

# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources From Your Employee Assistance Program

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Deer Oaks EAP Chat  
Sessions now have audio!

April 2011  
Chat Topic:  
**Dealing with  
Difficult People**

Every month, you will have the opportunity to chat on-line with a trained counselor. These live chats are held from 12:15-12:45 PM & 6:00-6:30 PM CST

Our Deer Oaks counselor now has the capability to conduct the live chat session in audio and all participants can respond via text.  
**Come Join Us!**

April 2011

At A Glance

Stress Awareness Month  
April 1st—30th

Visit  
[www.defense.gov/specials/stressawareness03/](http://www.defense.gov/specials/stressawareness03/)  
For more information

World Health Day  
April 7th

Visit  
[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)  
for more information



## Methods of Stress Reduction

*Although we cannot eliminate stress, we can reduce the **number** of stressors in our lives. We can also increase our positive thoughts and activities, which reduce the **impact** of stress on our bodies. Most importantly, we can improve the **way we respond** to stressors in our lives.*

### Relaxation and visualization

Wear loose clothes and find a comfortable place to sit or lie down. Breathe slowly and deeply and focus on your chest expanding and contracting. Repeat this several times and become aware of the tension leaving your body. Then, imagine you are walking in a place you find comforting--a particular beach, a path in the woods, even a quiet shopping mall. Enjoy the sights and fragrances, and gentle breeze and sunlight or shade as you are walking. Note something in particular for a couple of minutes to focus on that you like. During this time continue your deep breathing and gently push aside other thoughts. Listening to music you like while visualizing can also be beneficial. Experiment; this can even be done during a break at work.



### Exercise

Exercise, besides being generally healthy, can greatly reduce stress. We are talking about gentle exercise, exercises where you form a pleasant rhythm for yourself (like walking, jogging or bicycle riding), or ones with a pleasant social component (golf, tennis, volley ball).

### Reframing

Reframing is the process of taking unpleasant and stressful thoughts and looking at them in a different way so they are less stressful or at least less significant than we previously thought. For example, most of us have become more stressed out

while driving as more and more cars are on the road. We get upset when someone cuts in front of us or is discourteous. In actuality we are giving these people more attention than they deserve and we tremendously increase our stress. In a class I once attended, completely unrelated to stress, the teacher gave an excellent suggestion of how to deal with such situations. He recalled someone from his younger years, Freddie, who was always a pain in the neck and whom he had learned to ignore. Now when someone cuts him off he says "Oh, that's a Freddie!" smiles, and forgets the person. This is a way of giving disturbing people the attention they deserve--**none!** Try it; come up with a name for such people and see just how effective this can actually be.

Another important example of reframing is to begin viewing our mistakes as learning experiences rather than failures. Most of our mistakes are quite insignificant in the scope of our entire lives. As Richard Carlson discusses in his book *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*, try to imagine the importance of a mistake or slight 3 or 5 years from now. If it won't make a difference, try not to make a big thing of it. Our pattern of stressing over such things does much more harm to our health and our lives than it helps. Instead, work on accepting your humanness and learn from your mistakes rather than beating yourself up for them.

### Counseling

As adults we need to be honest with ourselves. Sometimes because of the complexity of our lives or the carryover of pains from our childhood, stress continues to be a major factor in our lives, in spite of all of our attempts to reduce it. If this is the case, it is a good idea to speak to a professional in order to understand ourselves better and to better deal with the internal and external issues we are facing. Counseling is not "just for crazy people." Most of my clients and those of other therapists are just average people with problems in daily living they haven't been able to master themselves. We only go through life once, and we deserve to do whatever we can to make it more meaningful and more enjoyable.

Deer Oaks EAP Services, your Employee Assistance Program, is always available to you and your dependents. If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks at:

1 (866) 327-2400

[eap@deeroaks.com](mailto:eap@deeroaks.com)

[www.deeroaks.com](http://www.deeroaks.com)

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## Methods of Stress Reduction—continued

### The Power of the Little Things in Life

These small day-to-day activities are so important in reducing stress that they deserve a special section for themselves.

1. Throughout the day take little pauses--sing in the shower or while you are driving, take a 5-10 minute break and concentrate on eating a piece of fruit or drinking a beverage so you can just enjoy the taste, close your eyes for 3 minutes and visualize a restful or pleasant scene or activity. *Do an additional one immediately.*
2. When you pass someone on the street, in a store, or at work, smile and maybe even say "hi." The other person will probably smile back, and this will help you feel better and be better able to reduce stressors later in the day.
3. In the morning, think of one thing you can accomplish that is small but will make you feel good. This can be going to the store and finally getting something you always forget, checking the batteries in your flashlight or smoke detector,

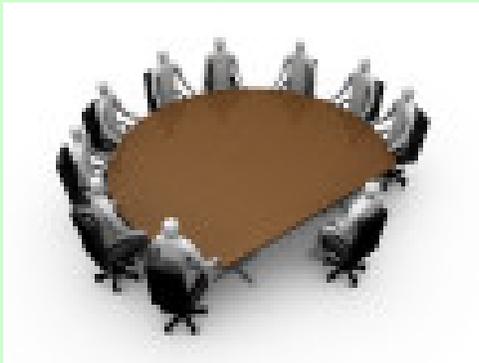
writing or emailing a friend, spending a half hour to begin clearing that pile of papers, playing a game for a half hour with a member of your family, or telling someone close how important they are to you.

4. Smiling and laughing are great stress reducers. Try injecting some light humor into your conversations, watch or read funny material--even the comics or Readers Digest jokes, or think of something amusing that happened during the day. We tend to focus more on the negatives than the positive or amusing things. Most important, try to be less hard on yourself and begin to learn how to laugh at your little mistakes or idiosyncrasies.
5. Plan in the evening or the next morning something nice you will do for yourself later in the day--reading a book you like for half an hour, watching a favorite TV show, taking a warm bath, calling a friend, or going to a nearby park for a half hour.

Rather than being an exhaustive list, these are just food for thought to stimulate your own thinking. Doing two or more of these things each day will have a surprising impact in reducing your stress level, increasing your pleasure in life, and extending your life.

*Dr. Malcom Miller: July 2001. Please visit  
[www.TherapyinLA.com](http://www.TherapyinLA.com) for more information*

## How to Work Successfully with Multiple Bosses



One of the most popular organization structures companies use today is matrixed management. This requires that workers have multiple bosses. Although a company may save money from this management approach, worker dissatisfaction and burnout resulting from multiple and sometimes competing directives can decrease productivity and override any tangible gains. If you are in a matrixed work environment with multiple bosses, here are some tips you can use to be successful.

- Identify and discover how to deal with the personality and leadership style of each boss.
- Request that each boss give you deadlines and priority levels for all assignments. If timing and priority are unimportant, suggest deadlines based on what you know about company operations and business unit goals.

- Develop a master worksheet that includes every task you have been given by each boss. Include deadlines and priorities for each assignment. Give a copy to your bosses and ask them to help you determine priorities and manage the work flow.
- Communicate with each boss immediately when scheduling conflicts arise. Let your bosses work out among themselves which is the most important task to complete.
- Learn how to say "no" to projects you know you will not be able to complete. Offer different options for getting the work done instead of becoming overwhelmed.
- Increase your bosses' awareness of the challenges you face by diplomatically reminding them of others in the work unit who may be able to do various assignments.
- Hold a group meeting with your bosses regularly to become familiar with their desired outcomes and the expectations they have of you. Ask them to share the big picture of what is happening in the company so you can better understand your role.
- ALWAYS, ALWAYS keep your bosses informed about what you are doing and ask for feedback.

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## Ergonomics in the Workplace

*Ten tips to avoid repetitive stress injuries*



While office jobs are not as dangerous as many other professions, there are still health risks that come with the territory. Fortunately, many office workers are now educated about office ergonomics by their employers. Office ergonomics look at how daily in-office habits affect the body, and there are many ways to use them to avoid health issues. Office workers who carefully study ergonomics tips can decrease their odds of ailments induced by their work environment.

### **Breaks**

To reduce the stress placed on the body throughout an office work day, remember to take periodic breaks for stretching. Stretching helps the body to loosen up after a long-time sitting in the same position.

### **Hand Position**

Office workers can develop issues with their wrists or hands if they do not follow ergonomic typing tips. To avoid arm problems, office workers should keep their elbows near them while typing and keep their wrists and hands even with their elbows.

### **Strenuous Movements**

Throughout the work day, pay attention to motions that seem to put strain on the body while performing normal duties. Any abrupt bending or repetitive movements could potentially cause health issues.

### **Environment**

To make sure there is enough room to achieve comfort, office workers should keep their desks and areas clean and free of restrictions. Workers with fewer constrained movements are less likely to get hurt.

### **Computer Usage**

Computer users can reduce the strain placed on their hands during work by trying to use their keyboard more frequently than their mouse. A mouse is more difficult on hands than mere key strokes, so using keyboard shortcuts instead of a mouse to navigate programs can be beneficial.

### **Task Variety**

Office workers should be careful to vary the types of tasks they perform throughout the day. Switching back and forth between tasks can help keep the body devoid of injuries and problems.

### **Stay Informed**

To ensure proper office ergonomics are taken into consideration daily, workers can create lists to follow and collect all ergonomic training materials available from their employer.

### **Posture**

Office workers should be careful to sit up straight when at their desks. Poor posture and excessive hunching can lead to back problems and unnecessary pain.

### **Computer Monitor Brightness**

Lighting and brightness of computers in the office is ergonomically important. Looking at overly bright lights often can lead to eye problems, so make sure that the brightness of a monitor is limited.

### **Products**

Office workers should make sure the tools and products they use each day are ergonomically sound. Many products are designed specifically to give workers an ergonomic advantage.

Source: Brian Vaughan

[http://www.ehow.com/list\\_7547699\\_10-office-ergonomics-tips.html](http://www.ehow.com/list_7547699_10-office-ergonomics-tips.html)



## Matters of the Heart



### No time for exercise?

By now, it is common knowledge that exercise is one of the best ways to prevent heart disease. But for many of us, it is seemingly impossible to squeeze any kind of exercise into our daily routine.

Physical activity, such as walking, should be one of the highest priorities of a weight-loss and heart-healthy program. The American Heart Association recommends 30–60 minutes of moderate physical activity at least five days a week.

Finding an activity you really like is key to being able to stick with it over time. For your busy schedule, try to fit in 30 minutes of exercise a day in increments of 10 minutes. Add small activities to your daily routine, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking in the halls at work when you're brainstorming, or walking during your lunch break. You'll be surprised how quickly your activity can add up.

Please visit [www.hearthealthyonline.com](http://www.hearthealthyonline.com) for more tips

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## What to do before you say ‘I do’

by Tanisha Warner

With wedding season quickly approaching, there is no better time to address the issue of finances with your significant other. Before you take the big leap, it's important to discuss how you will be spending your money as husband and wife.

Studies consistently show that tensions over financial issues are at the root of many disagreements in marriage, and a major cause of divorce. According to a Money Management International (MMI) survey, 56 percent of couples who are married but unhappy report financial problems are to blame. The financial experts at MMI offer you some tools to help you on your road to marital – and financial – bliss.

**Don't be afraid to share your feelings.** No matter how unromantic, having an open and honest discussion about your financial past and future is vital to your financial success. Remember that everyone has their own money style, which has been shaped by their past experiences.

**Make a commitment.** No one cares more about your financial security than the two of you. Make a promise to each other to take joint responsibility and take steps to better your overall financial position by paying down debt and establishing a savings plan. Establishing a savings cushion could keep a financial setback from becoming a financial disaster.

**Make plans for your future.** Set financial goals and vow to keep them. Make sure that your goals are both specific and achievable. Try to set goals that are equally rewarding so that you are both motivated to achieve them. Depend on one another for support and encouragement.

**Spend some quality time.** Schedule a time once a month to sit down and discuss your financial goals and expectations. Identify a family CFO who will review your budget regularly in order to identify problem areas. Occasional setbacks happen, so make adjustments as often as needed to ensure financial success.

**Understand your individual rights and responsibilities.** State laws vary quite a bit regarding ownership of income and responsibility for debt. Learning about your individual privileges and liabilities will help your relationship and could provide future financial security in a time of need.

Getting your finances in order now will help you build a stronger and more financially secure partnership. Because money matters, it's important for couples to devote more time to improving their financial standing. Plan for financial mishaps as best you can, and remember to seek help if you feel you are getting in over your head in debt.



### About Money Management International

Money Management International (MMI) is a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, financial education, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. MMI helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800.432.7310 or visit [www.MoneyManagement.org](http://www.MoneyManagement.org).