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Environmental Analysis at Cornell, workers in daylit office environments reported an 84 percent drop in symptoms of eyestrain, headaches and blurred vision symptoms, which ...

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According to a new study conducted a professor in the Department of Design and Environmental Analysis at Cornell, workers in daylit office environments reported an 84 percent drop in symptoms of eyestrain, headaches and blurred vision symptoms, 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 professor by Alan 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 optimal 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 daylit 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:

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- Workers in offices with smart glass reported a 10 percent decrease in drowsiness.
- Enhanced individual performance is tied to access to natural light. Workers sitting close to a window that 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 \$2m over the window's lifetime.
- Natural light creates a better indoor experience. Workers in offices with smart glass reported a 40 percent increase in daylight quality.
- Lack of daylight and access to views decreases the ability for the eye to relax and recover from fatigue. Additionally, workers in proximity to windows report 80 percent higher daylight satisfaction.

“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 Cornell study report, visit <http://go.viewglass.com/daylight-workplace-study>.

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