



**Run with the ball:**  
Graham Turner kicks  
around with Flight  
Centre staff during a  
lunch break

out exercising in his lunch hour. He engages with staff in a regular weekly game of touch football and participates in triathlons.

Meanwhile, the company's Healthwise program organises as many as 30 events a year and the number of staff who participate in these activities is growing.

Last year about 200 staff competed in the St George Melbourne Marathon Festival. The event gave participants a choice between a 10 kilometre run or a half marathon. This year, almost 500 Flight Centre staff will take part in the same run.

Nadia Spada, a team leader in the corporate bookings division, FCm travel solutions, has been with the company for eight years. After trying unsuccessfully to develop a fitness program on her own, she decided to take advantage of her employer's health program.

"A couple of years ago, it was hard to get my fitness up," she recalls. "I met with the Healthwise team and they gave me a running and training schedule. I'm now planning to run in the half marathon."

She says the benefit of the trainer has been to build up her fitness and that she feels more energetic. "We're also given options when to train," she says. "We work long hours, so I try to do the lunchtime runs. I found getting out of the office beneficial. When I come back I'm definitely more productive."

Aside from joining a running group, Spada has attended dance sessions and also works out in the gym.

"Some of the activities are free, some are at a discount price," she says. "Since I've started my fitness program, I've changed the way I eat. I recently had another fitness assessment and the consultant told me my fitness age was five years younger than my biological age."

The other positive aspect for Spada has been the social side and the opportunity to meet colleagues she doesn't necessarily work directly with. "When you're busy with work, you don't get to talk to many people," she says. **BRW**

## HEALTH

# HEALTHY ALTITUDE

Flight Centre believes that a fit staff is also good for the bottom line and offers encouragement with free assessments. **Report: Emily Chantiri**

● If you want to encourage a healthy workplace, then start at the top.

Flight Centre founder and chief executive Graham Turner has a strong health and fitness philosophy. He encourages his employees to make the most of their fitness by taking advantage of the company's health program. "It's important for our employees to look after their health and fitness," he says. "We can't make them do it but we can give them encouragement and we give them the tools."

Flight Centre employs a team of 10 to 15 health specialists to provide assessments of the 6500 staff across Australia.

The company also employs health professional contractors to run Flight

Centre's Healthwise fitness program. The trainers make appointments with staff and visit them at their workplaces.

Every employer is given free health and fitness assessments each year, which includes not only a suggested daily exercise routine but nutritional advice. Turner says that even though the health program is not compulsory, just about everyone does it.

"We provide two assessments per year by a professional trainer to our staff," he says. "They are given a program and it's up to the employee what they actually do with it."

Turner thinks the staff appreciate it but stresses that Flight Centre does it not just because it looks good and makes the staff happier, but because he honestly believes in the correlation between fit and healthy staff and the company's financial results.

"We believe that people who are fit and are satisfied with their exercise and nutrition regime are going to be people who are more valuable to the organisation," he says. "It's not just about looking after our people, it's about looking after the company as well."

Turner is a man who likes to practise what he preaches and often will be seen