

LET'S Talk

FALL 2007

HEALTHY BODIES • SOUND MINDS • A SAFE PLACE TO WORK

Get More Done with Teamwork

When people work together, sharing their talents and ideas, their combined efforts accomplish more than the same number of people working individually.

As a team member, you share the energy of your teammates, the excitement of a shared mission, and the celebration of completing a successful project. However, being part of a team has responsibilities as well because every member plays an important part in the team's success.

"There are a lot of little things you, as a team member, can do to inspire teamwork. They don't take much time, but they do require some effort and positive intent," says Kristin Arnold, author of *Team Basics: Practical Strategies for Team Success*.

Arnold recommends doing the following things that say to your teammates, "I am going to be a good team player."

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This Is the Reason ...

Fall's a Great Season

WHEN THERE'S JUST A BIT OF A BITE IN THE AIR, it's time to get energized and have some fun. Here are some ideas for activities this fall that will get your family out and about.

Fun activities

- 1** Give your kids a blank notebook so they can keep an "autumn journal" to track temperature and weather changes. When did the leaves first begin changing color? Provide crayons so they can make leaf rubbings by placing a leaf under a sheet of paper and rubbing over it with a crayon.
- 2** While taking a stroll to enjoy autumn's splendor, give your children a paper bag to collect treasures they find along the way—nuts, leaves, etc.
- 3** You also can preserve the season by making autumn place mats. Take the leaves your children have collected and arrange them on a piece of a paper with a photo. Include the date and other information before laminating it with clear contact paper.
- 4** Short, simple trips to farms and orchards also can be fun for families. Kids can pick out their own pumpkins for Halloween and do the carving themselves—with some help.
- 5** There are plenty of family-oriented Halloween events in almost every community, such as haunted house tours. Or you can make your own haunted house.
- 6** If there are apple farms in the area, a trip to one in the fall is a great time to pick your own apples. Then come home and bake special apple treats and mull some cider.



Late-Breaking Health News

>> U.S. tobacco companies increased the level of addictive nicotine in their cigarettes by 11 percent from 1998 to 2005, and did so in a variety of ways, according to a Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) study.

The tobacco companies accomplished the increase not only by intensifying the concentration of nicotine in the tobacco, but also by modifying several design features to increase the number of puffs per cigarette taken by smokers.

Increases in smoke-nicotine yields occurred in each of the four major manufacturers and across all the major cigarette market categories, including light and ultralight.

In analyzing major brand-name cigarettes, Harvard researchers found increases in smoke nicotine per cigarette averaged 1.6 percent each year over those seven years. Nicotine is the primary addictive ingredient in cigarettes.

“Our analysis shows the companies have been subtly increasing the drug nicotine year by year in their cigarettes, without any warning to consumers,” says Gregory Connolly, program director of the Tobacco Control Research Program at HSPH.

>> Avoiding trans fat can be a challenge. Despite the fact that many food manufacturers have reformulated their foods to reduce or eliminate trans fat—which is implicated in high risk for heart disease—there’s still plenty of it around.

Food products likely to contain the fat include fast foods, especially those that are deep fried; stick margarines; commercially baked cake



and cookies; prepared frosting; and frozen food, especially fruit pies, chicken pot pies, and pizza.

>> A low-fat diet may help prevent breast cancer recurrence. Researchers followed more than 2,400 women ages 48 to 79 who had been treated for early-stage breast cancer and found that a low-fat diet made a difference in the rate of cancer recurrence. The study, published in the December 20, 2006 issue of the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, found the rate of cancer recurrence after five years was 9.8 percent among women who ate a low-fat diet (about 33 gm of fat per day) and 12.4 percent among those who ate a standard diet (about 52 gm of fat per day).

The most significant risk reduction—42 percent—was noted in women on the low-fat diet whose tumors didn’t respond to the presence of the hormone estrogen. In women whose tumors did respond to estrogen, the risk reduction was 15 percent.

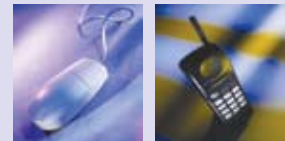
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Walk Your Way to Less Stress

WALKING CAN IMPROVE MENTAL FITNESS AS WELL AS PHYSICAL FITNESS. Using meditation techniques during your walk can help you reduce stress, tension, and anxiety.

“Your mind is constantly bombarded with noise, crowds, traffic, telephones, television, and a thousand other forms of mind pollution,” says Les Snowdon, coauthor of *Walk Aerobics*. “But when you walk—and specifically when you use walking-meditation exercises to calm the mind—you can let go of all the clutter filling your thoughts and see things more clearly.”

If you become aware of the rhythm of your walking, “you will find you become involved in a process—the flow of breath, the flow of the body, the flow of the air around you,” Snowdon says. “The action of walking itself then slows and stills your mind and spirit.”

Stress-reducing walks

Any kind of walk will reduce your physical stress, but these walking-meditation techniques will help reduce your mental stress.

- **FOCUS ON YOUR SURROUNDINGS.**

Instead of thinking about your problems, focus on the world around you. Pay attention to the different plants and trees along the path if you’re walking in the country. Note the different architectural styles along your route if you’re in the city.

- **COUNT YOUR FOOTSTEPS.**

“Counting your footsteps can help you take your mind off your problems,” Snowdon says. There are numerous ways to count. For example: from one to 10, 20, or 100; backward from 100, 20, or 10 to one; or the number of steps you take per block or section of trail.

- **REPEAT A MANTRA.** Repeat a simple word or sound with each step. Doing so will teach you to focus your mind.
- **LET GO OF A PROBLEM.** Use your daily walk to sort out a stressful problem. Begin by focusing on it as you do your warm-up and stretches. Then, let the problem go when you start to walk.

“Walking meditation can help you relax, give you power over your mind, and open up pathways to your better self,” Snowdon says. “If you practice it regularly, you can use the creative insights you gain while walking to improve your life, work, and relationships.”

TO LEARN MORE: The Walking Site, www.thewalkingsite.com



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Be prepared

To win the trust of your teammates, come to meetings well-prepared. Don't wait until the last minute to get your share done.

Know your strengths

Volunteer to do what you do best. It's the varied talents of the members that make a team successful. Whatever you're good at, offering to do those things will demonstrate your capabilities, as well as benefit the team.

Ask for help

"Asking for help isn't a bad thing; it's a good thing," says Arnold. "Many times, people avoid asking for help because they don't want to look bad to their teammates. However, asking for help is not a sign of weakness—it's a sign of maturity."

Assume positive intent

If other team members upset you, it's best to assume they don't mean to. After you calm down, find a quiet time to talk directly with the person about the situation.

"By being prepared and on time, by sharing your talents and asking for help when you need it, and by practicing positive communication habits, you'll be a valued team player, your team will get more done, and you'll also have more fun," says Arnold.

Relax: How to Let Go of Stress

YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS—a pounding heart, increased perspiration, tight neck and shoulder muscles, anxiety, and fear. But you may not know how to prevent or relieve these symptoms.

Taking the following actions can help you manage the negative effects of stress.

- **EXERCISE.** A regular workout can release pent-up frustrations. The American Heart Association recommends getting 30 minutes or more of moderate exercise at least three or four times a week.
- **DON'T ISOLATE YOURSELF.** One of the best ways to fight stress is to discuss your problems with a close friend or relative. Talking with

other people helps you realize you're not alone and can help you put a difficult situation in perspective.

- **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR DIET AND HEALTH HABITS.** A sensible diet of wholesome, healthful foods can help stabilize your moods.
- **MAKE TIME FOR LAUGHTER AND FUN.** Surround yourself with positive people who like to laugh. Watch funny movies instead of the news in the evening. Engage in fun or silly activities.

Above all, take time for yourself, whether it's for a daily walk, a hot bath, or a quiet night at home. Taking good care of yourself helps you let go of stress.

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