

EUROPE: SWITZERLAND

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to wellness or wellbeing?

Alternative Medicine Recognition

The Swiss government during a six-year trial period from 2012-2017 currently recognizes homeopathy, holistic medicine, herbal medicine, neural therapy and traditional Chinese medicine. These treatments are covered by basic compulsory insurance until 2017, provided a certified medical professional administers them. Ayurveda and European traditional medicine, as well as homeopathy and traditional Chinese medicine, have been approved for a national diploma examination. Currently these treatments are covered by a supplementary insurance scheme (an additional insurance policy that many Swiss hold to cover costs of complementary and alternative health treatments) if administered by a practitioner who is not a certified medical professional. As this is relatively new, not all insurers recognize these medicine systems however it is a breakthrough for the health and wellness industry of Switzerland.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think are important developments in your country for each of the following:

Spas: The Swiss hospitality industry is giving greater focus on spa management studies as recognition to the importance of this growing sector of business.

Wellness Tourism: Wellness tourism continues to strengthen despite the fact that Swiss tourism has showed a decline due to the strength of the Swiss franc.

Wellness Living Communities/Real Estate: Hiking, skiing, biking and living the outdoors are the norm engrained within the Swiss lifestyle, which is now giving rise to a new culture of spa & wellness users and most communities have a spa within reach.

Beauty: The export growth for Swiss Beauty products is primarily due to China's gaining purchasing power (reflected in the desire for premium quality) and its free trade agreements with Switzerland.

Fitness: The percentage of Swiss fulfilling the national recommendations concerning physical activity during leisure time has increased from 62% to 72% within the last 10 years (this increase applies to all age groups).

Nutrition: The Swiss are accustomed to seeking and delivering quality and this is reflected in the increasing demand for locally grown organic foods despite their higher costs in comparison.

3. How would you describe the state of workplace wellness in your country?

Swiss Wellness Initiatives in the Workplace

- **Friendly Work Space Certificate**

A tool applied in Switzerland to promote health in the workplace is the “Friendly Work Space” certification, introduced in 2009. The quality label is awarded to companies implementing health promotion as an executive responsibility and incorporating it as a part of their managerial strategy. Presently, only 31 Swiss companies have received this certification. However, thanks to the participation of larger players such as Nestlé and Swiss Post, over 100’000 people now benefit from a healthier workplace.

- **SWiNG Project**

The SWiNG project was established by Health Promotion Switzerland and Swiss Insurance Association to evaluate the impact of health promotion initiatives and activities. The SWiNG study comprised of 8 large Swiss companies, with a total of 5’000 workers. The study found that a staff member suffering from stress could cost a company corporate losses of 8000 chf.- per year.

A 10% increase in efficiency as well as fewer absent days came as a result of a positive balance between resources in the workplace (such as support from colleagues and encouragement from management) and sources of stress (conflict, noise, time pressure)

- **Wellness Initiatives in the Workplace Awards**

The Swiss section of the European Association for Health Promotion (AEPS) awards an annual prize of 25,000 CHF.- to enterprises that put emphasis on improving working conditions. Examples of winning activities have included, prevention of back problems among staff members, burnout prevention for workers above 50 years of age and alcohol awareness programs.

4. What has been the general attitude about investing in spa/wellness in your country in 2015? Specific examples?

In 2015 Switzerland has focused on investing in the following areas of health tourism: post-surgery rehabilitation, treatment of stress, beauty, preventive health care and active recuperation.

5. Whose responsibility is it to create a well world?

Each of us, and all of us are responsible in creating a well world. Many of us have good intentions on how we want to impact the world we live in, however we sometimes struggle with being true to this desire. Though we are better informed today on what creates a well world, the challenge is how to change our habits and mindset to fit with our newfound knowledge.

The practice of living in consciousness is necessary in transforming us to live in harmony with all that exists. A new consciousness and awareness is spreading causing us to realize our oneness with each other, nature and all creation. In creating a well world, it is vital that we see ourselves as a part of all creation rather than individuals in it.

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