EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE AND WORKLIFE

solutions

The quickest and best way to contact the EAP is by calling **1-800-222-0364**

It Pays Off to "Switch Off"

Rest and relaxation can be essential to achieving wellness. So, be sure to hit the "off switch" for a breather from situations where you feel stressed or overburdened.

Taking a break from your daily grind to relax has many advantages:

A Healthy Heart

Your body's natural relaxation response is a physiological state of peace and calmness. It's characterized by decreases in heart rate, respiration rate, and muscle tension. Relaxing practices such as yoga and meditation can keep your stress hormone, cortisol, in check—in turn, stabilizing or lowering high blood pressure, a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

A Stronger Immune System

Unlike the relaxation response, your body's stress response triggers the central nervous system, increasing your breathing and heart rate. That can overly strain your body, which can make you more susceptible to infection. In fact, a growing body of research suggests that consistently practicing relaxation techniques counteracts this stress and enhances your immune system's response.

Better Memory

Relaxing your mind after learning new material may help you recall it later. A recent study in Psychological Science found that resting your eyes for 10 minutes after listening to a story can help you remember the information better—compared to completing some distracting activity immediately after the story. So, take a quick break to process new information, and it may help your memory.

Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to learn more about the importance of relaxation and taking care of yourself.

Restore Your Energy

When life's stressors become overwhelming, give yourself some downtime to recharge your batteries—even it's just taking a quick walk to clear your mind. When repeated over time, the following relaxation techniques can yield lasting results in staving off serious physical and mental ailments.

1. **Be one with nature**: Venture into the great outdoors and enjoy its serenity. Sunlight, plants, and fresh air can all enhance your mood and help you feel more at ease with the world around you.

2. **Laugh it off**: When we encounter mental stress, it's often evident on our faces. In the same vein, relaxing our faces by smiling or laughing benefits our demeanor and reduces stress. So, hang around friends who make you laugh, read the comics, or watch your favorite sitcom.

3. **The magic of motion**: It may seem contradictory, but exercising can actually be relaxing. Even if you're tired or busy, a bit of activity can give you calm energy throughout the day. Try building more movement into your life with afternoon strolls, climbing the stairs, or joining a gym or sports league.

4. **Meditation in minutes**: Start breathing easy by meditating. Sit cross-legged—or in a chair—with your shoulders relaxed. Start with a deep breath. With your eyes closed, continue taking slow, full breaths, and focus on the air entering and leaving your body. Allow your thoughts to pass by without judgment. Continue following your breath for about five to 10 minutes.

Try any combination of these relaxation techniques and repeat them as much as necessary. For more relaxation tips, contact your EAP.

Don't Lose Sleep over It

Sleep can play a major role in how you feel throughout the day. Feeling refreshed and energetic starts with getting the recommended seven to eight hours of nightly rest. To start sleeping easy:

Become a creature of habit: Get your body used to going to bed and waking up at the same time every day—even on weekends—and soon you'll no longer need an alarm clock.

Try to avoid sleeping in Saturday and Sunday. This can throw off your body's sleep-wake rhythm.

Unplug and unwind: Spend some time relaxing before calling it a night. Dim the lights and do something soothing—such as reading, listening to music, or taking a warm bath. Doing physically or mentally stressful tasks late at night can hinder your ability to doze off.

If stress is keeping you up at night, your EAP can help. Call a program specialist 24/7 for a **FREE** expert consultation.

Employee Assistance Program

24 HOURS A DAY

1-800-222-0364

(TTY: 1-888-262-7848)

FOH4You.com

Services are offered as a **FREE** benefit to you and your family members, and are confidential within the limits of the law.

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