

COMPLETELY WELL



“Only one thing has to change for us to know happiness in our lives: where we focus our attention.”

Greg Anderson, NBA basketball player

Lifestyle: *Celebrating Labor Day*

Labor Day, celebrated the first Monday in September, is a day set aside to honor the contributions that workers have made to the growth and success of our country. With its roots in the labor movement and unions, Labor Day has been a national holiday since 1894. Also considered the unofficial end of summer, Labor Day may best be known for barbecues and picnics, but it is important to remember the original meaning of the day and appreciate the contributions we make through our jobs, finding ways to increase our job satisfaction.

Though we all daydream of days without work, those who are unemployed suffer more physical and emotional stress compared to those who are employed. Long-term unemployment is associated with depression and obesity. Working - having responsibilities, a routine and earning a paycheck - is good for us and those who return to work generally see improved health. While it's not necessary to be thankful for a bad day at work, finding the parts of your job and your day that bring you happiness is something to be grateful for and good for your health!

If you're someone who is struggling with job satisfaction, it doesn't mean that you need to change jobs. There are things you can do to improve your day-to-day work experience and enjoy your job more:

- Don't complain about work problems to coworkers. If you have a serious problem with something at work, decide who in your company needs to hear about it and go in looking toward a solution, not just complaining.
- Be aware of any impact your personal life may be

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having on work. Deal with personal issues away from work, seeking professional help if needed.

- Improve your job skills. Take courses that your company may offer or at a local college.
- Be positive. Approach both the people you work with and the job you need to complete with as positive an approach as possible. Looking for the positive is proven to improve mood and overall satisfaction.
- Take advantage of your breaks at work in a healthy way. Eating a healthy snack will make you feel better than eating processed food. Take a walk to reenergize. Read a book.

Whatever your job, know that what you do makes a difference. Appreciate how hard you work and, on Labor Day, celebrate what you do for your company, for yourself and for your health.

Nutrition: *What does “nutritious” mean?*

Nutritious, nutrition, good diet, eating right – we’ve all heard and used these words while trying to be healthy, have energy, and manage our weight. But what do they mean? What is eating right? What does “nutritious” mean?

We need food for energy. We also need food to repair cells, replace cells, build our immune system, fuel our thinking, maintain our body temperature, and keep our metabolism running. For all of these needs to be met, our food must provide certain properties. Without the right properties, our bodies will not be able to function properly.

So “nutritious” and “nutrition” refer to food that provides the nutrients needed for cellular repair and replacement, a strong immune system, and other important functions of the body. Here are some basics for good nutrition:

- ✓ Water is essential. Avoid drinks with added sugar or too much caffeine, and drink water frequently throughout the day.
- ✓ A diet based on a variety of vegetables, whole grains, and fruits will provide all of the nutrients you

will need. The key here is variety.

- ✓ A small amount of healthy oil – olive, canola, etc. – is good. Avoid saturated and trans fats.
 - ✓ If selecting animal protein, select lean cuts and eat moderate amounts.
 - ✓ Avoid processed foods.
 - ✓ Eat out less often.
 - ✓ Watch portion size
- Enjoy the benefits of a nutritious diet: increased energy and improved health.



Related to onions and scallions, leeks are a surprising mild vegetable that is great as a side dish or in a soup. They look like extra large scallions: white bulb and green leafy tops. With a few quick tips, leeks are an easy and sophisticated addition to any dinner.

The Basics: Leeks are available in year round at the grocery store but are considered in season beginning in September and throughout the winter. Look for leeks that are shaped more like a cylinder rather than with a rounded bulb, and choose ones that are not larger than one and one-half inches in diameter. The larger leeks can be less tender. Store your leeks unwashed and well wrapped in the refrigerator as their odor can contaminate other foods. Uncooked leeks will keep in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks. It is important when preparing leeks to wash them thoroughly as dirt may get trapped in the layers of the vegetable. Trim the roots and some of the green tops, especially any that feel overly “woody.” There is no need to cut all of the green off as it cooks well and it delicious to eat. Cut and cook according to your recipe. Cooked leeks will last a couple of days in the refrigerator.

Try This: Leeks can be sautéed like onions and added to any number of other vegetables or as a garnish to pork loin or beef. They are especially good when chopped and sautéed and added to mashed potatoes. There are many potato and leek soup recipes, so look around for one fits your family’s dietary needs and taste.

The Facts: Leeks are low calorie and are a good source of vitamin C, iron, manganese, vitamin B6 and folate

Produce of the Month: Leeks

Preventive: *Understanding Mental Illness*

Despite more public awareness about mental illness (through articles, television shows and even commercials for medications), there continues to be misunderstandings and confusion about what mental illness is as well as a stigma associated with it that can prevent people from getting the help they need. Here are some basic facts about mental illness.



Mental illness is a medical condition. It influences how a person interprets his or her surroundings, and it changes his or her mood, thinking and/or behavior. Mental illness may impact the ability of a person to keep a job or function within a family. Mental illness can range from mild to severe, and symptoms can vary from person to person, illness to illness and even moment to moment. People who see a counselor during a difficult time (such as a divorce or loss of a job) do not necessarily have a mental illness. General anxiety, stress and non-clinical depression are not considered mental illnesses. They are part of difficult life experiences and can benefit from talk or behavioral therapy. Mental illness, on the other hand, often requires talk therapy, behavioral therapy and medication.

The causes of mental illness are not known, and research continues to search for the causes and triggers for these diseases. Research has pointed to genetics as one possible trigger; a person may inherit a susceptibility to a certain mental illness. But genetics are only one possibility. Evidence points also to psychological traumas (especially in childhood) as another trigger as well as an individual's brain chemistry, brain injury, infections and substance abuse as possible causes.

Mental illness can affect an individual at any time, but the teens and early twenties are common times for symptoms to begin. Untreated mental illness can have serious consequences for the individual, family and society. Those with an untreated mental illness often suffer unemployment, homelessness and substance abuse problems. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, those who have serious mental illnesses are also more likely to have an increased risk for chronic medical conditions.

Treatment for mental illness is complex but often effective. Like a chronic disease, mental illness often needs ongoing treatment and includes medication, talk therapy, behavioral therapy and healthy lifestyle changes including nutrition and exercise. Other types of therapy (including Electroconvulsive Therapy) are also available, and hospitalization may be necessary to regulate medications or to administer alternative therapies.

Common types of mental illnesses include major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders and obsessive-compulsive disorder. It's important to note that many people can be treated effectively and function well after receiving a mental illness diagnosis. Mental illnesses can create symptoms and behaviors that confuse and even frighten those who don't understand what is going on. But mental illness is treatable, and individuals can often go on to work and live well. Vigilance is needed to maintain the treatment plan, and much support is often required. But those with mental illness still have a lot to offer, as is seen in these examples:

Tennessee Williams, playwright - clinical depression

Jimmy Piersall, baseball player - bipolar disorder

Vaslav Nijinsky, dancer - schizophrenia

Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States - depression

Isaac Newton, scientist - possible bipolar disorder or schizophrenia

Fitness: *Dancing for Fitness*



If the idea of a gym doesn't excite you, if you prefer the graceful moves of ballet to a spin class, tapping out a rhythm with your toes instead of the low thunder of a treadmill, take heart! Dancing can be great exercise, working your heart and muscles, all while having fun!

Do you enjoy ballet? Ballet is a full body workout, increasing your flexibility and range of motion. Ballet requires control, working the core while also working legs and arms. Instead of lifting weights, ballet requires you lift your own body weight, building and firming muscles. The music associated with ballet is also good for lowering blood pressure and reducing stress.

Think you are another Fred Astaire or Ginger Rogers? Well, tap dancing may be for you! Tap dancing can be great aerobic exercise and builds strong bones because it is a weight bearing exercise. Tap dancing also improves balance, coordination and agility, qualities we tend to lose as we get older. The music is fun and uplifting, and it's hard not to smile while "Shuffling off to Buffalo!"

Addicted to "Dancing with the Stars?" Try ballroom dancing! Ballroom dancing can be great aerobic exercise and improves flexibility, coordination and balance. It is also a great social exercise, terrific for improving mood and reducing stress.

Want to spice things up with some salsa? Then how about salsa dancing! Salsa dancing improves endurance and aerobic health and may help you lose weight. It is a weight bearing exercise that helps to build strong bones and improves coordination. Salsa dancing is full of energy and is a great stress reducer!

Check out your local park district or community college for dance classes. Some dance studios offer classes designed for the adult beginner. Call around for more information. Don't worry if it's been years since you put on dance shoes. Get out and find the dance class that makes you happy and helps you to get fit! You will feel better and meet other people who enjoy dancing the way you do.

BACK TO SCHOOL FITNESS

It's that time of year again; kids are going or are back to school. This time of year can get crazy, running to get school supplies, new clothes shopping, taking kids to practices and other after school activities again.

One thing you want to keep in mind is making sure that you and your family take time for back-to-school health and fitness. Just because things are crazy again doesn't mean that you forget about taking care of yourself and your family.

Be sure that you are preparing, making and packing healthy meals for everyone. You also want to make sure you are staying active to help with stress and overall health. Just like everything else in life you have to plan your day out, there is always some way and some time to work out. Even 15 or 20 minutes is better than nothing.

Consider including some activity throughout the day – climbing the stairs at work, short walk at lunchtime, a longer walk after dinner, and lifting some hand weights during your TV time. It all adds up!

Ask the Trainer: Vacation and Fitness

Question: I've been working out on a regular basis the last few months and have a vacation coming up. How do I keep with my routine while traveling?

Answer: This is a question I get asked quite a bit. It's easy to get workouts in when you are in a routine, but whether because of a vacation or work trip, it is very easy let your workouts go. To prevent this, you need to do is to make a plan. When you make a plan to workout or keep active while on a trip, you are more likely to actually do it.

Know where you are staying and what is around that area.

Is there a local gym that offers weekly or daily passes? Is there a park or recreational area to go walking or running at? Does the place you are staying have a workout facility?

Another suggestion is to bring equipment with you that you can use at your hotel or wherever you are staying. I love to bring resistance bands with me when traveling. They are inexpensive, light weight, and do not take up a lot of room well.

There are plenty of workouts you can do without extra gear: squats, lunges, butt lifts, push-ups, tricep dips, abdominal exercises, etc. Also, make sure you move frequently when you are traveling – during layovers, stops along the



way, etc.

If you include movement during your trip (and don't over indulge on sweets and rich foods), you should be able to start your regular workouts when you're back home with little trouble.

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Want to know more?

Contact *WorkingWell* for more information on wellness programs and how they can reduce healthcare costs and improve employee wellness.

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