker health information is special category data with extra protections, and that collection must be necessary, justified, transparent and proportionate [8]. The ICO's monitoring guidance is under review following the Data (Use and Access) Act; check current guidance before introducing any monitoring tool [7].

6. Rest and ordinary sleep habits

People need different amounts of sleep. The NHS says adults need, on average, 7 to 9 hours, and describes insomnia as regularly having problems sleeping [9]. This workbook does not diagnose sleep problems or promise better sleep.

If useful, ordinary options from NHS guidance include keeping a consistent wake time, relaxing before bed, making the room dark and quiet, exercising during the day, and avoiding caffeine, tea, coffee, alcohol or nicotine close to bedtime [9]. Shift work, caring, disability, pain, shared homes and housing conditions can make these options difficult; adapt without blame.

If changing sleep habits has not helped, sleep problems have lasted for months, or they affect daily life, the NHS advises seeing a GP [9]. Do not drive when sleepy [9]. This guide does not recommend medicines, supplements or fixed bedroom temperatures.

Evening choice

- ☐ Reduce one optional demand tomorrow.
- ☐ Put one essential item where it is easy to find.
- ☐ Choose a quiet, relaxing activity if accessible.
- ☐ Set a realistic wake-time plan for the next day.
- ☐ Ask for support with a caring, shift or household constraint.
- ☐ Do none of these; protect limited capacity.

7. A realistic weekly plan

Plan around actual control. A plan may include a personal option and a team action; neither promises an outcome.

Day or shift	One small personal option	One work-design or support action	Backup / “not today” choice
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Day or shift	One small personal option	One work-design or support action	Backup / “not today” choice
_____	_____	_____	_____

Review without scoring

At the end of the week, answer privately if useful:

- What was workable? _____
- What was blocked by workload, access or circumstances? _____
- What should be removed, delegated or redesigned? _____
- What support or conversation is needed? _____
- What will I repeat, adapt or leave behind? _____

Do not turn answers into employee data, a manager dashboard or a performance measure.

Final decision and action plan

My decision for the next 7 days:

- ☐ I will try one food-planning option.
- ☐ I will try one gentle movement or position-change option.
- ☐ I will try one ordinary rest or sleep-habit option.
- ☐ I will raise one workload, role, support or change issue.
- ☐ I will ask a trusted person or appropriate professional for help.
- ☐ I will not add a personal action; the work system needs attention first.

One action:

When or in which shift:

What makes it accessible and safe:

Backup or stopping point:

Who owns any team action:

Review date:

A useful plan is allowed to change. The next action may be personal, shared, organisational—or no action until the conditions are safer.

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