THE EMPLOYEE ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER

Deer Oaks EAP Services

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

July 19

July Online Seminar

Making a Life While Making a Living: Work-Life Balance

Identify strategies to be more effective and more satisfied with both home and work lives.

Available on-demand starting July 16th at www.deeroakseap.com

About Your EAP

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.

Tele-Health Services

Did you know that the EAP offers structured telephonic and video counseling in addition to traditional in-person counseling?

Call from the privacy of your home or office and one of our helpful counselors will help you address issues that are making it difficult to manage at work or at home.

Helpline: 866-327-2400
Web: www.deeroakseap.com
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Get Back to the Basics to Find Balance in Life

These are exciting times. Consider how different life is now than it was in the past. Until the industrial revolution in the 1800s, life was structured by the rhythms of day and night and the changing seasons. Excitement, stimulation, and change were all dangerous, to be avoided. Then imbalance was a sign of danger.

Now contrast this with modern life. All of the wondrous inventions—electricity, the automobile, the airplane, the telephone, the internet—have stripped away the natural, external limits, boundaries, and structure that had dictated life in the past. Nowadays, you can do anything, anywhere, with anyone at any time. Life is filled with possibilities.

But this exciting, limitless life can leave you out of balance. Without the soothing structure that guided mankind over the ages, you can become driven by instinctive mental energy. When your nervous system senses that your life is out of balance, it cries out in alarm, as it was programmed to do by millions of years of evolution. You feel more and more stressed, uneasy, and worried.

The answer to this problem is creating a framework to achieve balance in your life. Think of these seven rules of balance as operating rules for your brain—a guide to a healthy pattern of living.

1. Balance your time alone and time spent with people.
Too much of our contact with other people is superficial and virtual—through television, the internet, over cell phones, on crowded city streets, in shopping malls. Even though you may come into contact with dozens of people every day, in reality, you may be alone. Living without the calming structure of a relationship with a person you know and care about leads to depression, loneliness, and frustration.

Balance the overstimulated loneliness of modern life by maintaining at least five close, supportive relationships. Use your natural style to build relationships. If you like music, use it to find people. If you're an athlete, build relationships through sports and activities. If you're an avid reader, build close relationships through a book club. The antidote to today's superficial contact with people is to take time to build relationships based on who you are, and your unique interests and abilities.

2. Balance movement and rest.
If you spend your day sitting— in a car, at a desk, in front of a computer, sitting on a couch watching TV or talking on the phone—you can't feel rested and relaxed. Instead, you'll feel a gradually rising sense of tension and restlessness. You need healthy movement to truly relax.

The human body was designed to move. The purpose of resting is to let one gather strength and energy to move again. If you think of the lives of our prehistoric ancestors, it makes sense: You either moved—to find food, water and shelter, or to escape danger—or you died. In prehistoric times, movement was life.

A regular program of movement—walking, working out at a gym, yoga, dance, tennis, gardening, and so forth—will dissolve the restless tension that comes from a mentally stimulated but physically inactive state.

3. Balance living in the moment with thinking about the past.
The time-saving tools available to us—automobiles, mobile phones, the internet—are seductively efficient. They can draw you into a moment-to-moment, overstimulated, and overwhelmed kind of existence. Before you know it, you can lose focus.

Keep your balance by staying focused on who you are—what you've been good at and why you chose to do what you do. Are you doing things in ways that make sense for you? Are you sticking to your plans? Are you maximizing your skills and minimizing your risks and liabilities?

Get a sense of who you are. Then keep a reminder of your skills to orient you to the power of your own experience. Write down three to five activities that you're good at, that you rely on, and that help you to stay on track. Then, when the action starts to get fast and furious, review your skills to make sure you're doing what's right for you.

4. Balance your appetites with energetic abstinence, creative problem solving, and planning.
The natural human reaction to abundance is to consume. For prehistoric people, this was adaptive since times of abundance were rare. Appetites such as hunger, thirst, and sex were signals from the brain that it was time to plan and take actions to satisfy those appetites.

Now many people live in a world of abundance. There are few periods of abstinence between periods of consumption. One's intuition sometimes says that the right thing to do when feeling a strong appetite is to consume. But intuition is wrong in this case. Physiologically, when feeling the stimulation of an appetite, the right thing to do is to plan an activity, carry out the activity, and then to consume.

You maintain balance in the face of the abundance of modern life by using your mind to think, to plan, and to take action instead of to simply consume. The next time you're hungry, give it a try. Go outside and weed your garden instead of eating. Or visit a friend. Or simply take a walk around your neighborhood. Plan an activity and substitute it for eating or drinking when you know that your appetite is greater than your body's need. That's the path to balance.

5. Balance thinking and feeling.
Your brain works best through a dynamic balance of thinking and feeling. Feeling, or emotion, is the energy of the mind. It powers action, memory, and thought. When thinking is powered by feeling, your life has an elegant balance—it's meaningful and motivating and you know why you live the way you do.

Contrast this with the modern dilemma. Life has become mechanized, routine, and repetitive. Too little emotion and you can become flattened, demoralized, and apathetic. If you're feeling bothered and harassed by the inhumanity of it all, you can lose your patience.

Restore your balance by learning to soothe the inevitable frustrations of living in a mechanized world. Take baths, get massages, or sing in a choir. Anything that calms you will do. Then find out what matters to you. The key is to look back at times in your life when you felt powerful, positive emotions. Remember what you were doing, what mattered to you then, and try to recreate those feelings in your everyday life.

6. Balance sleep and waking hours.
Balancing sleep and wakefulness is critical. You need the right amount of sleep to refresh the energy and vitality of your body and mind.

It happened naturally in the past. Without electricity, people slept when it grew dark—in balance with the cycle of day and night, in cycle with the seasons. Now it is a 24/7 world and people are losing touch with the basic biologic need for sleep.

Balance sleep and wakefulness by finding out just how much sleep you need. Keep a chart to discover what amount of sleep feels best. Then get that amount of sleep. Train your sleep cycle by sticking to a regular time for waking, getting lots of bright sunlight in the morning, and planning your activities so that you're most stimulated early in the day and gradually calming yourself in the hours before sleep.

7. Balance belief and doubt.
Every day you're flooded with information, images, and ideas that demand your attention. In our electronic, media-driven culture, every moment of life is dissected, analyzed, and questioned. It becomes difficult to know what to do next. The result is worry.

Belief quiets this worried state of mind. Mankind has long used religious belief as an antidote to worry. Researchers have shown that belief in a positive outcome can help rid you of social anxiety, depression, and panic attacks. And research shows that those who have firm beliefs generally have healthier, happier, and more successful lives.

Balance the cynical worrying of modern life by following some practices that strengthen your ability to believe. Learn to talk positively to yourself and reflect on images of success. Pray if you are religious. Accept guidance. Learn to follow the wisdom of leaders. And follow reassuring ritual—whether it's going to church or reading stories to your children at bedtime. Ritual strengthens your belief by reminding you of the simple but powerful truths of life.

Follow the seven rules of balance and you'll find natural pathways within yourself to live a healthy and meaningful life. Apply these principles to truly enjoy the excitement, possibilities and passion of life.

Source: Sorgi, P. J. (Revised 2019). Get back to the basics to find balance in life (L. Zereski & B. Schuette, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.

Get Past Your Exercise Roadblocks

You most likely will face roadblocks that keep you from meeting your physical activity goals. Think about what keeps you from being active, then try to come up with creative ways to address those roadblocks. Here are a few examples to help you get started.

Barrier	Solution
I don't have enough time.	Instead of doing one long workout session, build in three 10-minute bursts of activity during your day, such as a brisk walk. Even standing up instead of sitting at your desk has benefits.
I just don't like exercise.	Good news! You don't have to run a marathon or go to the gym all the time to benefit from being active. To make physical activity more fun, try something you enjoy doing, such as dancing to the radio or taking a yoga class with friends. Many people find they start to like exercise better the more they do it.
I'm worried about my health or getting hurt.	If you have a hard time being active because of your health, talk with a health care professional first. A certified fitness professional can also guide you on how to be active safely.
I feel self-conscious working out in front of others.	Start being active at home until you feel more confident. Be active with friends who will support and encourage you.

How can I stick with my physical activity plan?

Sticking with a plan to be physically active can be a challenge. Online tools such as meal trackers and the NIH Body Weight Planner (https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/body-weight-planner) can help. The NIH Body Weight Planner lets you make personalized calorie and physical activity plans to reach specific goals within a specific time period.

Devices you can wear, such as pedometers and fitness trackers, may help you count steps, calories, and minutes of physical activity. Trackers can help you set goals and monitor progress. You wear most of these devices on your wrist like a watch, or clipped to your clothing.

You also can download fitness apps that let you enter information to track your progress using a computer or smartphone or other mobile device. Keeping an activity journal is another good way to help you stay motivated and on track to reach your fitness goals.

Set goals

As you track your activity, try to set specific short- and long-term goals. For example, instead of "I will be more active," set a goal such as "I will take a walk after lunch at least two days a week." Getting started with a doable goal is a good way to form a new habit. A short-term goal may be to walk 5 to 10 minutes, 5 days a week. A long-term goal may be to do at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days of the week.

Get support
Ask a family member or friend to be active with you. Your workout buddy can help make your activities more fun and can cheer you on and help you meet your goals.

Track progress
You may not feel as though you are making progress, but when you look back at where you started, you may be pleasantly surprised. Making regular activity part of your life is a big step. Start slowly, and praise yourself for every goal you set and achieve.

Review your goals
Did you meet your goals? If not, why? Are they doable? Did you hit a roadblock trying to meet your goal? What will you do differently next week? Brainstorm some options to overcome future roadblocks. Ask a friend or family member to help support your goals.

Pick nonfood rewards
Whether your goal is to be active 15 minutes a day, to walk farther than you did last week, or simply to stay positive, recognizing your efforts is an important part of staying on track. Decide how you will reward yourself. Some ideas for rewards include getting new music to charge you up or buying new workout gear.

Be patient with yourself
Don't get discouraged if you have setbacks from time to time. If you can't achieve your goal the first time or can only stick to your goals for part of the week, remind yourself that this is all part of establishing new habits.

Look ahead
Try to focus on what you will do differently moving forward, rather than on what went wrong. Pat yourself on the back for trying.

Most importantly, don't give up. Any movement, even for a short time, is a good thing. Each activity you add to your life is another step toward a healthier you.

Source: U.S. National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). (2016, July). How can I get past my roadblocks? In Staying active at any size. Retrieved July 3, 2018, from https://www.niddk.nih.gov/

Music Makes the Load Lighter

Listening to music makes physical exertion (from raking leaves to lifting weights in the gym) less exhausting, probably because of improved muscle coordination.

Scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences and other re-search facilities have tried to explain the power of music.

Contrary to what was previously suspected, music does not simply distract us when physically working hard by making the work seem a lot easier, but actually the music reduces the effort.

Health-e headlines ™

Respect: A Code of Ethics

This is the code of ethics for the Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) in New York State's Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). However, these ethics are far-reaching and can be applied in any situation or work environment.

I will respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people I support. I will recognize each person I support as valuable and promote their value within communities.

Furthermore, I will do the following:

- Seek to understand the people I support today in the context of their personal history, their social and family networks, and their hopes and dreams for the future.
- Recognize and respect the cultural context (such as gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socio-economic class) of the person supported and his/her social network.
- Honor the choices, preferences, abilities, and opinions of the people I support.
- Protect the privacy of the people I support.
- Interact with the people I support in a manner that is respectful to them.
- Provide opportunities for the people I support to be viewed and treated with respect and embraced as integral, contributing members of their communities.
- Promote the use of language that is respectful, sensitive, and contemporary.
- Practice positive intention and transparency in my interactions.

Source: New York State's Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). (n.d.). Code of ethics for direct support professionals. Retrieved January 31, 2019, from https://www.dol.gov/