

HEALTHY BUILDINGS – A FACILITY TREND THAT’S HERE TO STAY

A healthy building means a commitment to creating and maintaining people-first spaces. It can be defined as a built asset that utilizes uplifting architectural cues and eco-friendly technology to help people live healthier and happier lives. Healthy buildings strategically combine the best practices and processes that focus on the support of psychological, physical, and social health and well-being of users in buildings and the built environment.

What are the benefits of healthy buildings?

Why are healthy buildings important? The goal of a healthy building is to try to eliminate potential risks and provide more benefits for its occupants, such as the following:



Improved Overall Health

Outdoor pollutants can easily penetrate indoors. Given that [Canadians spend 90% of their time indoors](#), most of a person’s exposure to outdoor air pollution actually occurs indoors. The phrase “[sick building syndrome](#)” (SBS) refers to circumstances where building occupants experience changes in their comfort and health related to their time spent in a building.



Improved Cognitive Function

A research study showed that workers in green-certified buildings [performed 26.4% better on cognitive function tests](#).



Increased Motivation

A healthy building can contribute to office morale by ensuring employees' peace of mind that their employers care about their comfort, health, and well-being.



Decreased Distraction

A healthy building is a quiet building. The health of individuals is impacted by ambient noise, which raises stress levels in general and exacerbates stress-related illnesses like high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, peptic ulcers, and migraines.



Decreased Stress

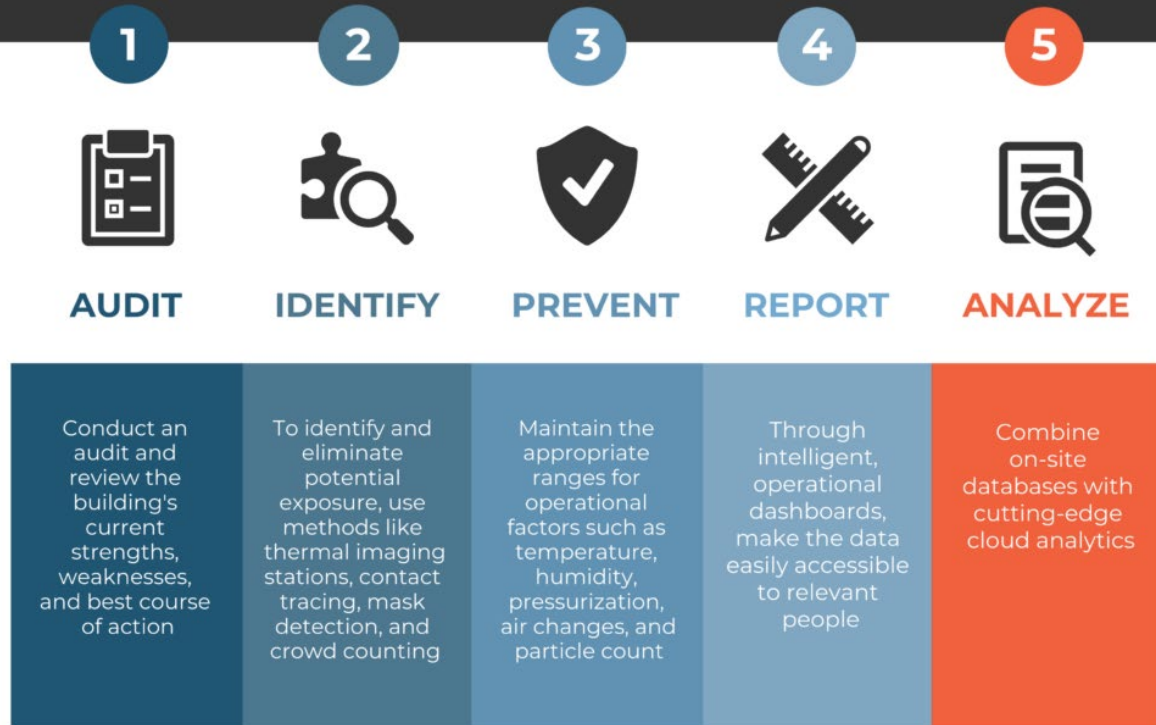
Having awareness of SBS, architects are using a design system that has been demonstrated to improve physical and mental health, enhance sleep, and lower stress levels for occupants.

Achieving a Healthy Building – Where do you start?

While there are **9 foundational elements** that are essential to achieving a healthy built environment, you must start with a baseline understanding – primarily a building audit. An experienced facility management partner can conduct your building audit to give you a better understanding of the needs of your building. This will help you understand what the current health of your built environment is and where there are opportunities for improvement.

How to Get Started

Take these actions to understand the current health of your built environment.



The Vital Role of Facility Managers

The healthy building trend is bound to accelerate and deepen as people continue to return to buildings that they hope are safe and healthy. Facility managers can play a vital role by updating the way they evaluate their buildings — including enacting additional safety measures and sharing timely information with tenants and employees.

There are also several third-party certification programs that facility managers can participate in to properly evaluate their facilities and ensure they uphold them to a high standard. These include:

[Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\)](#): Under the LEED program, points are awarded for projects based on how they address carbon, energy, water, waste, transportation, materials, health, and indoor environmental quality.

WELL Certification: The WELL certification is a plan from the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI) to advance health and well-being.

BOMA Best: Is an environmental assessment and certification program within Canada.

Fitwel: Originally created by the CDC and GSA, Fitwel encourages the integration of a health-promoting design and operations strategy.

Partnering with an experienced Integrated Facility Management (IFM) partner can also help you start off on the right track in achieving your goal. A focus on building user health and well-being should remain a critical and necessary function of building operations teams. By identifying and reducing occupant health risks and focusing on leading innovation you can take the first few steps towards achieving a healthy building. After all, it's a facility trend that's here to stay!