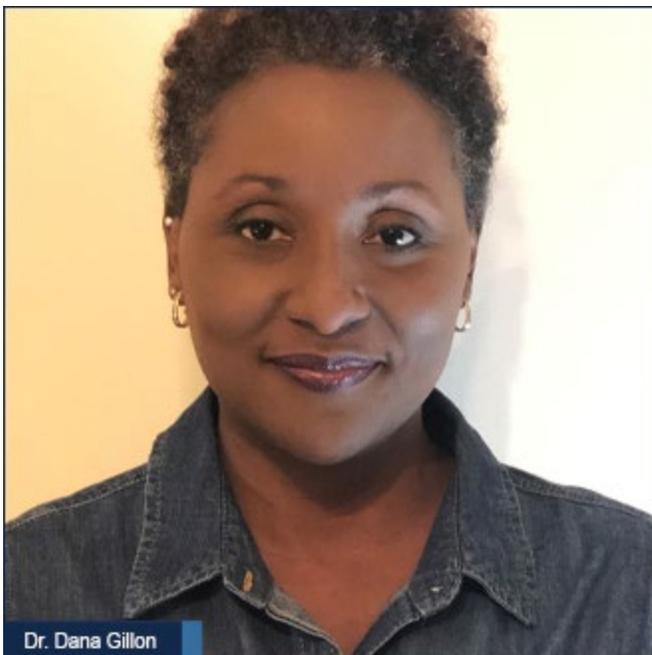


# WELLNESS CONNECTION

LIVE WELL. WORK WELL.

JANUARY 2021

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT - Wellness Connection Interview with Dr. Dana Gillon



*By Seth Yoder*

**Q. Could you please tell me what your job title is and describe what you do in your role?**

**A.** I am a Coordinator of Occupational Safety for Facilities and Services at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In my role, I plan, organize, develop, and implement occupational safety and health program elements, including ergonomics, campus medical surveillance, and safety training.

**Q. We often hear about the importance of setting up an ergonomic workstation.**

**What might an ergonomic workstation look like in our homes and why do ergonomic workstations really matter?**

**A.** Whether we are in the home or the office, ergonomics is about fitting the working conditions to the individual, and in doing so, improving overall performance on the job. Conversely, when we try to put ourselves into conditions that don't fit us, performance is likely to decline. We may experience discomfort, pain or even soft tissue injuries. An ergonomic workstation is going to take into account our posture, how often our tasks are performed, and the level of effort

required to perform those tasks. If we are doing a lot of reaching and bending, that is going to put pressure on our soft tissue and could potentially lead to discomfort and/or injury. For example, when we are using a computer, the position of our head and neck is very important. An ergonomically correct computer set-up requires the screen to be in front of your face at about an arm's length away, and your head should be level. Additionally, your keyboard should be level so that your elbows are at a 90-degree angle. When our workstation is set-up correctly, it helps take pressure off our joints, which helps prevent injuries and improve overall performance.

**Q. To stand or not stand – is it imperative that we spend a portion of our day standing, and, if so, is it possible without a standing desk?**

**A.** Movement contributes to well-being and there are advantages that come from shifting from sitting to standing. Whether or not you have standing desk, you should be getting up every 20-30 minutes and moving around. It's important to remember that you don't have to have a standing desk to still be able to get work done while standing. For example, you can take a phone call while standing or if you need to read something, stand up while you are reading. Just keep in mind that regardless of whether you are standing or sitting, the posture of your neck is important. When we extend our neck in the downward position for too long that can cause strain.

**Q. While it may not occur to many of us while we are working from home, accidents and injuries can occur. Are there any specific things we can do to prevent accidents or injuries while working from home?**

**A.** We should take the same types of precautions at home that we would take in the workplace. You should stand up in your workspace and do a review of what is immediately around you. Are there trip hazards? Are there cords that need to be managed? Is there an excessive amount of clutter? These are things in the workspace that we call slip and fall hazards, which happen all of the time. At the beginning of each day, review your surroundings. Also, remember to use the same type of judgement you would use while working in the office. For example, if a light bulb needs to be replaced, use a stepladder and not a chair to get up and change it. Be mindful of making smart choices about how you engage with your workspace so you can limit injuries.

**Q. Within the University of Illinois System, are there any specific resources available to assist staff with work from home set-up?**

**A.** The [Employee Safety and Health Webpage](#) on the Facilities and Services website provides a number of resources to assist in employee safety practices at home or in the office.

This one-page [Ergonomics Self-Help Guide](#) will help you set-up a more ergonomic workstation at home or in the office.

In this collection of safety awareness and compliance trainings called [Toolbox Talks](#) you can find information on topics that range from stepladder safety to housekeeping for safety.

