

# Your EAP News

COUNSELING SERVICES

LEGAL/FINANCIAL CONSULTATIONS

ONLINE WORK/LIFE AND WELLNESS

## Beating Workplace Fatigue



**W**orkplace fatigue has contributed to some of the world's greatest disasters, including Chernobyl, the Challenger explosion, and the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Fatigue typically happens after prolonged mental and physical activity. In today's always-on, technology-driven world, its frequency and impact on health and productivity are gaining attention. Recognize the signs of fatigue and take action to protect your health. Symptoms include difficulty concentrating, slowed reaction time, irritability, persistent drowsiness, and reduced motivation. You may also experience frequent yawning, headaches, forgetfulness, blurry vision, and increased mistakes. If fatigue continues, see a medical doctor to discover its underlying cause, and if your lifestyle creates fatigue, talk to the EAP. On the job, take a break. Walk, stretch, hydrate, do breathing exercises, and get fresh air. If your fatigue is severe, let someone know to reduce the risk of injury or prevent a calamity.

## Fifteen Benefits of Walking



**K**nowing the benefits of walking 30 minutes a day five days a week may well increase your motivation for doing it. Do you see in the following list any benefits that excite you? Decreased risk of cardiovascular disease; decreased risk of cerebrovascular disease; decreased risk of type 2 diabetes; decreased risk of cognitive impairment and dementia; improved mental well-being; improved sleep; increased lifespan; reduced risk of cancer; increased effectiveness of immune function; greater calorie expenditure during and after the walk; reduced effects of stress; improved self-esteem and positive self-talk from achieving walking goals; improved overall endurance; improved insulin sensitivity and glucose control; and alone time to reflect on thoughts, feelings, and goals for improved self-awareness and personal growth. Talk to your doctor about your exercise plans. Note that incorporating short, intense bursts of walking fast or jogging for, say, 20 seconds periodically can help you achieve greater health benefits *in less time* compared to a moderate walking pace alone!

## Avoid Passive-Aggressive Communication at Work

**P**assive-aggressive communication is distressing and contributes to poor morale, higher turnover, and lower productivity. Recognizing its impact and avoiding it can create a more positive workplace, reduce stress, and decrease burnout. Do you participate in passive-aggressive communication? Common behaviors include sending emails to a coworker but copying it to their supervisor; withholding information; using the silent treatment; leaving notes that create distress (e.g., "See me" or "We need to talk"); giving a compliment containing a hidden insult (e.g., "Wow, good work for a newbie."); using an insincere tone (e.g., "Yeah, sure, I'll get that done pronto."); and undermining a positive relationship between two coworkers with gossip or falsehoods.



## The Power of Feeling Time Affluent



**D**o you have enough time to do the things you want—and need—to do? Answering yes means you are "time affluent." It is a key to feeling happy and satisfied with life. The opposite would be feeling constantly under pressure, harried, and "without a second to breathe." That feeling of being in control of your time isn't necessarily acquired by having money—financial affluence—but instead by appreciating time as an irreplaceable commodity and applying skills that give you more control over it. To gain time affluence, consider seven skills: 1) Learn to prioritize to prevent less-important tasks from consuming time. 2) Practice doing key tasks in "chunks of time." This increases focus and speed and gives you more life balance. 3) Learn to say no; this requires learning when and what to say no to while staying proficient at it. 4) Delegate more—a cost-free example might be delegating household chores to other family members. 5) Reduce/avoid social media/technology use. 6) Change your perception. Put time gaps between chores to enjoy a break rather than stitching them together all day and feeling harried. 7) Discover the art of mindfulness and utilize this life skill to appreciate the present moment.

# Avoid Lifestyle Habits That Harm Kidneys

**D**on't harm your kidneys with lifestyle behaviors that place stress on their ability to function. Kidneys filter blood at the rate of about 200 quarts per day. They remove waste products, selectively reabsorb or excrete water, control blood pressure, produce hormones, and maintain electrolyte levels. The following put stress on kidneys: 1) Late-night eating and bedtime snacking interrupt your circadian rhythm and adversely affect metabolism, causing stress on kidneys. 2) Skipping breakfast is linked to poor metabolic control, specifically increasing the risk of protein in urine, a sign of unhealthy kidney function. This can also increase hypertension. 3) Poor hydration reduces blood flow to the kidneys, making them work harder. Stay hydrated by drinking water during the day to help your kidneys do their job. 4) Oversalting your food can increase blood pressure. Avoiding these behaviors can help prevent inflammation, poor hydration, and disturbances of your metabolism—all enemies of your kidneys' health. Learn more: [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28385348/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28385348/)



# Stop the Doomscrolling

**E**xcessive consumption of negative news online is called "doomscrolling." With thousands of competing news sources, there are dramatic increases in competition for the attention of viewers. Research studies show that humans are inclined to pay more attention to negative news than to positive news because our brains naturally pay attention to what threatens us. Negative news grabs attention—not just in newspapers but also online. If you find yourself drawn to social media or news sites, repeatedly searching for more details about the latest negative story, and if that starts consuming excessive time, interfering with your work or social life, or causing ongoing anxiety and stress, consider seeking support through your Employee Assistance Program. Learn more: [freedom.to/blog/why-you-cant-stop-doom-scrolling/](https://freedom.to/blog/why-you-cant-stop-doom-scrolling/)



**Voluntary:** You decide when to use the program services.

**Confidential:** Your personal information will not be shared with your employer or anyone in your family. Only you know when you call for assistance.

**Convenient:** EAP offers services with professional providers with offices nationwide. Services can be accessed in-person or virtual.

**No-Cost:** Services under the EAP are available to you, your spouse/partner and your dependents under the age of 26.



April is  
**STRESS**  
AWARENESS  
Month

Learning to cope with our stress and finding healthy ways to deal with these situations can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life. After all, stress can impact many aspects of your body.

- Recognize when you don't have control, and let it go.
  - Avoid getting anxious about situations that you cannot change.
  - Take control of your reactions and focus your mind on something that makes you feel calm and in control.
  - Take care of yourself – eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and give yourself a break if you feel stressed.
- Recognize when you need more help – know when to talk to a counselor.

Using your EAP benefit is a healthy way to maintain work-life balance and positively affect your well-being. **We are here to help.**



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# WELLNESS MINUTE

April 2025



**ARE YOUR GOALS SMART?**

**LAUGHTER: AN OVERLOOKED WAY TO  
MANAGE STRESS**

**RECIPE OF THE MONTH**

**3 MOBILITY EXERCISES FOR BETTER FITNESS**



SPECIFIC



MEASURABLE



ACHIEVABLE



RELEVANT



TIME-BOUND

# ARE YOUR GOALS SMART?

Do you set goals and then have trouble sticking to them? Goals that are vague are not likely to happen.

It's common for people to set goals, such as "I'm going to lose weight." Even if you add the specific amount, such as 40 lbs., and the method, like "eating healthy and exercising more", this is still too general, doesn't include a plan, and may not be realistic.

Let's take a look at how we can turn this into a SMART goal.

**SPECIFIC:** How much weight do you want to lose and what action steps will you take in order to reach your goal weight? Consider what you may need to change. Can you eat more home-cooked meals? Do you need to reduce or eliminate sweetened beverages? Are you willing to reduce empty calories (sugar, refined carbs)? Do you need to reduce portion sizes? After reflecting on your current habits, decide what specific actions you are willing to take.

**MEASURABLE:** In order to track, you need to know where you are now and then identify a system or method for keeping track of your progress. In the case of weight loss, this is pretty straightforward, but you do have a few options: Weighing yourself on a scale, tracking your measurements, or calculating your hip-to-waist ratio.

**ACHIEVABLE:** Setting a goal that is achievable is crucial. It should challenge you yet be realistic. You're likely to get discouraged if you make your goal too big and don't reach it. Research shows that a 5-10% loss is attainable for those who are overweight. So, a 200 lb. person may want to start with a goal of losing 10-20 lbs.

**RELEVANT:** Take into account how important this is for you right now and whether it aligns with your other life goals. If you are experiencing major life or work challenges, it may not be the ideal time to try to change your habits. This doesn't mean you have to give up on your desire, but simply delay it until a time when you're able to focus on it a bit more or give yourself a longer timeframe to achieve it.

**TIMEBOUND:** An end-point is needed so you can measure and because deadlines can be motivating. Sticking with the weight loss example, it's important to keep in mind that a realistic expectation for safe and sustainable weight loss is 1-2 lbs. per week. So, if your goal is to lose 20 lbs., you may want to allow yourself 4 months to reach your goal weight.

Putting this all together, a SMART goal could be:

I will lose 20 lbs. in the next 4 months by:

- Drinking at least 8 glasses of water each day and eliminating sweetened beverages.
- Limiting restaurant food to 2-3 meals per week.

Whether your plan is weight loss, healthy eating, fitness, better sleep, tobacco cessation, stress management, or any other wellness goal, Wellness-Connect is here to support you! In fact, the portal has a SMART goal feature that allows you to set and track your goals. For some of our members, we also have Wellness Coaches available to help you create and reach SMART goals.

# ***LAUGHTER: AN OVERLOOKED WAY TO MANAGE STRESS***

While exercise, deep breathing, meditation, spending time in nature, hobbies, talking to trusted friends, and other relaxing activities can reduce stress, let's not forget how good it feels to laugh.

## ***RESEARCH SHOWS THAT LAUGHTER CAN:***

- Reduce the stress hormone, cortisol.
- Improve your mood by increasing endorphins or happy brain chemicals.
- Soothe and calm your body by relaxing your muscles.
- Stimulate your heart, lungs, circulation, and muscles by increasing oxygen.
- Improve your immune system.

The next time you're feeling stressed or anxious, turn to laughter. Find ways to make laughter a daily practice. Don't wait for something funny to happen. Be proactive and add laughter to your self-care routine.

## ***HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO DO IT:***

- Choose to watch comedies on a regular basis, whether that's a movie, a sitcom, or a stand-up routine.
- Play with young kids or a pet.
- Watch funny YouTube videos.
- You may even want to give laughter yoga a try.

In case you aren't familiar with laughter yoga, search it on YouTube and you'll be laughing in no time!

### **Reference:**

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>





# Berry-Beet Salad

Serves 4

Try this delicious earthy and sweet salad, which can be either a main dish or a side dish. It can make a great addition to your Easter meal.

## Ingredients:

- 1 each fresh red and golden beets
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon honey
- Dash of salt
- Dash of pepper
- ½ cup sliced fresh strawberries
- ½ cup fresh raspberries
- ½ cup fresh blackberries
- 3 tablespoons chopped walnuts, toasted
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 4 cups torn mixed salad greens
- 1-ounce fresh goat cheese, crumbled
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, thinly sliced

## Directions:

1. Place beets in an 8-inch square baking dish with 1 inch of water. Cover and bake at 400 degrees for 30-40 minutes or until tender.
2. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk the vinegar, oil, honey, salt, and pepper; set aside. Cool beets; peel and cut into thin slices.
3. In a large bowl, combine the beets, berries, walnuts, and shallot. Pour dressing over mixture and toss gently to coat. Divide salad greens among 4 serving plates. Top with beet mixture; sprinkle with cheese and basil.

**Source:**

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/berry-beet-salad/>

# 3 MOBILITY EXERCISES FOR BETTER FITNESS

Lack of mobility can make it more difficult to do everyday simple tasks like reaching to get something out of a cupboard or bending over. Mobility is related to flexibility but they are not the same. Mobility refers to the range of motion of your joints. Flexibility is the ability to lengthen or hold a muscle in a stretch.

Lack of mobility can lead to poor walking mechanics, especially if you're someone who sits too long. Tightness in your hips can result in shorter steps, shuffling as you walk, and a hunched posture.

The older you are and the more you sit, the more important it is to do mobility exercises. Here are three to get you started:

1. **Child's pose to a downward-facing dog.** Kneel on the floor, lower your hips to heels, let your torso fall over your knees, and allow your head to fall to the floor between your arms that are reaching forward. Come into a tabletop position with shoulders over wrists and hips over knees. Push up into a downward-facing dog position with your body forming a triangle. Take a few deep breaths, release back to the floor, and repeat several times.
2. **Arm and shoulder circles.** Standing with legs shoulder-width apart, raise one arm to shoulder height and move it in circles 10 times. Switch direction for another 10 circles. Allow that arm to relax and repeat with the other arm.
3. **Hip circles.** Lie on the floor facing up with legs extended. Bend your right knee and bring it up so that it's pointing toward the ceiling. Draw 20 circles with your knee that gets progressively bigger then switch directions for another 20 rounds. Repeat with the other knee.

Source:

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/fitness/mobilityexercises-to-boost-your-health-and-fitness/>

## Your EAP Can Help

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