

## New to Customer Service by Phone?



If over-the-phone customer service is new to you, you'll discover new challenges. Veteran telephone customer service employees have some advice.

One piece is to avoid reacting

emotionally—it may be easier to react to antagonism when you are aided by the anonymity and distance that embolden an irate customer. Try smiling while you speak. It can help you be less reactive to antagonistic behavior. Standing or walking back and forth while on the phone may also help you feel more engaged, feel less stressed later on, and improve focus. The unavailability of an empathic ear from a colleague—if you feel the need to vent a distressful experience—might be missed, so use EAP resources to process work stress. Discussing work experiences in confidence can lead you to better ideas and solutions that ultimately help you find greater meaning in any job.

## Stalking Prevention Month: Yes, That's Stalking



Stalking is "repeated unwanted attention and harassment directed at a specific person causing him or her to fear harm."

Stalking is a crime. Although similar definitions exist in every

state, unfortunately many perpetrators ignore or incorrectly "compare out" of the definition. They believe whatever they are doing isn't stalking. Many behaviors can constitute stalking, including unwanted contacts via social media, sending unwanted gifts no matter how well-intentioned, contacting the victim's friends, hiring an investigator, or even going through the victim's garbage. Could your behavior constitute stalking? Learn more at [LegalDictionary.net](http://LegalDictionary.net) [search stalking].

## Use a Site Blocker When Self-Discipline Fails



To stay productive at work, we use self-discipline.

However, there are so many digital distractions that only a robot could avoid them.

Social media, shopping sites, political news feeds, gaming—these tempting delights burn up irretrievable minutes and hours. Instead of sitting for hours and doing everything but work, use a site blocker. There are many such apps and browser extensions. One of them is "Stay Focused." It is free. Find it on your Google Chrome browser. You can find others with variable features by doing a simple search for "site blockers."

## Being Positive May Reduce Memory Decline



Positivity or demonstrating an optimistic attitude has always been a valuable workplace trait in employees. Many research studies have examined its

benefits on the bottom line, its ability to favorably influence others, and its affirming effects on general health. Now research shows its benefits for helping prevent memory decline as we age. Positivity is learned, and optimism is a teachable skill. A simple online search will show hundreds of tips on how to develop a more optimistic disposition. Your EAP can also help, especially if depression or other life circumstances feel like they are robbing you of your ability to feel positive.

[www.sesp.northwestern.edu](http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu) [search "positive memory decline"]

## Make Your Goals Happen in 2021



Those who succeed in accomplishing big goals often practice similar behaviors. Since “like behaviors” often produce “like effects,” consider the following: 1) Write down your goal and action steps to accomplish it. 2)

Evaluate changes needed in your life to facilitate realization of the goal (e.g., creating a new routine that produces massive action). 3) Create methods to make the goal “top of mind.” You have many goals—important, urgent, big, and small. Each competes for your time and attention. So, preventing defocus and distraction is critical to keeping your goal ever present. If focus does not happen, you risk losing the momentum created the day you decided on your goal. 4) Act on tasks during the time of day when you have the most pep. Many goal-slayers start early in the morning and practice an early-to-bed, early-to-rise routine (the “5 a.m. Club”). If you’re nodding off while working, it’s likely that you haven’t figured out this step. Getting up early helps curb procrastination and provides precious time early, even on weekends, without interfering with work-life balance or risking burnout. Energy, ideas, answers, and motivation are often found in social groups, so hanging out with like-minded goal seekers can be helpful, and those who want to win can keep you focused, but avoid open-ended groups that lack structure and purpose. 5) Reward yourself at incremental steps and measurable milestones along the way.

## Are You Glamorizing Overwork?



Stressed? Ask yourself if you glamorize work. There is nothing glamorous about working yourself into the ground. Chronic over workers can suffer from cardiovascular problems like high blood pressure and a cardiac

event. Those unable or unwilling to draw the line between just enough and too much on-the-clock activity are also more prone to depression and anxiety. Overworking does not make you more valuable, although this association is often learned from parents or caregivers. Likewise, overwork does not beat quality as an indicator of doing a great job. For a healthier you, focus on accomplishments, rather than overworking. You may still work some long hours, but they will be fewer. Set boundaries, but if it’s too difficult, consult with an EAP professional. Soon you will point to the success of your accomplishments, not the hours you rack up.

## Your Stress Management “Urgency Kit”



There are many techniques for managing stress, but you may only be aware of a few, such as exercising, meditation, journaling, or talking things over with a friend.

Experimenting with different ways of managing stress can help you discover a collection of dependable techniques that fit your life and work for you—a personal stress management “urgency kit.” Try these quick, “on the fly” stress management techniques to see if they qualify for your kit. 1) Peel an orange. Studies show the smell of citrus can help reduce stress; 2) take a walk in green space; 3) listen to classical music for five minutes; 4) drink black or green tea; 5) try a guided imagery exercise using all five senses; 6) declutter your desk; 7) spend ten minutes in the sun. Discover a thousand ideas in the book *Simplicity: 1,000 Ways to Reduce Stress and Simplify Your Life* by Glen Mizrahi

## Have a Workplace Injury-Free Year



Approximately 5,000 employees die from workplace-related injuries each year in the United States. The “fatal four” (not including automobile accidents) are falls, electrocution, being struck by an object, and getting caught “in between.” These

awareness tips can help ensure you don’t become a victim: recognize hazards, use proper safety equipment, maintain a safe distance, respect barricades, correct an unsafe situation without delay, monitor a huge or heavy moving object, get the proper training, avoid rushing, and don’t shortcut safety measures. And if the thought “Should I stop what I am doing and go get the proper safety equipment?” crosses your mind, do it! Statistics: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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We know it is not always easy to juggle everything & realize simple tips can help provide a different approach. Your EAP is here to help with family, work, health, & legal issues.

To access your EAP services  
1-800-343-3822 | TDD 1-800-448-1823  
[www.AWPnow.com](http://www.AWPnow.com)

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# BalancedLiving

January 2021



## STAY HEALTHY: PRACTICE PREVENTION

Medical advances and technology can detect diseases earlier than ever before and save lives, but making prevention a part of your everyday life is just as important.

"Practicing prevention can lower your risk for developing the most deadly chronic diseases: heart disease, diabetes, and cancer," says Tricia Trinité, MSPH, APRN, director of prevention dissemination and implementation for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. "There's nothing mysterious about taking preventive action; it's really just a matter of making healthy choices on a daily basis."



### Eat Nutritiously

Eating healthy foods in the right amounts can help you live a longer, healthier life.

Many illnesses and conditions—such as heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes—can be prevented or controlled by eating a healthy low-calorie and low-fat diet that includes at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day, says Ms. Trinité.

Other dietary recommendations include eating more fiber and lean protein, such as chicken and fish, and less sodium, red meat, and sugar.

For specific information on how to improve your diet, ask your doctor and visit the [National Cancer Institute's website](#), the [American Heart Association's website](#), or the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Dietary Guidelines for Americans website](#).

### Maintain a Healthy Weight

Being overweight increases your risk for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and high blood pressure. To stay at a healthy weight, you need to balance the number of calories you eat with the number you burn off in physical activity. You can reach a healthy weight and stay there by eating right and being physically active.

### Exercise Most Days

Physical activity can help prevent heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, some cancers, and mental health problems, such as depression.

"All kinds of physical activity, whether it's moderate or vigorous, will help you stay healthy," say Ms. Trinité. "It's a good idea to aim for at least moderate activity, such as brisk walking, bike riding, housecleaning, or playing with your children for 30 to 60 minutes most days of the week. Generally, the more active you are, the better you'll feel today and the healthier you'll become tomorrow."

If you've been sedentary, smoke, or have a chronic health condition, ask your health care provider how you should get started with an exercise program.

### Stop Smoking

More than 440,000 Americans die each year from smoking and smoking-related causes. Smoking causes illnesses such as cancer, heart and lung disease, stroke, and problems during pregnancy.

"Quitting is hard, and most people try several times before they quit for good," says Ms. Trinité. "But when you're ready to quit, ask your doctor for advice on the best way for you."

# BalancedLiving

April 2018



## Take Medicines Correctly

Always be sure you know important information about a medicine before you take it. This will help you get the full benefit of the drug. It also will help you avoid taking too much or too little, which can be dangerous.

Each prescription medication comes with an information sheet. Be sure to carefully read this sheet. If you have questions or aren't clear about anything on the sheet, check with your health care provider, nurse, or pharmacist.

## Get Your Shots

You can prevent several serious diseases by getting immunized. Check with your health care provider to be sure you've had immunization for measles-mumps-rubella, tetanus-diphtheria, whooping cough, and influenza. If you are at risk for hepatitis A, B, or C, you should be immunized against them. People older than 65 should be immunized against pneumococcal pneumonia. Because of a resurgence of whooping cough (pertussis) in adults, a booster shot (in combination with diphtheria and tetanus) is now available for teens and adults.

## Get Checked and Screened

Checkups and screening tests help find diseases or health problems early, when they're easier to treat and cure.

"Your doctor can help you decide which health screenings you should get and how often," says Ms. Trinité.

If you have a chronic condition, follow your health care provider's recommendations for regular checkups and screening exams; they are more important if you have a chronic condition.

Ask your health care provider if your screenings are up-to-date for blood pressure; cholesterol; diabetes; osteoporosis; and skin, breast, colorectal, cervical and prostate cancers. You can find a list of the recommended screening tests on the [U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's website](#).

Healthy adults should also see a dentist once or twice a year and an eye doctor every one to three years. Adults with dental disease or chronic conditions, or those at high risk for specific diseases, should get more frequent exams as recommended by their provider.

For the best preventive care, you also should talk with your provider openly regarding your health concerns.

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# JUGGLING THE DEMANDS OF WORKING AT HOME



As working from home has suddenly become the new norm for many employees across the globe, people everywhere have pivoted to define what work-life balance looks like in a time where stress is at an all-time high.

On the physical side, this stress can lead to headaches, back pain, muscle aches, and stomach trouble. Mentally, stress leads to low morale, poor sleep and concentration, and depression. It can also take a toll on our immune systems—at a time when we all need to be focused on strengthening our health and well-being.

It's important to find a balance between work and home responsibilities. Here are tips that can help:

## **Try to stay positive and relaxed**

The more stress you feel, the worse your mood and the harder it will be to get things done. Focus your energy on completing one task at a time—whether it be work or family-related—rather than worrying about how to do all of them at once.

## **Prioritize your to-do's**

Create a to-do list and a schedule of tasks you need to complete, with the most important ones at the top. Budget time for each of those items, and stick to your schedule as closely as you can.

## **Practice mindfulness**

When you feel overwhelmed, take some time to relax. Try to breathe deeply with your eyes closed, concentrating on your breathing. Or do some yoga or gentle stretches. Relax your muscles by starting with your toes and slowly relaxing each muscle in your body as you work your way up to your head.

## **Set limits**

When your to-do list is already full, say no to more projects at work and home if you can. Find out your boss' top priorities and work on those, but be careful not to promise more than you can deliver. Make it clear that if you work on project "X," you may have to push back the deadline on project "Y."

## **Share the load**

Don't be afraid to ask your coworkers or family members for help. Have your spouse or older kids pitch in around the house and cook meals, do some cleaning, and take care of a few loads of laundry. Even younger

kids may be old enough to dust or set the table. It's much less stressful if you're working as a team.

## **Leave perfection at the door**

Don't try to be perfect. We're in a time when competing priorities means that perfection may not be attainable. If you have a less than clean house because you're also homeschooling your children or caring for an elderly family member, so be it. Allow yourself room for imperfections.

## **Do your best to stay healthy**

To do your best at work and at home, you've got to take care of yourself. Eat regularly and stick to nutritious foods, and do your best not to "stress eat." The gym may be closed, but you can take walks and build in exercise breaks at home to manage stress and enjoy a little time for yourself. And be sure to get plenty of sleep each night—it's one of the best ways to give your immune system the support it needs.

## **Demonstrate compassion for coworkers**

If you can help someone manage their competing priorities, offer to help. Can you record a meeting or take notes if they can't attend? Can you offer to take their place at a meeting? Can you offer them early morning or evening hours for calls while children are asleep? Have you simply asked them how they're doing?

## **Take time for yourself**

A few quiet minutes to yourself each day can recharge your batteries and help with your resilience. You'll be a better employee and a better family member by doing this.

## HELPING STUDENTS MANAGE CHANGE HEALTHFULLY

We live in a constantly changing world. The last year has likely prompted the most significant changes you have experienced in your life. You might be experiencing campus life—or college life as a whole—in an entirely different way than you ever imagined.

It can be incredibly challenging to retain a sense of control amidst changes, such as the ones our world is undergoing, especially if you're someone who likes to maintain the status quo.

It is more difficult to adjust to changes that happen to you which you feel little or no control over, such as experiencing a health scare or losing your job. But the changes you initiate, such as changing schools or moving your home, can also be challenging.



While the unknown might feel daunting, following these tips for riding the waves of change will help you keep your sanity intact.

### **Solidify Your Support**

To cope with change effectively, align yourself with a group of like-minded people and nurture relationships with friends and family members who hold positive outlooks. Having people you can relate to and who can encourage you will help you through hard times.

### **Appreciate Nature**

For general stress relief, especially stress related to uncertainty, connecting to nature can create a sense of being part of the larger whole and soothe anxiety. Try taking a simple walk in the park or sitting somewhere peaceful outside where you can appreciate the natural sights and sounds. Experiencing a sense of sacredness of all things, such as the birds chirping in the morning or a gorgeous sunset, can ease your stress and help put your current challenges into perspective.

### **Flex Your Change Muscles**

Change gets easier the more you welcome it into your life, so force yourself to experience enjoyable change frequently, especially if you haven't changed your routine much lately or you feel stuck in a rut. You might, for example, take a different route to work every other week, get involved in a new hobby, or enroll in a class that interests you.

### **Practice Self-Care**

Before and during times of change, it's especially important to take good care of yourself—eat healthy foods, get quality sleep, and move your body in ways that make you feel good.

Regular self-care will help support you, and even if you experience a major health setback, you'll be in a stronger position to recover. You'll also feel more psychologically prepared to cope with change.

Finally, it's important to be ready to seek help if you are chronically anxious about the changes you are experiencing or stuck in the grieving process. Don't be afraid to let others know you are struggling and get the help you need.

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# The Wellness News

Tips and resources for living well

January 2021

## Goal Setting for Overall Health

While goals can vary from big to small, setting goals to improve overall wellness is vital, especially during this current climate. When setting goals, it's important to do so in a way that makes it easier to transition into lifestyle changes. It's also important to remember that it takes practice and can take up to 60 days to create and maintain new habits. Below you will find a guide to help consider goals for overall health.



The start of the day matters tremendously. When setting goals for your overall health, try starting with developing a morning routine. It will help ease into the day and can be done with carving out just 15 minutes. This time can be spent on something that is valuable or meaningful to you to get the day started- whether it be stretching, having a cup of coffee, or simply organizing the day ahead.

Along with a morning routine, an evening routine is just as important and critical for mental health management. An evening routine can consist of reading, exercising, or anything that promotes peace, relaxation, and/or serenity before bed. To make a health goal into a habit, set a time to stop working. This allows time for an evening routine amid the afternoon activities and obligations.

When considering setting goals for overall health, managing a healthy plate with green vegetables is great. Greens, especially dark leafy greens, have an array of benefits from healthier skin, vision, and energy to stronger kidneys and organs. Try starting off slow by adding greens to your lunch or dinner plates.

Fresh air opens the lungs, the heart, and the mind. It also sharpens the mind, restores energy, is good for the digestive system, and improves blood flow. If you can't get outdoors, try inhaling through your nose four times and then exhaling, making a sound as you breathe out. This is another great technique that can help calm stress or anxiety throughout the day.

Turning even the smallest health goals into habits will transform your well-being and create lasting lifestyle changes.

# Cervical Health Awareness



January is National Cervical Cancer Screening and Awareness Month. Cervical Health Awareness Month is a chance to share information about how women can protect themselves from HPV (human papillomavirus) and cervical cancer. About 3.52 billion women worldwide are at risk of cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is the presence of abnormal cells on the cervix, the lower part of the uterus, opening into the vagina. Cervical cancer can be diagnosed using a Pap smear or other procedures that sample the cervix tissue. HPV is a very common infection that spreads through sexual activity, and it causes almost all cases of cervical cancer. HPV infection occurs as a result of sexual contact with someone who has the virus - and HPV is a common virus. Over 20 million men and women are currently infected, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and approximately six million more become infected each year.

The CDC reports that the vaccine is most effective prior to any HPV exposure – therefore, it is recommended based on age, not sexual experience. HPV vaccination is recommended for both females and males starting at age 11 or 12. However, the American Cancer Society (ACS) does not recommend HPV vaccination for persons older than 26, so it is important to get the vaccine as soon as possible. The CDC emphasizes that you should not wait until you have reached puberty or started having sex to be vaccinated. Getting the vaccine at the recommended age could be a decision that prevents cancer when you are older.

According to cancer.org, cervical cancer is one of the most successfully treatable cancers, and early detection allows for successful treatment – through surgery, chemotherapy or radiation. Signs of cervical cancer include abnormal bleeding, abnormal discharge or pain during sex. An abnormal Pap smear is often one of the first signs. A Pap smear is done during a pelvic exam and includes obtaining a small sample from the surface of the cervix to help identify any cell changes. If results are negative, the ACS recommends pap smears every three years for women aged 21-29 and every five years for women aged 30 to 65. In addition, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends that women see their provider every year for a breast and pelvic exam, even if they are not due for a Pap smear.



# Spaghetti Squash with Avocado Pesto

## Ingredients

- A 2 1/2- to 3-pound spaghetti squash, halved lengthwise and seeded
- 1 ripe avocado
- 1 cup of packed basil leaves
- ¼ cup of unsalted shelled pistachios
- 2 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 1 clove of garlic
- ¾ teaspoon of salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon of ground pepper, divided
- 5 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1-pound of boneless, skinless chicken breast, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces



## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Coat a large rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. Place squash cut side down, on one side of the prepared pan. Bake until tender, about 45 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, combine avocado, basil, pistachios, lemon juice, garlic, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a food processor. Pulse until finely chopped. Add 4 tablespoons oil and process until smooth.
4. Ten minutes before the squash is done, toss chicken, the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and the remaining 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper together in a medium bowl. Spread the chicken in an even layer on the empty side of the baking sheet. Return to the oven and bake until just cooked through, about 10 minutes.
5. Using a fork, scrape the squash from the shells into a large bowl. Add the chicken and toss gently to combine. Serve topped with the pesto.

## *Health Tip:*

### Exercising in the Cold

Plan ahead for safe outdoor exercise with cooler weather

- Check the forecast before you go out and have a plan
- Wear 2 to 3 light layers that you can remove to prevent overheating
- Use a synthetic fabric as your bottom layer to draw sweat away from your body
- Have a waterproof layer on top if the weather calls for precipitation

**Action:** *Layer your clothing to exercise outdoors for varied weather.*

# Let's Talk Portion Control and Serving Sizes

As a nation, we tend to overeat. Serving sizes in restaurants have increased significantly over the years. So how can you know how much is too much?

**Portion** is how much you choose to eat at one sitting. A portion is completely up to the individual, and that individual decides their portion. Many foods that come as a "single portion" contain multiple servings.

**Serving size** is the amount of food listed on the products "Nutrition Facts" label. So, when you read the nutritional values, those numbers are for ONE serving that the manufacturer suggests on the package.

Tips for eating smaller portions:

- **Cooking at home:** offer the proper serving to eat plate and put the remaining food away for leftovers. Leaving the food out makes it easy to eat more.
- **Eating out:** opt out of appetizers (especially fried foods). Appetizers add lots of calories before you have your meal! In addition, ask for a takeout box to be brought when your food is served. Before you begin eating, put half of your meal in the takeout box. This cuts the portion in half, AND you get a tasty meal to take home with you.
- **Ordering takeout:** If you normally eat two or three slices of pizza, try cutting that in half and enjoy a salad to go with it. If you are ordering for the whole family and normally order a large pizza, try a medium. The slices are not much different, and you will all be eating less!
- **Watching movies at home or the theater:** Break the habit of eating while watching TV. Instead of snacking, keep a tumbler of water beside your seat and drink water if you get the urge to snack. At the movies, decide to share a bag of popcorn, and opt out of refills.
- **Snacks:** count or measure your serving size and then put the bag or box of snacks away. It is too easy to overeat when snacking straight from the container.
- **Everyday meal planning:** Use a food diary to log what you eat and how much. Sometimes the simple task of writing it down brings our habits to light! Tracking your calories also helps to monitor your weight.

As we adjust to the new year, consider building a healthy mindset by monitoring your portions and serving sizes. Losing weight and staying healthy takes lifestyle changes. Simple habits can be beneficial for years to come.



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