

# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

May 2014

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## Investing in Your Family

Families are busier than ever before, so make an extra effort to let your spouse, children, parents, and other special people in your life know how important they are to you. There are lots of ways to do this; here are some to get you started.

- Make time to listen thoughtfully to your loved ones. Be careful not to jump in with your opinion too quickly.
- Schedule time alone with each of your children. Let them decide how they want to spend this special time with you.
- Make a date with your spouse. Plan something special like you did when you were dating.
- Take your kids for a walk after dark. Look for stars in the sky and listen for the night noises. Children remember these out of the ordinary times spent with parents.
- Watch the sun set. Better yet, get up really early and watch it rise.
- Read books together every day. Don't stop just because your children learn to read.
- Give lots of realistic, specific praise to your children.
- Tuck love letters under pillows.
- Allow each of your children to plan the dinner menu one day each week. Cook together without worrying about the mess you are making.
- Create a special hand signal that means "I love you" to your family. Use it often.
- Invite each of your children to go for a ride in the car alone with you. Make your destination a surprise (the park, the ice cream store, etc.), but plan on the ride being half the fun. You'll be amazed at the subjects that your children will talk about in the car!
- Have a family movie night once a week. Rent a video, pop some popcorn, and enjoy the time together.
- Pull out your old board games and have a game night. Include all generations of your family. Some great games are available on DVD too.
- Show films or photographs from when you were young. Compare them to your children's photos. Share your family history. Encourage your parents to tell your children about things that you did when you were young.
- Never underestimate the power of a hug!

Be careful to keep family activity schedules from becoming a burden. It's important to have time for some of the little things that create the best memories. You can see that most of these ideas for busy families do not cost a lot of money but they do require an investment of your time. Children grow up fast, and the best thing you can give them is an armful of memories to look back on. They will stay connected to you because you took the time to connect with them!

Source: *Workplace Options*. (Reviewed 2014). *Investing in your family*. Raleigh, NC: Author.

[www.deeroaks.com](http://www.deeroaks.com) | 866-327-2400 | [eap@deeroaks.com](mailto:eap@deeroaks.com)

## Chat Reminder

### Connect with Your Kids

Connect with Deer Oaks and a counselor for a live confidential chat.

#### When:

May 21, 2014

#### Where:

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

#### Session Time (CST):

12:15 PM to 12:45 PM





## Boomer Busts



Boomers are now age 50 and older. Lots of boomers. And they are sustaining lots of injuries to tendons (the structures that attach muscles to bone) and ligaments and backs, knees, and hips.

As we age, regular exercise is critical for maintaining and improving bone and muscle strength. And yet if not done properly, exercise can result in pain and injury, sprains and strains, especially for people older than 50.

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons offers the following exercise safety advice for anyone older than 50:

- *Warm up and stretch.* A warm up is different than just stretching and usually requires breaking a sweat before you begin a more vigorous workout. Walking, bending, jumping jacks, and running in place before exercise gets and keeps the circulatory system moving and prevents injury. Stretching can be done before or after a workout.
- *Exercise consistently.* Don't be a weekend warrior. Try to get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.
- *Take lessons.* Consider taking lessons for the sport you love. Whether you're a beginner or a long-time enthusiast, proper form and instruction reduces the chance of developing an overuse injury like tendonitis or stress fractures.
- *Wear the proper equipment.* Select the proper gear and shoes for your sport.
- *Listen to your body.* As you age, you may find that you are not as flexible as you once were, or that you cannot tolerate the same types of activities. If so, modify your exercise routine to accommodate your body's needs. For example, if you've been a daily runner for many years, consider replacing a day or two of that activity with swimming, biking, or another sport that puts less impact on your joints.
- *Use the 10% rule.* When changing your activity level, increase it in increments of no more than 10% per week. Slowly build up each week until you reach your higher goal. This will prevent overuse injuries that may keep you from exercising or enjoying your favorite sport for some time.
- *Develop and maintain a balanced fitness program.* Incorporate cardiovascular exercise, strength training, and flexibility. A balanced exercise program will provide a total body workout, keep you from getting bored, and lessen your chances for injury.
- *Take a break.* Hard workouts can take a toll on your body and thus require strategies aimed at recovery. Learn to take a day off or cut back your training to allow the body to adapt and recover. Gentle stretching, light aerobic exercises, and proper nutrition and hydration are all helpful to the recovery process.
- *Consult your doctor.* If you develop or have had a sports or orthopedic injury like tendonitis, arthritis, stress fracture, or low back pain, consult an orthopedic surgeon who can help design or modify your fitness routine to promote wellness and minimize the chance of injury.

# Give Your Plate a Taste Lift

Consumers will choose taste over nutrition to buy one food over another. It makes sense. We eat the foods we enjoy the most.

So make taste a priority when preparing nutritious meals, suggests Joy Dubost, speaking on behalf of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She offers this cooking advice to enhance flavor.



- Choose high-quality ingredients at their peak of quality.
- Intensify the flavors of meat, poultry, and fish with high-heat cooking techniques such as pan-searing, grilling, or broiling.
- Pep it up with peppers. Use red, green and yellow peppers of all varieties—sweet, hot and dried. Or add a dash of hot pepper sauce.
- Try grilling or roasting veggies in a very hot (450 degree F) oven or grill for a sweet, smoky flavor. Brush or spray them lightly with oil so they don't dry out. Sprinkle with herbs.
- Caramelize sliced onions to bring out their natural sugar flavor by cooking them slowly over low heat in a small amount of oil. Use them to make a rich, dark sauce for meat or poultry.
- Simmer juices to make reduction sauces. Concentrate the flavors of meat, poultry and fish stocks. Reduce the juices by heating them—don't boil. Then use them as a flavorful glaze or gravy.
- For fuller flavors, incorporate more whole grains such as brown rice or quinoa, or experiment with amaranth and wild rice.
- Add small amounts of ingredients with bold flavors like pomegranate seeds, chipotle pepper or cilantro.
- Add a tangy taste with citrus juice or grated citrus peel: lemon, lime or orange. Acidic ingredients help lift and balance flavor.
- Enhance sauces, soups and salads with a splash of flavored balsamic or rice vinegar.
- Give a flavor burst with good-quality condiments such as horseradish, flavored mustard, chutney, wasabi, bean purees, tapenade and salsas of all kinds.

## *Foiled*

If you see suspicious activity around your home, such as an attempted burglary, click your car alarm fob from inside your home. The noise is likely to deter a burglar quickly. Bad guys hate anything that draws attention to the situation, say the experts at AlarmSystemReport.com.

**Health-e headlines™**

## *Look Away*

Two-thirds of Americans spend up to 7 hours a day using computers or other digital devices such as tablets and smartphones. This constant eye activity increases the risk for computer vision syndrome and can cause problems such as dry eye, eyestrain, headaches, neck and backache, and fatigue. The American Optometric Association recommends that you practice the 20/20/20 rule - every 20 minutes, take a 20 second break, and look at something 20 feet away.

**Health-e headlines™**

## *An EAP Reminder*

*Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.*

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.



**Health-e headlines™**



## Clinician's Corner..

*Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team*

### Connect with Your Kids



As we continue on the endless quest for work/life balance so many of us particularly focus on balancing family time. Between full work schedules, after-school activities, sports, and carpooling, it can often feel like you're lacking in quality time with your children. And, based on their ages, they may not know how to express that they need some more TLC time with mom and dad. Although it can be difficult to set aside large blocks of time, the good news is that even brief moments of connectivity can help replenish the bond between parent and child and help enhance communication in your household overall.

*Highs and Lows:* At the end of each day, either on the drive home from school, to soccer practice, or tucking your kids in, review the "highs and lows" of their day; in other words, what was the best moment of their day, and the moment in which they didn't feel so great. Not only does this help enhance communication in general, but it increases your kiddo's level of comfort with talking about his or her feelings. As a plus, it helps you to cheer them on for their successes and stay involved and supportive with anything that may be causing them anxiety or worry.

*Schedule family dates:* Even something as simple as having a family calendar in a common area in your home where fun activities are pre-planned can help keep your family looking forward to time they may have together. Family dates don't have to break the bank, in fact sometimes the more simple activities can lead to increased cohesion. Put a "Saturday surprise" on the calendar, and make a big breakfast in bed; create a Nature Scavenger Hunt and enjoy scouting out bugs, flowers, and other fun finds at a local park or trail; set up an outdoor obstacle course and split into teams.

There are a lot of other small things you can do to create a big impact. Remember, it isn't always about the quantity but quality of the time you spend with your family. Five free minutes spent engaging with your child, praising them, demonstrating affection, and communication is better than sitting in front of the TV or at the kitchen table with cell phones, tablets, and laptops buzzing. If your kids are old enough, enlist their help to come up with fun activities to put on your calendar.

Looking for more great parenting tips and resources? Check out articles, tips and tools at [www.deeroaks.com](http://www.deeroaks.com). There are multiple sections devoted to enhancing your parenting skills.

By:  
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Regional Clinical Manager  
Deer Oaks EAP Services, LLC

# How To: Rebuild Your Personal Savings Account ...



Have you ever seen your savings account balance dwindle to nothing and feel like you could not build it up yet again? Or did that last emergency drain your savings to an all time low? If you like the security of having money in savings, but have gotten sidetracked, there are two small steps you can take that will help your personal savings grow again without causing discomfort or budget distress.

### ***Establish the savings habit***

Start a pattern of setting aside money on a consistent basis. Establish a regular payroll deduction, set up an automatic payment to savings from your online checking account, or simply put all coins you collect in a jar and then regularly

deposit the change into your savings account. If saving is a mental game for you, make a big deal out of each deposit. Sometimes you need the visual push that writing out the deposit slip and placing the cash on the counter provides. There is not a right or wrong method, starting the habit is the key.

### ***Plan to increase slowly***

Sometimes in our zeal to start saving, we overestimate how much we can save in a month. Plan to start small and work your way up. To ramp up over time, try the following strategies:

- When you receive a pay raise, put a portion into savings rather than increasing spending or expanding your lifestyle. Deposit windfall money such as bonuses, gifts, or inheritances directly into savings.
- Analyze your miscellaneous spending and cut unnecessary expenses so you can add that money to savings.
- Delay purchasing a new car when you pay off your old one. Instead save for a few months and build your savings.

Don't let a short-term setback impact your long-term plans. Recognize that sometimes savings will be wiped out by unavoidable circumstances such as needed car repairs, unexpected expenses, or large purchases. When this happens don't get discouraged, just reboot the system and start the habit again. The road to success is usually paved with a few potholes, but every bit of know-how you gain can be applied to building a bigger and better account.

### **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).