



THE EMPLOYEE ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER



HELPFUL RESOURCES FROM YOUR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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2021

FEBRUARY ONLINE SEMINAR

Setting Goals for Your Future

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Time: A Special Resource

Time is a special resource, because it takes time to accomplish anything. The way you manage time, like the way you manage your money, energy, and other resources, plays a large part in determining the goals you can accomplish and the satisfaction you receive from everything you do.

You really manage yourself with regard to time. There are many ways to make the most of your time.

Time is...

Measured—by clock or calendar, by season, by life stages

Limited—Everyone has 24 hours.

Unique—You really manage yourself in relation to time.

Perishable—You cannot save it for future use.

Money—It has a monetary value.

The key—to finding satisfaction and enjoying life

Time is a special resource for anyone trying to meet family, work, community, and personal needs. Some say time is the most valuable of all resources, because it is limited. Others think time is endless—thinking they can always do their tasks at another time. Most busy people have to plan carefully to meet all their time demands. Jobs, schools and other events require you to be on time, even though you would prefer a more relaxed schedule.

Time itself is not the real problem: The key is how you use your time. Time cannot really be managed; you manage yourself in terms of time use.

Think about time.

Time is unique. It is the only resource every person has in equal amounts: Everyone has 24 hours a day.

Time is perishable. You cannot really save time. You can “lose it or use it.” A problem with time as a resource is that you cannot borrow minutes from one day and use them the next day. Although time cannot be saved, you can use your time effectively through careful planning and action.

Time is a measure. When time is discussed, many people think first of the clock. Most developed countries tend to be a clock-and-calendar centered society. Being on time for work, school, and appointments, and for payments such as rents and bills, is a necessity for almost everyone today. In other cultures, time may be measured by the sun and the seasons.

Time has a monetary value. An old proverb says, “Time is money.” It takes time to earn money. It takes time to develop new resources. It takes time to get the most from your shopping money. Sometimes you choose whether to “buy time” in the form of convenience foods or household repairs.

Time has other values. People look for “quality time” to spend with children and other family members. Everyone needs time for rest, leisure and personal renewal, as well as for friends, neighbors, and your community.

Balance your use of time.

Plan to balance your life and share time with family, friends, neighbors, paid work, and volunteer work (e.g., with your place of worship, neighborhood, or community). Every person invests time, wastes time, and uses time. Think carefully about your use of time. Make sure you invest time in the things that are important to you.

Source: Walker, D., Mark, E., & Kiss, E. (Ed.). (Updated 2016, February). Time: A special resource (pp. 18–19). In Essential living skills: Time management skills (Pub. No. S-134F). Manhattan, KS: Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. Retrieved October 5, 2017, from <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/>

Practicing Mindful Communication

Mindful communication happens when you are truly present in the moment. It involves entering a conversation with curiosity, kindness, and compassion. You listen to your conversational partner with an open, nonjudgmental heart. You speak with intention, emotional intelligence, and honesty, and without harsh language or gossip-driven speech.

Challenges of Mindful Communication

Here are just a few things that make mindful communication difficult:

- Coming to a conversation with a predetermined outcome in mind
- Hearing what you expect to hear rather than what is actually being said
- Having difficulty expressing emotions
- Lacking attention skills
- Wanting to get your own thoughts or position expressed first, instead of listening to the other person
- Getting caught up in gossip and disruptive conversations
- Forgetting to be compassionate toward the other person
- Being preoccupied with internal chatter
- Having the tendency to want to fix other people's problems instead of just listening

Practice this.

First, understand why you want to improve your communication. Is the reason authentic and real, or a guise to make you “look better”? Mindful communication has the potential to bring harmony into relationships if it's genuine. At work, mindful communication can help you think on your feet, seek out information in a collaborative manner, help you resolve conflict in ways that help all parties be heard, and encourage transparency about processes. All of these things will improve relationships and enhance productivity.

Second, limit distractions whenever possible—turn away from your computer, turn toward the speaker, turn off the television, put your book down, and so on. Set an intention to listen attentively to someone at work and at home without interrupting, asking questions, agreeing, or otherwise inserting any speech. Attempt to ONLY listen for the first 3–5 minutes of the conversation before providing feedback or asking questions. Notice what happens inside you when you just listen, and notice how the other person responds.

Finally, practice pausing before you speak. Take one deep full breath, and consider what is about to come out of your mouth before you say anything. Ask before giving someone your advice. Remember, people really just want to be heard, and not everyone is looking for answers. Always bring your empathy to every conversation.

Source: Workplace Options AWARE & Schuette, B. (Ed.). (2019). Practicing mindful communication. London: Author.

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.

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.

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/>

Breakfast Smoothie Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 cup low-fat, fat-free milk or almond milk
- 1 cup frozen fruit, such as blueberries, strawberries, or cantaloupe
- 1 medium banana, sliced
- 1 handful loose spinach leaves
- 2 tablespoon peanut butter, sunflower seed butter, or almond butter

Add ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth.

Handling Political Conflict at Work as an Employee

Follow your employer's policies on political expression and activity at work:

- Don't engage in political discussions at work unless you're able to have civil, respectful conversations:
 - Don't start or enter into a political discussion if you're not open to hearing different views and willing to reconsider your own positions.
 - The goal on both sides should be to understand and learn from coworkers—not to antagonize them or change their views.
- If the emotional intensity of a political discussion becomes too hot and people are getting upset, shut the conversation down or suggest you continue when tempers have cooled.
- Be aware of the effect your conversations might have on people who are within earshot, even if they're not engaged in the discussion. Might they be offended or feel demeaned by what you or your coworkers are saying?
- If you're offended, hurt, or disturbed by political conversations at work, or if conversations like these are interfering with your work performance, go to your manager or HR representative for help.

Source: Morgan, H. (2021, January 19). *Handling political conflict at work* (C. Gregg-Meeker & B. Schuette, Eds.). Raleigh, NC: *Workplace Options*.

Change Your Life with SMART Goals!

No matter how good you are at something, there is always room for improvement. Wanting something is one thing, but as millions of broken New Year's resolutions show every year, setting a goal is much easier than meeting that goal. A good goal is SMART: specific, measurable, action-focused, realistic, and time-bound.

- **A goal should be as specific as possible.** If your broad goal is to lose weight and you lose 2 ounces, you've technically met your goal. A good goal, on the other hand, would be to lose 10 pounds in the next 3 months.
- **Measurable goals are best**, because it's apparent if you're making progress toward meeting your goal.
- **Action-focused goals require an action on the part of the goal setter.** For fitness goals, a personal readiness device or a health application can be a great aid in reminding you of the actions you need to take.
- **Good goals are realistic.** A smart goal setter needs to make an honest assessment of how much improvement is possible in a given period of time and base the goal on that assessment. As the old adage goes, Rome wasn't built in a day. Trying to do too much too quickly can be just as detrimental as doing nothing.
- **Lastly, a SMART goal is time-bound.** When setting a goal, you need a deadline to reach it.

Source: Cook, L. (2013, November 22). *Change your life with SMART goals!* [Excerpt]. Retrieved December 4, 2020, from <https://www.army.mil>