



## THE CONSCIOUS OFFICE

A plan for **SAB&T** to increase the health, harmony & happiness in its offices and increase **productivity, efficiency** and **profitability**.

*THIS PROGRAM IS BASED ON VERY ANCIENT VEDIC PRINCIPLES OF LIFE.*



# The Conscious Office

“The very purpose of our life is happiness; the very motion of our lives is toward happiness.”

Dali Lama

## INTRODUCTION

In today's world, businesses are realising the importance of fostering a nurturing environment for their staff, an environment that brings about more harmony and thus productivity into the workplace. Time and again research is showing that by nurturing staff's deeper needs, they ultimately perform more creatively, efficiently and thus serve the company and society's deepest interests more effectively.

Vedic Society has spent the last 6 years researching various conscious technologies globally which can be implemented into any setting to improve the harmony, efficiency, productivity and creativity of the environment.

We are most honoured to have been invited by **SAB & T** to present some of our research findings and wish that it can serve your company in the highest and best way possible.

## THE PRINCIPLES

The ultimate objective of implementing a **Conscious Office** plan into your business is to create a sanctuary, a balanced and harmonious place that is supportive to the people who work there. Once we become aware of how our environment affects us, we can fine tune it using various methods, many of which are common sense such as having fresh air or plants in our office space, thus it will nourish us.

Have you ever noticed that some rooms just “feel good,” and others give you an uncomfortable feeling? That is **Conscious Office** space working. It is not so much a look as it is a feeling. When all the elements are in balance, the energy flow is positive, resulting in a feeling of harmony.

Wouldn't it be great if all your employees spent their workday in a place that made them feel good? A healthy harmonious environment will result in healthy harmonious staff.

The space one works in has a profound affect on one's sense of well-being. No one has to settle for an environment that is just good enough to get by. The office environment can be a source of stress or it can be a harmonic space that enhances balance and calmness.

Businesses today need to recognize the advantages to creating a balanced environment for both their clients and employees. Applying the principles of a **Conscious Office** to your business will result in:

- Reduced stress
- Improved morale
- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced staff turnover
- Increased customer loyalty
- A more harmonious atmosphere
- Improved ability of individuals to focus
- Increased productivity and performance

By **Conscious Office**, we do not necessarily mean a solemn, church-like environment, but rather an environment full of life-giving energy, creativity and peace. We are talking about the kind of environment that nurtures people.

The environments we surround ourselves with contributes to our sense of well-being as well as to our creativity and productivity. There is a direct link between inner peace and the spaces in which we live and spend our time. The idea of **Conscious Space** is as old as humanity itself.

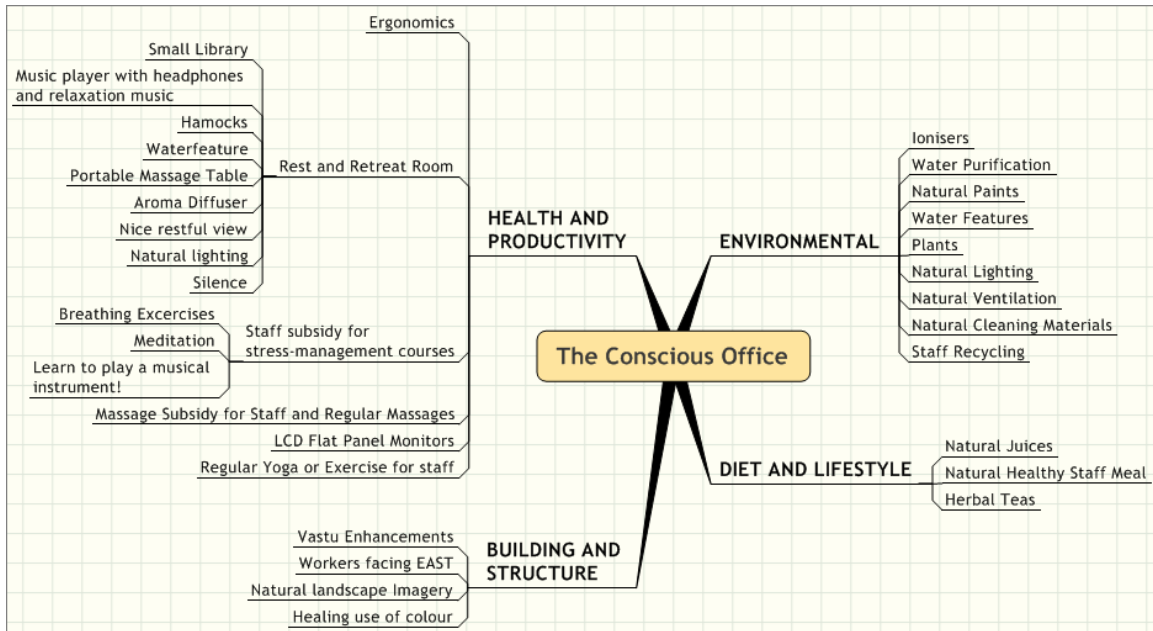
This plan shows you how to achieve this step by step

It is also just the beginning of an amazing journey which once begun will take your office to greater and greater heights

"Be the change you want to see in the world"

**Mahatma Ghandi**

# A BRIEF OVER VIEW OF THE PLAN

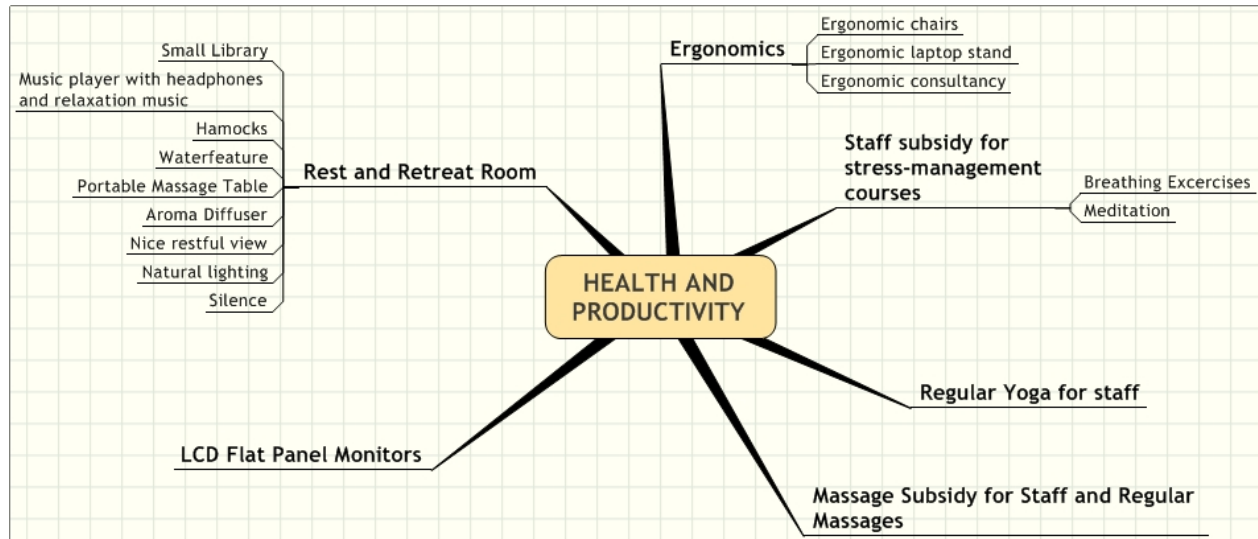


Each and every suggestion in our **Conscious Office** plan is based on the fundamental **life** principles; thus creating a sanctuary, a balanced happy and harmonious place that is supportive to the people who work there.

Some of them concern the **building and its structure**; others work with the **natural elements** such as colours, light, forms, plants etc. Mental and physical aspects of the workers in the office are deeply important and are covered in the section on **ergonomics, diet and lifestyle and stress-management techniques**.

Let's take a look at each element in turn and its implementation strategies specific to **SAB & T**.

# HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY



## Ergonomics

### Overview

Ergonomics is based on the basis of natural posture to prevent stress and injury to the body based by selecting the optimal posture for any particular activity.

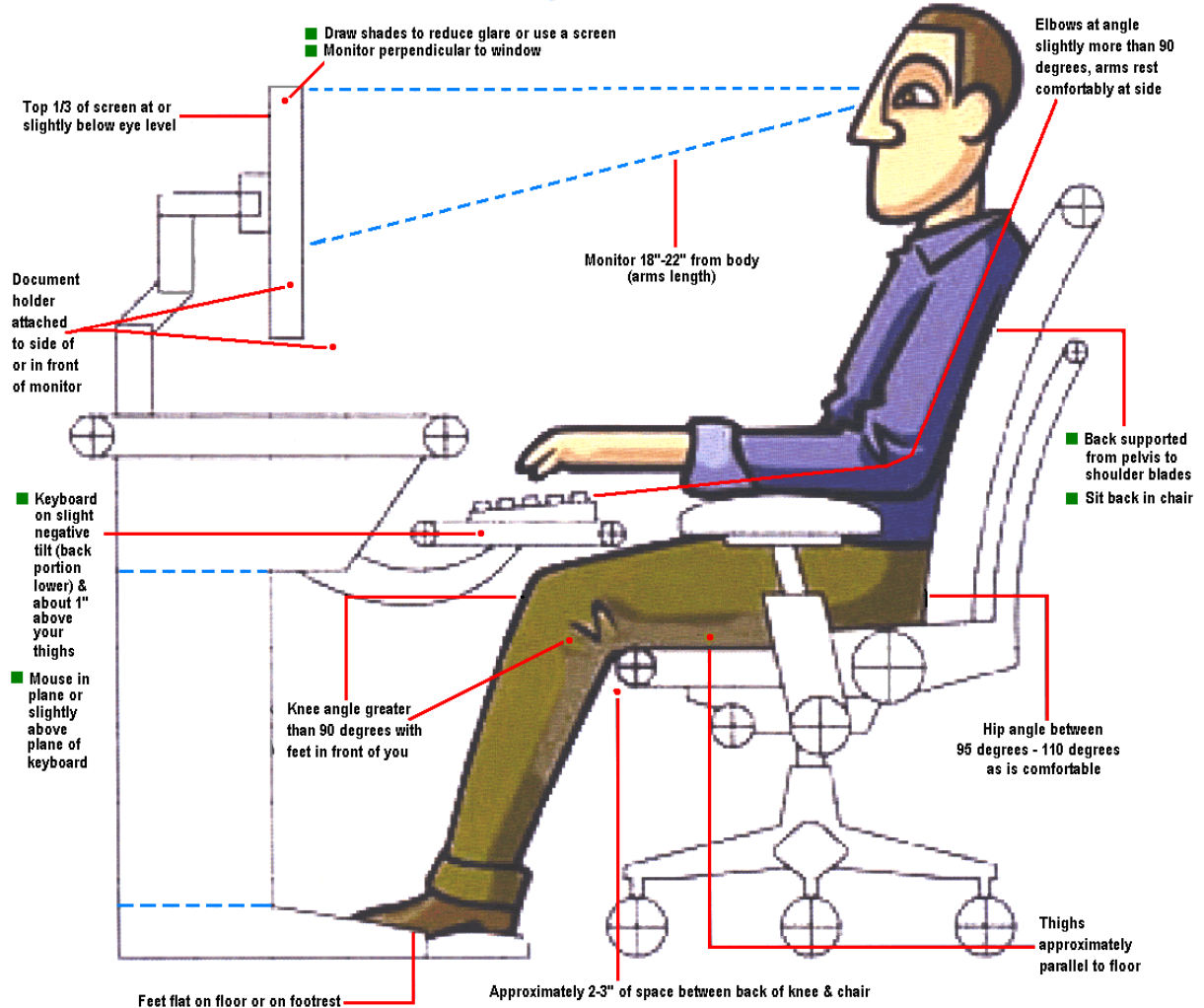
Your desk is a critical component of your workstation. It supports tasks such as writing and typing, above-surface equipment (computer monitor, printer or scanner, and below-surface equipment computer casing holder). The height and layout of your work surface play an important role in your work posture, safety and efficiency. A good ergonomic arrangement is one that will allow you to work most efficiently in a good position.

For example if one is sitting in a chair and the spine is upright, the mind is calmer, clearer, more focused. If one repeats an activity for a long time such as sitting at a desk all day – the benefits of ergonomics increase exponentially. Setting up your workstation appropriately may be the single easiest way to prevent injuries and optimize your staff's work performance.

In the context of the modern office, ergonomics has been well researched and well documented. Any workers using computers/desks for more than 1-2 hours per day should without question use an ergonomically designed desk and chair. If you are using your computer for more than 4 hours a day it is in your best interest to seek professional advice from an ergonomist.

Management is advised to invest in proper ergonomic desks and chairs for their staff. Basic ergonomic works desks and chairs can be sourced for all staff locally and are quite affordable. This is a once-off investment which has a lifetime of returns for more energy and enthusiasm for all staff.

# Ergonomics for the Computer Workstation



## Benefits

- Increased productivity
- More creativity and better concentration
- Increased focus
- Less absenteeism and injury (RSI – repetitive strain injuries are very common in most office settings)
- Happier workers – better work!

## Research Links & Further Reading

<http://www.hfes.org/Web/PubPages/goodergo.pdf>  
<http://humanics-es.com/rethinkingsitting.htm#chairs>  
<http://humanics-es.com/payoff.htm#ergonomics>  
<http://www.system-concepts.com/articles/article0071.html>  
<http://www.oerc.org>  
<http://www.ergomax.co.za/>

## How to Implement at SAB & T

To implement an ergonomic office at SAB & T requires a once of investment in ergonomic chairs (these chairs have full back support etc.) and desks for all office workers using their computers/desks for more than 2 hours a day.

For upper management, high end ergonomic furniture will make the world of difference to productivity and efficiency thus effecting the entire organization.

We suggest contacting an ergonomic consultancy to get further recommendations and source ergonomic furniture – in Cape Town we recommend **Ergomax** or another similar company. You could also go direct to office furniture suppliers and order ergonomic desks and chairs. At the very least, ergonomic chairs.

One of the very positive aspects of ergonomic chairs is they keep the spine erect, when the spine is straight the body is calm and focused meaning increased productivity for your office.

### Special Recommendation: ERGONOMIC stand for laptop users

At **SAB & T** many of the staff use laptops. These have inherent ergonomic risks as the screen is not height adjustable nor is the keyboard able to move. We recommend that you purchase a laptop stand to correct these common problems.

**Ergomax** import a special stand to raise the laptop screen to eye level (one of the ergonomic principles). We highly recommend these as most laptop users hunch over the keyboard causing wrist and back injury.

**Ergomax** imports the exclusive 'Bakker Elkhuizen' Laptop/notebook stands. The Ergo-Q2 stand is the ergonomics answer to notebook concerns. Research in Sweden has shown that prevention of physical harm and improvement of productivity is the direct outcome of using the lap top stand **Ergo-Q**: A 21% increased comfort, 17% increased productivity and a 32% decrease in neck forces was reported.



# Rest and Retreat Room

“Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath you, you will suddenly know everything there is to be known”

**Winnie-the-Pooh**

## Overview

The rest and retreat room / meditation room offers the workers a place where they can completely take time out and recharge themselves. It is a space allocated where there's no phone distractions and where workers can feel completely centred, calm and relaxed. This concept is becoming quite popular in many organizations and the result of a happier, less stressed workforce are increased productivity.

Just as ones emotions and energy are affected by ones home, so too will they be influenced by ones office space. The environments we surround ourselves with contribute to our sense of well-being as well as to our creativity and productivity. There is a direct link between inner peace and the spaces in which we live and spend our time.

The challenge is not to change the employees to fit the work space, but to seek a way to create a nurturing environment for the staff, an environment that brings about more harmony and energy.

Having a 'Rest and Retreat/Meditation' room creates such an environment, a space that inspires one to do ones best work; it is a place which gives one a sense of the sacred. In today's world, businesses are realising the importance of fostering a nurturing environment for their staff, an environment that brings about more harmony and thus productivity into the workplace.

Time and again research is showing that by nurturing staff's deeper needs, they ultimately perform more creatively, efficiently and thus serve the company and society's deepest interests more effectively.

This space should be painted with beautiful alive colours and offer a natural nurturing environment where staff completely zone-out of their work environment to take a moment to relax and de-stress, a quiet space that employees can come to pray, meditate, think, or even sleep. There need not be any religious symbols in the room, but there has to be a very conscious effort to create the space in such a way that it is nurturing to the human spirit.

## Benefits

- Increased focus
- Increased productivity
- More creativity and better concentration
- Helps in attracting greater re-sourcing of knowledge and self-cultivation.
- Opens up creative energies, supports greater success in careers and assists in increasing focus.
- Enhances and creates greater balance in health, enrich how we express ourselves and influence how others see us.
- Happier workers – better work!

## Research Links

<http://www.fourgateways.com/uversity/chapterthree.htm>

<http://sipapu.gsu.edu/html/kiva.html>

<http://www.imt.net/~randolfi/WorkStress.html>

<http://www.examiner.com/careersearch/1128sullivan.html>

<http://www.jongordon.com/111405-TheBenefitsofSilence.htm>

<http://top7business.com/?Enjoy-The-Silence:-The-7-Powers-of-Silence&id=716>

## How to Implement at SAB & T

The 'Rest and relaxation' room should be a great contrast and give a great sense of disconnection from the rest of the office. The room must have as much natural lighting as possible along with natural ventilation, such as opening windows. For the colour of the room, we suggest using calming, soothing colours like light shades of sunrise colours (amber-orange-yellow hues). These colours are calming and restful but also inspire creativity. Bring in as many natural elements into the room as possible, such as having a water feature with natural plants, large pictures of natural environments and animals and any furniture in the room should ideally be made of natural elements, such as wood or cane, bamboo, Hessian and other natural materials. Having a water feature, it should be placed in the room (for ideal orientation put it in the northern or eastern side of the room if possible). This provides the very restful sound of flowing water which produces negative ions (enhancing absorption of energy in the body) and also a very soothing and relaxing sound.

The room should be as large as possible while ideally situated at the Eastern side of the building (The benefits of facing East are based on the healing effects of natural sunlight which are most present in rooms on the Eastern side of the building – research has shown the morning sunlight is composed of more light and less radiation – this light is very healthy for all).

The room should also nurture the mind by having a small library of carefully chosen books. It should have a music player with headphones and a selection of relaxation music. A couple of sitting hammocks / swinging chairs to rest in, as the swaying motion, produced by its suspended elevation, has proved to be very relaxing. The room could also have a portable massage table to be used for regular staff massages if need be. Also suggested is a natural scent aroma diffuser with a selection of aromas. Aroma diffusers use air to naturally dispense aroma oils into the atmosphere. This would allow the room to be diffused with healing smells which open the nerve centres in the brain and aid creativity and relaxation.

Above all the room should as silent a place as possible, silence is a way of clearing and un-cluttering ones emotional and mental sphere. Thus the room should be not be situated where there would be heavy foot traffic or any other such disturbances from outside the entrance, or be situated where there would not be any disturbances from the outside environment.

*Ultimately the 'Rest and Retreat' room creates the vessel for inspiration, guidance and nourishment. It is a place to honour the employee and nurture their human spirit. In some dynamic IT companies such as Google and Microsoft, such areas are incorporated into the design of the buildings as they have found that staff are much more creative when they have a space they can express their individuality in some form or just take some time-out.*

## Contents:

- WATER FEATURE:

[www.practical-water-gardens.co.za](http://www.practical-water-gardens.co.za)

- INSPIRING BOOKS:

[www.vedicbooks.co.za](http://www.vedicbooks.co.za) (mail [kate@vedicbooks.net](mailto:kate@vedicbooks.net) for a list of suitable titles)

- HAMOCKS:

[www.zenpoint.co.za](http://www.zenpoint.co.za)

- AROMA DIFFUSER:

[www.pranamonde.com](http://www.pranamonde.com)

- PORTABLE MASSAGE TABLE:

[www.parafanaylya.co.za](http://www.parafanaylya.co.za)

[www.logicabeauty.com](http://www.logicabeauty.com)

- RELAXATION MUSIC:

[www.cdxonline.co.za](http://www.cdxonline.co.za)

# Stress Management Courses

"My concentration improved, I have amazing physical energy and am capable of long hours of physical work without fatigue. After a fortnight I realised I had stopped biting my nails, a lifelong habit. I have a sense of organisation I have lacked all my life. I feel more patient and tolerant. "

**John Harding – The Sunday Times Magazine (UK) – On learning mediation**

## Overview

The calmness and clarity of our mind determines our ability to be productive and creative in life. A clear still mind is a powerful tool, like a sharply focused laser beam. Under stress and pressure, the mind often becomes preoccupied with past mistakes and events or anxious over future goals and deadlines. Emotional decisions are irrational decisions. These constant vacillations in the mind result in lower performance, lack of concentration, and decreased efficiency. Conflicts and stress that originate in the mind get stored as toxins in the body, resulting in ill health as well as a lack of focus and an inability to make effective decisions.

There are two exercises to an effective stress-management programme. The first is the power of breath and the second is deep relaxation exercises, such as meditation.

Let us now look at both exercises, in turn.

## 1 ~ The Power of Breath

The breath has proven to be a powerful tool to effectively regulate the mind and eliminate stress and impurities from the system. Every inhalation brings vital energy to the body; every exhalation relieves stress and eliminates toxins. Over 80% of the toxins in the body are eliminated through the breath, yet most people use only 35% of their lung capacity. The breath also plays an important role in how we feel emotionally as well as in the state of our mind, which directly affects our creativity and productivity.

The breath is the link between the mind and emotions. Every emotion creates a specific rhythm or pattern of breath. When one is anxious, under pressure, or stressed, there is a deviation in the natural rhythm of the breath, limiting one's energy and mental clarity. When faced with a business or management challenge the breath becomes fast and tense and creativity and decision-making abilities are impaired. When centred and relaxed, the breath becomes more full and light and there is an increase in efficiency and enthusiasm. Skilful use of the breath can effortlessly transform an individual's mental and emotional state, augmenting productivity, and creativity.

## Breathing is a Vital Source of Energy

The breath is an extremely powerful source of energy that directly affects one's business performance. The breath is linked to one's vital life force or bio-energy. A lack of this energy results in lethargy, irritability, low enthusiasm, and even depression. Conversely, when the body is filled with this energy, we become more energetic, innovative and productive, experiencing an overall improvement in health and well being. Our life can be greatly enhanced by learning to utilize the full potential of the breath

Doing daily breath exercises infuses the body with energy and harmonizes the natural rhythms of the body, mind and emotions. Using specific rhythms of breath has the ability to re-establish balance in life as they simultaneously flood the cells of the body with oxygen and energy.

We strongly suggest the 'Healing Breath Technique'. These breathing exercises offer specific breathing techniques that infuse the body with energy and enliven the natural rhythms of the body, mind, and emotions. Due to the intensity and stress of modern life, these natural rhythms get distorted. Experienced as burnout or ill health, this discord creates fatigue in the body and mind, creating mental and emotional imbalances, lowering one's productivity and efficiency.

'The Healing Breath Technique', which uses specific rhythms of breath to re-establish balance in life as it simultaneously floods every cell in the body with oxygen and energy. The healing breath technique purifies and rejuvenates the body by eliminating toxins at a deep cellular level. Participants report that with regular practice (10-15 minutes a day) there is a vast improvement in physical and mental energy and a sense of belonging in the workplace.

## Benefits of Breath Technique

- Increased focus
- Heightened concentration
- Reduction in cholesterol
- Enhanced health and well-being
- Increase in anti oxidant protection
- Restores normal sleep patterns
- Relieves anxiety and depression (mild, moderate and severe)
- Reduces levels of stress (reduces Cortisol, the "stress hormone")
- Enhance brain function (increased mental focus and faster recovery from stressful stimuli)
- Increases health, well-being and peace of mind - Kriya increases EEG alpha and prolactin, the "well-being" hormone

## Course participants commonly report:

- Greater ease and joy in personal relationships
- Increased fulfilment in work
- Deeper sense of community and belonging to society
- Enriched spiritual life

## Research Links

<http://www.artofliving.org/research/research.htm>

<http://www.imt.net/~randolfi/WorkStress.html>

<http://www.artofliving.org/>

## How to Implement at SAB & T

We all take the process of breathing for granted. Have you noticed how when you are stressed or anxious that your breathing changes? 'The Healing Breath Technique' or Pranayama, which is its original name, is an ancient method of balancing, purifying and strengthening the breath so as to manage stress. When we breathe deeply and correctly, stresses can not effect us, the mind naturally follows the guide of the breath and there is inner harmony.

We suggest contacting 'The Art Of Living' foundation which offers a very complete course that includes, amongst other things, instruction in a very good form of Pranayama which can be used on a daily basis to manage stress.

Various studies have shown the physical and mental benefits of this technique. As an added bonus of the 5 days The Art Of Living - Pranayama course is that various other techniques which aid stress release and more happiness are taught.

## Contacts:

Art of Living Foundation South Africa – [www.artofliving.org](http://www.artofliving.org)

## 2 ~ Meditation

Life progresses in two fundamental steps: rest and activity. The quality of rest received influences all aspects of life. For example, after a sleepless night there is a tendency to feel tired, irritable and to be unable to think clearly. Whereas after a good nights rest one feels fresh and alert, able to think more clearly and constructively and so can achieve more with less effort. Therefore happiness, health, success and fulfilment in life are dependent on our ability to rest effectively and so regenerate the system. Lack of this ability forms the basis of unclear thinking, pessimism, worry and anxiety, poor health and tension – and also what psychologists tell us is the use of only about 10% of our mental potential. The answer then is to find an effective way of resting and enlivening the nervous system.

The transcendental meditation (TM) technique is a simple, natural way of gaining deep relaxation. It is not a religion, philosophy or belief, nor does it involve hypnosis, autosuggestion or trance states. The benefits of the Transcendental Meditation program have been verified by over 600 scientific studies at more than 200 independent research institutions in 35 countries. ([www.tm.org](http://www.tm.org))

During meditation the body is more relaxed than even in the deepest sleep and the mind is restful but awake. After meditation a person feels calmer and revitalised, more relaxed and yet, at the same time, more energetic and lively. Transcendental meditation (TM) is a natural, spontaneous technique that allows each individual to expand his conscious mind and improve all aspects of life.

In this meditation the mind actually experiences subtler states of thought without having to imagine, anticipate, or aim at any particular process. It is an entirely innocent process which succeeds under the personal guidance of a qualified TM teacher.

In practical terms it gives peace of mind and relief from stress and strain. From freedom of stress all manner of benefits flow. An unstressed mind is able to concentrate, to reach its full potential. A person without stress enjoys better health, free from psychosomatic illnesses. They are more tolerant and in better control of their emotions - enjoying better relations with others. Research has shown that with regular meditation mental ability, physical health and mental health improves.

## An Excerpt of Research on Meditation in the Office

- **Improved Productivity and Job Performance:** *Enhanced job performance and job satisfaction, improved teamwork and communication, increased productivity, improved relations with co-workers and supervisors, and reduced absenteeism and sick days. Numerous company case studies have documented increased sales revenues and profits, improved employee morale, more harmonious work environment, and reduced mistakes, job accidents, and injuries.*
- **Improved Health:** *Reduced risk factors for ill health such as stress and anxiety, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, insomnia, smoking, drinking, and drug abuse. Reduced need for health care and decreased health care costs: 56% less hospitalization overall, including 87% less hospitalization for heart disease, and 55% less for cancer. Reversal of biological aging.*
- **Unfoldment of Mental Potential:** *Increased creativity and intelligence, improved memory and learning ability, improved problem-solving ability and decision making, reduced stress and job tension, improved personal and work relationships, improved psychological health, and broader comprehension along with increased ability to focus.*

**Reference:** <http://www.tm.org/mcdp/summary.html>

## Summary of the Corporate Benefits of Transcendental Meditation

- Improved health and well-being of employees
- Improved creativity and intelligence
- Reduced absenteeism
- Improved decision making and teamwork
- Improved working atmosphere
- Increased productivity and profits

## Research Links

<http://www.meditation-at-work.org/id14.html>

<http://allnurses.com/forums/f24/research-reveals-benefits-meditation-142065.html>

<http://www.tm.org/mcdp/summary.html>

<http://www.tm.org/discover/research/index.html>

## How to Implement at SAB & T

The Transcendental Meditation technique is a simple, natural, effortless procedure practiced 20 minutes twice a day, sitting comfortably with the eyes closed. This practical, proven meditation procedure requires no effort or concentration, no special skills, and no change of lifestyle.

Because of the mind's natural tendency to move in the direction of experiences that bring greater enjoyment, the process requires no effort or concentration. However mere words alone cannot adequately describe Transcendental Meditation – it is subtle, and requires the constant feedback between the mediator and a properly qualified teacher during the initial few days of learning. To attempt TM from a written description of the technique is to invite inevitable failure.

There are various TM centres around the country where you can find qualified teachers to instruct staff in the TM technique.

*Note TM is a popular and accessible form of silent meditation that has a very simple and effortless technique at its core. It also has a proven (backed by scientific research) track record – however there are various good and comprehensive meditation courses available – we suggest TM simply because it is very accessible and backed by more than 600 research studies so its efficacy is documented and undoubted.*

## Contacts:

TM South Africa – [www.tm.org](http://www.tm.org)

# Other Health & Productivity Suggestions

## Overview

We suggest implementing the following suggestions to further promote health and productivity at **SAB & T**:

- **Regular in-house staff massages.**
- **Using only LCD Flat panel computer monitors, where applicable.**
- **Having a regular in-house yoga or exercise programme for the staff.**

## 1 ~ Regular In-house Massages

Touch is vitally important to human wellbeing, especially in the modern world where social inhibitions have led to limited touching between people and the pressures of daily life mean that we all suffer from stress and tension. Massage is the ideal way to ease tension and soothe tight muscles resulting from these conditions.

In reality, massage is an advanced and conscious form of our instinctive and innate ability to offer healing through the laying-on-of-hands. In this respect, tender loving touch may be just as important to our health as food and cleanliness.

Indeed, psychologists tell us, that stroking and caressing especially during infancy, is vital to our emotional and physical development. When touching takes the form of skilled and sensitive massage, not only does it relax and revitalise an ailing or tired body, it is also a way of communicating warmth, reassurance and a sense of self worth and we are nurtured on every level of our being.

## Benefits

From the physical point of view, the benefits are considerable. Massage enhances blood circulation, which is a vital function for our bodies to operate to full capacity. When our circulation is less than fully efficient, our bodies are receptive to a host of different ailments, problems and illnesses.

- Relaxation
- Increased blood circulation
- Decreased anxiety levels
- A sense of well-being and vitality
- Depending on the nature of the massage, the possibility of feeling invigorated
- Improved awareness of body, which can lead to the early detection of minor problems

## Research Links

<http://www.internethealthlibrary.com/Therapies/MassageTherapy-Research.htm>  
<http://www.naturalhealthweb.com/articles/Parker3.html>  
[http://www.holistic-online.com/massage/mas\\_benefits.htm](http://www.holistic-online.com/massage/mas_benefits.htm)  
<http://www.miami.edu/touch-research/Massage1.html>  
<http://www.leesburgtherapeuticmassage.com/>  
<http://vancouvermassage.ca/articles/research.php>  
<http://www.bcmr.org/research/index.htm>  
<http://www.elsevier-international.com/catalogue/title.cfm?ISBN=0443102015>  
[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=8884390](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=8884390)

## How to Implement at SAB & T

Having a regular, weekly or bi-monthly massage for staff available with an incentive / subsidy from the company is a very good way to keep employees at their maximum potential. (Google amongst other very dynamic companies in the USA are doing just this with amazing results). A lot of stress accumulates in the head, neck and shoulders and even to have a Shiatsu (Japanese finger pressure) therapist available for staff would give a world of benefits. Massage is as old as time and in some parts of the world it is still culturally practiced as part of daily life. It is an important way to release mental and physical blocks and bring more vitality to all systems. In the case of SAB & T we feel Shiatsu adapted for the office in the terms of a head, neck and shoulder massage would be very practical and give good benefits. The company should offer an incentive and make the service available. There are a variety of practitioners in all parts of SA available of in-office work.

We suggest contacting the Massage Therapy Association of South Africa (MTA) who can put you into contact with a massage therapist in your area. You can organise that such a person can come to your offices on a regular basis to give the staff therapeutic massages. The Cape Town School of Shiatsu is a great starting point for your Cape Town office.

*We further suggest setting up in the 'Rest and Relaxation' Room, where it forms part of fostering a nurturing and therapeutic environment for your staff.*

## Contacts:

For the name of a therapeutic massage therapist in your area, you can contact the **Massage Therapy Association of South Africa (MTA)** at: E-mail: [info@mtasa.co.za](mailto:info@mtasa.co.za).

We also suggest contacting the **Cape Town School of Shiatsu** for local Shiatsu practitioners.

## 2 ~ Migrate to LCD (flat panel) Computer Screens

Traditional cathode-ray tube (CRT) screens function on the principle of: like a fine jet of water projected against a wall, a beam of fast electrons sweep the fluorescent surface of the screen, where, point by point, it draws a luminous image on the screen. This would not be a problem if the energy from the electrons was limited to providing the image. But some of this energy escapes in the form of radiation at various frequencies, in particular VLF and ELF (very low frequency and extremely low frequency) fields. The spot of electrons which sweep the screen generates what scientists call PEMR (Pulsed Electro-Magnetic Radiation) which, at close range, disturbs the balance of all living cells. It has been established that the harmful effects of PEMR exist all around the screen, especially in front of and behind the tube, effects which persist several hours after the computer or TV set has been turned off.

Several problems have also been observed in people who spend more than four hours a day exposed to Pulsed Electro-Magnetic Radiation (PEMR):

- Stress.
- Headaches.
- Irritability.
- Insomnia.
- Eye strain
- Eyesight decline.
- Abnormal general fatigue.
- Decrease in productivity.
- A natural resistance of the immune system, decline in libido, disorders in the menstrual cycle, and hormonal disturbances.

Even more disturbing is the fact that exposure to CRT screens appears to be one of the causes of decrease in spermatogenesis. In rats, it has been proven that after being exposed to the radiation of cathode ray tube screens at a prepubescent stage, their neuro-endocrine development was severely affected. Many adult rats ended up sterile and their secretion of melatonin was significantly reduced.

LCD (flat panel) screens work on a different principal and thus are virtually free of harmful radiation emissions thus users report better concentration, less fatigue and better general overall wellbeing using the flat panel screens. Prices have come down very much in the last year or two and they are now virtually on par with their CRT counterparts – the slight additional expense will bring a vast improvement in productivity and staff health in the long run.

### Research Links

<http://workingfromhome.allinfoabout.com/monitors.html>  
[http://www.mercola.com/article/emf/emf\\_dangers.htm](http://www.mercola.com/article/emf/emf_dangers.htm)  
<http://www.emf-bioshield.com/emf/arecrt.html>  
[http://www.closerange.com/working\\_solutions/TCO.html](http://www.closerange.com/working_solutions/TCO.html)  
<http://www.homeandoffice.hp.com/hho/cache/7361-0-0-225-121.html>  
<http://experts.about.com/q/Ophthalmology-Optometry-979/LCD-eye-health.htm>

## How to Implement at SAB & T

To eliminate exposure of pulsed-electro-magnetic radiation to your staff and thereby eliminate the negative side effects thereof, we strongly suggest replacing any cathode-ray tube screens (Traditional box screen) in favour of the new liquid-crystal-display (LCD) flat panel screen which emit no radiation at all.

Speak to your computer suppliers for details.



CRT Monitor



LCD Monitor

### 3 ~ In-House Yoga / Pilates / Exercise Programme For the Staff

Working in an office or at a computer for prolonged periods of time can put strain on the neck, shoulder and back muscles which in turn can lead to tension and stiffness. This tension can cause headaches, as well as back, neck and shoulder pain. If left unattended, it could also impact your ability to function effectively at work and affect the overall quality of life of your staff. Simple techniques such as office yoga may help alleviate the pain and other symptoms by releasing tension and increasing muscle strength and flexibility.

Yoga has been found to be especially effective for those leading stressful lives and sitting at a desk all day. Help your staff to build stronger bodies, stimulate creativity, and effectively manage stress with practical, clear, step-by-step yoga instruction personalized for your company's environment.

Despite popular misconceptions, Yoga is not about bodily contortions or becoming a human pretzel. Yoga is an approach to physical and mental health, well-being and personal growth. It is a discipline through which we experience, explore and challenge our minds and bodies, and the nature of our being.

One of the many benefits of yoga, is developing an awareness of the effects of stress in our lives, and the skills with which to manage them. These benefits naturally extend from the individual participant to the work environment in which they are contributing. Regular practice is known to bring improved health in mind and body, increased energy, well-being and productivity.

Businesses now see the need to address chronic fatigue, carpal tunnel syndrome, recurring back problems and other physical ailments linked with long periods of desk work. They realize that employees who practice yoga experience less stress and take fewer sick days. Physical and mental health, stress reduction, safety and employee satisfaction are crucial aspects to corporate productivity. Having the ability to focus, create solutions, and maximize productivity are characteristics of a healthy employee.

A similar benefit can also be gained by having an in-house Pilates or exercise program for staff. Yoga is a very ancient, natural and balanced form of exercise but all mild and gentle exercise is good for productivity, creativity and staff health. Yoga exercises the internal organs of the body which is its main exceptional benefit when compared to other forms of exercise.

## Benefits

- It is energizing
- Increased fitness.
- Released tension
- Stronger muscles
- Improved balance
- Improved immunity
- Increased flexibility
- Enhanced creativity.
- Healthier lifestyle behaviours.
- It allows one to focus internally
- Decreased reaction to stressors.
- Improved concentration and memory.
- It is noncompetitive and process oriented
- Decreased stress, anxiety, and depression

## Research Links

[http://www.wholehealthmd.com/refshelf/substances\\_view/1,1525,746,00.html#Health\\_Benefits](http://www.wholehealthmd.com/refshelf/substances_view/1,1525,746,00.html#Health_Benefits)  
<http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/HealthPromotion/index.aspx?Page=195>  
<http://stress.about.com/od/tensiontamers/p/profileyoga.htm>  
[http://www.moksha.biz/stress\\_management.htm](http://www.moksha.biz/stress_management.htm)

## How to Implement at SAB & T

We suggest contacting a Cape Town based company (for example 'Moksha' ) which has produced a corporate stress management programme centred on self-management with the aim of unleashing your staff's greater potential. There is a distinction between being taught to do something right and actually digesting and integrating a meaningful experience into one's life over time. By concentrating on the latter and providing a programme for increased self-awareness, their programme leads to internalised and therefore sustained changes within the individual. The result is a healthier, happier staff and enhanced company performance.

The principles of their programme are practical and tangible with an orientation to skills and tools. It is an ongoing programme conducted over time to embed healthy habits in your staff. It is a strongly participatory programme which instils discipline, commitment and hard work by the staff. Most importantly, it is outcome orientated where they align the programme outcomes with your company goals.

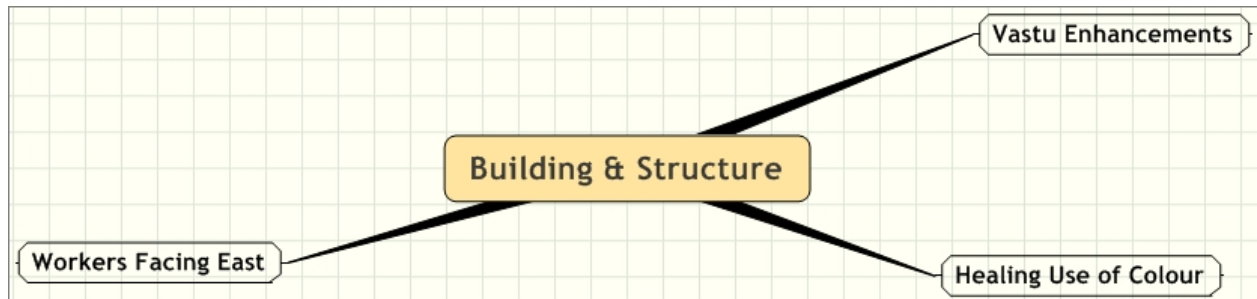
Yoga is an immensely powerful tool for releasing stress and building team awareness of staff. It has been used for centuries to calm and centre. The return on investment is great as it gives a more creative and productive individual so productivity increases massively.

## Contacts:

**MOKSHA** - 021 465 1733

[http://www.moksha.biz/stress\\_management.htm](http://www.moksha.biz/stress_management.htm)

# Building and Structure



## Vastu (Space Energy) Enhancements

### Overview

Vastu is a very ancient science originating in India. Its core principals are the maximising and retaining the positive energy flow of an enclosed space, be it a building, a home or an office. The essential principals of Vastu are related to capturing and maximising the positive effects of the sun's healing component (light) and the earth's magnetic field which flows down the North / South axis.

### Vastu suggestions for SAB & T – Cape Town

We have visited the new office premises of SAB & T and have the following report thus:

#### Positive Points:

- The building's **main entrance is from the EAST side** which brings a good flow of positive energy to the workplace
- There is a **central open space** (open courtyard) in the diamond shaped building which is very good as it brings sun light into the building from the centre. This is known as a *Brahmasthan* in Vastu terminology and is a very good point. It makes a building well aired and balanced. Notice how in all ancient civilizations homes and towns were planned with a central open area be it a courtyard (vis. Roman houses) or a central town square.

Points that are not ideal in terms of Vastu and their corrections

- There is water to the West side of the building which is considered debilitated this causes the afternoon sun which has more radiation (heat) and less light to be reflected more into the building. **REMEDY:** Keep the Western side of the building closed with blinds as much as possible.
- Building is diamond and not square shaped thus corners are not 90 degrees. For thousands of years the square shape has housed mankind and it creates balance and harmony – the SAB&T new office is square but the corners of this square are cut as such. **REMEDY:** Maximise positive flow in building using points highlighted in this document.

- Eastern side of the actual office is blocked per say i.e. even though entrance to the main premise is from the Eastern side, there is a block to the Eastern side of SAB & T's portion. The morning sunlight has been found to be immensely healing and energising. **REMEDY:** Use orange (sun coloured) colours on the Eastern wall or hang some decorations incorporating this as such.

Vastu is a very ancient science that has been used for 1000's of years and has recently become well known by it's spin-off called Feng Shui which travelled to China with Buddhist monks from India. It's effects are very strong. Vedic Society has a number of studies done of buildings that were done with 100% Vastu from the ground up with amazing results. One of them is a hospital that was built on the USA West coast recently. Patients reported wanting to be there longer and staff turnover dropped to almost nil. The entire success of the hospital in all arenas increased dramatically. For a copy of this report please mail [research@vedicsociety.org](mailto:research@vedicsociety.org) and we will gladly send this and other reports done on Vastu.

### **Implementing a complete Vastu informed architectural design**

We would strongly suggest that if SAB & T does ever consider constructing their own premises in the future, to consider constructing with a 100% Vastu design. This will give an immense success to all their work and increase productivity and profitability from the ground up. You can contact Vedic Society for more details on how to implement this in the future.

## **Benefits**

- Increased focus
- Increased productivity
- More creativity and better concentration
- Helps in attracting greater re-sourcing of knowledge and self-cultivation.
- Opens up creative energies, supports greater success in careers and assists in increasing focus.
- Enhances and creates greater balance in health, enrich how we express ourselves and influence how others see us.
- Happier workers – better work!

## **Research Links**

<http://www.vastu.ca/research.htm>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/06/AR2005070600611.html>

<http://maharishi-programmes.globalgoodnews.com/vedic-architecture/research.html>

[http://www.sthapatyaveda.com/scientific\\_research/frameset.html](http://www.sthapatyaveda.com/scientific_research/frameset.html)

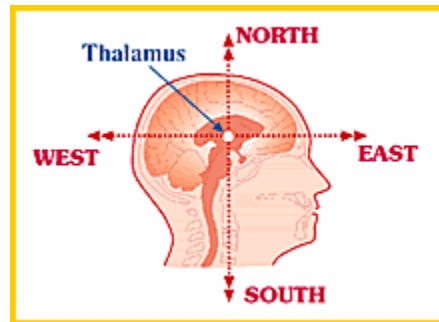
## **How to Implement at SAB & T**

The changes are self-explanatory in the paragraphs above. Remedies to energetic defects are possible but they are not the same as constructing from the ground up with a Vastu design. The remedies though will give good results – they are simple and inexpensive to implement. Simply go through them and implement and observe the results.

## **Contacts:**

Vedic Society – [design@vedicsociety.org](mailto:design@vedicsociety.org)

## Workers Facing East



### Overview

Recent research has shown that when facing east the endocrinal system in the body functions more efficiently thus improving concentration and brain function. For centuries in the ancient disciple teacher schools of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, students have faced East while studying. Now the recent research has validated the benefits of facing East. The sun is rising each morning from the East as well as all the planets including the Moon (whose effect is very much and very measurably known on the oceans). So from the East all stellar and cosmic energies are received by the Earth. Thus it makes great sense that facing East is good for mental work, studies and concentration. Try implementing it when it is practical and possible and observing the amazing results.

### Benefits

- Better concentration
- Improved health
- Better quality of work
- Happier workers – better work!

### Research Links

<http://maharishi-programmes.globalgoodnews.com/vedic-architecture/research.html>

<http://www.vastu.ca/research.htm>

### How to Implement at SAB & T

Having observed the floor plan new office layout for Cape Town, many desk layouts have already been set but when and where possible try to align workers to face the East. If not to the East the North (where the earth receives its magnetic energy from) is a good 2<sup>nd</sup> option and also very beneficial. Other directions are fine too but if possible try to align workers to these directions. The subtle influences add up over weeks and months to have a measurable effect on productivity and creativity.

### Contacts:

Vedic Society – [design@vedicsociety.org](mailto:design@vedicsociety.org)

# Healing Use of Colour

## Overview

When carefully selected, the colours used for office space elements such as furniture and wall and floor-coverings, can contribute significantly to the creation of an aesthetically pleasing and more productive workplace. Study after study has shown that colour influences not just mood, but also wellness and productivity. The impact of a well-designed environment on emotional well-being is becoming widely known and widely accepted.

It is also a well known fact that colour influences mood and feeling in common experience, however, the field of colour psychology is still not well understood. Research on the psychological aspects of colour is difficult for the mere reason that human emotions are not very stable and the psychic make-up of human beings varies from person to person. Nevertheless, there are a number of general and universal reactions to colour which seem to be noted in most persons.

Broadly speaking, hues in the red area of the colour wheel are called 'warm,' while those in the blue and green range are referred to as 'cool.' These terms are relative rather than absolute. There is also a commonality of the colours of the spectrum with associating each with two moods. The warm colours are active and exciting such as a red and its neighbouring hues. The cool colours which are passive and calming are blue, violet and green. Likewise, light colours are active, while deep colours are likely to be passive.

Modern researchers in Japan put their finger on this point precisely. For example, Choku Akashi (1986) demonstrates a number of his research results which imply that red is often felt to be active and may be connected in some circumstances with aggression. In contrast to the warm colours, the cool colours are inactive or passive. Indeed, though the conclusion may be largely empirical, warmth and coolness in colour are dynamic qualities, warmth signifying contact with environment, coolness signifying withdrawal into oneself.

In summary, emotionally the red is exciting the blue is subduing. Physically and physiologically, the same sort of complementation exists. Red colours tend to increase bodily tension, to stimulate the autonomic nervous system, but green and blue colours release tension and have a lesser physiological effect. It is to be granted, of course, that direct connections exist between the brain and the body and that reactions take place independently of thought or deliberation.

## Colour perceptions at-a-glance

**Red:** Dynamic, exciting and stimulating.



**Orange:** Mellow than red, yet still stimulating and warm; friendly.



**Yellow:** Cheerful, radiant, happy, uplifting.



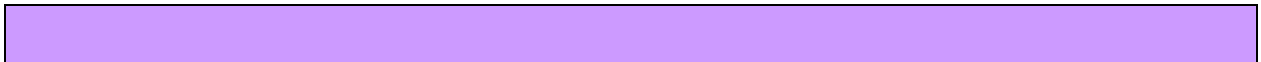
**Green:** Relaxing, refreshing, tranquil.



**Blue:** Calming, comforting, cooling, peaceful.



**Violet:** Dignified, rich, noble, intense.



**Cool colours:** Greens, blues and violets; tend to recede and make rooms appear larger and spacious.



**Warm colours:** Yellows, reds and oranges; seem to advance and make a room feel smaller and more intimate.



## Research Links

<http://www.yorku.ca/eye/phototherapy.htm>

[http://www.innerself.com/Health/Color\\_Therapy\\_part\\_2.htm](http://www.innerself.com/Health/Color_Therapy_part_2.htm)

<http://www.colormatters.com/research.html>

[http://www.sherwin-williams.com/pro/paint\\_colors/about\\_color/working\\_with\\_color/science.jsp](http://www.sherwin-williams.com/pro/paint_colors/about_color/working_with_color/science.jsp)

<http://www.bio-immuno-development.com/books/daylight/932.htm>

## How to Implement at SAB & T

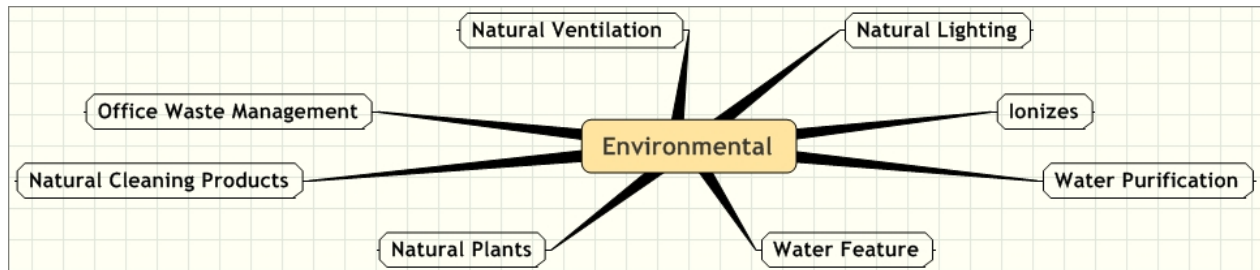
Office spaces support several kinds of very human needs. These include functional needs such as the ability to concentrate or to collaborate, and ergonomic needs such as the ability to work comfortably with minimal fatigue. But office spaces also speak to emotional needs ranging from the need for personal space to feelings of self-worth. All of these needs — functional, ergonomic and emotional — must be considered when colour is used to lend shape to office environments.

The nature of the work done at SAB & T requires the staff to be calm, focused and energised. We would thus suggest the use of GREEN particularly for SAB & T. This is a particularly good colour for commercial activities too and will keep workers calm and focused. Other colours are good and each have their positive points but for SAB & T and work of a commercial nature GREEN is very excellent.

Green can be brought in as a secondary theme with decoration of furniture, walls etc. It is not necessary to paint the entire office though doing some rooms in GREENS would be good.

GOLDEN YELLOW is also very good and will bring some warmth to the GREEN it is a colour of wisdom, peace and clarity and is excellent for complementing the GREEN at SAB & T.

# Environmental



## Overview

In this section we cover ways to bring more harmony to the office by introducing more nature elements into the office as modern buildings are often far removed from nature in that they are tightly closed in, rarely with fresh air. The building materials and cleaning materials used within are often highly chemical and super-toxic. The drinking water is polluted and considering that water constitutes 80% of our body, when we drink polluted water it affects all aspects of our mind-body over time. Something as simple as having plants in the office is often neglected. Recent research at NASA shows that plants can metabolise all sorts of airborne toxins, even from plastics, photocopiers, laser printers and the other countless toxin producing devices in a modern office. For example Ionisers offer a quick and effective way to bring pure air into an office space. When the air is pure, the mind is more calm and focused and productivity is more. Have you noticed how much more energy you have when near the sea or in any place of nature? In this section we share a few more simple tools to bring nature more into the office and as a result enjoy a more productive workforce feeling better within and giving a better quality of work.

## Benefits

- Healthier workers – less absenteeism
- Increased productivity
- More creativity and better concentration
- Activities like recycling build better group morale
- Happier workers – better work!

## How to Implement at SAB & T

To consciously implement a healthy nurturing environment for your staff we recommend the following steps.

- Installing ionisers in the offices to purify the air
- Water purifiers
- Installing a water feature
- Have plants in the office
- Expose the office to natural light
- Replace fluorescent lighting with natural “daylight” bulbs where possible
- Use natural ventilation where possible
- Use only natural cleaning materials
- Office waste management

## Ionisers:

Today's office is brimming with electromagnetic fog in the sense of every device is emitting various frequencies of radiation (cell phones, computers, photocopies, faxes, wireless networks etc.). On top of this there is often poor natural lighting and ventilation on office settings so an office becomes a sealed setting filled with un-natural radiations and movements of air. Electrical devices have been found to emit what are known as positive ions.

On the complete opposite side of the spectrum – in places where nature is dominant such as near the ocean, in a forest or by a waterfall, large numbers of positive ions have been found. Negative ions have a very good effect on the physiology both mentally and physically. They allow for the body to be stronger, more receptive to nourishment and more vital both mentally and physically. The absence of negative ions in the modern office plays a serious part in 'sick building syndrome' and the poor vitality both physically and mentally experienced often by office workers. This leads to less job satisfaction.

Ionizers negatively charge oxygen atoms with an extra electron. Negatively charged ions are oxygen atoms with an extra electron. Thousands of negative ions occur naturally. We recognise negative ions as that great feeling we have when walking on the beach or near a waterfall. Negative ions help to make us feel better.

Created in nature, when enough energy acts upon a molecule such as carbon dioxide, oxygen, water, or nitrogen to eject an electron from the molecule, leaving a positive ion. The displaced electron attaches itself to the nearest molecule, which then becomes a negatively charged ion.

However, computer and TV screens deplete the air of beneficial negative ions. Air conditioner systems and furnace ducts remove negative ions. Polluted areas have large quantities of positive ions. Hot dry winds deplete ions from the air.

We strongly suggest installing ionisers in your offices because when negative ions are high, depression is low, staff feel better about themselves and become less sensitive, more alert, more responsive and energized. They enhance the body's absorption and utilization of oxygen thus assisting concentration and alertness. They also prevent disease transmission among staff which in itself is enough practical reason to install them.

## Health Benefits of What Ionisers Do:

- Remove and destroy airborne bacteria and viruses.
- Reduce the effects of passive smoking, allergies to pollen, dust and pets.
- Reduce histamine, which triggers hay fever
- Affects the levels of serotonin, a neuro-hormone associated with anxiety, stress and migraine, helping to relieve these symptoms.
- Have a beneficial effect on anyone suffering from bronchial complaints such as bronchitis asthma, catarrh and the common cold.
- Help sufferers of insomnia, migraine, emphysema, eczema, headaches, tiredness and general feelings of malaise.
- Increase the speed and quality of healing of burns and surgical incisions with less cross infection and reduced pain.
- Enhance the body's absorption and utilization of oxygen thus assisting concentration and alertness.

## Overall Benefits:

- Deodorizes
- Purifies the air
- Improves health
- Maintains clean air
- Eliminates bacteria
- Increased productivity
- Reduction in absenteeism.
- Prevent disease transmission

## Research:

[http://www.peakpureair.com/negative\\_ions.htm](http://www.peakpureair.com/negative_ions.htm)

<http://www.static-sol.com/library/articles/air%20ion%20effects.htm>

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list\\_uids=3109576&dopt=Abstract](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=3109576&dopt=Abstract)

## Contacts:

Various companies sell them – **Health Makers** specialize in Ionizers and related products and thus we can recommend them: [www.healthmakers.co.za](http://www.healthmakers.co.za)

## Water Purifiers:

South African Municipalities do a great job treating our water so that we do not suffer from water born diseases. Our water is therefore 'safe' to drink. However chemicals like chlorine and aluminum sulphate are left in the water after treating it. Very necessary in the treatment process but harmful to us in the long term. There is also the risk of leakage into the already treated water in the system. Municipalities also don't remove pesticides and herbicides and other industrial pollutants. Ironically, the chemicals used at water treatment plants to minimize contamination can, in themselves, cause problems. This means that tap water is frequently far from pure and tastes anything but fresh.

We therefore suggest further purifying your staff's drinking water. We strongly suggest doing by using a 'Reverse Osmosis' water purification system, which is attached to the tap system and used for purifying drinking water and the water used in any food preparation.

Reverse osmosis, represents state-of-the-art in water treatment technology. Reverse Osmosis (RO) was developed in the late 1950's in the United States under Government funding, as a method of desalinating sea water. Today, reverse osmosis has earned its name as the most convenient and thorough method to filter water. It is used by most water bottling plants, and by many industries that require ultra-refined water in manufacturing. Now this advanced technology is available to homes and offices for drinking water filtration.

## Benefits of Reverse Osmosis

- Purifies up to 99% free of unwanted substances commonly found in tap and well water.
- With cool, crisp, purified water, it will be easy to drink the recommended 2 litres of water per day!
- Unwanted chemicals and metals like chlorine, lead and aluminum sulphate, pesticides, herbicides, industrial pollutants and impure leakages into the system are removed from the water.
- This will substantially reduce your risk of conditions and illnesses linked to dehydration and those chemicals.
- It is about 20 times cheaper than buying bottled water.
- It is MUCH more environmentally friendly to purify tap water as you are using already established water systems, the municipality, and not adding tons of plastic bottles to our landfill waste sites.

## Research:

<http://www.all-natural.com/water.html>

<http://www.secretstohealth.us/alternativehealthbook4.html>

<http://www.reverse-osmosis-water-filter-guide.com/dangers-of-tap-water.html>

## Contacts:

**Health Makers** specialize in very good water purifiers and we can recommend them very highly:  
[www.healthmakers.co.za](http://www.healthmakers.co.za)

## Water Features & Plants

### Plants

Intuitively, people sense that contact with plants and nature is restorative and calming to the human spirit.

Plants are nature's natural air filters and purifiers and the world's greatest source of oxygen. Interior landscaping with healthy real plants in the office provide an inexpensive method of cleansing the air of toxic gases emitted from modern office equipment, such as computers, photocopiers and fax machines. Tests by NASA have shown that through their natural process of photosynthesis, common houseplants remove a variety of pollutants from the air, especially gases such as carbon monoxide, formaldehyde and benzene. Allowing these gases to build up can cause headaches and irritation to the eyes.

Philodendrons, spider plants, scheffleras, chrysanthemums, ferns and dracaena are all excellent air filters.

With health and safety in mind, many companies now realize the benefits of interior landscaping and install large office plant displays to maintain the office air quality with additional advantage of enhancing the corporate image.

## Benefits of having plants in the office

- Office Plants Inspire
- Office Plants Reduce Noise
- Office Plants Absorb Dangerous Toxins
- Office Plants Help us Stay Healthy at Work
- Interior Landscaping and Plants Aid Recovery
- Office Plants Maintain Perfect Humidity Levels
- Plants Give a Sense of Meaning and Purpose to Life
- Office Plants Improve Productivity and Reduce Stress

### Some research on the matter

Professor Tove Fjeld of the Agricultural University in Oslo, Norway carried out several conclusive studies regarding health claims relating to Sick Building Syndrome among office workers. This crossover study was conducted among 51 offices over two years.

When plants were included in the offices, study participants were exposed to 13 commonly used foliage plants. The score sum of 12 symptoms was 23% lower during the period when participants had plants in their offices. This translated into a 14% decrease in absenteeism.

The problem is large and growing. Contemporary buildings are sealed tightly to increase efficiency. Inside those sealed environments man-made articles such as paints, plastics, insulation, plywood, carpets, synthetic fabrics and detergents emit up to 300 harmful pollutants. However, leafy green help is available.

Palm plants have helped cure staff at an aerospace company of headaches, nausea and itchy eyes. When a new industrial photocopier was installed at 'VT Aerospace', in Dorset staff soon became unwell.

An Interior Landscaping firm suggested installing some palms, which are believed to remove office pollution.

After three weeks staff said their symptoms were disappearing. When the palms were removed the symptoms returned during a week of heavy photocopier use, and symptoms disappeared again within three days of the palms' return.

It is not just photocopiers that cause problems; modern offices suffer airborne pollutants from various things such as carpets, ceiling tiles and air conditioning. Research has shown that plants are effective at restoring air quality.

VT Aerospace proposals manager Sid Harding said 'we were not sure at first if the result was simply psychological, but when the plants were removed I had a headache every evening which disappeared once they came back.'

It is recommended one potted plant for each 100 square feet of floor space.

Dr. Virginia Lohr (Washington State University, Pullman, Wash.) demonstrated that plant transpiration in an office environment creates a humidity level exactly matching the recommended human comfort range of 30% to 60%.

When the air is too dry, people are vulnerable to colds and flu. When the humidity is too high, people can develop other complaints. Through their natural processes of transpiration and evaporation, office plants add moisture to the dry overheated air often found in sealed office environments. At the same time, studies show that plants do not add moisture in significant amounts when the air is already moist. A study conducted at Washington State University, suggests that plants help regulate humidity. When office plants were added to the environment, the relative humidity stabilized within the recommended "healthy" range of 30 to 60%.

## TOP 10 PLANTS FOR CLEANING THE AIR IN THE OFFICE:

Common Name	Scientific Name
Bamboo Palm	<a href="#">Chamaedorea Seifritzii</a>
Chinese Evergreen	<a href="#">Aglaonema Modestum</a>
English Ivy	Hedera Helix
Gerbera Daisy	Gerbera Jamesonii
Janet Craig	<a href="#">Dracaena "Janet Craig"</a>
Marginata	<a href="#">Dracaena Marginata</a>
Mass cane/Corn Plant	<a href="#">Dracaena Massangeana</a>
Mother-in-Law's Tongue	<a href="#">Sansevieria Laurentii</a>
Pot Mum	Chrysanthemum morifolium
Peace Lily	<a href="#">Spathiphyllum "Mauna Loa"</a>
Warneckii	<a href="#">Dracaena "Warneckii"</a>

**This table is based on recent research at NASA:**  
<http://www.zone10.com/wsdocs/tech/NASA/fyh.htm>

### Research sites

<http://www.colormegreenco.com/NASA/nasa.htm>  
<http://www.zone10.com/tech/NASA/Fyh.htm>  
<http://www.denverplants.com/foilage/html/CleanAir2.htm>  
<http://www.rosefloral.com/nsplnt.htm>  
<http://www.plants-for-people.org/eng>  
<http://www.plantscapes-officeplants.co.uk/>  
<http://www.plants-for-people.org/eng/science/plantsinoffice.html>

## Water Features

Water features bring the relaxing sight and sound of nature into the work place. The benefit of flowing water is maintaining a balanced, healthy and serene environment. Given that they moisturize the atmosphere in air-conditioned rooms or buildings, relieve stress in pressured lives and are a powerful form of relaxation therapy for hyperactive children, insomniacs, and those living with noisy neighbours or busy roads.

A water feature can be placed in the office. The best places to place them are on the Northern, Eastern side of a large room/office or your building. They are also excellent at the entrance where you receive staff and guests and they set a soothing mood for the entire day as the first impression at the office entrance. The very restful sound of flowing water which produces negative ions (enhancing absorption of energy in the body) and also a very soothing and relaxing sound.

## Examples of Office Water Features



[www.practical-water-gardens.com](http://www.practical-water-gardens.com)



[www.liquidconceptdesigns.co.za](http://www.liquidconceptdesigns.co.za)

## Natural Lighting

Light, both natural and artificial, has a profound effect on the experience of space in functional as well as psychological ways. Scientists have discovered a correlation between quality of light and certain psychological disorders which can be treated through redesign of architectural lighting.

**Natural Light** – The most harmonious environments make effective use of natural sunlight. Our bodies use the Sun's light as an external metronome to set our bio-cycles and body rhythms. For instance, the production of melatonin, an important hormone in controlling sleep, and serotonin, a hormone involved with moods, are both closely linked to sunlight.

The usefulness of natural light is not just an effect of its quantity. It is equally important to filter and balance the natural light in order to minimize stress caused by glare and ultraviolet radiation. Inadequate attention to proper lighting design can cause one to have to continually adjust to contrasting light levels. This can create unneeded tension by demanding constant eye adjustments between extreme brightness and shadow. This can tire eyes quickly, causing headaches, tension, nausea and other disturbances.

**Artificial Light** - In a world of electric light bulbs, late nights, early mornings, coffee and long distance travel across time-zones we often need to re-set our body's relationship with the Sun. This is where *full spectrum light therapy* can help. Being exposed to light that mimics natural sunlight can re-balance the hormonal system causing a cascade of beneficial effects.

“Malillumination” is the term coined by pioneer light researcher, Dr. John Ott, to describe sunlight deficiency and the negative, harmful effects of artificial pink or cool-white fluorescent lighting on behaviour, learning, health, hardiness and longevity.

On the other hand, “Posillumination” is the term used to refer to those simulated sunlight environments, about which an overwhelming body of research shows the positive impact of simulated sunlight (full spectrum lighting and colour) on human behaviour, learning, health, hardiness and longer life.

Schools, classrooms and other work environments where people spend time learning and working under simulated sunlight (full spectrum lighting and colour) experience less stress and anxiety, improved behaviour and attitudes, improved health and attendance, and increased performance and academic achievement.

Research in the use of light in schools has shown that cool-white fluorescent bulbs, (which are used in virtually all classrooms) cause: bodily stress, anxiety, hyper-activity, attention problems and other distress leading to poor learning performance. With cool-white fluorescent lighting, some students demonstrated hyperactivity, fatigue, irritability, and attention deficits. In the classrooms with full-spectrum lighting, however, behaviour and classroom performance, as well as overall academic achievement, improved markedly within one month after the new lights were installed. Furthermore, several learning-disabled children with extreme hyperactivity problems miraculously calmed down and seemed to overcome some of their learning and reading problems while in classrooms with full-spectrum lighting.

Therefore we strongly suggest exposing your office to as much natural light as possible. Also suggested, is using 'Full Spectrum Light' globes to illuminate the working spaces to mimic natural light.

### Benefits:

- Easier to concentrate for longer periods
- Improved eye-health
- Increased productivity
- Reduction in stress and anxiety.
- Improved behaviour and attitudes.
- More creativity

## Research Links:

[http://www.fullspectrumolutions.com/Lighting for Schools.htm](http://www.fullspectrumolutions.com/Lighting%20for%20Schools.htm)

<http://www.informinc.org/SheddingLightRelease.pdf>

<http://www.lrc.rpi.edu/>

<http://www.intellearn.org/>

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=health&res=9C06E3DF1238F934A25755C0A9659C8B63>

## Contacts:

Speak with your local lighting supplier for supplying “full-spectrum” lights. The best full-spectrum lights are fluorescent (low energy) full spectrum lights developed especially for office usage. These are available from <http://www.ottlight.com/>. Speak with Lighten Up on 021 – 555 – 3182 for information on local daylight tubes and globes available. Check with optometrists which are the best models for office usage.

## Natural Cleaning Products

A number of cleaning products are most likely to contain toxic ingredients: bleach, brass or other metal polishes, drain cleaner, carpet cleaner, room deodorizer, dishwashing detergent, fabric softener, laundry detergent, anti-cling sheets, mould and mildew cleaner, mothballs and spot remover all usually contain irritating or toxic substances.

Chemical products such as these have a negative impact on the environment. When they are used and disposed of, they release chemicals into the ground and wastewater which may contaminate our groundwater and present a problem to wastewater treatment facilities. Most often, hazardous products are not disposed of properly and are land-filled or incinerated where they release their toxins to the environment.

Some of these toxins, such as the chemicals in household cleaners, pesticides and insecticides, persist in the environment and can concentrate as they go up the food chain. They have wiped out many species and produce stronger resistant strains of pests and insects. Phosphates, used to soften water and help detergents rinse better, are devastating to the environment, causing algae blooms that choke waterways. The toxic effects of chemicals in your home and office have serious short and long term repercussions for you, the environment and all its living entities.

Synthetic chemicals are appearing in alarming places. A 1999 study by the World-Wide Fund For Nature found that samples of mothers’ breast milk in the UK were contaminated with over 350 chemicals found in suntan lotions, pesticides, disinfectants and industrial raw materials.

Natural Parent, September/October 1999

The Consumer Safety Commission in America has determined that cleaning products are some of the most dangerous substances in your home. (1.) And that the average home contains more chemicals than were found in a typical chemistry lab at the turn of the century. (2.)

Such chemicals also emit fumes, which in themselves are toxic, the negative effects of which are self evident when released and left to circulate in an enclosed air-conditioned office space. Also by using such toxic cleaning products, thereby spreading these fume emitting chemicals around an enclosed air-conditioned office space on a regular basis, intensifies the exposure of these harmful chemicals to you and your staff.

### **The effects of inhaling toxic fumes from chemical cleaning products:**

- Nausea.
- Eczema.
- Headaches and migraines.
- General feelings of depression.
- Coughing – thus germ spreading.
- Loss of concentration and alertness.
- Persistent feelings of tiredness and fatigue.

Collectively, as consumers, our impact on the planet can actually turn from one of disregard and destruction to one of nourishment and nurture by using organic cleaning products.

Organic cleaning products are just as effective as chemically manufactured ones, whilst being completely safe for you, your staff and the environment. They contain organically grown plants, essential oils and pure spring water and are completely biodegradable, while being completely safe and non-toxic.

We suggest using the cleaning products from a local Cape Town based company called 'Enchantrix.' Their products are locally manufactured and of a high quality, while also available to purchase in bulk quantities, directly from the manufacturer.

#### **Notes:**

1. Debra Lynn Dadd, The Nontoxic Home and Office (Jeremy P Tarcher, 1992)
2. Nancy Sokol Green, Poisoning our Children (The Noble Press, 1991)

## **Research Links**

<http://www.naturalcollection.com/>  
<http://www.biolytix.co.za/>  
<http://reports.eea.eu.int/NYM2/en>

## **Contact:**

### **Enchantrix:**

Tel: (021) 706 9847

Fax: (021) 706 7642

[www.enchantrix.co.za](http://www.enchantrix.co.za)

Speak with Anthea Torr

## Office Waste Management

The average workplace uses hundreds of supplies on a daily basis -- and accounts for a lot of what we use and throw away.

Creating a conscious office space includes not only being conscious of the impact that the company has on its employees and its immediate office environment but also its social and environmental impact as a whole. An integral part of creating a consciously aware office is correct office waste management.

The ultimate objective of implementing a conscious office plan into your business is to create a balanced and harmonious place that is supportive to the people who work in it along with the environment that the company operates in. Being staff and environmentally friendly is to *become conscious of your actions and the impact thereof*, to create a balanced and harmonious work environment which is ultimately beneficial for the business as a whole.

### How to Implement at SAB & T

**Buy energy-efficient office equipment** - Energy Star-rated equipment is an option at work as well as at home. Energy Star equipment has power management features that allow it to reduce its power use or turn itself off when not in use. According to the EPA, Energy Star-labelled equipment can save up to 75 percent of total electricity use. **Become conscious of the impact of your actions.**

**Recycle, Recycle, Recycle** - If your office doesn't have a recycling program, work with your office manager and custodial staff to set one up. Paper, tin cans, glass and plastic bottles are easy to start with, and additional materials can be added as the staff gets used to recycling. Set up bins in convenient areas to collect each type of material your office recycles, and make sure everyone knows they are there. Contact a company called 'Nampack', which can help you set-up such a program and collect the discarded waste to recycle it. **Become conscious of the impact of your actions.**

**Commit to environmentally friendly purchasing practices** – Be encouraged to make a commitment to purchasing paper and plastic materials made with post-consumer recycled content. Companies should avoid paper products made from 100 percent virgin fibre content, and switch to paper that is 30 percent post-consumer content at minimum. Also look for plastic and metal products made with recycled or scrap material. **Become conscious of the impact of your actions.**

**Be thrifty with paper** - Don't print out each memo or email you receive. Read and delete the ones you don't need to save and electronically file others you might refer to later. Make sure your office copier can make two-sided copies, and pester everyone to get into the habit of doing so. If people don't take the hint, arrange to have your copier's default set to the two-sided rather than one-sided option. High-speed copiers that are set to automatically make two-sided copies reduce paper costs by half - and, of course, save paper. Save even more paper by using the blank sides of used sheets of paper for note-taking and printing drafts. **Become conscious of the impact of your actions.**

**Use reusable utensils for office parties** – If your office in one of those offices where there's no excuse too small for a mid-afternoon get-together, we suggest investing in a set of dishes, cups, and utensils that can be used each time, rather than bringing out plastic utensils and paper plates. **Become conscious of the impact of your actions.**

**Bring a waste-free lunch** – Suggest your staff to store their food in reusable containers rather than wrapping it in foil or plastic. Also suggest that they use the office utensils or bring their own and to use a cloth napkin at work to avoid the need for plastic utensils and paper napkins. **Become conscious of the impact of your actions.**

## Contact:

Speak with Biophile magazine for local recycling contacts: [www.biophile.co.za](http://www.biophile.co.za)

### **Nampak Recycling**

Bob Christie  
E-mail: [bob.christie@za.nampak.com](mailto:bob.christie@za.nampak.com)  
Tel: (011) 799-7111  
Fax: (011) 799-7222

## Environment Summary

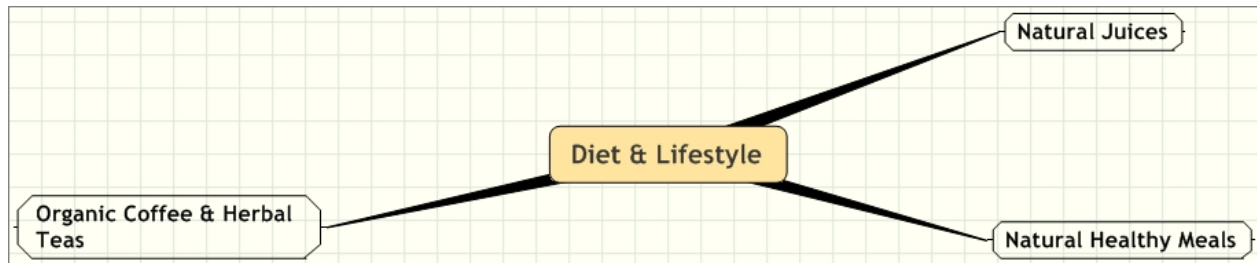
The ultimate strategy and associated benefit of creating a true conscious office is to permeate balance, harmony and integrity at every juncture, at every corner and in every breath by becoming conscious of every action and the impact of such an action.

Our environment impacts on us greatly and if it is harmonious, balanced and pure then we will respond accordingly.

By breathing purified (ionised) air in our office space, by having luscious plants, by drinking pure water, by having natural or similar to natural lighting in as far as possible, we recreate what nature gives us innately. The benefits to energy, clarity, focus, concentration ability should not be underestimated.

We suggest you try and see the difference and you will be very pleasantly surprised. Many offices in Europe and USA are moving in this direction based on the incredible increase in productivity staff report when in a natural or as natural as possible office. By recycling and becoming conscious of wastage and consumption we also move in a direction of honouring the very planet we live on more and more. By doing this our staff become not just workers, but true servers of the society in a deeper way. In turn the society becomes a better place and everyone wins.

# Diet and Lifestyle



“Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food”

**Hippocrates**

1. Natural Juices
2. Organic Coffee and Herbal Teas
3. Natural Healthy Meals

## Natural Juices

We suggest having a juice bar where natural and freshly made fruit and vegetable juice is available as a great and very healthy energy booster.

Converting fresh fruit and vegetables, herbs, barley or wheatgrass into concentrated drinkable vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals is the greatest food and medicine for any body. Juices demand little to no digestive effort on the stomach and are assimilated into the system very easily. This is what makes juicing so special.

Fresh fruit & vegetable juices have been shown to possess remarkable health-promoting properties and has been used for centuries by naturopaths to help treat a range of ailments. Lime juice was, for example, found to be an effective cure for scurvy in the sixteenth century and this saved thousands of sailors' lives on their long voyages around the world. In more recent times, scientists have identified the nutritional and biochemical properties of freshly-prepared fruit and vegetable juices which account for their use in helping treat so many health problems. Vegetable and fruit juices also flush old and dead cells out of our body, help in dissolving salty build-ups, dissolve stones in our liver and kidneys, and play a role in preventing cancers. However, many people are concerned about chemicals used in the growing and storing of fruits and vegetables.

Fresh juice has the ability to deliver an important group of nutrients, know as enzymes. Enzymes are your body's work force. Acting as catalysts in hundreds of thousands of chemical reactions that take place throughout the body, enzymes are essential for digestion and absorption of food, for conversion of food stuffs into body tissue, and for the production of energy at the cellular level. In fact, enzymes are critical for most of the metabolic activities taking place in your body every second of every day.

Fresh juices are a tremendous source of enzymes. In fact, the "freshness" of juice is one of their key features, because enzymes are destroyed by heat. When you eat cooked foods, whether its meal, grains, fruits, or vegetables, if the food is cooked at temperatures above 114 degrees, the enzymes have been destroyed by the heat. Since fruits and vegetables are juiced raw, the enzymes are still viable when you drink the juice.

Coincidentally, many of the phytochemicals that nutritional researchers are focusing their attention on are either enzymes, or more often, they are substances that help build or activate enzymes that play essential roles in protecting cells from damage.

In addition, fruit and vegetable juices are good sources of the traditional nutrients. Citrus fruits (grapefruit, oranges, etc.) provide healthy portions of vitamin C. Carrot juice contains large quantities of vitamin A, in the form of beta carotene. A number of green juices are a good source of vitamin E. Fruit juices are a good source of essential minerals like iron, copper, potassium, sodium, iodine, and magnesium, which are bound by the plant in a form that is most easily assimilated during digestion.

Plus, since juicing removes the indigestible fibre, these nutrients are available to the body in much larger quantities than if the piece of fruit or vegetable was eaten whole. For example, because many of the nutrients are trapped in the fibre, when you eat a raw carrot, you are only able to assimilate about 1% of the available beta carotene. When a carrot is juiced, removing the fibre, nearly 100% of the beta carotene can be assimilated.

Finally, fruits and vegetables provide one more substance that is absolutely essential for good health - water. More than 65% of most of the cells in the human body are made of water, and in some tissues, for example the brain, the cells can be made up of as much as 80% water. Water is absolutely essential for good health, yet most people don't consume enough water each day. Plus, many of the fluids we do drink, coffee, tea, soft drinks, alcoholic beverages and artificially flavoured drinks each contain substances that require extra water for your body to eliminate. Fruit and vegetable juices are free of these unneeded substances and are full of pure, clean water.

The specific health benefits of each juice come from physiologically active substances produced by plants. Juices are so rich in microelements and minerals that they contain almost the entire periodic table of elements. In other words, all vitamins, microelements and minerals essential for our health are found in plant juices. One week of regular drinking of raw juices will bring a healthy complexion to your face, deep restful sleep, and better functioning of your gastrointestinal tract.

So far, the National Cancer Institutes attempts to promote the health benefits for fruits and vegetables have only affected a relatively small segment of society. But, as more and more is written about the long-term health benefits of fruits and vegetables, as increasing numbers of people learn about the possibility of preventing and curing cancer, heart disease, arthritis, and a host of other diseases by making dietary changes, the fruit and vegetables trend and the popularity of juicing will continue to grow.

**Note:** At **SAB & T** a fresh fruit juicer (such as the Oscar Living Juicer from Healthmakers) should be made available in the staff refreshment area. A regular box of organic fruit (apples, pears, grapes etc.) and juicing vegetables (carrots, beetroot, ginger etc.) should be made available for staff to enjoy fresh juices. You will be amazed at their extra energy and vitality. A glass of fresh juice gives a zing of pure prana or energy and is very good for mind and body.

## Organic Coffee and Herbal Teas

Regular coffee drinkers report **organic coffee** as having all the deliciousness of coffee but not having any of the side-effects such as the down or occasional headaches that can come after drinking coffee or too much coffee. Organic produce has none of the harmful chemicals during grown and processing and thus you are getting just the pure substance. We do not endorse excess coffee drinking per say, but being aware that it is commonly used in the modern office environment, and at the same time being aware of the wonderful health benefits of organic coffee in moderation, we suggest the coffee that is available to staff workers be Organic Coffee exclusively. Coffee like all plants has medicinal value and in its organic form this can be easily tapped. To top it off organic coffee is usually grown in a very conscious environment where the pickers and farmers have not been exploited or underpaid.

Herbs have been consumed for ages by mankind for their medicinal effects and deliciousness. We highly suggest making a complete range of **herbal teas** (we suggest the *Pukka* tea range which is an Ayurvedic tea range easily available and also with many different tastes and various tea bags, one for relaxing, stimulating, energising etc. Their taste is good and they give much vitality and energy when taken. Herbal tea should best be taken without any sweetener or if any then organic raw sugar (see resources below). It should be available in the office refreshment area and be the drink of choice. Note: Polystyrene and plastic cups should not be used for either coffee or tea – rather invest in porcelain cups which last much longer and do not pollute or effect the flavour of the drink.

## Natural Healthy Meals

We highly suggest SAB & T follows suite of many large companies overseas and provide an organised **healthy vegetarian meal** for all workers each day. This can be offered as partially subsidised, fully subsidised or simply organized by the company. We suggest a partial subsidy initially. Once you see the results in improved profits and productivity you will be inclined to make a full subsidy for this. Google for example offer meals for all workers and have very specially trained gourmet health conscious chefs preparing for all their workers.

Personally we suggest a healthy (organic, fresh and natural) vegetarian menu. Initially you can contact a catering service that can accommodate such a request, you can see how many staff members wish to subscribe to this and pre-book on a monthly basis so the meals are distributed daily ready to eat. The meal should consist of a grain, a lentil or legume, one or two fresh vegetable dishes, perhaps a natural sweet using raw sugar or dates, some other side dish, green vegetable or pickle. This kind of meal will provide all 5-elements (6 – tastes) and thus create a balanced and centred mind. If one does not get proper nutrition at least once a day, one tends to snack on 'junk foods' which cause much imbalance and poor attention span.

We suggest such a product be piloted with the co-operation of the staff – SAB & T can offer a subsidy towards the meal initially and staff can pre-book a month in advance 5 days a week. The meal should be delivered fresh and hot and ready to eat at the offices each day.

*For healthy vegetarian catering you can contact Mukunda Charan Das on: [mukunda@krishnabooks.co.za](mailto:mukunda@krishnabooks.co.za)*

## Overall Benefits:

- Improved staff health – less absenteeism
- Improved moral – staff share a meal together
- More vitality resulting in better quality of work, better concentration and focus
- Enhanced creativity

## Research Links & Further Reading

<http://www.rawfoods.com/articles/benefits.html>

<http://www.internethealthlibrary.com/Therapies/juice-therapy.htm>

<http://www.healthguidance.org/articles/1993/1/Information-On-Raw-Juice-Therapy>

<http://www.oscar-living-juicer.com>

<http://www.theolife.com/article-005.html>

<http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art38727.asp>

<http://www.shirleys-wellness-cafe.com/rawfood.htm>

<http://www.starthealthylife.com>

## Contacts and Resources:

**For all organic foods (teas, coffee and vegetables):** Organics Alive – Muizenberg – 021 – 788 – 6012

**Organic Vegetable Delivery Service:** [www.organicsonline.co.za](http://www.organicsonline.co.za)

**For healthy vegetarian catering:** Mukunda Charan Das – [Mukunda@krishnabooks.co.za](mailto:Mukunda@krishnabooks.co.za)

# Conclusion

“I offer you peace, I offer you love, I offer you friendship, I see your beauty, I hear your need, I feel your feelings, my wisdom flows from the highest source, I salute that source in you, let us work together for unity in love”

## Mahatma Ghandi – Prayer for peace

The basic conscious office principles are simple. Everything is alive and connected with energy, the awesome power of which lies within the small day-to-day details, activated through observable and subtle intention.

The ultimate objective of implementing a conscious office plan into your business is to create a balanced and harmonious place that is supportive to the people who work in it and ultimately for the business as a whole. Once we become aware of how our environment affects us, we can empower it. Once we become aware of the impact of our decisions, we can make conscious choices.

The conscious office proposal is about consciously implementing both observable and subtle underlying initiatives to use ‘intention’ to subconsciously activate the positive mental energies that create positive thoughts. By encouraging these positive thoughts in your staff, you encourage positive actions, which in turn encourages positive thoughts, and so continues this self-perpetuating dynamo of positive reciprocating energy.

The result of which is a conscious, nurturing and prosperous work environment, subtly yet powerfully affecting positive change within the people who work in it.

Time and again companies around the world are moving back towards these age-old principals which bring more quality of life and work to the work environment. Ultimately the workers are happier, more creative, more productive, more loyal and more content. This makes the company more successful, productive and profitable at the end of the day.

## A Special Mention of Thanks:

Vedic Society specially wants to thank **Pragasan** at **SAB & T** for giving us this amazing opportunity to share our research and adapt it for the modern office. We’ve loved doing this and wish that it can serve many people around the world. **Damian Martin** for his immense help compiling and researching for this project and his amazing dedication to the project. **Stacy Friedlander** for the use of her computer equipment for compiling this report and her moral and inspirational support.