

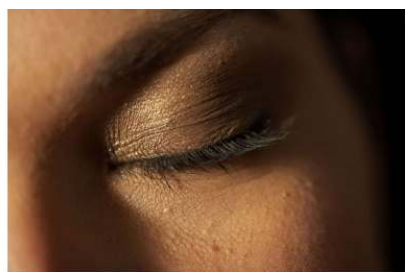


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Sleep—A “Fountain of Youth”

Although there is no such thing as a “fountain of youth,” many researchers are convinced that quality sleep comes closest to its benefits. Seek help for sleep troubles from appropriate health resources. Start with a doctor, EAP, counselor, credible book, or your health and wellness advisor. Research studies on those who get better sleep show improved memory, reduced depression, improved self-confidence, lost weight, looking younger, increased creativity, improved mood, increased energy, prevention of cognitive decline in later life, reduced pain, better work performance, and even positive benefits in decision making leading to business and financial success. One study showed that 17 hours without sleep equates to an impaired brain with a .05 percent blood alcohol level.

Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov> [Search PMC 1739867]



Counseling for Procrastination

Many people who struggle with procrastination find it mind-boggling to try to self-correct this habit. Despite having access to a world of tips on how to overcome their tendency to put things off, deadlines still challenge them. Don't keep fighting with your inability to get started on tasks and to stick with them. Procrastination is a symptom, usually of another issue undermining your ability to “just do it.” Depression, fear of success, fear of failure, or even addiction and other health issues can undermine the ability to self-motivate—leaving the “victim” immobilized until the fear of a deadline forces them to act. If this sounds like you, begin today to track your procrastination, make notes, and take your personal experiences to a mental health counselor or your EAP—you can slay this saboteur of productivity.



Art of Asking for Feedback

Don't wait for feedback from your supervisor. Instead, ask for an “assessment” regarding projects and assignments. Preface the request with your goal. For example, “I want my monthly presentations to department heads to be engaging and effective. Can you assess this morning's presentation?” This approach is more likely to produce the feedback you want. A less specific request such as “Can you give me feedback?” risks a more general response like, “You're doing fine. If there is a problem, I will let you know.”



Prove You Are Adaptable

Few employers can promise that change will not disrupt the job you are seeking. They need you to be adaptable, but they may not ask. Instead, they will look for evidence in your work habits that prove you don't fear change. These include having backup plans, coping well with sudden redirection, always having different approaches to problems, and evidence of your ability to make lemonade out of lemons. Be prepared to talk about a big problem or sudden crisis you faced, and how you weren't rattled, instead overcoming or achieving new heights from it. You'll make the right impression.



Is Social Media Changing You?

Are you aware of social media's effect on you? Does it interrupt your activities, consume too much of your time, adversely affect your mood, keep you inside on sunny days, cause you to be late, distract your driving, or put the kibosh on your to-do list? Facebook and other social media platforms make their money based on usage and seek to have you spend more time online. Some studies have shown a little shot of dopamine—a hormone that creates a sense of pleasure—is released when we engage on social media, get a response back, or gain any satisfaction from the clicks, likes, and entertainment we experience. This leads to escalating use, and it's a powerful distraction when we are attempting to be productive. When our brains seek relief from stress or boredom, we reflexively turn to social media for a "pick me up." Many studies link social media use with depression and alienation from others. Gain more time in your life by reducing your social media use with the help of one of the many free apps that measure, control, and discourage use. They will tell you everything you want to know, including your accumulated hours from your days and weeks of social media engagement. Imagine what you will do with free time back in your life.

<https://www.ama.org> [Search: social media dopamine]

Why So Defensive?

Workplace communication sometimes includes receiving negative feedback or being confronted with a problem related to our work. Automatic reactions of defensiveness then follow. Remaining unruffled—staying composed and receptive even while feeling reactive—is a learned skill. Feeling defensive is natural when we feel a threat, but it has drawbacks in the workplace. Typically, it is a no-win response that keeps us from hearing others, interferes with solving problems, and sours relationships with those we depend on. Ultimately, defensiveness gives away your control and ability to shape the outcome you want from a difficult interaction. To reduce defensiveness at work, challenge yourself to pause before you react. For example, count to 10 in order to spend some time regaining control, which will help you avoid lashing out. For speedier results, use a mini-diary to track how well you stayed composed, what went well, and what you will do better next time.



Shun Shortcuts to Prevent Workplace Injuries

On-the-job shortcuts are one of the most common causes of workplace injuries. A shortcut places a priority on speed over safety. Employees who take shortcuts believe they are aware and savvy enough to avoid injury in exchange for saving time, hassling with safety gear, meeting quotas, or some other advantage. Insurance companies, which calculate risk, protect businesses, and make a profit when fewer claims are paid, will tell you that the increased risk from an "unsafe work practice" is about 600 percent higher than doing it safely. When you bypass a safety step, you automatically enter a world of probability called the "Law of Large Numbers." Also called the "law of averages" or "gambler's fallacy," it states that you may escape injury once or twice, but your chance of injury becomes nearly certain as time passes.

Source: <http://www.selectinternational.com> [visit "blog," then search "no short cut"]



Building Resilience: Finding Time Alone

"Alone time" is time engaged in a solitary, uninterrupted, and satisfying behavior or activity that provides you a psychological boost. The goal is feeling refreshed despite a schedule of tightly

woven work and home responsibilities. Single parents, caregivers, or those with busy jobs and chain-linked to-dos can find it difficult to schedule regular alone time. It's easy to see alone time as only a "nice-to-have" activity or to avoid it altogether out of fear or guilt. However, alone time is a tool—a resiliency strategy—that can help you manage stress better, increase energy, and provide a positive point in the future to focus on while you are under stress in the present. Alone time improves mood, offers work-life balance, and renews your purpose. See your EAP or a counselor to help you map an alone time strategy so you can reap all the positives it promises for your life.

