



FrontLine

Employee

Wellness, Productivity & You!

BluePrint for Health® Employee Assistance Program 651-662-0900 or 1-800-432-5155

Run for Your Life!

Who says you can't outrun old age? A new study concludes that aging runners live longer and are less likely to suffer physical disability than non-runners. All you need to get started is a pair of quality running shoes and an "all clear" from your doctor before beginning. Ease yourself into your routine by starting with a brisk 10-minute walk. After you've warmed up, jog slowly for one minute, and then return to walking for another 10 minutes. Reduce walking time and increase jogging time by one minute each week until you're able to jog for 20–30 minutes straight. Overtraining is counterproductive, so don't push too hard. Shoot for three sessions per week. Always remember to stretch before beginning your jog, and walk for 10 minutes after your run to cool down and prevent injuries.

Source: Archives of Internal Medicine, August, 2008



Time Logs Tell All

A time log is a tool to track how you spend your time during the work day. Logging time can be tedious, but it provides powerful insight into work efficiencies. You will quickly see how valuable your time is, and become more willing to plug the "time leaks" from nonproductive, unnecessary tasks that reduce your efficiency. Think you're too busy to keep a time log? Then you're more in need of one than you know.



Online Behavior Can "Off" Your Career

Be careful about what you put on the Internet. A vault.com survey reveals that 44 percent of hiring managers have screened job applicants by searching social sites such as Facebook and MySpace, and 39 percent have looked up a current employee. Although some social networking sites allow you to filter who reads your page, there's no such thing as complete privacy on the Internet, so always consider the implications of your behavior before posting. Your reputation is at stake.

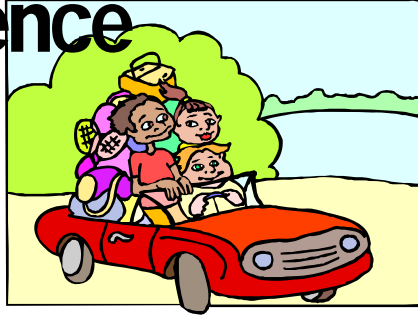


"You've Got Mail!" (What About Productivity?)

Is e-mail consuming your life? Continuously checking e-mail at work can drag down your productivity, yet 20 percent of people check e-mail 10 times a day or more — a lot more, according to a recent survey by AOL. Dedicate small blocks of time for catching up on e-mails during the day. Kill alerts for incoming mail so you won't be tempted to respond to it. Avoid distractions by using filters to separate work from personal e-mail. Minimize e-mail volume by asking coworkers to contact you by phone or in person whenever possible. Don't let dealing with e-mail become a way of "taking a break" from your regular work.



Give Teen Drivers the Total Experience



Independence has its rewards and responsibilities. Before handing over the car keys to your teen, make sure that he or she is prepared for more than just parallel parking and shifting gears. Your teen's attainment of legal driving age presents a unique teaching opportunity — one in which you'll have plenty of leverage. Begin by teaching your teen the power of preventive maintenance. Show him or her how to check oil, coolant, and other fluid levels. Show how a tire pressure gauge works. Stress the need for adhering to a regular maintenance schedule by reviewing the manufacturer's recommendations in the owner's manual. All cars break down sooner or later, so make sure your teen is prepared for emergencies. Show how to use jumper cables, change a tire, and use road flares. Pack an emergency kit with tools, water, blankets, dehydrated food, a few dollars in cash, and a flashlight. Store the kit in the trunk. You'll sleep better knowing that your teen can manage a routine problem and your child will thank you if one ever occurs. Finish your child's driving education by going over your car insurance policy and explaining deductibles and coverage. Requiring that your child pay for at least a portion of gas and insurance is also a great way to teach financial responsibility and will encourage safer driving habits.

Don't Be a Conflict Avoider?



Conflict can be unpleasant, but it's natural and can be a positive force. If you are a "conflict avoider," you don't really prevent conflicts. Instead you attempt to dispose of them by deciding that your needs or wishes are subordinate or less important. Avoiding conflict may have been useful in your past, but in the workplace, it is a roadblock to job satisfaction that causes problems to fester and resentments to build. You can overcome your fear of conflict by learning the skills involved in "managing differences" (an easier way to think of conflict). Next, test these skills and observe your successes. Resources for learning abound, but your employee assistance program is a great place to start. Key skills: Separating the "problem" from the person, listening without fear of losing, learning to focus on each person's "interest" versus his/her "position", and how to generate mutually acceptable options.

Time to Get Some TLC



Ask your healthcare provider about Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (TLC) programs to help you properly manage a chronic disease or get healthier by eating right, exercising, and taking care of yourself. TLC programs include the support of a professional who keeps you on the right path. TLC programs are getting popular, and reportedly they work better than diets because they are more comprehensive. TLCs may be the way of the future, because they also save health care dollars through prevention for illnesses like type 2 diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. When you join a TLC program, a health professional will assess your current health, set up reasonable goals, help you develop a plan of action, follow up on results, and make adjustments as needed. Inquire about any benefits for TLCs from your health insurance. You may not be aware of current offerings that often change, like discounted fitness memberships, free health screenings, etc.

Back-to-School Shuffle



School's back in session! Establishing good habits now is the best way to ensure a successful school year. Start with enforced homework and bedtime rules. Teens need about nine hours of sleep a night (tough to get), but discourage super-late nights and sleep-ins on weekends. Sleep deficit has a cumulative effect, and can make Monday morning a grueling chore. Limit extracurricular activity, if possible, until this structure is in place. Keep an eye open for signs that your child is being bullied, having trouble fitting in, or struggling with homework. Ask frequently about how your child's school day is going, and read between the lines if you don't get a direct response. Schedule a consultation with a teacher if you sense trouble.