

# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

*Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program*

July 2015  
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Public Employee Benefits Alliance

## Learn to Disconnect

*"Never go to excess, but let moderation be your guide."  
—Marcus Tullius Cicero*

Sage advice when it comes to technology, screen time, and multitasking. Continuously being connected without a break can cause anxiety and may inhibit deep thought. A study from the University of Michigan found that multitasking heavily can fatigue the brain, which causes it to lose the ability to focus. Your brain needs a rest from the multitasking. Some recent imaging studies have found that major cross sections of the brain become surprisingly active during downtime. Just as plugging in and logging on is a habit, so should be taking a break from it. If you are not accustomed to breaking the plugged-in habit, it may take some diligent practice and rewiring on your part. Here are some suggestions for making the break.

- Challenge yourself to the 20-20-20 rule. After 20 minutes of computer use, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- Say no to multitasking and allow yourself to do one thing at a time. Read a magazine, talk on the phone, walk to a coworker's cube to ask a question instead of instant messaging or e-mailing.
- Change your environment by going on vacation and making it technology free. It may result in a level of relaxation and free-flowing ideas that you never imagined possible.
- Be a part of nature. Go where cell phones don't work, where there is no Internet, or where it is forbidden. For example, visit the ocean or a cave in the mountains, or take a class.
- Start slowly. Create time each day, say 30 to 60 minutes, for no interruptions. For example, turn off technology an hour before bed or right before working out; try driving to work with no radio and no cell phone.
- Include the whole family. Limit children's time on technology. Declare a TV Turnoff Week, with small prizes for contestants at the end of each day and the week.
- Practice mapping a destination, instead of using the GPS.
- Go for a walk or jog without headphones; engage another person to go with you.
- Turn off notifications so you are not tempted to plug in.
- Set aside time for social networking.
- Move apps away from your home screen to avoid constant interruptions.

Feel the freedom of single tasking. This means being comfortable working on one thing at a time, which helps sharpen focus and produce a higher quality, uninterrupted output. Balance is the key. While it is vitally important to be plugged in sometimes, it is equally important to recognize that there is a world beyond the screens surrounding you.

Source: May, C. (Reviewed 2015). *Learn to disconnect*. Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options

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

## Online Seminar Reminder Information Overload

### When:

July 21, 2015

### Where:

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

### Webinar Times (CST):

11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

AND

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM





## To Ice or Not to Ice - That is the Question



Or maybe the real issue is to heat or not to heat?

Either way, whether you're dealing with a one-time injury or chronic aches and pains, a few simple guidelines will help you know whether it's best to bag some ice or get the trusty heating pad.

Dr. Scott Lynch, Director of Sports Medicine at Penn State Medical Center, said it's all about blood flow. When you injure yourself, you should follow a prescription known as RICE—rest, ice, compression, and elevation.

"Elevation is probably the most important thing because it limits the amount of blood flow to the area and the amount of swelling," he said.

Cold temperatures applied to an injury help constrict, or narrow, the blood vessels and keep blood from accumulating there, potentially causing too much inflammation or swelling that can delay the healing process.

Dr. Cayce Onks, family and sports medicine physician at Penn State Hershey, said icing an injury for the first 48 to 72 hours after it occurs can reduce the amount of secondary tissue damage. Ice also can help decrease pain.

The recommendation is to use ice for 20 minutes, once an hour. That's so you don't create additional issues such as frostbite or damage to the skin. It also gives the skin a chance to recover from each icing session.

While special freezer packs are readily available, Dr. Onks said plain old ice in a bag is still the best. "You can mold it around the injury and get more coverage," he said. "You also have to keep in mind that because of the chemicals in freezer packs, they can get much colder than ice and you could cause temperature-related skin problems."

Heat, on the other hand, is often used to alleviate muscle aches and pains, or to loosen up tense and sore areas before activity.

"Heat typically brings blood flow to the area, which provides nutrients that the tissues need for healing," Dr. Onks said. "It can also increase the flexibility of tendons and muscles."

Athletes who have chronic issues or old injuries typically heat before they are active and ice afterward. Using a moist heat can also help because some people feel like the extra humidity helps with penetration of the heat.

In an athletic training room or physical therapy setting, providers can also produce deeper heat by using ultrasound. But generally a heating pad or a pack you put in the microwave to heat up will do the trick.

Commercially available heat patches or products such as Icy Hot may provide temporary or superficial relief, but they don't typically offer the penetration of ice, moist heat, or ultrasound.

**Health-e headlines™**

## Super Fruits and Seeds



Imagine superstar foods that contain a nutritional bonus and health benefits all in one package. These seeds and fruits fill the bill, according to the Institute of Food Technologists:

- Chia seeds: Often used in yogurt, homemade trail mixes, baked goods, commercial nutrition bars, beverages and snacks, high in omega-3 fatty acids, calcium, phytonutrients, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- Flaxseeds: Good source of protein, fiber, antioxidants, and phytoestrogens in the form of lignans and omega-3 fatty acids, may lower cholesterol.
- Sunflower seeds: Often considered a traditional ballpark snack, sunflower seeds provide monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, protein, fiber, vitamin E, and phytochemicals.
- Pumpkin seeds: Packed with protein, fiber, manganese, magnesium, and phosphorus.
- Blueberries: Daily consumption may reduce blood pressure and arterial stiffness, packed with fiber, vitamins, minerals, fructose, and antioxidants. Antioxidants in blueberries are linked to the prevention/delaying of diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and the aging process.
- Acai berries: Rich source of anthocyanin and have a fatty acid ratio similar to olive oil. They have been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties.
- Tart cherries: High in anthocyanin and have high antioxidant activity. Reported benefits include enhanced sleep, anti-inflammation in arthritis and gout, and sports recovery.
- Avocados: More than just the main ingredient in guacamole, avocados have beneficial effects on cardio-metabolic risk factors that extend beyond their heart-healthy fatty acid.
- Cranberries: Long associated with benefiting urinary tract health but have also shown to benefit heart health, cancer prevention, oral health, and glycemic response.

Health-e headlines™

### *No yoke?*

Adding eggs to a salad with a variety of raw vegetables is an effective method to improve the absorption of carotenoids. Those are fat-soluble nutrients that help reduce inflammation and oxidative stress, according to research from Purdue University.

Health-e headlines™

### *Look and Act Promotable*

You've got a job, but unless you plan to make it the last job you ever have, think long-term. Act like you're a man or woman on a mission, always prepared to take the next step, to take your career to the next level. Dress accordingly. In fact, dress for the job you want, not the job you have. Showcase your work when you can. Go above and beyond.

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.





# Clinician's Corner..

*Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team*

## ***Unplug to Recharge***



Have you ever counted up how many hours of “screen time” you usually have per day? In other words, outside of normal business hours, screen time refers to the amount of time you spend watching television, on the computer, phone, or tablet. Rapid technological advancements are making it more enticing to spend increasing amounts of time on devices for both personal and professional reasons. Though it may be tempting to just sneak a peek at your work emails after hours, it is important for health and well-being to ensure that you are sticking to a healthy work-life balance when possible.

Start by observing your screen use for a couple of days or even a week. As you probably know, TV watching, internet surfing, and devices in general can lead to more time on a screen than was originally intended. Total up how many hours you were on a device each day, and use that to then set a new goal for yourself. Determine how much of your work-related screen time is necessary. Often, we may find ourselves blindly answering emails, even though they can probably wait until you go into the office the next morning. If it isn't a must, try physically moving your phone out of reach; the more clearly defined home and work time you have, the better it is for your well-being.

To help reach your goals, set limits for yourself. How much television would you like to limit yourself to each day? What about tablets and phones? Start off by setting a timer, or commit with family members to watching one or two shows and then turn the television off. Use this as an opportunity to enhance family communication and leisure. Decide together what other activities you can do in lieu of screen time and talk about the importance of “going dark” from time to time. You may be surprised what you learn about your family just by swapping one TV show per week with a half an hour of conversation with one another.

Visit us at [www.deeroaks.com](http://www.deeroaks.com) for more ways to increase a healthy lifestyle.

By:  
Kira Rogers, Psy.D, HSP-P  
Regional Clinical Manager  
Deer Oaks EAP Services, LLC



## How To: Save for College



As fast as children grow, so does the cost to educate them which has more than tripled in the past 20 years. Whether you have 18 years to prepare or your son or daughter is packing right now, you'll have to decide how to foot the bill. If you plan on paying for all or part of your child's college education, you'll need to develop a savings plan as early as possible.

The most common way to finance an education is with student loans. While most student loans do offer attractive repayment options, many students are dismayed when they are still paying for their education 5, 10, or even 20 years after graduation. If this is a situation you and your college-bound child would like to avoid, there is good news: opportunities for funding your child's education are as diverse as the career paths they afford.

### **Private scholarships**

There are thousands of private scholarships awarded every year that fall outside of the university's domain. Private scholarships are not limited to students with perfect grades and packed resumes. Artistic talent, creative writing skills, lineage, interest in a particular field of study or being a member of an underrepresented group can all help you secure a private scholarship. However deadlines can be as early as July, more than a full-year before the student plans to enter college, so scout out and apply for scholarships early.

### **Section 529 plans**

Section 529 plans are state-sponsored college savings programs. The two major types are Prepaid Tuition Plans, which lock in current tuition rates, and State College Savings Plans, which offer more flexible investing options. Both are useful ways for families to save for their children's college education. If you are planning to use a 529 plan, dedicate a specific dollar amount per month to add to the account. Funds in a 529 plan are taxed at the student's tax rate, and can be transferred to another individual if they aren't needed.

### **College controlled aid**

Your individual college may be able to offer a short-term installment plan that splits your tuition into equal monthly payments. Many schools also offer their own merit scholarships.

### **Military aid**

The U.S. Armed Forces offer several programs to provide students with money for school. The most well know is the Montgomery G.I. Bill that provides cash education incentives to encourage students to join and serve a tour of duty.

Finally, don't forget to enlist the student's help. Money earned from a part-time job, including work/study jobs can cover incidentals, such as books. Keep an open line of communication with your child as they will not be learning about personal finance at college, but from you.

### **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).*