

Study: Natural Light Is the Best Medicine for the Office

New research from Cornell University Professor Alan Hedge finds the optimal amount of daylight reduces incidence of eyestrain by 51% and headaches by 63% in office workers

MILPITAS, Calif. – January 31, 2018 – According to a new study conducted by Alan Hedge, a professor in the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis at Cornell, workers in daylight office environments reported a 51 percent drop in the incidence of eyestrain, a 63 percent drop in the incidence of headaches and a 56 percent reduction in drowsiness, all of which can detract from productivity.

“The study found that optimizing the amount of natural light in an office significantly improves health and wellness among workers, leading to gains in productivity,” said Hedge. “As companies increasingly look to empower their employees to work better and be healthier, it is clear that placing them in office spaces with the optimal amount of natural light should be one of their first considerations.”

With Americans, on average, spending more than [90 percent of their time indoors](#), providing the optimal amount of natural light is vital. Unfortunately, office environments introduce a number of challenges. Most notably, uncontrolled natural light can cause unwanted heat that can lead to intra-office “thermostat wars” and excessive glare on occupants’ eyes and computer screens. Consequently, windows are often covered with blinds or shades, contributing to poorly daylight spaces.

To conduct the study, Hedge compared the experiences of workers in offices with traditional windows to workers in offices with auto-tinting “smart” windows that adapt to and control the sun’s energy to optimize natural light and reduce glare. The smart windows were manufactured by View Dynamic Glass.

Key findings of the study include:

- **Controlled daylight unlocks significant health and wellness benefits for office workers.** Workers in office environments with optimized natural light reported a 51 percent drop in the incidence of eyestrain and a 63 percent drop in the incidence of headaches, both of which can detract from productivity.
- **More natural light translates to more alert employees.** Workers in offices with smart glass reported a 56 percent decrease in drowsiness.
- **Enhanced individual performance is tied to access to natural light.** Workers sitting close to smart windows with optimized daylight exposure reported a 2 percent increase in productivity – the equivalent of an additional \$100,000/year of value for every 100 workers or around \$2 million over the window’s lifetime.
- **The optimal amount of natural light creates a better indoor experience.** Workers in offices with smart glass reported an 82 percent improvement in daylight quality.

“Lack of daylight and access to views decreases the ability for the eye to relax and recover from fatigue. Despite their best intentions, companies are unwittingly detracting from their employees’ health and performance by limiting their access to natural light,” said Dr. Brandon Tinianov, chair of the U.S. Green Building Council’s Advisory Council and vice president of industry strategy at View. “These findings are a wake-up call to every executive who wants to maximize the wellness and productivity of their workforce.”

To read the study report, visit <http://go.viewglass.com/daylight-workplace-study>.

Methodology

In November 2017, Hedge conducted a study of 313 office workers from five different locations who worked in either a View Dynamic Glass or traditional glass office environment. Located in a combination of open and private offices, workers were situated within 10 feet of windows and surveyed on daylight and its impact on their productivity, wellness and health. Hedge conducted the study independently and had full autonomy over all aspects, including the survey design, and data analysis.

About Alan Hedge

Alan Hedge is a professor in the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis, Cornell University. He directs the Human Factors and Ergonomics teaching and research programs. His research and teaching activities have focused on issues of design and workplace ergonomics as these affect the health, comfort and productivity of workers.

He has edited a book on "Ergonomic Workplace Design for Health, Wellness, and Productivity," co-authored a book on "Healthy Buildings," co-edited "Advances in Ergonomics Modeling and Usability" and also the "Handbook of Human Factors and Ergonomics Methods," published 41 book chapters, 74 peer-review journal articles and 164 refereed proceedings articles, 42 other conference proceedings, 15 technical reports, 13 legislative reports, 15 technical reports, and 151 additional conference presentations on ergonomics and related topics. He is extensively cited in the national and international media and has appeared on several TV and radio programs.

About View, Inc.

Situated at the intersection of human wellness, smart connectivity, and energy efficiency, View manufactures View Dynamic Glass, a new generation of architectural glass that intelligently transitions through multiple tint states to control the sun's energy, providing an enhanced occupant experience and optimum natural light and thermal comfort. View is the market leader in smart glass, with installations across 25 million square feet of real estate in a variety of commercial markets, including corporate offices, healthcare, government, higher education, airports and multifamily residential.

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