

# Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

December 2015

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## Weight-Loss Goals: Set Yourself Up for Success



Weight-loss goals can mean the difference between success and failure. Realistic, well-planned weight-loss goals keep you focused and motivated. They provide a plan for change as you transition to a healthier lifestyle.

But not all weight-loss goals are helpful. Unrealistic and overly aggressive weight-loss goals — for example, losing 10 pounds a week — can undermine your efforts.

It's OK to dream big. Just be smart about it and use these tips for creating weight-loss goals that will help you achieve your dreams.

### Set SMART goals

When planning your goals, write down everything and go through all the details. When and where will you do it? How will you fit a walk into your schedule? What do you need to get started? This way you'll be able to track your progress to see if you're meeting your goals.

#### *Make it measurable:*

For example, how far are you going to walk? For how long? How many days each week are you going to walk? Track your progress.

Review your progress each week. Were you able to successfully meet your goals last week? Think about what worked and what didn't. Then plan for how you will reach your goals next week.

#### *Focus on what's attainable and relevant to you:*

Set goals that are within your capabilities and that take into account your limitations. Consider your personal fitness level, health concerns, available time and motivation. Tailoring your expectations to your personal situation helps you set achievable goals.

A reasonable goal for many people is losing 5 to 10 percent of current weight. It's a good idea to plan to lose 1 to 2 pounds a week (0.5 to 1 kilogram) — even if your initial weight loss is a little faster in the first week or two.

Public Employee Benefits Alliance

### Online Seminar Reminder

#### Creating a Personal Development Plan

#### When:

December 15, 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





## Weight-Loss Goals: Set Yourself Up for Success *continued...*



### *Think about timing:*

Timing is crucial, often making the difference between success and failure. Choose a definite start date for your weight-loss program and don't put that date off. Be sure to account for life circumstances that might hamper your efforts, such as work or school demands, vacations or relationship problems. You may need to resolve some issues before starting.

Set both short- and long-term goals. Short-term goals keep you engaged on a daily basis, but long-term goals motivate you over the long haul. Your short-term goals are the stepping stones to your long-term goal.

### *Focus on the process:*

Make the most of your process goals, rather than outcome goals. "Exercise three times a week" is an example of a process goal, while "weigh 145 pounds" is an example of an outcome goal. It's changing your processes — your daily behaviors and habits — that's key to weight loss, not necessarily focusing on a specific number on the scale.

### *Plan for setbacks:*

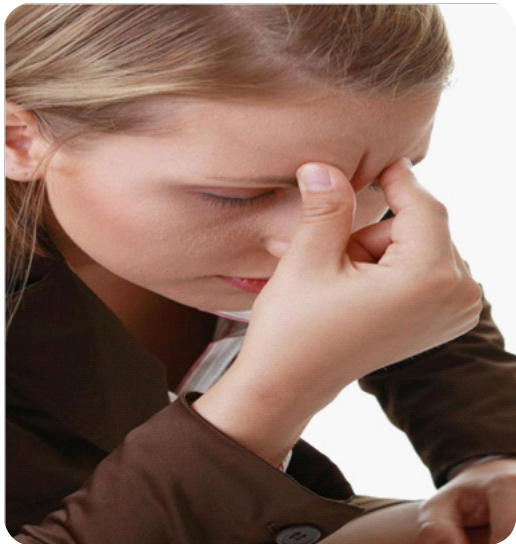
Setbacks are a natural part of behavior change. Everyone who successfully makes changes in his or her life has experienced setbacks. Identifying potential roadblocks — a big holiday meal or office party, for example — and brainstorming specific strategies to overcome them can help you stay on course or get back on course.

### *Re-assess and adjust your goals as needed:*

Be willing to change your goals as you make progress in your weight-loss plan. If you started small, you might be ready to take on larger challenges. Or, you might find that you need to adjust your goals to better fit your new lifestyle.

Source: [https://www.advantageengagement.com/p\\_content\\_detail.php?id\\_element=001&search\\_term=how%20to%20plan&id\\_cr=58937](https://www.advantageengagement.com/p_content_detail.php?id_element=001&search_term=how%20to%20plan&id_cr=58937)

## More than a Headache



### *Make healthy trade-offs*

Nutritional balance is key. Not enough vegetables in the morning meal? Prepare extra carrot, celery, and broccoli sticks with a hummus dip as an afternoon snack.

**Health-e headlines™**

### *Ever wonder*

what the words triple-washed or pre-washed on a bag of baby spinach mean? Not much, according to engineers at the University of California, Riverside. They discovered that small peaks and valleys in baby spinach leaves could be a key reason why there have been numerous bacterial outbreaks involving leafy green vegetables. Best defense: rinse those leaves (again) before you serve them.

### *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.



Each year, millions of Americans visit their doctor with physical complaints such as headaches or fatigue, even upset stomach. But few realize that these symptoms can be common signs of depression and generalized anxiety disorder, which can result in an improper diagnosis. You might be given pain medicine for headache when the real issue is your depression.

Most people don't recognize the physical symptoms of depression and anxiety, according to a new survey, nor did they associate the symptoms with highly treatable disorders.

"Many patients come to my office with only vague aches and pains, and frequently they respond to pain relievers or anti-inflammatory medication," said Dr. Steven Lamm, clinical assistant professor of medicine at New York University. "However, if the patient also talked about emotional symptoms such as feeling sad, a loss of interest in favorite activities and in spending time with friends and family, or difficulty concentrating, I may recognize these as symptoms of depression."

If you experience any of the physical or mental symptoms for more than 2 weeks, talk with your doctor. Describe what you're feeling.

**Health-e headlines™**



## Clinician's Corner..

*Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team*

### Change Something: Personal Development Plan

As human beings, we never stop growing or learning. It's part of our nature. Whether it's in the short- or long-term, most of us look forward to aspects of our lives or selves that we would like to change and improve. Especially during this time of year, we are drawn to think about those goals that we have yet to fully achieve. In order to optimize your chances for making lasting change, it's important to understand what may be holding you back.

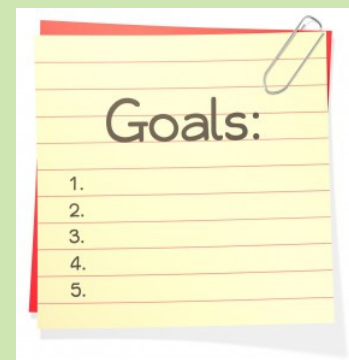
Regardless of the goal you have in mind, take a moment to think about why you haven't started. Are you uncertain as to where or how to begin? Is it difficult to muster the motivation to face the difficulties associated with making a change? Are you afraid of what this change may mean? People often ask about procrastination and the truth is, there are many reasons why we put the big and small tasks off to the last minute. For many people, anxiety, self-doubt, fear of failure, and fear of success can fuel procrastination. We may not be fully aware of these, and so instead we rely on the more standard excuses, "I don't have time," "I don't have resources," or, "I can work on it later."

In order, then, to stay future-focused and goal-driven, make a pros and cons list of your upcoming change. Lay out all of the expected benefits you imagine you would receive from making a successful change. Then, consider the possible downsides, including fears, anxieties, and doubt. Many people are surprised to see that the items on the potential cons list are not necessarily based in reality, but instead on fears and negative thought patterns. To counter these negative thoughts, try to observe them from an outsider's point-of-view. Do they seem realistic? Would you be supportive if a friend shared a similar thought about him or herself (for example, "I'll probably fail," "I won't live up to my expectations," etc)? Is there any objective evidence to back up your fears? Or are they just that, passing fears and thoughts in your mind?

To help find more helpful evidence, try to remember some of the big changes you have successfully made in the past. And, can you think of some of your interpersonal strengths that may help you succeed? If you struggle with this, you may want to consider enlisting the help of close family and friends who may be able to provide you with that additional support and encouragement. If you are interested in speaking with a professional counselor to develop goals, or would like to learn more about making a personal change, call us or visit our website!

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).*