

# ActiveforLIFE News

## At Work Or Play...Time Is Everything

Do you ever have the feeling that no matter how hard you try you'll never get everything done? Whether it's responsibilities at work or at home, many people find that there just aren't enough hours in the day to do what they need to do. Effective time management can help ease the stress that comes from missed deadlines or an unkempt house. By following these tips, you'll add minutes to your day and joy to your life.

**Get organized.** Spending a little time planning today for what you'll do tomorrow will help you get the day off to a quick start. Determine what your priorities are and start there. Consider using a To Do list and check off tasks as you complete them. You'll feel a great sense of accomplishment as you see the list shrink.



**Stay focused.** Nothing wastes time like unnecessary interruptions. If you're at work, limit socializing to breaks and lunch hours. At home, let the answering machine pick up phone calls until you've finished what you're working on. You'll work more efficiently when you stay on track.

**Know your peak time.** When is your peak energy time of the day? Plan to tackle your top priority tasks then. You'll take less time to complete a task when you're running on full steam.

**Learn to say "No".** The truth is that sometimes we simply can't do it all. Before adding something new to your To Do list, review your priorities. Turning down a meeting or a dinner invitation may be necessary if it doesn't fit in with your priorities.

**Above all, strive for a balance between work and play,** and don't be surprised when you become happier and healthier as a result.



Stress is one of the leading causes of poor health in the workplace. And many people find it difficult to "turn off" the stress when locking the office door for the night.

Taking up a new hobby may help. There are so many to choose from: speed walking, kayaking, tennis, golf, hiking, camping, cycling, horseback riding, bird watching, quilting, gardening, yoga, astronomy, rock climbing, gourmet cooking, ballroom dancing, hang gliding, river rafting, scuba diving or fly fishing. The choices are endless!

Hobbies are terrific stress reducers. They regenerate your body through physical activity by tapping unused muscles. They calm anxiety and spark the mind and spirit.

Just as important, hobbies allow us to interact with others. We can share similar interests with co-workers and cultivate their physical and mental well-being.

## Keep Stress in Check

Relaxation lowers your blood pressure, respiration, and pulse rates, releases muscle tension, and eases emotional strains. Next time serenity seems hard to find, try some of these tips.

### Maintain Healthy Habits

A diet rich in a variety of whole grains, vegetables, and fruits and avoiding stresses such as alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco can help lower stress. And exercises such as swimming or brisk walking are great aerobic and stress-reducing exercises.

### Deep Breathing

Taking a deep breath is an effective technique for winding down. Deep breathing exercises can be very useful during a stressful situation, or for maintaining a relaxed state during the day. Close your eyes and breath in, allowing your rib cage and belly to expand as you inhale. Inhale through the nose slowly and deeply. Exhale slowly. Concentrate on your breathing.

### Muscle Relaxation

Lie down in a comfortable position without crossing the limbs, and concentrate on each part of the body, beginning with the top of the head and progressing downward. Contract each muscle as tightly as possible for a count of 5 to 10, then release.

### Meditation

Select a quiet place free from noise and distraction. Sit or rest with eyes closed, and try to achieve a feeling of peace. Concentrate deeply on a pleasant idea or thought, or focus on the sound of your own breathing.



*The best way to cheer yourself up is to cheer somebody else up.*

*-Mark Twain*

## Volunteering: Just What the Doctor Ordered?

**Q:** Could volunteering make you healthier? We all know helping others makes us feel good inside, but does it do something good for our bodies as well?

**A:** YES!

The most immediate health benefit of volunteering is physical activity: Helping others requires effort! Many volunteering opportunities involve physical activity, including disaster relief, Habitat for Humanity, food pantry and soup kitchen work, gardening, home chore help, hospital work, mentoring young people, and sports activities.

## Distractions can help you stick to a diet

If you eat when you're bored, stressed, sad, angry, or for other emotional reasons, a list of "distractions" can help you stick with your diet.

Think of 20 things that you enjoy doing that will take your mind off eating. Choose simple activities like taking a walk, listening to a specific piece of music, soaking in a hot bath or contacting a friend. Write each thing on a small slip of paper that you can fold in half. Put all the sheets of paper in an envelope in your desk or on your kitchen counter.

The next time you find yourself reaching for food when you're not really hungry, reach for the envelope instead. Pull out one of the "distractions" and enjoy the moment without food. Then take the time to deal with what is really bothering you.