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New Physical Activity Guidelines

The U.S. Office of Disease Prevention has released its updated "Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans." Only 26% of men, 19% of women, and 20% of adolescents meet these recommendations. For adults, that's 150 minutes per week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity *and* two days of muscle-strengthening activity. Will you have a New Year's resolution focused on wellness? If so, use a coach, gym resource, motivational videos, or even your EAP to keep yourself on track if motivation slips. Fact: Half of all American adults have one or more preventable chronic diseases, and 10% of all premature mortality is associated with failure to meet recommended levels of aerobic physical activity.



Source: www.health.gov (search "physical activity guidelines").

Emotional Intelligence in Customer Service



Emotional intelligence (EI) applies very well to customer service, where it has big payoffs. To use EI in customer service, focus on your customers' emotions and not your own. You will appear more empathic, identify customer needs more quickly, and calm an angry customer faster. You will experience less stress on the job by being proactive rather than reactive to a customer's emotionality. Try it. See if you aren't less worn out at day's end.

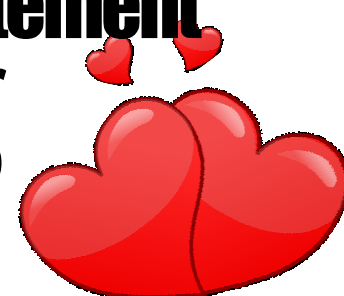
Research ... Social Media Causes Depression

There has been quite a bit of research on the adverse impacts of social media on well-being. The most recent research focused on Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. With more social media use, symptoms of depression are likely to occur. And those who are already depressed can expect the condition to worsen with more social media use. Researchers don't advocate giving up social media, but they do strongly suggest limiting screen time to improve mental health. This free time should be used to reduce loneliness by socializing and interacting with friends offline.



Source: upenn.edu (search "social media depression").

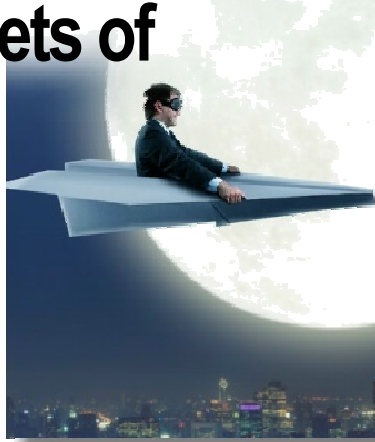
Putting Excitement Back in Your Relationship



If your relationship with a significant other feels too sluggish or routine (a complaint of many couples), research psychologists say the intervention is to plan new activities you both enjoy. Don't panic—routines occur naturally because we are creatures of habit. One study showed an increase in relationship satisfaction while planning something new, while participating in it, and following the activity. Novel experiences need not be expensive vacations. A new hobby, project, or visiting local attractions, recreation, or picnic spots—nearly anything can do the trick. Shaking up the routine is a life skill. Use it to avoid complacency and stagnation.

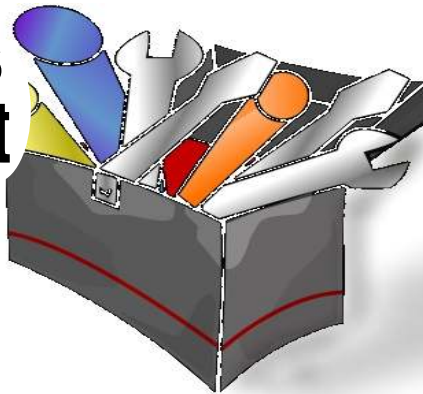
Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10707334>

Hard-Won Secrets of Outstanding Workers



Some outstanding work habits take decades and hard knocks to learn. Practice these work habits and watch your indispensability grow. 1) Do more than what's asked. *How to do it:* When given an assignment, put yourself in the boss' shoes. Use empathy. For example, ask, "What will management above my boss additionally want in this report that was not requested?" 2) Avoid more mistakes. *How to do it:* Don't ignore the small voice of warning in your head that says, "I better get clarification on..." "Better check on..." "I should inform my boss about..." 3) Take action to solve problems others ignore. *How to do it:* When you spot a problem that needs to be fixed, claim the high ground and create a solution or initiate the process if others are needed to participate. 4) Practice positivity. *How to do it:* No one feels happy all the time, but make a positive attitude your calling card. It will be remembered more easily than your name will. 5) Systematize and organize. *How to do it:* Create systems to save time and reduce repeating time-consuming tasks. This frees you for greater productivity, improved energy, and less fatigue. 6) Maintain a neat and orderly work area or office that greets you with a "smile" when you arrive at work. You'll feel more energetic as you start your day.

Build a Stress Management "Tool Kit"



Do you have a personal stress management program—a collection of techniques to intervene when stress hits? Or when stressed, do you cope with the anxiety and tension without a strategic approach, searching for relief only when it all becomes too much? With a thoughtful approach to stress management, you can reduce the risk of harm from prolonged stress and avoid unhealthy ways of coping with it. To build your stress management "tool kit," first identify factors central to your stress response pattern. When stressed, do you lose sleep, get headaches or neck pain, eat poorly, eat more, not eat, become irritable, head for salty snacks, or have GI problems? See the long list of stress effects at www.stress.org/stress-effects. Once you pin down these effects, focus on how to fight back. Research the intervention strategies, and try enlisting the help of a professional counselor or your organization's EAP.

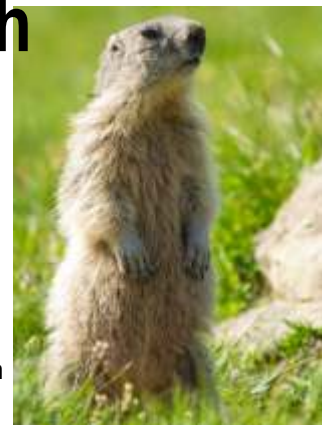
Free the Clutter that Binds You



Everyone reacts to workspace clutter differently. Some employees even report working more effectively around a bit of it. But if that is not you, realize that research exists to explain clutter's effect on productivity, and it's not good. Clutter distracts. All that stuff around you—mail, sticky notes, scattered supplies, food, gadgets, personal items, files—they all compete for your attention even if you aren't engaged with them. They contribute to distraction, cause defocus, make it harder to get back on task, create irritation, and increase your stress. To declutter your space, end your day with a five-minute decluttering ritual. Over ensuing days, notice the impact of how you feel arriving at your workspace. Do you have more energy? Do you feel more in control? Has your ability to concentrate increased? Do you feel less depressed, more engaged, and/or more positive about your job?

Source: www.paw.princeton.edu [Search: "clutter research"]

Stay Safe with Situational Awareness



"Situational awareness" is a skill learned in professions in law enforcement and the military, or in activities like riding a bike. When you are "situation aware," you consciously pay attention to what is happening in your immediate vicinity in order to more quickly spot threats to your safety. This helps you respond sooner. Situational awareness can protect you from becoming a victim of a crime. Leaving your workplace alone at night or walking in an isolated parking lot are examples of where situational awareness may protect you from an attack or circumstances that may place you at greater risk. You can practice situational awareness almost anywhere. When walking down a sidewalk, take a few moments to notice details, colors, people, small objects, and changes in the environment. Periodically practicing this exercise may prompt you to use situational awareness when it will be most beneficial.