



Your Wellness Toolkit

Volume 1, Issue 3

FITNESS at work...



Take your Meetings for a Walk!

Walking meetings are a great way to incorporate fitness into your workday while staying on track with business. So, what is a walking meeting? Well, it's just that – a meeting that takes place while walking. If you are like the rest of us who sit at a desk throughout the day, you know that we can all use more movement.

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Q&A Café...

Digital Devices & Digital Detox: Being Mindful in a Technology Based Life

Q. I find constant texts and emails breaking my concentration and interrupting my workflow. What can I do to reduce distractions?

A. Assign designated times to focus just on clearing emails and messages 2-3x/day. Start the first hour of your workday getting projects off to a start rather than being sucked into your inbox.

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FOOD for thought...

Tips to Eating Healthy at Work

Having a healthy breakfast sets the tone for the day. If you find yourself running short of time in the morning, make a healthy smoothie the night before and put it in a thermos. You can drink it on your way to work on mornings when you have minimal time for a cooked breakfast. You can get several servings of fruits, vegetables, healthy fat and fiber in this easy and healthy meal. Remember, smoothies can be enjoyed any time of the day and can be a healthy way to boost energy.

Bring snacks and leave your money at home. In a small container or snack-sized plastic bag, pack apples and 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, carrots and 2 tablespoons of hummus, raw nuts & seeds like raw almonds, cashews, sunflower and pumpkin seeds.

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RECIPES for health...

Broccoli Kale Soup with Lemon Garlic Chickpeas



Cook Time: 25 Min Total Time: 45 Min Serves 4

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WORKING well...

3 Ways to Improve Productivity

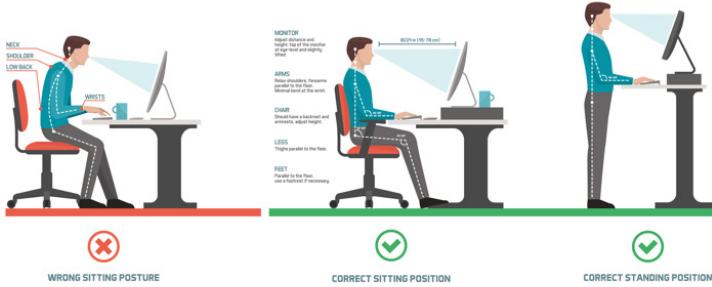
Do you ever feel that if you could get all your tasks done within a desired timeframe then you'd feel more productive? Productivity is often associated with time management and while that does make a contribution, it encompasses much more than that. It involves taking care of yourself in a manner whereby productivity becomes the byproduct. By implementing simple well-being practices into your daily life, you can empower yourself to be more productive naturally. For example, you would most likely be more productive at work if you had 7 to 8 hours of sleep the night before, as opposed to only 5 or 6. When you're productive, you are also likely to feel more confident, calm, and less stressed.



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The Monitor Doesn't Only Affect The Neck!

No matter how well an office workstation is designed, problems may arise if attention is not paid to the way the work is done. Working at a computer often involves very few changes in body posture/position. This lack of movement can lead to muscle fatigue and/or pain.



Ergonomics/Human Factors is a field of design specialty that focuses on the simple premise of Human Comfort and Safety. It ensures that the everyday items and spaces we use are positioned, designed, and set up in such a way that our bodies work the most efficient (the least amount of energy) and comfortably (positioning most body joints in anatomical neutral).

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POSITIVITY at work...

Stress Mastery Toolkit: Tips to Reframe and Revitalize



How many times have you heard your family or friends say how stressed they are?

How many times do you comment to others, "I'm so 'Stressed'?"

Do you know the cause of your stress, I mean really know what is creating the stress?

Many times, we believe our stress comes from something outside of ourselves, when in fact, it is forming from within. There are two types of stress: acute and chronic.

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“Take your Meetings for a Walk”



Our bodies are designed to move and excess sitting has been linked with some 35 plus diseases, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, depression, hypertension, and even back pain. In addition to the physical benefits of movement, getting fresh air and a good dose of Vitamin D, thinking skills and psychological health are also affected in a positive way. According to Dr. Mark Tremblay, Director of Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research at the CHEO Research Institute in Ottawa, Canadian adults spend approximately 75% of their waking hours sitting or reclining each day. Walking meetings are a great solution at the office.

Movement, however, is not the only benefit from a walking meeting, there are also mental benefits.

Tips:

1. Walking meetings are suited for one-on-one meetings or for small groups of up to four people.
2. Ensure the walking meeting is appropriate for the subject matter. In a Stanford University study¹ it was noted that walking meetings are best for idea generation, brainstorming, and general discussions. However, not all subject matter is appropriate for walking meetings, such as discussing employee performance issues or meetings that require note-taking.
3. **Scheduling the meeting:**
 - Advise attendees it is a walking meeting so they can wear appropriate footwear/clothing and apply sunscreen;
 - Set an agenda;
 - Provide a route, if possible, and relay that route to a co-worker not attending the meeting;
 - Encourage attendees to leave their phones behind. The scheduler of the meeting should relay to attendees that he/she will have their phone with them in case of emergency, and provide his/her cell phone number to an appropriate person (such as a receptionist) with instruction to only call or text in cases of an emergency concerning meeting attendees.
4. **Time to walk:**
 - Set the pace based on the slowest person;
 - Pay attention to safety and mobility issues of attendees (if any);
 - Be aware of weather conditions;
 - Provide bottled water to stay hydrated; be prepared to move meeting to an indoor location in case of rain.

In addition to the physical and mental benefits of walking meetings, employees and companies can also realize other benefits such as:

1. **Communication:** Walking meetings can facilitate better communication due to limited distractions such as phone calls, emails, and co-worker interruptions.
2. **Camaraderie:** Without the distractions of the office, people are relaxed when walking and as a result more prone to relay thoughts and ideas, and collaborate.
3. **Creativity:** Walking boosts creativity! In a Stanford University study¹ it was noted that creativity levels were consistently and significantly higher for those walking compared to those sitting and that it's the act of walking itself, not the environment, that was the main factor.
4. **Energy, Mood, and Focus:** Walking can boost energy, mood, and focus. And if the walking meeting happens outdoors, it can significantly boost happiness levels.
5. **Exercise:** Of course, walking is exercise! Some physical benefits to walking are maintaining a healthy weight, muscle building, deeper breathing, improved mood, and increased blood circulation, which helps with the prevention of health conditions such as heart disease.

So, what are you waiting for? Schedule your walking meeting now and start reaping the benefits!

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¹ “Give your ideas some legs: The positive effect of walking on creative thinking” by Marily Oppezzo and Daniel Schwartz, Stanford University

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Q&A Café...



RATIONALE: This accumulated unproductive time could be used to take a walk, meet a deadline earlier, or help you leave on time at the end of your day.

Q. I often multi-task while juggling multiple projects and sometimes feel overwhelmed and struggle to give everything my full attention. How can I better organize my work?

A: Prioritizing one task at a time will help focus your concentration. Only have the file or document you are working on open on your desk or computer to help reduce mental clutter. Assign sufficient time in your schedule to dedicate to specific projects – then move on.

RATIONALE: We have grown accustomed to believing we should be working on several things at once and that “busy is best,” but our brains function better and retain more given the chance to focus more intentionally.

Q: During team meetings my co-workers often multi-task and split their attention with work on cell phones and laptops. How can I improve participant engagement during these meetings?

A: Be respectful of co-workers’ time and other work commitments. Send out agenda/materials for review ahead of time to help meetings stay focused on important topics and decisions. If topics are not pertinent or high priority to all team members, suggest they submit their comments for a post-meeting summary report to allow efficient use of meeting time. Stay on agenda, make the meeting interactive, and ensure everyone’s voice is heard. Request phones and laptops be turned off or not brought to meetings to maintain the team’s undivided attention.

RATIONALE: We have slipped into the use of digital devices and see multi-tasking and digital communication as normal and acceptable in many situations. However, if two colleagues were holding a verbal conversation or working together on a paper and pen project while someone was presenting during a meeting, it would be considered rude, inattentive, and disruptive. The need to multi-task and work through the meeting could also be a sign that an employee is feeling overwhelmed with their work assignments. Team leaders should investigate the reason for the behavior and support staff with prioritizing, time-management, and productivity skills.

Q. Work follows me home into my evenings and weekends. How can I create a better boundary between my work and home life?

A: Communicate your goals with your colleagues to engage support – staff meetings are good forums. What are the expectations to work? Are they real or perceived? Develop guidelines, example - emailing/responding in a crisis is acceptable but routine items can wait until Monday. Use an “out of office” email autoresponder to let people know you are not available. Organize a “Departmental Digital Detox Weekend” where everyone agrees to unplug from work for the weekend. If some coverage is needed, schedule a designated “On Call” person to handle issues that arise.

RATIONALE: Setting clear boundaries and expectations will decrease guilt or anxiety about disconnecting yourself on your time off. It also assists in restructuring a new workflow pattern and gaining acceptance and recognition of those limits from colleagues.

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“Tips to Eating Healthy at Work”



These are much healthier options than candy bars or processed salty snacks. Watch your wallet get fatter as your waistline shrinks.

Carry a water bottle with you everywhere you go! Have a vessel that is 20 ounces or larger and try to drink at least five full bottles a day. This will keep you hydrated, more alert, feeling full, and might even help you lose weight. Add freshly squeezed lemon or lime wedges for additional nutrients and flavor.

Small changes over time equal big results. If there are unhealthy snacks readily available at your boss's or friend's desks, break your habit of stopping by their office. Suggest that they come to you or meet in another location. You can ask to meet in your office or a neutral spot like a conference room. Be the one who brings the healthy treats when you have workplace celebrations and potlucks.

Bring a lunch. Save time, money, and your waist by bringing a healthy lunch to work. You can make salads in a jar for the entire week in just a few minutes that you can enjoy all week. Add appeal by using a variety of colored vegetables and change it up every week. Add a protein, such as grilled chicken, hard boiled egg, or lentils, to keep you full and energized. You can also pack leftovers from dinner for a quick, tasty, and healthy meal. Stay on track by packing healthy lunches and prevent unhealthy choices that can be expensive, time-consuming, and promote weight gain.

Remember to “**work on progress,**” not perfection. Be kind and loving to yourself and celebrate the healthier choices you make!

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“Broccoli Kale Soup with Lemon Garlic Chickpeas”



Nutrition Tip: Most people are concerned “where’s the protein,” when they’re eating vegetarian. Nuts, seeds, beans, and legumes contain protein and complement most vegetarian dishes. Chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, are actually a member of the legume family. Adding these versatile, tasty legumes to vegetarian dishes provides a good source of protein to your meal. Each cup contains 15 grams of protein, plus a healthy dose of fiber, manganese, and folate.

Soup Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive or coconut oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 cups broccoli
- 6 cups low sodium veggie broth
- 2 tablespoons miso, mixed in some warm water
- 2-3 cups kale, shredded
- ½ cup parsley chopped
- Half the garlic chickpeas – see recipe below
- ½ lemon juiced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Garlic Lemon Chickpeas Ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed well and dried on paper towel
- 1 tablespoons olive or coconut oil
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- Juice ½ large lemon
- Salt and pepper
- Handful chopped parsley

Directions:

Chickpeas:

Drain and rinse the chickpeas and dry them on paper towel. Heat oil on medium to high in a heavy pot and add chickpeas and garlic stirring so the garlic doesn't stick. Season with salt, pepper and ¼ teaspoon chili flakes. Cook, stirring often, until the chickpeas are colored and some are crunchy – add a little more oil if you need to. Cook for about 15 minutes until they start to ‘pop’. Finish with lemon juice and a handful of chopped parsley and season with a little more salt and pepper.

Soup:

Heat the oil in a soup pot and sauté leeks and garlic for 4-5 minutes. Add the chopped broccoli and season, cook for 3-4 minutes. Add veggie stock and miso, bring to a boil, and reduce to a simmer, cover and cook for about 10 minutes. Add shredded kale and simmer until it wilts, (few minutes). Add half the parsley and half the garlic sautéed chickpeas and lemon juice. Puree in a blender, in batches, until smooth. Return to pot. Check seasoning, and serve with garlic chickpeas on top and some fresh chopped parsley. Note: If desired, you can puree half the chickpeas with the soup for a thicker, heartier texture.

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“3 Ways to Improve Productivity”



Three tips to help improve YOUR productivity:

- 1. Empower Your Body:** The use of desk cycles and standing desks can increase mobility, which can improve your energy levels so you perform more effectively. Take the stairs whenever possible. Stand or walk around your office space to avoid sitting for long periods of time. If you can, do some quick rounds of jumping jacks during breaks. Trade processed foods for real foods. Instead of having a donut, choose an apple perhaps. A study in the British Journal of Health Psychology revealed that the more fruits and vegetables people consumed, the happier, more engaged, and more creative they tended to be.
- 2. Harness the Power of Focus:** Emails, texts, social media, and the constant use of digital devices can dilute your ability to focus on one thing at a time. A 2017 Forbes magazine article cited that studies show multi-tasking can reduce productivity by as much as 40 percent. Using a simple timer to focus on one task, for a set amount of time without any distraction, can greatly improve your productivity levels. Also, practice being truly present in meetings and in discussions with others. Give people your full attention by placing your phone face down on a table (or ideally turning it off), or by closing your laptop.
- 3. Optimize Your Workspace:** Make use of “visual anchors” in your workspace that can help keep you more grounded and centered. Some examples are a meaningful picture, a favorite quote, artwork that inspires you, or a small figurine. Have a small bottle of an essential oil on your desk, such as Rosemary, that you can smell throughout the day. Rosemary is attributed to promoting productivity and has stimulating effects on the mind. Flowers also improve emotional health, trigger happy emotions, and feelings of life satisfaction.

Be encouraged to take a step today towards implementing any one or more of these tips so you can improve your productivity and enjoy all the benefits they will bring to your life.

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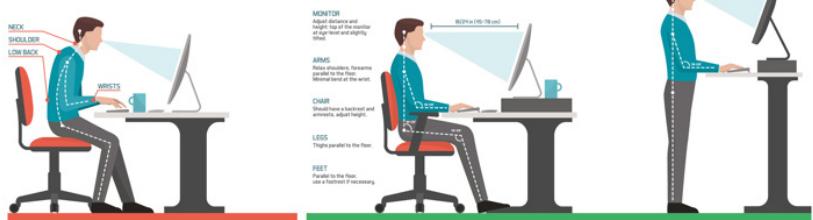
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“The Monitor Doesn’t Only Affect The Neck!”



Outlined below are body positioning tips to stay safe and comfortable when using a monitor. It is important that this frequently used piece of computer equipment be positioned properly for both neck and visual comfort.

TIPS

- **Height:** To ensure the head and neck maintain a neutral posture, the top of the monitor casing should be level with eyes when seated at a comfortable seat height. If the monitor gets positioned higher than this it results in a “straight forward” head and neck posture that when maintained for extended periods of time, dramatically increases the workloads on the tiny muscles coming off of the base of the skull.
- **If using corrective lens** (reading, bifocal, progressive) the monitor should be positioned somewhat lower to set screen(s) into the nearsighted portion of corrective lens.
- **Position:** Directly in front of you. Dual screen setup should have screens slightly angled inwards towards you and where the two screens meet should be in line with your belly button.
- **Distance:** Approximately an arm’s length away. A monitor that is set too close increases workloads on the tiny eye muscles. A monitor that is set too far away will encourage forward leaning in the chair and neck craning to view the screen.
- **Glare:** Position monitor(s) perpendicular to primary light source (windows) or between and at 90 degrees to rows of overhead light fixtures. Use blinds or pull down shades when necessary.

DID YOU KNOW?

Viewing a monitor screen is considered a nearsighted task, like reading a book/document. Positioning the monitor at the recommended height listed above allows the nearsighted visual system the ability to focus better on what it is looking at, thus decreasing eye strain on the small eye muscles.

Visual Tip: In order to give your nearsighted visual system a rest when engaged in a high percentage of computer tasks, take frequent “visual breaks” – look off into the distance to engage your farsighted visual system for a few minutes.

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"Stress Mastery Toolkit: Tips to Reframe and Revitalize"

Acute stress is the body's reaction to a perceived threat, otherwise known as "Fight or Flight Syndrome." Acute stress can be positive as well as negative. Sometimes the acute stress keeps you safe and away from danger or it can give you energy. Acute stress usually does not create problems if it is dealt with immediately; other times it can trigger anxiety or other health related problems. Chronic stress is stress that is accumulated from acute stressors that do not go away and are not managed. This is the tricky stress as you sometimes don't even know it is brewing. This is the stress that will affect your health.

Identifying the stressor and learning to manage it is the key to stress mastery. Learning to change the "old thoughts with new thoughts" is how to "master the stress." Tools that can help with this are:

- **Journaling** - Journaling your feelings daily will help not only relieve the stress but will help to identify the underlying issue(s).
- **Talk Therapy** - Talking to a professional counselor or someone you trust is the key to working things out and can help reframe how you look at and manage stressors.
- **Deep Breathing** - Breath is very important because it is connected to both the mind and the body. Deep breathing through your abdomen, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth is a very impactful practice to help calm and decrease anxiety. Continue your rhythms with deep inhalations and exhalations for as long as needed.
- **Limit self-judgement** - do not let "old tapes" and limiting beliefs play in your head. Remember to talk positively to yourself. Saying things like, "I am feeling stress, however, I will deal with this and work things out in time", can feel very calming and empowering.
- **Get help from others** - reaching out to others for help and learning to say no to someone can be a big step in not taking on more than you can handle at one time. Setting limits is self-care.
- **Sleep** - Getting at least 8-10 hours a sleep is very important. You will be able to manage the stressors more positively when you are well rested.
- **Proper Nutrition and Exercise** - Eating a balanced meal plan and engaging in a daily forms of exercise will help you to think more clearly, and that will help you to deal with the stress in a constructive way.

These are suggested tips only! If you feel you need more stress mastery tools or that your stress is still interfering with your health, please contact a stress mastery specialist or a professional counselor who can help you discover the root of your stress and guide you toward health and wellness.

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