

Balanced Living

February 2023



Change Your Attitude to Accomplish More

When things go wrong, it doesn't have to ruin your day. In fact, with the right outlook, you can prevent many problems from ever happening. When mistakes occur or something goes wrong, "remember that you're the person who controls your reactions," says Ed Foreman, a motivational speaker and president of Executive Development Systems in Dallas. "Don't let the weather, your spouse or your boss take that control away from you."

Choose to maintain a positive attitude. "Bring a proactive approach to situations, don't just react to things after they've happened," he says. "Decide how you would like them to turn out."

Set high expectations up front. "Instead of wondering what might go wrong, start looking for things to go right. Our thoughts are self-fulfilling, so chances are you will get the result you expect," says Mr. Foreman.

A positive outlook contributes to a less stressful, more healthful lifestyle, he says. Anger, fear and other stressful emotions are associated with many health problems, from depression to high blood pressure, heart disease and the common cold. But feeling good about yourself and others helps prevent mental anguish and physical problems.

Being upbeat also contributes to more pleasant personal relationships. "Take an honest look at your attitude, then ask yourself, 'Would I like to work with this person? Would I like being married to me?' If you answer no, it's time to change your attitude and behavior," says Mr. Foreman.

Start with a smile

Start building a positive attitude as soon as you open your eyes each morning. "Instead of dragging yourself out of bed and off to work in a big rush, start each day with a positive, healthful routine," Mr. Foreman says.

To do that, he suggests you:

- Get up early so you don't have to rush.
- Tune into positive messages. If the morning news depresses you, listen to a motivational cassette or read an upbeat, fun book.
- Eat a healthy breakfast.
- Exercise. Refresh your body and spirit with a brisk walk or other aerobic activity.
- Leave home early. Allow enough time for your commute -- and then some.

Put yourself in charge

"On the job, an individual with a positive attitude is more likely to achieve good results. The next time there is an important assignment or a promotion, that person is likely to get it," Mr. Foreman says.

Here are his strategies for achieving a positive attitude at work:

- Plan your day and your future. Work to achieve real goals, not just finish tasks.
- Greet people with a smile. Studies have found that smiling makes you feel better.
- Avoid excuses; they just make the other person angrier. But "I'm sorry" and "I'll take care of it" work wonders.
- Give sincere appreciation. Your co-workers deserve to know when they've done something well -- and they will return the compliment.
- Listen more and talk less. Listening to another person is one of the best compliments you can give.
- Alternate work and rest periods. Take time out to refresh yourself with a walk, stretches or other moderate exercise.
- Don't complain. Grumbling focuses attention on what's wrong, not what's right, and creates a negative atmosphere.
- Learn from your mistakes. Instead of getting upset, ask, "How can I correct the situation?"
- Make room for humor. Make it cheerful, not offensive.
- Review your accomplishments at the end of the day. Even small contributions make a difference.
- Go home early enough to spend time with family or friends. Relax and get a good night's sleep.

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Comforting Advice for Coping with Grief

The death of someone you love can be one of life's most difficult challenges. Understanding the process of grief and knowing some of what to expect may help. Grief affects people in many ways. You may feel angry, anxious, guilty, sad—or all of those by turns. Often, the first reaction to the death is to feel numb or shocked. You may have difficulty concentrating or lose interest in enjoyable activities. Physically, you may feel tired, have trouble sleeping, lose your appetite, or even become ill.

Caring for Yourself Is Important

Taking these steps can help you manage your grief:

- Give yourself permission to feel however you are feeling.
- Try to keep up with daily tasks to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- Talk with others about your feelings.
- Get enough sleep, exercise, and eat a healthy diet.
- Avoid alcohol, which can make you feel worse.

Adjustment Takes Time

The period of time following a death often holds many changes. Grieving is a process of accepting your loss and adjusting to those changes. That can take months, or even years. While mourning a loss takes time, if you're not feeling any better in even small ways several weeks after the death, you may need help. Other warning signs that you're having trouble getting through the grief process include:

- Ongoing difficulty with eating or sleeping
- Avoiding any reminders of the loved one who passed away
- Constantly thinking about the person
- Relying on drugs or alcohol to cope
- Feeling alone or detached from others

Talking with your health care provider or a counselor can help if you're having difficulty coping with your loss. Grief support groups led by mental health professionals can also provide a place to talk about your feelings.

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Manage the Changes in Your Life

Every day you face unexpected challenges that require you to change your plans and find room in your schedule so that your priorities and responsibilities do not fall behind. Some of the challenges are easy to adjust to and have only a small impact on your day. Others may be so challenging that they can unsettle your schedule for days or even weeks.

Awareness

The more aware you are of the challenges that are circling around your life, waiting for the worst moment to appear, the less of an impact they'll have. Recognizing challenges gives you a chance to prepare for what might come next.

Impact

How you respond to a challenge determines the degree of impact it will have and how far that impact will ripple throughout all the other areas of your life. Some impacts might only feel like small annoyances, while others might feel much worse.

Response

Responding to a challenge instead of reacting to it means that you have plans in place that you can use to lessen the overall impact of the challenge.

Below are some tips to help you develop your resilience, so when changes in your life present new challenges, you can quickly and easily resolve them.

- Always take a few moments to just breathe before you respond to an unexpected moment in your day.
- Meditation may create a feeling of centeredness, connectedness, and calm to address sudden changes.
- Create a plan. Physically write down or type out what you need to do to overcome the challenge.
- Avoid starting or shifting back to negative habits as a way of coping with challenges.



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February 2023

Exercises for Blood Pressure Management

According to the Mayo Clinic, there is a close relationship between having high blood pressure and not getting enough exercise.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends that individuals with hypertension engage in moderate-intensity aerobic exercise 5-7 days per week, including:

- Resistance exercise 2-3 days per week
- Flexibility exercise at least 2-3 days per week

Research has found that excessive sedentary time can contribute to various health conditions. To reduce the amount of time you stay sitting, try to aim for 5 to 10 minutes of low-intensity physical activity each hour, such as getting up to drink water or going on a short walk.

Examples of aerobic exercise that may lower blood pressure include:

- Walking
- Jogging
- Cycling
- Dancing

High-intensity interval training, alternating short bursts of intense activity with subsequent recovery periods of lighter activity is another option to try out.

While weight training can cause a temporary increase in blood pressure during exercise, it has long-term benefits to blood pressure that outweigh the risk of a brief spike for most people.

Some tips for weight training with high blood pressure:

- Learn the proper form
- Exhale as you push the weight
- Lift lighter weights more times
- Listen to your body.

If you have high blood pressure, get your doctor's OK before starting exercise, increasing your current exercise, or adding weight training exercises to your fitness routine. Likewise, stop exercising if you feel chest pain, weakness, dizziness, lightheadedness, pressure, or pain in your neck, arm, jaw, or shoulder.

source: [exercising-your-way-to-lowering-your-blood-pressure.pdf \(acsm.org\)](https://www.acsm.org/exercising-your-way-to-lowering-your-blood-pressure.pdf)



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Modifying Behaviors for a Healthy Heart

Heart health can often be overlooked. However, with heart disease being the leading cause of death in the United States, prioritizing heart health is essential, especially for adults. In addition, focusing on a few principles of overall health, like nutrition, movement, and recovery, as well as seeking adequate health care, can pay dividends when combined and applied consistently over time.

Research shows what a balanced, primarily whole-food approach can provide the heart. The nutrient components of whole foods, such as fiber, protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, etc., work in unison to improve biometrics such as total cholesterol, blood pressure, triglycerides, and body weight.

A heart-healthy eating approach that maximizes these nutritional components includes:

- Whole grains such as oats, brown rice, and whole wheat
- Beans and Legumes, including lentils, black beans, and garbanzo beans
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Lean sources of protein such as animal products, beans, legumes, and soy
- Nuts, seeds, and nutrient-dense oils

Physical activity also plays a crucial role in heart health. By promoting blood flow, the entire body can receive nutrient-rich blood, function at a higher level, and avoid chronic inflammation.

- Aim to get 150 minutes per week of moderate physical activity, which equates to 30 minutes, five days per week

Studies have shown that less than adequate sleep is associated with more significant stress, increased inflammation, high blood pressure, and weight gain.

- Aim to get at least 7 hours of sleep per night

As mentioned, greater benefits can be obtained by considering a combination of the above lifestyle changes in conjunction with support from your doctor. Acting at any time can prove valuable, especially considering heart health's central role in living a fulfilling life.

source: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/heart-healthy-living>.

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, well-being & legal issues.



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February 2023

How to Care for Your Skin this Winter

Did you know that the winter months can take a toll on your skin? This is because the air in our homes and outside is drier, which can wreak havoc on your skin's natural barrier. So, if you spend much time outdoors in the colder months, it's imperative that you tend to your skin.

If you're unsure how to update your skincare routine, don't worry! We've put together a list of ways to nourish your face and body.

Review your Cleansers

Ensure that you're washing your skin with a hydrating cleanser. Opt for fragrance-free options without harsh exfoliants and alcohol.

Add in Moisture

The best time to lotion your body is right after the shower when your skin is still damp. It would help if you chose a different moisturizer for your face, as facial skin is more sensitive and thinner than the skin on your body.

Start with a Serum

The dry air in the winter can take a severe toll on your skin's moisture. Give your skin a head start by applying hydrating serums like hyaluronic acid or lactic acid before your moisturizer. Talk to your doctor or dermatologist about what kind of serum is right for you.

Turn Down the Heat

Hot showers are amazing in the winter. We get it. However, they're terrible for the moisture barrier on your skin. Try to use lukewarm water and reduce how long you spend in the shower.

Lock in Your Moisturizer

"Slugging" went viral in 2022 for its skincare benefits. Slugging is a nighttime skincare practice of slathering petroleum jelly, like Vaseline or Aquaphor, overtop your regular nightly skincare routine to lock in your moisturizer, protect your moisture barrier and improve skin's texture. This practice can also be done with skin-safe oils, such as pumpkin seed oil, rosehip seed oil, and vitamin E oil.

Don't Forget the Sunscreen

Yes, even in the winter months, you can still get sunburn. This is especially true if you're out in the snow when the sun's rays reflect off the surface before you hit the slopes or break out the shovel, lather at least SPF 30+ on your skin.

source:

<https://www.aad.org/public/everyday-care/skin-care-basics/care/winter-skin-survival-kit>

<https://www.brynmawrdermatology.com/blog/10-dermatologist-approved-winter-skincare-tips-from-dr-husienzad/>

[What Is Slugging and Should You Try It? – Cleveland Clinic](#)



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25 Minute Chicken and Veggie Enchiladas

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 ½ cups chopped zucchini
- 1 ½ cups chopped yellow squash
- ½ cup chopped yellow onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 ½ cups shredded, cooked chicken breast (about 4 ½ oz.)
- ½ cup shredded, cooked chicken thigh (about 1 ½ oz.)
- ⅝ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, shredded (about 1 cup), divided
- 8 (6-inch) corn tortillas
- Cooking spray
- ½ cup bottled salsa Verde
- Fresh cilantro leaves

Directions

1. Preheat oven to broil with rack 5 to 6 inches from heat.
2. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high.
3. Add zucchini, squash, and onion, and cook, stirring often, until vegetables are tender and just beginning to brown, about 10 minutes.
4. Add garlic and cook for 1 more minute.
5. Add chicken, salt, pepper, and ¾ cup of the cheese; stir to combine. Cook until hot and cheese melts, about 1 minute.
6. Remove from heat, and cover to keep warm.
7. Warm tortillas according to package directions.
8. Place about 1/3 cup of chicken mixture in center of each tortilla; fold the tortilla around filling, and place, seam side down, in a lightly greased (with cooking spray) 11- x 7-inch (or a 2-quart) broiler-safe baking dish.
9. Pour salsa over enchiladas, and sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup cheese.
10. Broil in preheated oven until hot and bubbly, about 1 ½ minutes. Garnish with cilantro.

Nutrition

High-Protein, Gluten-Free Optional

4 Servings | Serving Size: 2 Cups

Per Serving:

Calories: **393** | Protein: **25g** | Carbohydrates: **37g** | Dietary Fiber: **5g** | Fat: **18g** | Saturated Fat: **6g** | Sodium: **499.2mg**

source: [25-Minute Chicken & Veggie Enchiladas Recipe | EatingWell](#)

Teaching Children to Be Better Problem Solvers

If you are parent of young child, here's a "formula" for teaching problem solving. (Be patient and do not rush the process): 1) Encourage the child to explain the situation needing a fix, solution, or answer. 2) Ask questions that prompt critical thinking and solutions. 3) Help the child break the problem up into smaller parts. Tackle one piece at a time. 4) Let the child brainstorm for answers. 5) Guide the child to the solution. 6) Praise the effort. 7) Talk about mistakes as learning tools, and okay. 8) Have a post-event discussion and reflect on the steps to solving a problem. For more create more opportunities for learning the problem-solving process, create problems. Example: "I don't know what to make for dinner, but this is what we have in the refrigerator."

Is a Marital Workshops the Answer?

Could you benefit from a marital/couples workshop as a way to have a more satisfying relationship? Such workshops allow for time away from distractions, usually 1-2 days, while participants explore many aspects of relationship wellness. Marital workshops may facilitate changes you desire if traditional, weekly counseling hasn't brought the results you seek. Marital workshops help a couple reorient their view of the relationship to attain "team focus" rather an adversarial one. Improving communication is paramount, especially with the use of deeper empathy, listening, and validation skills that help partners feel truly understood. All relationships have challenges, and stressful times can test resilience, so workshops are usually designed to give you a lasting framework that both partners understand as their go-to approach to stay cohesive in times of significant stress. Most importantly, a marital workshop can help couple's feel more positive and hopeful about the future, and in control of where their relationship is going. Many research studies have shown that negative communication patterns of couples threaten physical and immune health with slower healing and more vulnerability to physical illness. That's strong incentive to repair a relationship that is not working. One benefit might be a longer life. Learn more: "Best Guide to Marital Counseling Retreats" at www.guidedoc.com/best-marriage-counseling-retreats-us. Also: "Transform Your Marriage Vision Retreat: A Self-Guided Getaway for Couples Paperback" (2021) available at online book sellers

Living Better in the 'Sandwich Generation.'

The 'sandwich generation' refers to adults raising children under the age of 18 while also caring for elderly parents. Are you a member of this select group? If so, key stressors may include finding time for yourself—sleeping well, eating, and engaging in physical activity; setting boundaries with finite time and energy resources, financial stress, a need for emotional support, and wondering what resources are out there to assist you. *See the following Web site for help and support: U.S. Area Agencies at www.usaging.org/adrcs for answers. In Canada, search Canada.ca [search caregiver help]*

Dating Violence Prevention Month

There's great concern about teen dating violence because recent research points to a strong correlation with domestic violence in later years. Parents on the front lines in providing education and awareness. And they should keep an eye (and ear) out for signs of abuse. Many teens are unaware of what constitutes abusive behavior. They rely on parents to tell them, but 80% of parents don't believe teen dating violence is a serious problem. Here's why: Many teens won't acknowledge victimization for fear of being embarrassed or losing the relationship to which they attach strong social value. If you are a parent with a teen, don't wait to detect a problem. Be proactive using the resource below. Avoid having your child wonder years later why you didn't say more about how to prevent or protect themselves from abuse. Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/Dmpromotionalbrochure-508.pdf>



Achieve Goals with the EAP's Help

Achieving goals naturally includes circumventing roadblocks and hurdles, but many are personal like maintaining motivation, overcoming self-doubt, remaining unshaken by failures, staying on track, planning, time management, avoiding procrastination, and overpowering distractions. Your EAP is the perfect starting point for issues like these that hold you back. Give up the struggle and make contact. Worthwhile achievements rarely come easily, but with assessment, counseling, short-term problem-solving, or referral to the right resource you can claim success you're dreaming about.

Finding More Meaning and Energy in Your Job

Gallup research has found that 40% of employees believe their mental health is negatively affected by their job. Managing stress are important, but improving wellness is also accomplished by becoming more "engaged." Could you enjoy your job more despite aspects of it that you do not like? If so, research says you will increase energy, find new meaning your work, feel more positive and in control, more hopeful and productive. Your less likely to burnout. Helping employees become more engaged is a hot topic in the world of work. If haven't explore this idea yet, you may be on your way to discovering new energy and improved mental health on the job.

Start here:

www.greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_be_more_engaged_at_work

Focus on Excellence, Not Perfection

Excellence at work involves setting high standards and striving to achieve them. But not letting go of a work project because it is not "perfect" is a path to frustration and burnout. Most people know that perfectionism is not attainable, but it may not feel like it when it's your project. Just one more tweak seems critical. And then another. Start by not labeling yourself "a perfectionist." Next, think about your relationship with mistakes and failure. Do you see these things as personal flaws rather learning experiences? If so, being self-critical is likely a habit that accompanies your perfectionism. Talk to a professional counselor. You will learn how to reframe how you view mistakes, errors, and imperfections, and see these as opportunities to practice letting go, patience, and self-love.

Stress Management, Right Now: Refresh Your Relationship with the Boss

There's nothing like a positive meeting with the boss. You feel confident of what he or she thinks of your work, feel the strength in your relationship, and the rest of your day flows. However, worry about what the boss thinks is a major stressor for employees. Intervene with stress by having a refresher, status, or reacquaintance meeting. Here are the signals it's time to go: 1) You don't get regular feedback anymore. 2) You aren't sure of what you are supposed to do or what the boss wants, and when; 3) Your boss does not follow up after giving you an assignment; 4) Your boss does not engage with you to discover how things are generally going. 5) Your gut tells you there is something wrong.

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.

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