

# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Page 1

May 2009

Helpful Resources From Your Employee Assistance Program

## May's Chat Topic May 20, 2009

### Sleep Disorders: Self-help, and When to Seek Professional Help

Every month you'll have an opportunity to chat online with a trained counselor. These live chats are held from 6:00 PM to 6:30 PM CST.

## May 2009 At A Glance

### Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

<http://www.aafa.org>  
<http://www.aafa.org>

### Better Sleep Month

<http://www.bettersleep.org>

### Clean Air Month

<http://www.lungusa.org>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/features/cleanairmonth/>

### Correct Posture Month

<http://www.amerchiro.org>

### Healthy Vision Month/UV Safety

<http://www.healthyvision2010.org/hvm>

### National Arthritis Month

<http://www.arthritis.org>

### National Mental Health Month

<http://www.nmha.org>

Source: 2009 National Health Observances, National Health Information Center, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC.



## May 18 - June 1

### Buckle Up America! Click It or Ticket Week

Click It or Ticket is the most successful seat belt enforcement campaign ever, helping create the highest national seat belt usage rate of 83%. Coast to coast, day or night, the message is simple - Click It or Ticket. The primary audience continues to be men aged 18 to 34, which research shows are less likely to wear seat belts. Every year during this holiday period, America's law enforcement agencies join forces day and night for an enforcement blitz that delivers the message Click It or Ticket. For more information, see <http://www.nhtsa.gov>.



## Featured Article

### Anger Can Work FOR You

Anger is a powerful emotion but a delicate topic. Though we all have it, no one likes to show it or admit it—at least not in polite company. It's natural, so why the fear and guilt about it? Perhaps we worry we will lose control. Or maybe we grew up in a household where anger was not to be expressed. Maybe we just buy into society's expectations about not expressing anger. Read on to learn how to manage and harness the power of anger.

We have emotions to guide and teach us in our daily lives. What does anger do? Well, first, it indicates that you really care about something. If you didn't care, you wouldn't be so strongly affected. Anger also gives you a powerful burst of energy—an adrenaline rush you can use to change behavior, solve a problem, or fight for your rights. But you have to control your anger for these benefits to occur.



Harnessing the power of your anger begins with containing your response. The simplest tool is a time-out. Fake a coughing fit if you have to, or pretend your phone just vibrated, but leave the situation for a moment. Take some deep breaths and count to ten. Get a drink of water or go for a short walk. Give yourself time to get it together. Consider your thinking and challenge any irrational thoughts. Will this situation matter so much in five or ten years? In the big scheme of life, is it that important? Try to understand the perspective of the other person. Remember, most of us are doing the best we can at a given moment. Remembering compassion and tolerance may substantially reduce your anger. Try to discover what you agree about, and see if you can figure out a win-win compromise. If not, consider whether this battle is worth the fight. If the other person died tonight, how would you feel about how you left things? Finally, anger management requires that you take good care of yourself physically, mentally, and spiritually. If you maintain good health, you will be less vulnerable to becoming overwhelmed by any emotions.

Once you have reined in your anger and managed your response, form a plan to tackle the problem or disagreement. After relaxing and breathing deeply, you should have the focus and energy you'll need. You may even find you don't need to do anything except let go.



## Quick Hit: Stolen Credit Cards

If your purse or wallet containing all your credit cards was stolen, would you know what to do?

Each credit card issuer lists a telephone number to call if your credit card is lost or stolen. Make a list of each of your credit cards, along with the corresponding telephone numbers.

For safety reasons, do not list your full credit card number, but rather only the last 4 digits. If you need to call, your credit card company can look up your card number using your social security number. Be sure to keep your list in a safe place in your home.

If your cards are lost or stolen, immediately contact each card issuer, and advise them of the situation.

## Smart Tips - Lower Your Grocery Bill

For many of us, knocking \$200 off our monthly food bill could mean the difference in the type of car we drive, how much we can save for our children's future, or where we go on vacation. The following tips are designed to simplify the process of saving money on groceries.

**Planning** - The Key to Saving on Food. Dedicating time to grocery shopping and meal planning will cut spending by up to 50%, if we stick to our list. Impulse-buying is the thrifty shopper's enemy, so we should try to avoid picking up items that are not on our list.

**How Much Do We Really Spend?** It is hard to plan on saving money on something when we really do not know how much we are spending. One easy method to determine how much money is going towards groceries each month is to put all of the grocery receipts in one envelope for a month and add it up.

**Eat Before You Shop.** It has been proven that going to the grocery store hungry can increase food bills by up to 15%, due to impulse-buying. All too often we leave work, tired and hungry, and stop at the grocery store to pick up something for dinner. This leaves us wide open to temptation and we end up coming home with food we really do not need. Play it safe and fill up yourself before you fill up your grocery cart.

**Avoid Shopping in Convenience Stores.** Convenience stores thrive on the principle that our quick trip in for a cheap coke will result in us making a purchase of at least two other items. Those two items will most likely be marked up by 60% or higher over grocery store prices. If you do want a coke or a quick cup of coffee, bring in close to the exact change needed to help control any impulse to buys.

**Do Not Buy Toiletries at Grocery Stores.** Grocery stores generally mark up toiletries 25% or higher, compared to discounted drug stores. It is worth a quick trip into Wal-Mart or your favorite discount drug store to stock up on your toiletry needs.

**Become a Spicy Mixologist.** Food items that include added sugars, spices and sauces are often up to 50% higher in price, compared to buying the basics and doing it yourself. Sugar-coated cereals and seasoned frozen dinner mixes are a good example.

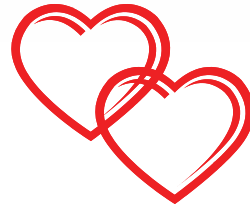
These ideas are only the start! For more tips, see the full About.com article at <http://couponing.about.com/od/groceryzone/a/smarttips.htm>.



## Start an emergency fund

No matter how much you owe in loans or credit card debt, it is important to find some money in your monthly budget to save toward an emergency fund. Having money for emergencies will not only help financially, but also should help you sleep better at night and directly improve your overall well-being. Consider your savings "payment" to be a non-negotiable monthly expense. If possible, have money transferred directly from your account so you don't see it upfront. Try to at least put away 5% of your salary. And don't just hide it under your mattress! Transfer your money into a high-interest online savings account, a certificate of deposit, or a money market account. Otherwise, inflation will erode the value of your savings.

## Matters of the Heart



### How Much Exercise is Worth It?

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) released updated guidelines for physical activity for Americans. The guidelines outline the health benefits of regular exercise (and the health detriments of leading a sedentary life), and offer recommendations for children and adolescents, adults, and older adults. Authors from the Institute of Medicine previously offered a report on the health benefits of exercise which were firmly grounded on evidence-based clinical science, but ignored the realities of both modern lifestyles and human nature. This earlier report recommended at least 60 minutes of vigorous activity each day for virtually everyone-- more than that if possible. Predictably, that report was widely ignored.

The DHHS decided to take a much more realistic approach, and that approach is reflected in their new guidelines. This report recognizes that, while it is true that the more exercise you do the greater the health benefits, it is also true that the majority of health benefits can be realized with 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week, a level of physical activity that can be achieved by most of us.

In summary, the new guidelines recommend:

- \* For children and adolescents, at least 60 minutes of moderately intense exercise daily.
- \* For healthy adults, 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week (roughly 20 minutes a day, or 30 minutes 5 days per week).
- \* For older adults, as much exercise as their physical condition allows, aiming, if possible for 150 minutes per week.
- \* In addition to aerobic exercise, the total exercise program for all groups should include muscle-strengthening activities roughly twice per week.

Finally, realizing that even this scaled-down exercise program will be too much for many Americans, the new guidelines take pains to point out that some exercise is far better than none at all. That is, the health benefits begin to accrue as soon as you get up and move around. So even if you are unable to meet the recommended activity goals, you should try hard to become as active as possible.

What is the connection between heart disease and exercise?

Exercise is extremely important in maintaining cardiovascular health and preventing the onset of heart disease. The bottom line is that being sedentary is hazardous to your health. While the more exercise you do the better (at least, to the point that it doesn't lead to being fired or to divorce), any amount of exercise is good. So do what you can, and be confident that you are helping yourself.

**Healthy Heart**



**Healthy You**

Deer Oaks EAP Services, your Employee Assistance Program, is always available to you and your dependents. If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact your EAP, Deer Oaks at:

**1-866-327-2400**

**eap@deeroaks.com**

**www.deeroaks.com**