

# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

*Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program*

December 2016

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## Be Good to Yourself: Tips for Adults



Many people feel stress in their daily lives. Stress can cause you to overeat, feel tired, and not want to do anything. Regular physical activity can give you more energy. Try some of these other ideas to help relieve stress and stay on track with your fitness and nutrition goals:

- Get plenty of sleep.
- Practice deep breathing while relaxing your muscles one at a time.
- Take a break and go for a walk.
- Take short stretch breaks throughout the day.
- Try taking a yoga or tai chi class to energize yourself and reduce stress.
- Try a new hobby, like a pottery class or any activity that sparks your interest.
- Surround yourself with people whose company you enjoy.
- A balanced eating plan, regular physical activity, and stress relief can help you stay healthy for life.
- Eat breakfast every day. People who eat breakfast are less likely to overeat later in the day.
- Choose whole grains more often. Try whole wheat breads and pastas, oatmeal, brown rice, or bulgur.
- Select a mix of colorful vegetables each day. Vegetables of different colors provide different nutrients.
- Have low-fat, low-sugar snacks on hand at home, at work, or on the go to combat hunger and prevent overeating.
- At restaurants, eat only half your meal and take the rest home.
- Visit museums, the zoo, or an aquarium. You and your family can walk for hours and not realize it.
- Take a walk after dinner instead of watching TV.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health (NIH), Weight-Control Information Network. (Updated 2012, August). Better health and you: Tips for adults (NIH Publication No. 08-4992). Retrieved April 29, 2015, from <http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov>

### *Online Seminar Reminder*

### *Lighten Up With Laughter*

#### When:

Available on-demand  
starting December 20, 2016

#### Where:

[www.deeroakseap.com](http://www.deeroakseap.com)





## Drive-Thru Eating Driving You Crazy?



Are you driving through fast-food windows, mindlessly eating while you work, or munching while driving?

You may be out of touch with your eating, and then it's easy to overeat, said Dr. Jenny Conviser, an expert in the treatment of eating disorders.

You can establish mindful eating patterns. She offers this advice:

- Carve out time for meals. Don't get a lunch break? Fight for one, even if it's 15 minutes. Research suggests that our brains don't even fully register the things we're eating while doing something else.
- Eat sitting down. If you're going to eat at the refrigerator, pull up a chair! If you commit to eating only while sitting down (at a table no less!), you're less likely to mindlessly munch. And eat without distractions, like the TV or computer, so you can fully experience what you are eating.
- Learn what "hungry" feels like. Ask yourself if you really are hungry before you eat, or are you eating due to the time of day, habit, or cope with stress? If you are hungry, allow yourself to eat and plan for healthy snacks during your day. Driving yourself to extreme hunger by skipping meals or not allowing yourself to snack can result in unhealthy binges.
- Notice each sensation. Next time you sit down to eat something, take a moment to notice the shape, the color, the size. Bring the food to your nose and inhale the aroma. When you take a bite, notice how the texture feels on your tongue, and chew fully before swallowing. Take a moment before taking another bite. Sure, this takes a few extra minutes, but you get to experience food as it's meant to be—a full sensory experience.
- Check in with yourself. Try stopping for a break midway through your meal for a few minutes. Are you still really hungry? If so, keep eating, and check in again after a few more bites. If not, maybe it's time to stop and save the rest for later.

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## Yes, Stretch

Using the wrong technique during stretching can waste your time and increase your risk of injury. Be aware of the fact that when you stretch a muscle, you will also perform at least one action that is directly opposite to what the muscle does as it works (contracts).

To stretch safely, you must follow the 4 main principles: avoiding pain, stretching slowly, stretching the right muscle, and working only the necessary joints and muscles. These guidelines are designed to make your stretching safer and more effective and to increase your awareness of your body, according to Kristian Berg in his book *Prescriptive Stretching*.

**Avoid Pain:** If you stretch carefully, your muscles will react in the desired manner. If you force the stretch, your muscles will not want to cooperate. If you stretch to the point of pain, your body's defense mechanisms will kick in, thinking something dangerous might be going on. When muscles register pain, they try to protect themselves by contracting. This is the opposite of what you want to achieve by stretching. Of course, very slight pain during a stretch can feel good if the discomfort does not spread to the body. However, you must be able to tell what is the burn of stretching and pain that will lead to an injury.

**Stretch Slowly:** If you throw your arms or legs out during the stretch, the muscle will stretch too fast. This makes the body think that the muscle is about to get torn or injured. Once again, it will try to protect the muscle by contracting it, preventing you from reaching your goal.

**Stretch the Correct Muscle:** Although this might sound obvious, you must use the correct technique to follow this rule. Movement that goes a couple of degrees in the wrong direction can mean the difference between stretching the muscle and pulling on the joint capsule or harming the body.

**Avoid Affecting Other Muscles and Joints:** Stretching that is careless or poorly done can negatively affect other muscles and joints, actually worsening your condition. This common mistake is the main reason why some people consider stretching worthless or painful.

**Follow the Golden Rule:** Stretching correctly demands good technique and practice. As in any other discipline, practice makes perfect. Make sure that all your angles are correct as you start the movement. You must move with the right speed and with the right posture. Your focus should be moving the joint as little as possible as you stretch the muscle.

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## *If weight control is on your menu*

When dining out, order items that are baked, braised, broiled, grilled, poached, roasted, or steamed. Don't order items that are battered, fried, pan-fried, buttered, creamed, or breaded, advise nutrition experts at the University of Alabama–Birmingham.

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## *Shower away the mold*

Rub a sponge saturated with vinegar on your shower curtain to remove soap build-up and kill mold and mildew, suggest the authors of *Clean & Green: The Complete Guide to Nontoxic and Environmentally Safe Housekeeping*.

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## *An EAP Reminder*

*Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.*

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.



DEER OAKS EAP SERVICES



## Clinician's Corner..

*Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team*

### Taking Risks for Personal Growth



Have you been feeling as if you were in a personal rut? Can you remember the last time that you challenged yourself or tried something new? For many of us, this time of year is packed with higher levels of stress and increased demands on our time. Our day-to-day activities become even more mundane feeling as we struggle to accommodate the demands of the holidays. Then, as it all winds down, we are faced with making personal resolutions to grow and change. Because we are so worn down, these resolutions can often feel forced or shallow.

While the typical New Years' resolutions are often well intended, the challenge becomes to work on personal growth on a deeper level. What goals have you had for yourself that you have been delaying perhaps out of fear, uncertainty, or for a desire to avoid change? Have you been looking to ask for a promotion, make major changes in your relationships, or take up a new and challenging hobby? Ask yourself why you have not yet embarked on this new journey.

For many of us, fear is what holds us back. We fear not being able to predict outcomes, to know if our decisions will be the right ones. Fear can tell us that we aren't good enough, that we'll fail or sometimes that we'll succeed and not be able to handle the attention that ensues. In the long run, staying in the same routine isn't necessarily a bad thing, but we then risk not feeling the rush of pride and exhilaration when we make a change and overcome our fears.

So this year, instead of (or in addition to) selecting a personal resolution about something you "should" be doing, try taking a different path. Resolve to make steps towards personal change and growth, whatever that means for you. The new path may not be as well lit as the one that has been walked on for so long, but allow your personal strengths and greatness to shed light on the amazing opportunities that lie ahead. Want to learn more about personal growth? Check us out at [www.deeroakseap.com](http://www.deeroakseap.com).



## Five Frugal Ways to Save at the Gas Pump



While high gas prices may cause panic for some consumers, remember that there are steps you can take to make sure soaring prices don't send you into a financial tailspin. The following suggestions will help you get the most out of a full tank.

- 1. Search for the best price.** Gas prices usually vary from one area of town to the other. Search for websites that can give you detailed information about the gas prices at stations in your neighborhood.
- 2. Drive sensibly.** Did you know that exceeding the speed limit by just 5 mph can result in an average fuel economy loss of 6 percent? Constant accelerating and braking wastes gas, and according to CNN Money, it can lower your gas mileage by 33 percent when driving at highway speeds and by 5 percent when cruising around town.
- 3. Plan trips in advance.** If you know you have to run multiple errands in a day, make a plan that will help you consolidate the number of trips you have to take. This tactic is also useful for driving down the cost of road trips. Gas prices vary from one city to another. Plan your route so you don't get stuck paying extra because you have no choice.
- 4. Routinely maintain your vehicle.** Get your vehicle checked on a regular basis to make sure all systems are running smoothly. Make sure spark plugs and sensors are replaced on time and the tire pressure is at the right level. If these aren't maintained, your vehicle will have to work harder, which means guzzling more gas.
- 5. Look into alternatives.** Research other methods of transportation. These could include carpooling with coworkers, using public transportation, or even riding a bicycle. With the growing number of affordable hybrid vehicles on the market, you may find that you can save money by investing in a new car. Automotive financial calculators can help you calculate savings.

### About Money Management International

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