



'The Right Way': American Cast Iron Pipe Company

American Cast Iron Pipe Company (American) was founded in 1905 by John Joseph Eagan, who led his company to follow the Golden Rule: Treat others the way you would like to be treated. Operating under the company slogan, "The Right Way," American has long been committed to a culture of wellness, emphasizing injury prevention. By 1914, Eagan had opened the company's first on-site health clinic, staffed by a nurse, to treat injuries at the foundry. Over the last century, this effort has grown into a comprehensive worksite wellness program called WellBody. In a physically demanding industry, WellBody incorporates safety and injury prevention into its approach to worker health and wellness.



AMERICAN
THE RIGHT WAY

WellBody: A Good Health Movement

American's approach to worksite wellness includes safety and injury prevention, and improved physical health. The wellness team works with the safety department to prevent injuries and support employees who return to work after an injury.

Program History

American identified a need for physical and nutritional wellness programs in the early 1990s. The timeline below (figure 1) shows major events in the WellBody Program. These include hiring the first Wellness Coordinator, adding an incentive program, and providing on-site physical therapy to prevent and treat work injuries.

American's leaders found that musculoskeletal injuries could put their employees' health and safety at risk. To address this concern and reduce future risk, American partnered with a physical therapy provider in 2009.

American Cast Iron Pipe Company: At A Glance

Locations: Headquartered in Birmingham, AL, with subsidiary sites in Alabama, Michigan, Minnesota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Brazil

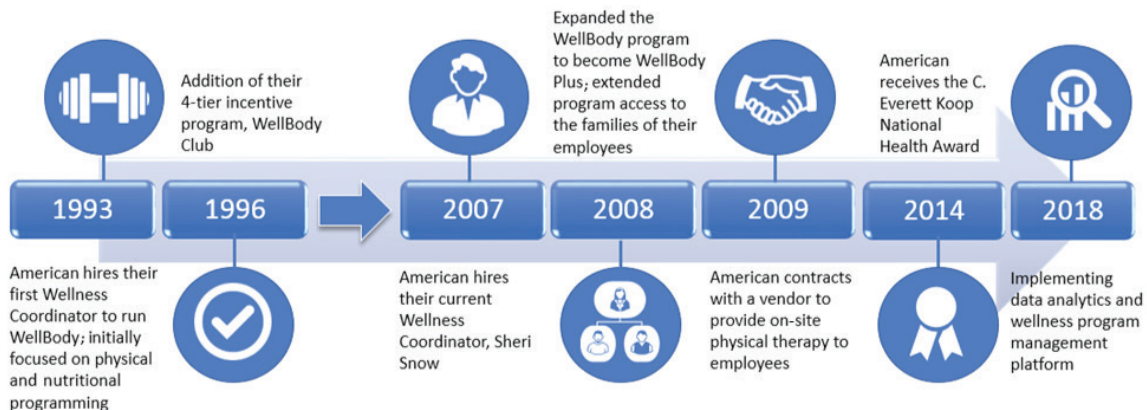
Size: Approximately 2,300 employees

Industry: Ductile iron pipe, steel pipe, valves and hydrants for the waterworks industry; steel pipe for the oil and natural gas industries; and static castings for the agriculture and mining industries

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Sector:

Manufacturing

Figure 1. Timeline of American's WellBody Program



Workplace Health Awards

- C. Everett Koop Award, 2014 (sponsored by The Health Project)
- Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award, 2010 (sponsored by the American Psychological Association)

Since 2017, Sheri Snow, Wellness Manager, has worked closely with Kirk Agosto, Safety Manager, to connect the wellness and safety departments. For example, the two worked together to integrate safety into company wellness fairs, monthly wellness days, health screenings, and hearing screenings.

WellBody + Rewards Program

The WellBody Program helps employees and their families start and keep healthy habits. The voluntary program is open to all employees and spouses. WellBody comprises four steps:



1. **Get screened.** Get a biometric screening with on-site health coaches.
2. **Set and meet annual goals.** Set health goals with a health coach and follow up at least once during the year.
3. **Participate.** Participate in two wellness campaigns during the year.
4. **Earn rewards.** Earn a discount (\$50 for employee/\$25 for spouse) on monthly health plan premium by completing steps 1–3, and meeting annual goals set by the employee and his or her health coach.

In addition to monthly premium discounts, WellBody participants can qualify for WellBody Club incentives. Employees receive a cash reward at the end of the year based on their biometric screening results, including weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. They may also receive a one-time payment for improvement and advance to the next club level (see table 1).

Table 1. Club Level Summary

Club Status	Club 10	Club 25	Club 50	Club 200
Receive Rewards	\$10 annual	\$25 annual	\$50 annual	\$200 annual
Advancement Award	One-time advancement paid at year-end	Club 10 to Club 25: \$200	Club 25 to Club 50: \$150	Club 50 to Club 200: \$100

WellBody Services

All employees and spouses can use any of the free WellBody services at American’s Eagan Center for Wellness. All workers can use this facility from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. to take advantage of a range of services.

- **Nutrition.** Registered dietitians are available for coaching year-round.
- **Fitness.** Group fitness classes, such as yoga and cycling, cardio machines and free-weights are available.
- **Education and activities.** American provides regular programs and activities:
 - Diabetes Today, Curb (healthy lifestyle campaign), and tobacco cessation classes to help employees and families manage and/or prevent chronic disease. American offers classes one or two times a month, and employees can use up to two hours of company time to attend. Educators also meet with individual employees to create wellness plans.
 - Quarterly wellness campaigns and challenges, such as walking/steps, weight loss, and family challenges
 - Combined health-safety-wellness fairs every other year
 - Monthly wellness days with joint wellness and safety exhibits and activities
 - Required, week-long safety training for all new hires
 - Exercises to counteract strain on the body
 - On-site physical therapy services



Stationary bikes in the group fitness room in the Eagan Center.

When I started coming to the Wellness Center, I weighed 254 pounds, my cholesterol was high, my blood sugar was high, and my health was going in the wrong direction. Through my discussions with the dietitians and nutritionists, I was able to get my diet in line and start to exercise. I managed to get my weight down to 210 pounds, which was my goal. My cholesterol is in the healthy range, my blood sugar is in the healthy range.

~ Alan, Quality Assurance Technician



On-site physical therapy clinic.

In 2009, American hired a local physical therapy vendor to provide employees with preventive and reactive physical therapy. The vendor focuses on manual therapy, work-related exercise, and screenings to enable return to work. The physical therapy clinic works closely with Snow and Agosto to address the root causes of musculoskeletal injuries in American's workers. The goal is to instill good, lifelong habits.

The clinic is conveniently located inside the Eagan Center for Wellness to save employees travel and wait times.

The physical therapy clinic provides:

- **Pre-hire physical ability evaluation.** Job-specific screening, which may include lifting, carrying, squatting, pushing, and pulling, to show an applicant has the physical abilities required to do the job.
- **Ergonomics assessments.** Evaluation of a worker in action if he or she has physical discomfort, (e.g., back pain) to find ways to make the job less stressful and decrease strain.

- **Counter-strain exercises.** Movements to reverse any strains that workers have had.
- **Return-to-work screens.** Job-specific screening, which may include lifting, carrying, squatting, pushing, and pulling, for a worker to be cleared to return to work. If unable to return, he or she will complete "Ramp In," a two- to three-week conditioning program to retrain and strengthen his or her body.
- **Musculoskeletal early intervention program.** Pilot program aimed to find injury risk and treat any threat before severe injury would occur. This is the first full-scale program that combines wellness, safety, and physical therapy. Physical therapy sessions that use non-recordable treatments, such as hot/cold therapy, massage therapy, non-rigid support such as KT Tape, and position-specific exercises, can reduce the number of recordable incidents to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Program Data And Analysis

In 2016, American estimated a 4:1 return on investment (ROI) calculated based on investing in physical therapy and safety programs, as well as the savings from fewer physical therapy clinic visits and restricted and lost-duty days. The number of injuries American must report to OSHA that cause lost work time has declined 89.2 percent from 2010–2016, and the total number of lost time cases decreased 85.7 percent during the same period.

American's workers' compensation claims data show about 87 percent of workers went back to full-duty work in 2010–2012 before they started "Ramp-In" in 2013. As shown in figure 2, since 2013, more than 90 percent of employees who had an injury and received care were able to perform their jobs after an injury, without needing to adjust their work efforts.

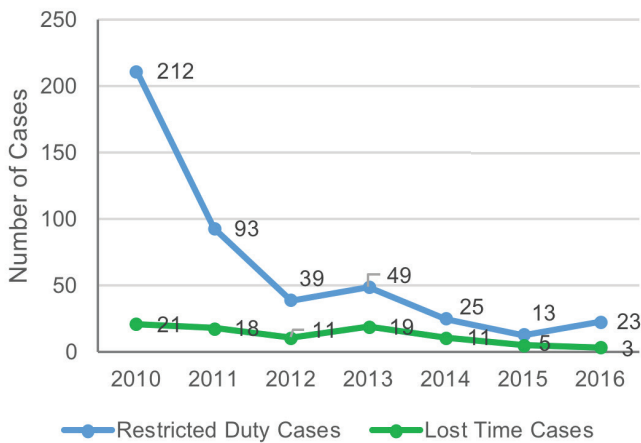
WellBody offers physical therapy if you're having any issues to keep them from becoming more serious, which would implicate being able to do your job safely. Employees participating in the musculoskeletal Early Intervention Program can see a therapist on company time. The fact that we can be proactive and focus on prevention is huge.

~ Kirk Agosto, Safety Manager

Physical therapy is real nice. It's convenient because you can work it around your schedule. I had a problem with my back and they fixed it. I had a bone spur in my foot, plantar fasciitis. I did physical therapy and they made it go away.

~ Brian, Maintenance Mechanic

Figure 2. Number of restricted duty cases and lost time cases at American, 2010–2016.



Source: American's Injury Logs, 2010–2016

Notes: Restricted duty and lost time is as defined by OSHA. This data set only includes American employees who have used PT services. Employees treated by other providers are not in this data set.

American's commitment to preventive services for workers has reduced rates of injury and recovery times. Early treatment is key, and much of this success is due to the decrease of time between injury and treatment from about two weeks to two days. Because employees are able to see a physical therapist at the first sign of strain, American has decreased employee recovery time or prevented injury altogether.

Future Plans

American plans to continue to improve its wellness services. After a formal review process, it will roll out the piloted Early Intervention Program to all departments, with the goal of reducing musculoskeletal injury risk. American plans to create a one-stop online wellness portal where employees can track their health data, record wellness and health claim costs, and discuss upcoming wellness activities and events. The portal will help American track and manage health risks among workers.

In addition, Agosto will revamp the new-hire safety training so that all workers know the company safety policies and procedures. Agosto said the main goal is "to prevent anyone

from getting hurt. They do the work safely or not at all." This mindset will help workers watch out for their own safety and the safety of their coworkers.

Advice For Other Employers

A common challenge in keeping employees healthy and reducing risk of strain and injury is that production needs may seem more important than wellness. But a delay in treatment could lead to longer time to heal from injury. Wellness and safety leaders at American agree that the support of middle management is key to reducing the time between injury and treatment. As a result, Snow, Agosto, and their team developed relationships with employees, supervisors, and leaders at all levels. Because they have a rapport with Snow and Agosto, middle managers are more likely to release their supervisees to be treated by the wellness and physical therapy teams.

Recommendations For Action

- **Support** treatment and return to work screenings to help employees back to work more efficiently and to help prevent long-term injury.
- **Identify** and build upon existing resources. For example, you may already have a fitness space on-site where a physical therapy vendor could treat employees.
- **Collaborate** with wellness, safety, and physical therapy departments, if applicable, to create common goals that combine employee health, education, and safety to provide a holistic wellness program.
- **Learn** about [OSHA](#), the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#), and [NIOSH Research on Work Schedules and Work-related Sleep Loss](#).

The [CDC Workplace Health Resource Center \(WHRC\)](#) is a one-stop shop for organizations to find credible tools, guides, case studies, and other resources to design, develop, implement, evaluate, and sustain workplace health promotion programs. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/WHRC> to find more case studies of workplace health programs in the field.