



EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the NJ Civil Service Commission's Employee Advisory Service (EAS) Newsletter! EAS is committed to improving the quality of life for all New Jersey Civil Service employees by encouraging a good work-life balance. **The EAS Employee Newsletter** contains useful articles and information for managing various well-being and work-life issues in order to create a healthier, happier, and more productive workplace.

Overcoming Burnout

This important session will take a practical look at the causes of burnout and provide several life management strategies that can help individuals to improve their health, regain motivation, and increase life satisfaction. Strategies will include building resilience, time and stress management, and identifying and pursuing our life's purpose.

When:
Thursday, April 30th
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET

REGISTER NOW 

Bouncing Back: Resiliency

Life is full of ups and downs; everyone faces daily struggles and conflicts, and has coped with them! Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity.

Resilient People

- Resilient people cope with stressors in life and become stronger! They bounce back from problems with more smarts and power. Others view them as buoyant and elastic.
- Everyone can improve and develop their resiliency skills. Everyone wants to get through setbacks quicker and better, and recover faster from adversity. It just takes practice.

How to Improve Resiliency

- See change as part of life. You can't fight change; it is a constant—so accept it!
- Consider embracing change and take charge.
- Going ballistic or avoiding the problem usually does not help. Stay cool, calm, and collected; manage your attitude and behavior. Find ways to solve the problem when you are in control and have a plan.

Think positively!

- An optimistic outlook is helpful and a hopeful perspective makes a difference.
- See yourself as achieving and succeeding! Even dark clouds do have silver linings.
- “We can't control everything that happens in life; we can control our attitudes and responses.”—Lou Tice

Keep your perspective.

- You may limit your options with a poor perspective. Use a long-range view to cope with the current problem.
- Monitor your perceptions of the event and your reactions. Change your view and responses as needed, so you can manage them effectively.

Practice self-care.

- Exercise, rest, sleep, eat well, and relax often! People can best handle problems when the body, spirit, and mind are nourished.
- Find fun hobbies and activities, and engage in them frequently.
- Take good care of yourself!

Lessons Learned

- Review how you have effectively handled past stressful or difficult times.
- Use similar resiliency strategies with tackling present problems.
- Know that you can handle it!

Resiliency Expert Tip

- Try a new approach or strategy when old ones are not working or fail.

Game Plan

- How do you plan to bounce back?
- What are your best rebounding skills and strategies?
- How and when will you use resiliency skills?
- Who are your coaches?

Equip your mind and body to deal with stresses that come your way!

Source: U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. (n.d.). From *Bouncing back: Resiliency [PPT]*. Retrieved February 4, 2019, from <https://www.med.navy.mil>

Mindfulness Exercises

Try these exercises to bring yourself into a more mindful state during this stressful time. Practicing mindfulness daily helps you when you need it most.

Breathing Exercises

Taking deep breaths can increase a sense of calm and contentment. When people experience anxiety, they take quick, shallow breaths. When they are feeling calm, breathing slows, and blood pressure and heart rate drop.

Belly Breathing

Try belly breathing when experiencing a stressful situation such as waiting at the doctor's office. Sit upright with your shoulders relaxed. Take one regular breath and notice where it goes: into the chest or abdomen. Inhale through the nose and imagine the air filling the abdomen; exhale. On subsequent breaths, increase the rise of the belly while inhaling more deeply. Repeat as many times as desired.

Focused Breathing

Try focused breathing when there is a need to quiet the mind. The back should be flat on the floor or upright in a chair. Begin with a deep belly breath. Inhale while saying a positive word or phrase such as, "I am happy." Exhale and imagine breathing out a negative quality, like stress or anxiety. Visualize breathing in a soothing color, or count while breathing in. In on 1, out on 2 up to 10 times, and then repeat the sequence. Do this for at least 5 minutes.

Alternate-Nostril Breathing

Try alternate-nostril breathing first thing in the morning or after a workout. Sit comfortably in a chair or on the floor. Bring the right hand up to the nose. Using the thumb, gently hold the right nostril closed, and inhale through the left nostril. Release the thumb, hold the left nostril closed with the ring finger, and then exhale through the right nostril. Now inhale through the right nostril, release the ring finger, close the right nostril with the thumb, and breathe out through the left nostril. Keep your head in neutral position. Start with 5 back-and-forth rounds and work up to 10.

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness meditation is a method for practicing mindfulness. It is a time to sit quietly, empty the mind, and have a feeling of inner peace. Meditation involves sitting and observing without judgment. This may sound simple but can be challenging in practice.

Meditation practice involves observing thoughts, feelings, and sensation without focusing on them. In meditation, one learns to let the natural inner activity of the mind and body continue on while watching emotions, thoughts, and sensations come and go. Through regular practice, meditators learn distress tolerance through letting go of the struggle with their internal experiences. Use the following guidelines to get started.

- Sit in a comfortable position.
- Close the eyes or focus on a spot.
- Mentally scan the body for tension.
- Breathe slowly, simply watching each breath come in and go out of the body.
- Repeat a mantra if desired.

If distracted, which is normal and inevitable, bring attention back to the breath. Other types of mindfulness practice include yoga, walking meditation, mindfully engaging in daily activities, and prayer.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Public Health. (2011, July). Mindfulness exercise. Retrieved March 7, 2019, from <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/>

Homeworking for Beginners

Due to current events, many individuals are now telecommuting or homeworking for the first time. This disruption to your normal routine can be very stressful. Unanticipated distractions can make productivity while homeworking difficult.

Below are some tips that may help you adjust to working from home:

- Stick as closely as possible to your normal routine. You may not be leaving the house, but waking up at your usual time and completing your normal morning routine can help put you in the right mindset for work. This is especially important for families with children, as routines are important to the wellbeing of your kids.
 - Set time boundaries for your work, and stick to your normal working hours if possible. Don't work over your scheduled hours.
 - Have a designated space to complete your work in. Keep this space separate from where you spend your non-work time:
 - A clean, organized workspace can promote productivity. For some, setting up a home workspace in a similar manner to their regular workspace can be helpful. This way, when the workday is done, you can leave work behind by moving to a different area.
 - Set boundaries to discourage interruptions. Let family or housemates know when your work hours are and what your workspace will be. Noise-cancelling headphones can be helpful for tuning out distracting sounds.
 - Set realistic work goals for how much work you can complete while working from home and possibly caring for children who are also home from school.
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- Technology is key. Make sure that you have the bandwidth to handle working from home. You may want to set up a schedule for internet time for the kids to avoid disrupting any video-conference meetings you need to attend.
 - Keep in constant communication! In this time of social distancing, people are connecting virtually. Use video conferencing or chat to stay in touch with your coworkers. A webcam is a great tool to keep you in contact with coworkers and make meetings easier.
 - Talk with your manager about their expectations and any limitations to your work while working from home.
 - Combat cabin fever with breaks. Taking breaks like you would in the workplace is important for both your sanity and your vision. Eyes need a break from screen time. Go outside for a short walk or spend time gardening.

Sources

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Tirado, B. (2020, March 17). *5 tips working at home amid COVID-19*. Retrieved March 20, 2020, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com>

Gaddis, A. (2020, March 23). *Homeworking for beginners*. *Workplace Options: Raleigh, NC*.

How Can We Help You?

Call EAS to schedule an appointment. Together we can get through this.

1-866-327-9133

Everyday Exercise at Home

The easiest part of exercising is coming up with excuses not to do it. Sure, the goal is to exercise every day, but only 30 minutes of exercise three times a week can make an enormous difference in your physical and mental health. So for those of you who put all of your effort into "I don't have enough time," or "It'll be too hard," or "I'm just not the exercise type!" here are some ways to get started and pointers for making fitness a part of your everyday life at home. Check with your doctor before starting any new exercise program. It will all add up to a healthier you.

AT HOME EXERCISE

- **Pick an activity and start.** The first step really is the hardest. It's OK to start slowly.
- **Establish a routine** and make it part of a daily pattern.
- **Walk when you get home or after dinner.** Even a leisurely, 15-minute walk will be beneficial. A brisk 30-minute walk will give you a good cardiovascular workout. If you're more ambitious, try speed walking or head for the hills.
- **Use the stairs but "up the ante."** Running up and down stairs inside or outside your home for 10 to 20 minutes will lead to terrific results.
- **Leave the car at home.** For nearby errands, walk or ride a bike. Your destination is probably closer than you think.
- **After shopping, lift those grocery bags.** Take the handles with both hands and lift the full bag directly in front of you up to your chin 10 times.
- **Garden to your heart's content.** Mowing with a push mower, weeding, pruning, transplanting, and raking can make for a real workout.

- **Run around with the kids,** and see what happens to your heart rate after a half hour of active playtime.
- **Make the most of housework.** Put some music on, and move it. Do stretches while vacuuming, leg lifts while folding laundry, and rise onto the balls of your feet and then lower them while doing dishes.
- **When out with the stroller, stretch, and tone.** There are many exercises specifically geared for pushing a stroller.
- **Buy a jump rope,** and keep it where you can grab it while waiting for the kids to finish their homework or for a meal in the oven.
- **Go dancing instead of out to dinner.** Cardio Salsa for a date night, anyone?
- **Use a treadmill while watching TV.** Let your favorite programs improve your ratings. Fill those commercial breaks with stomach crunches and push-ups.
- **Lose the remotes.** Get up to change the TV channel or music on the stereo.
- **Work out with videos or DVDs.** Exercising this way is a great option for early morning or before bed. Keep a good supply so you won't get bored.
- **Get moving with a stationary bike.** Listening to your favorite music while you work out adds another stress-release layer to exercising.
- **Buy an exercise ball.** It's a simple piece of at-home gym equipment that can give you enormous workout flexibility.
- **Make a smart investment in a set of dumbbells.** Strength training combined with a cardiovascular workout equals total fitness. Increasing muscle allows the body to burn calories faster, and weight-bearing exercises help fight against osteoporosis.
- **Find a regular activity** you can commit to, and set a schedule but don't throw in the towel if something unexpected happens and temporarily puts you off course.
- **Make yourself try it once.** Whether it's swimming, biking, aerobics class, or a visit to a gym, try to expand your fitness horizons.
- **Exercise with friends,** and keep each other accountable.
- **Write down what you do.** A fitness log that includes your goals will validate, encourage, and inspire you.

Source: *Workplace Options*. (Reviewed 2017). *Everyday exercise*. Raleigh, NC: Author.