

In recognition of the hectic lives lived by small business owners, a wellbeing program backed by NAB has just launched to support the health and wellbeing of these steadfast individuals.

Rolling with the punches isn't a skill that small business owners have picked up this year, rather it has been a dire necessity in the entrepreneurial environment since, well, forever. This year, however, has pushed us to sharpen our game of adapting to an ever-changing climate so much so that we should feel fit to spearhead anything that could get in the way. However, this confident *In Omnia Paratus* sentiment doesn't run strong all-year round; it doesn't even hang around for most of the day. At times we feel primed for a new challenge, but other moments can leave us doubting ourselves, our purpose, and whether this solo endeavour was the right kind of risk. Day in, day out, the emotions cycle through creating internal instability.

It's all about balance

Balance is the most important word we can know; some might argue *love*, but that's not what we're here for. Passion can get us far, but burnout will ultimately knock us out of the game so, let's focus on keeping life's scales levelled.

The team at Strive Stronger, a company that optimises work-place performance, have recently gained backing from the National Australia Bank to impart their 20-odd years of experience on the steadfast people that make up the backbone of this nation, the talented small business folk. Open for anyone and everyone, this program (NAB BusinessFit) can be accessed through your desktop or phone. The whole digital platform is dedicated to 'boosting the physical and mental wellbeing of employees and help them to adapt to the new ways of working.' It's packed with easy to watch videos, podcasts, wellbeing classes, keynotes, articles, scientific resources, workouts, healthy eating tips, and even a guide to calm the mind. **It's a comprehensive wellness toolkit and, it's completely complimentary!**

BUSINESSFIT PROGRAM



Who's behind it?

While the community-targeted program may be financially backed by NAB, the StriveStronger team are the diverse experts behind the platform content and its mere existence. StriveStronger's founding CEO, Andrew May, a world leading performance strategist and leadership coach, as well as best-selling author, did what any pilot is trained to do in mid-air crisis – sit on your hands, and have a think about what's really going on and how best to react.

"Many people have died shutting down the wrong engine in an emergency because they act too swiftly without correctly identifying which engine has failed in the heat of the moment... It's about finding the right balance between urgency and getting enough information to arrive at the correct answer."

His book, MatchFit, 'a complete guide to getting your body and brain in the best possible shape for work, and for life,' co-authored with colleague, Dr. Thomas Buckley, is from where BusinessFit found its feet. During Sydney's lockdown at the first half of 2020, Andrew and his team endured what is a shared story for many; in a matter of weeks they lost all their revenue. Large corporations couldn't justify investing in programs for better work-place performance during the chaos that reigned in the streets and they especially couldn't see the value when their own employees were no longer in their direct line of sight. Working from home totally wiped them out but they did what Operations Director, Angela Poon, calls 'a complete technological pirouette.'

"For the past decade, I had an average of 40-50 keynotes a year... all of this was instantly wiped off the table" – Andrew May, Founding CEO of StriveStronger.

Who really has the time for wellness programs when our businesses are battling?

If you know us, the crew behind the Work inc brand, then you know we are running our own show too and every one of our passionate individuals on the team has some kind of side-hustler, or entrepreneurial-character in them. Therefore, this is as much advice for us as it is for you. Plus, we aren't ones to tell people to do something we wouldn't do ourselves, so, we got Kristy Bannister to step up to the block.

Work inc's operations director, and owner of Dr. Dough Donuts and Mug Life Café in Pyrmont took the program for a spin and honestly, there's no one we know that needs it more. Ask Kristy if her weekend was good and she'll stagger to say anything because she doesn't have one, instead she's taken to perfecting the old smile-and-nod trick.

Her first introduction to the BusinessFit program was during a conversation with Angela which she reported back to us as being like a therapy session.

"When she asked me how I spent time for myself I said, 'I work on the business,' and she said, 'But what do you do for you? And there was silence'" – Kristy Bannister, owner of Dr. Dough Donuts & Work inc Operations Director.

Spending time on yourself feels like an indulgent, selfish act when that same amount of time could be used towards smoothing out the business side of things. However, if there's one piece of advice that's lightened Kristy's load these past few months, it's that you have to put your oxygen mask on first before you can help anyone else.

"I felt guilty if I occupied my time any other way," – Kristy Bannister



Selflessness through a seemingly selfish act

BusinessFit is like standing by a lake on a hot summer's day, you can dip your toe in, or you can go full send and submerge yourself entirely in the water. Take as little or as much as you want from the platform.

Now's a good time to let you know that Kristy runs her days at what to us is a continuously unmatched speed; her alarm stirs her out of bed at 2am and she won't get back to that comfort until 8 or 9pm that night, and that's her daily rhythm all year round. So, when we say that if Kristy has found some time for herself, then maybe there's something on your plate you can swap out for a bit of me-time.

"One example that stands out is using the business fit planner to schedule in some running. I love to run, but I got so consumed by working on our user experience through the donut website development that I stopped completely. To me, an uber or train ride meant a few more minutes to do work than to dedicate 30 minutes to run from Lavender Bay to Pyrmont.

And I didn't realise there was a problem until I started running again. I became aware of a gradual negative shift in my mentality and that affected my performance more than anything physical. I can trust my instincts again, and I'm making sure my team can do the same for themselves."

In the long run, it pays off. As leaders, when we look out for ourselves, we unexpectedly have a positive impact on those around us. Taking a 'halfer' where you can, can mean the difference between begrudging an employee or coworker for not getting the work done right or on time, and digging a little deeper to find out why to hear them out because there could be a different issue at play. It's can be a tossup between operating at half-speed for the rest of the afternoon or getting your jive back after a few minutes chatting with mates, taking a moment to yourself to breathe and heading out for a green walk before settling back behind the workstation. And this all translates to stronger support for not only yourself but your team, coworkers, family, and friends; and aren't those connections the most important to us?

When we look after ourselves, we ultimately look after our people too.

Directions for Use:

1. Sign yourself up (guilt-free)
2. Pick any video or podcast and give it a try (some are just 2 minutes) and see how you go with it.
3. Invest in yourself in your own way.
4. Pass it on to a friend, coworker, or mentor that you wish to give back to.

LEARN ABOUT THE PROGRAM

"No one will thank you for your sacrifices. Doing what you love is the best thing you can do for those around you." – Malavika Varadan

NAB Business Fit Case Study – Kristy Bannister

