



# Well Worth It

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## New Year, New You

**This is the time of year when goals and resolutions are being defined and refined as everyone vows to make this THE YEAR that they will lose weight, find a new job, restore relationships or achieve other important, life changing goals. The key to successful resolutions in 2009 is different for everyone.**

- **First, set realistic goals that you can achieve and break your goals into manageable chunks. If you've never exercised before and your goal is to run a marathon, then break the goal down in smaller portions. First aspire to walk 2 miles, increase it to 4 miles, and then begin to jog and so on. You may not run a marathon in 2009 – but you are on your way to being healthier and feeling success in an area that is important to you.**
- **Second, plan for a change in your life instead of making sudden changes. Visualize how your daily routines will be different in light of your new resolutions or goals.**
- **Third, do not give up. If your resolution or goal falls through the cracks by January 31<sup>st</sup> – it isn't too late to begin again. Identify why you were unable to achieve your goal and make modifications.**
- **Lastly, celebrate your success. Reward yourself for small successes and resolutions that you keep.**

## Save the Date!

**The Wellness Council of WV's Annual Conference  
on Worksite Wellness will be held**

**October 22 – 23, 2009**

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**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

## Stress Management

In order to manage stress it is necessary to know what stress is and what causes stress. **What is stress?** It is your body's reaction to the demands of the life you lead. Stressors are events or conditions in your surroundings that may trigger stress. Two main types of stress you face are acute stress (the body's immediate response to a significant threat, challenge or scare) or chronic stress (the body's more subtle response to acute day-to-day situations and problems).

Effective stress management involves identifying both acute and chronic stressors in your life. If stress is left "untamed" it can extract a physical toll on the body. Headache, fatigue, poor concentrate, depression, anxiety, or irritability. Stressors can be external things beyond your control (job pressures, relationship problems, or a neighbor's persistent barking dog) or internal pressures (fear, worry, anxiety or unrealistic expectations). Learning to identify your stressors is the first step in managing stress and positively affecting your overall health. Look for more information on managing stress in future issues of Well Worth It.

*Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each new year find you a better man.*  
~Benjamin Franklin

### 2009 Mental Health Awareness

In 2009, the Wellness Council will be focusing on mental health issues that affect you in the workplace. From depression to stress to juggling a career and caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease and much more, we are striving to present the best information you can use. If there are specific mental health topics that you'd like to see covered in future issues of *Well Worth It* please send an email to [info@wcvv.org](mailto:info@wcvv.org).

## 6 Strategies for Weight Loss

### 1. Make a commitment –

Permanent weight loss takes time and effort. Make sure that you're ready to make permanent changes and that you do so for the right reasons.

2. **Do not go it alone** - While only you can help yourself lose weight by taking responsibility for your own behavior, your chances of success are higher when you seek support when needed from your partner, family and friends.

3. **Set a realistic goal** - When you're considering what to expect from your new eating and exercise plan, be realistic. Healthy weight loss occurs slowly and steadily. Aim to lose 1 to 2 pounds a week. To do this, you need to burn 500 to 1,000 calories more than you consume each day through a low-calorie diet and regular exercise.

4. **Enjoy healthier foods** – Adopting a new eating style that promotes weight loss must include lowering your total caloric intake. Incorporate more plant-based foods – fruits, vegetables and whole grains into your daily menu.

5. **Get active, stay active** - The goal of exercise for weight loss is to burn more calories, although exercise offers many other benefits as well. One of the best ways to lose body fat is through steady aerobic exercise - such as walking - for more than 30 minutes most days of the week.

6. **Change your lifestyle** - It's not enough to eat healthy foods and exercise for only a few weeks or even several months. You have to include these behaviors into your life. To do that, you have to change the behaviors that helped make you overweight in the first place.



Visit [www.MayoClinic.com](http://www.MayoClinic.com) to learn more about weight loss, strategies and caloric intake recommendations.

## Juggling work and family

For most people, juggling the demands of career and personal life is an ongoing challenge. With so many demands on your time — from overtime to family obligations — it can feel difficult to strike this balance. The goal is to make time for the activities that are the most important to you. Here are some ideas to help you find the balance that's best for you:

**Keep a log.** Track everything you do for one week. Decide what's necessary and what satisfies you the most.

**Take advantage of your options.** Find out if your employer offers flex hours, a compressed workweek, job-sharing or telecommuting for your role.

**Learn to say no.** It's OK to respectfully say no. When you quit doing the things you only do out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, you'll make more room in your life for the activities that are meaningful to you.

**Leave work at work.** With today's technology (cell phones, internet) it is possible to be "connected" 24 hours a day. You must create a boundary between work and home.

**Manage your time.** Use lists, calendars and other time management strategies to stay organized and efficient.

**Communicate clearly.** Limit time-consuming misunderstandings by communicating clearly and listening carefully.

**Protect your day off.** Try to schedule some of your routine chores on workdays so that your days off are more relaxing.

**Get enough sleep.** There's nothing as stressful and potentially dangerous as working when you're sleep-deprived. Not only is your productivity affected, but you can also make costly mistakes.

**Bolster your support system.** Turn to trusted friends or relatives who can assist you during times of stress.

**Seek professional help.** If problems persist and you continually find yourself feeling overwhelmed, depressed or discouraged, it may be wise to seek professional help. [www.MayoClinic.com](http://www.MayoClinic.com)

## Seasonal Affective Disorder

For some Americans, the short days and long dark nights of winter trigger a type of depression that repeatedly occurs the same time every year. This is called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Researchers have mixed opinions to the causes of SAD but think it may be caused by a lack of sunlight. Lack of light may upset sleep-wake cycle and alter serotonin levels in the body. Serotonin levels affect one's mood.



Symptoms of SAD include:

- Feeling sad, grumpy or anxious
- Losing interest in normal activities
- Gaining weight
- Craving carbohydrates (breads, pastas)
- Daytime drowsiness
- Reoccurring symptoms from the fall to spring of every year

After assessing your medical history a doctor can diagnose SAD. Treatments are available and may include a combination of light therapy, counseling, exercise and medications. Preventative strategies are also important and can be effective in combating the disease.

## Depression Self Assessment

Are you at risk for depression?

The Mayo Clinic has put together an online resource at

[http://www.mayoclinic.com/invite.cfm?retryCount=1&objectid=3323EE4A-4AD6-4408-](http://www.mayoclinic.com/invite.cfm?retryCount=1&objectid=3323EE4A-4AD6-4408-B82B7DDEB1D2FEB6)

[B82B7DDEB1D2FEB6](http://www.mayoclinic.com/invite.cfm?retryCount=1&objectid=3323EE4A-4AD6-4408-B82B7DDEB1D2FEB6) providing you with an online self-assessment you can complete in the privacy of your own home or workplace. This assessment is not intended to replace or be used in lieu of professional medical advice. It is only a guide to familiarize you with yourself and the symptoms of depression.

*For last year's words belong to last year's language*

*And next year's words await another voice.*

*And to make an end is to make a beginning.*

**T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"**

## Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the lung most often caused by a viral or bacterial infection. Children and adults who are diagnosed with pneumonia often are dealing with a pre-existing condition/infection. The condition weakens the immune or defense system making the system more susceptible to an attack. If you have symptoms of pneumonia, you should seek medical advice immediately. Pneumonia is a serious illness that can be fatal.

According to the American Lung Association, pneumonia and influenza represented a combined cost to the U.S. economy in 2005 of \$40.2 billion, \$6 billion due to indirect mortality costs and \$34.2 billion in direct costs. Pneumonia and influenza together are ranked as the eighth leading cause of death in the United States. Pneumonia consistently accounts for the overwhelming majority of deaths between the two. In 2004, 60,207 people died of pneumonia.

Patients at high risk of pneumonia are urged to get the pneumonia vaccinations. The pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV) is recommended for anyone over 65 years of age, those with serious long-term health problems and anyone with lowered infection resistance. Overall good health is important to ward off disease.



### You Should know...

#### Smoke free Federal Government Petition

The American Lung Association is calling on President-Elect Obama to close loopholes in existing legislation and create smoke free worksites for all federal employees. There are no safe levels of second hand smoke. You can help the ALA in this endeavor by completing a short online petition that can be found at the following web address:

[http://lungaction.org/campaign/Federal\\_Workplaces\\_Smokefree](http://lungaction.org/campaign/Federal_Workplaces_Smokefree) You can be a part of the American Lung Association's quest to submit 10,000 signatures and make all federal buildings smoke free!

#### Preventing Carbon Monoxide Disasters

Approximately 500 people die each year from unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Thousands of others become ill or seek medical attention due to exposure to the colorless, odorless gas. Carbon monoxide results from the incomplete burning of carbon-containing fuels and it reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen.

Take the following steps to prevent carbon monoxide in the home: 1) do not use unvented stoves, ovens or gas ranges for heat 2) do not burn charcoal inside an enclosed area 3) do not operate gasoline-powered engines in confined areas (i.e. garage) 4) never leave the car or mower running inside the garage, even if the door is open 5) have the heating system inspected and cleaned annually 6) install carbon monoxide detectors in your home and garage & 7) if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, nauseous or suspect CO poisoning, see your doctor immediately. Visit the American Lung Association at [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org) to learn more.

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