

Productivity,
Wellness and
You!

The **CONCERN CONNECTION**
Your Employee Assistance Program

www.concernonline.org

(901) 458-4000

(800) 445-5011

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One Drink May Be Too Many



Moderate or “social” drinkers insist that they can consume a cocktail and drive safely—that they know “when to say when.” But new research indicates they may be wrong. Even with blood-alcohol levels well below the legal limit—from just one strong drink—you can still fail to see threats in your field of vision. So, holiday season drivers: a single alcoholic beverage can divert your attention and dull your alertness. After finishing a drink and driving, you may concentrate so intently on your speed that you neglect to notice road hazards and pedestrians. It’s one more reason to pass up any alcohol before you get behind the wheel.

Source: Journal of Applied Cognitive Psychology, June 2006

Wow'em in Your First Month on the Job



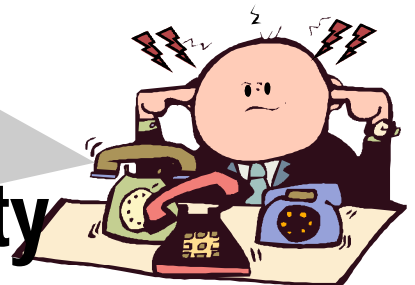
Here are some good moves for the first month on the job (and beyond): 1) Show them you know how to work hard. Do more than what you’re being paid to do. 2) Establish goals by asking yourself, “Six months from now, what do I want my boss to think about me?” 3) Study the work culture and then act and dress to fit within it. 4) Take notes and record the names, titles, responsibilities of others, key players, relationships, and linkages. 5) Ask lots of questions and avoid “over-demonstrating” knowledge—acting like you have all the answers. 6) Early no-no’s: too many personal calls, flirting with staff, correcting peers.

Can the EAP Help with Chronic Pain?



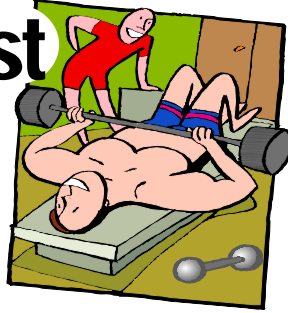
Don’t discount the EAP as a possible source of help if you suffer with chronic pain. There may be resources in your community to help you manage pain, which sometimes can be treated using alternative methods. There are mental health professionals who specialize in working with chronic pain. They use a variety of often-effective techniques—from hypnosis to biofeedback. Talk to the EAP to learn more.

Less Noise More Productivity



More than 70 percent of American office employees say their productivity would improve if their workplaces were quieter. The push for open-plan office space adds to the noise, along with the ever-present hum of computers, photocopiers, and other electronic devices. A few fixes: Lower the volume on phone and fax ringers, and computer sound effects. If you work in a cubicle or open space where you lack privacy, make long phone calls from a conference room so that your coworkers cannot overhear. In plants with loud machinery, choose the slowest speed that still allows you to meet your employer’s output demands. Notice whether you are less irritable and tired after you have given a few of these strategies a try.

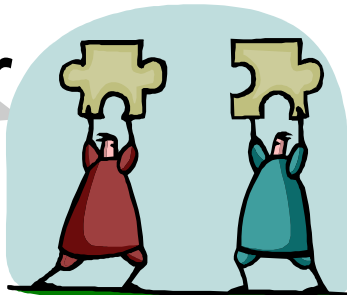
Squeeze the Most Out of Every Gym Workout



After obtaining your doctor's approval for an exercise program, avoid wasting time, effort, and money with a few tips. Avoid following the same routine every time. Variety in both aerobics and weight training provides your body with a more dynamic, challenging test. Rotate which machines you use for aerobic exercise, and choose different circuits for muscle toning and strength building. Ask a gym employee for suggestions on how to vary your workout; keep incorporating new equipment and approaches all the time. Better yet, change your daily intensity. Be careful not to push yourself to the limit. You may feel sweaty, exhausted, and satisfied, however, your body may appreciate a mix of longer, less taxing workouts—where you don't necessarily burn a lot of calories. By going all-out only some of the time while prolonging low-level blood flow to exercise muscles at other times, you will enhance both your cardiovascular health and your stamina. If your goal is strictly weight reduction, then choose the type of aerobic equipment that you enjoy the most and stick with it—at least at first. Once you bond with that machine, branch out and try others. Note the difference between pushing to a safe limit and going overboard, where you experience joint or muscle pain. If anything hurts, stop and seek expert advice.

Learn more at <http://bodybuilding.about.com>

Bring Your Team Together



The most successful teams naturally lose cohesiveness from time to time, but are helped by remembering one key rule for thriving rather than being thwarted: individual behavior—good or bad—can nurture or nix team cohesion. So express faith in your team members' ability to make valuable contributions. Praise good work. Ask questions to pick individuals' brains. Share your expertise—don't hoard knowledge. Hold back on your proposals for solving problems until everyone has had a chance to contribute to the solution. Learn the art of framing your suggestions by citing teammates' ideas, concerns, and observations. (It helps make others feel like their ideas counted in the final outcome.) You want to earn a reputation as a team member who doesn't talk too much, but makes every word count. Are you worried about your team? Talk to the EAP about its ideas for intervention.

Happier Holidays with Uncle Harry



Are holiday get-togethers sometimes tense and contentious, where you bite your tongue and others hold you down in your seat while you are provoked by undesirable family scripts and ill-timed stories about yesteryear? If so, experiment with these cordial company keepers for the holidays: 1) When getting together with your adult children, strive to relate to them as "adult peers" or "friends" rather than as your children. You will reduce tension and discover a healthier part of your relationship. 2) If young children are part of the mix, vow to put their needs first to help you avoid emotional responses to difficult family behavior. 3) Consider whether you can include a friend at dinner or during social events. When strangers are present, relatives prone to conflict seem to exercise more self-restraint. 4) Commit to avoiding the impulse to open old wounds. Take frequent breathers outdoors. With these tips in mind, you are ready to "head over the river and through the woods to grandma's house."

Tomorrow Morning Eat Breakfast



Is this one of those days where lunchtime is approaching and all you have had to "eat" is your morning cup of coffee? Note how you feel right now. Then tomorrow, eat breakfast and gauge your mood and energy level at this same time. You will notice a positive—possibly dramatic—difference. You've heard the adage before: "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day." Think fiber and protein, and avoid sugar and syrups if possible. The most common myth about skipping breakfast: it's a good way to lose weight. In actuality, breakfast eaters are more successful at keeping their weight balanced.