



Well Worth It

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Coping with Stress

With many Americans wondering if their jobs, houses or nest eggs are safe, stress levels are beginning to climb. Extended periods of stress for whatever reason can put one at greater risk for heart problems, sleeping conditions, and depression. The *American Cancer Society* recommends the following techniques to more effectively cope with stress:

- **Exercise** - improve your mood, release tension and boost your confidence by working out three times a week.
- **Mediate** - feel calm and focused by using mediating or other breathing techniques to relax.
- **Eat Healthy** - keep your energy levels high with balanced nutritious meals throughout the day.
- **Get Rest** - getting plenty of sleep will help keep the negative health effects of stress at bay.
- **Enjoy Small Pleasures** - incorporate something small into each day that brings you pleasure including taking a bath, listening to music or talking with friends.



Those who are lifting the world onward and upward are those who encourage more than criticize.

Elizabeth Harrison, American Educator, 1849-1927

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Coping with Stress
- 1 Upcoming Events
- 2 Social Network Support Group
- 2 Headaches and Stress
- 2 Military Mental Health Screenings
- 3 Exercising with Children
- 3 Caregivers and Stress
- 3 10 Tips for Caregivers
- 4 Anger Management
- 4 Alcohol Awareness Month

Upcoming Worksite Wellness Trainings

- April 6, 2009** **Spring Conference**
Bridgeport, WV (Bridgeport Conference Center)
- April 28, 2009** **Worksite Wellness 101**
Charleston, WV (Institute, WV Rehab Center)
- May 19, 2009** **Worksite Wellness 101**
Parkersburg, WV (Blennerhassett Hotel)

More information and registration forms are available on our website at www.wcwg.org under the "Trainings" section on the home page. Register today!

Mental Health Screenings for the Military

The organization, Screening for Mental Health, Inc., has put together a free mental health screening for military members and their families. It is an anonymous screening designed to help guide military families to the proper professional medical care, if needed. Check it out at <https://www.militarymentalhealth.org/chooselang.asp>



Social Network Support Group

Feeling stressed? Perhaps you need a coffee break or a telephone chat with someone in your social support group. What is a social support group? A social support network is made up of friends, family and peers. It is not a formal support group that is generally run by a mental health professional and very structured. A social support network is something you can develop when you're not under stress, providing the comfort of knowing that your friends are there for you if you need them.

Perhaps you already have a social network support group without giving it an official name. That is great! Continue to foster the growth of your network by maintaining your existing relationships. This can be done by staying in touch and appreciating the friends and family in your network.

The benefits of a social network support group are enormous. Stress is reduced when adults have a sense of belonging, an increased self-worth knowing there are friends they can call on, and a feeling of security by having people who are truly watching out for their best interest. Learn more about cultivating a social network support group at www.mayoclinic.com.



Headaches and Stress

The daily struggles of life – finding car keys, meeting job deadlines, sitting in traffic, and so on can erode one's ability to cope. Adults are more likely to experience a headache when they are stressed. Some adults experience headaches as a result of the daily “grind.” Keeping daily stress under control can help lower the levels of stress hormones and lower your risk for stress related headaches. Simplifying your life, managing time wisely, relaxing, laughing and changing the pace are ways to keep your daily stress levels at a manageable level.

It is important to note that not all headaches are stress-related. If headaches disrupt your normal activities you may need to seek medical help. Seek emergency care if your headache is sudden, accompanied by a fever, stiff neck, rash, double vision, difficulty speaking or follows a head injury.

Exercising with Children

Everywhere we turn today (the paper, internet, television) medical professionals tell us we need to exercise. Exercise is a valuable tool to help reduce stress, improve our health, lose weight and so much more. Family constraints often make it difficult to find the time to exercise. Realizing your mental and physical health are worth it to find the time to exercise (not to mention the positive example you are setting for your family) is important. The following tips from the ACSM Certification Magazine will help you workout with your children:

Turn up the music and have a dance party.

Go for a bike ride together. For smaller children invest in a tag-a-long bike that attaches to yours. Make sure everyone has helmets.



Take a hike. Find a nearby park, take your children and then finish with a healthy picnic lunch.

Go swimming together. Tread water while you play with them in the pool

If you have the opportunity to exercise alone then take advantage of it by purchasing a yoga or exercise DVD to use before the children are awake or after they are asleep. Ask for help with childcare so you can find time to exercise on your own. Ask a relative, friend, trusty neighbor or schedule regular time to have a babysitter. You are worth it!

Through humor, you can soften some of the worst blows that life delivers. And once you find laughter, no matter how painful your situation might be, you can survive it.” Bill Cosby

Caregivers and Stress

Many adults today are faced with caring for aging parents or even their spouses. While caring for others takes time and energy, it is important for the caregiver to maintain a sense of self and make their own health a priority.

Caregivers tend to neglect eating right, exercising and maintaining their own medical check-ups. Over time, this neglect can take a physical and mental toll on the caregiver's own body. Sleep deprivation, infectious disease, premature aging and even mortality can result from the stress a caregiver endures. Read the full article exploring the relationship between stress and caring for a loved one at <http://www.thefamilycaregiver.org/pdfs/CaregiverStress.pdf>.

Fortunately, there are many resources available to help the caregiver connect with others and receive the support needed during a very stressful phase in their life. Check with medical professionals in your area for information for caregivers. Or connect online with other caregivers at the National Family Caregivers Association at www.thefamilycaregiver.org.

10 Tips for Caregivers

1. Choose to take charge of your life, and don't let your loved one's illness or disability always take center stage.
2. Remember to be good to yourself. Love, honor and value yourself. You're doing a very hard job and you deserve some quality time just for you.
3. Watch for signs of depression and don't delay in getting professional help when you need it.
4. When people offer to help, accept the offer and suggest specific things they can do.
5. Educate yourself about your loved one's condition. Information is empowering.
6. There's a difference between caring and doing. Be open to new technologies and ideas that promote your loved one's independence and help you do your job easier.
7. Trust your instincts. Most of the time they'll lead you in the right direction.
8. Grieve for your losses, then allow yourself to dream new dreams.
9. Stand up for your rights as a caregiver and as a citizen.
10. Seek [support](#) from other caregivers. There is great strength in knowing that you are not alone.

Additional information for caregivers can be found at <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3039829>

National Alcohol Awareness Month

April is National Alcohol Awareness Month. This health focus strives to educate the American public that the disease of alcoholism is treatable and alcoholics are capable of recovery. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence reports that alcohol contributes to 100,000 deaths annually, making it the third leading cause of preventable mortality in the US after tobacco and diet and activity patterns. Furthermore, 8.1 million Americans are alcoholics while an additional 5.7 million Americans have drinking problems not severe enough to be categorized as an alcoholic.

The good news is the disease of alcohol **can be treated**. Treatment programs are numerous and located across the nation. Visit <http://dasis3.samhsa.gov/> to locate a treatment facility in your geographic area. Other resources with education, prevention and treatment information include the National Council of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence at <http://www.ncadd.org/index.html>, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism at <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at <http://www.samhsa.gov/>, or Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) at www.aa.org. Lastly, you can always consult the yellow pages of your local phone book for additional resources in your area. Help is available for those who seek it.

Anger Management

Anger, a normal healthy emotion can be harmful to our health if it is expressed in an inappropriate manner. Being passive and keeping anger inside or at the other extreme having violent outbursts can lead to headaches, sleep difficulties, high blood pressure or digestive problems. Medical evidence supports that stress and hostility related to anger can lead to heart attacks.



Learning to express your anger appropriately is good for your health. Techniques to manage anger include self-talk, walking away from a situation until emotions have calmed, remembering to treat others the way you'd like to be treated, and agreeing to disagree. If these efforts fail and anger continues to be a persistent problem, anger management classes are available to teach people about what anger is, how to recognize their anger triggers, how to become aware of their own feelings of anger, and how to keep their anger under control. www.mayoclinic.com

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