



Employee Assistance Program

1-800-822-0244

www.oer.ny.gov/eap

FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, and You!

Overcome Springtime Stressors



Springtime can include a surprising amount of stress. A menu of stressors typically includes final exam preparation, graduation planning and festivities, dating and relationship issues, loss of focus on school as it comes to an end, recreational pursuits, sport schedules, social events, college planning, and tough financial decisions. The big overlay is parenting challenges. If you're unfortunate enough to check all the stress boxes above this month, don't suffer physical and psychological effects. Pick up some tips from your EAP or other professional counseling resources. Anxiety or depression can affect you at any time of year, and some say May is one of the most challenging times.

Get It Scheduled to Get It Done



If you create to-do lists that pile up without acting on them, you may accumulate to-do lists for days, weeks, or even months and be frustrated that so much is unaccomplished. The solution is scheduling. The phrase "If it doesn't get scheduled, it doesn't get done" is one of the most important concepts in time management. In short, if you don't set aside a specific time to do a task or complete a project, you are still at the mercy of procrastination and distraction. By scheduling your task, you commit yourself to prioritizing it and allocating the time needed to complete it. Try it to see if you move forward.

Mental Health Month: Practice Preventive Mental Health Care



There is such a thing as "preventive mental health," just like there is preventive physical health. Here's one approach: Practice self-compassion—be kind and understanding to yourself, especially during difficult times. Treat yourself with the same empathy and support that you would offer a close friend. And here's another: Establish healthy boundaries—set limits on your time, energy, and resources to avoid burnout and resentment. Learn to say no to requests that don't align with your values or goals. Preventive mental health lowers stress and builds resilience for when the going gets tough.

Calling In Sick: There's Help for That



There are many reasons employees call in sick when they are actually well, and some are associated with personal struggles or problems suitable for resolving with help from EAP or other professionals. Have any of the following kept you away from work? 1) Personal or family issues requiring your attention. 2) Feeling burned out or overwhelmed by work. 3) Feeling undervalued and unexcited about your job. 4) Wanting to avoid a difficult or unpleasant work situation or person. 5) Needing a "mental health day" after an upsetting or emotional incident the day before. 6) Feeling over-stressed or being overcome with anxiety about a personal issue.

Harvest Some Wellness with Indoor Gardening

The **therapeutic** and mental health benefits of gardening have been shown in numerous studies, but you don't need a garden plot, backyard, or even a patio to reap the benefits of this activity. You can get all the advantages of gardening by using just a pot or two on a windowsill. Benefits include improving your mood, reducing stress and anxiety, and gaining self-satisfaction, mindfulness, and a feeling of accomplishment from growing your own food and nurturing a plant and watching it flourish. This gardening-centered activity can boost self-esteem and help you feel more capable and in control. The easiest things to grow in a small pot include leafy greens and herbs, microgreens, and even beans. Varieties of leafy greens such as lettuce, spinach, arugula, and kale all can be grown in small pots. Herbs and peppers are other options. They require a moderate amount of sunlight and can be harvested continuously by picking the outer leaves as they grow. Vegetables grown indoors may not yield as much as those grown outdoors in a garden, but you will still get the fun and rewards that accompany gardening. Gardening requires a certain level of focus and attention, which can promote a sense of well-being. And focusing on the present moment and the task at hand may help alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression. Experiment to see what your green thumb can do.



Source: Horticultural Therapy Association (www.ahta.org)

Go Ahead . . . Praise the Boss

Bosses need positive feedback too, but often they hear only problems and complaints. As they are resource experts and troubleshooters, it might feel counterintuitive to think they need support from subordinates. Positive feedback has a favorable impact on everyone, so it can add measurably to a positive workplace. Everyone benefits when that happens.



Tips: 1) Express genuine appreciation and praise. Don't be insincere or patronizing. Be specific, not by saying, "Hey, you're an awesome boss," but by simply pointing out specific examples of how what they did made a difference. Be genuine—if you don't "feel it," take a pass. 2) There's no need to be drippy, emotional, or effusive. Simply share the observation. Hint: Be sure to complement your praise by being a good worker yourself, or the feedback you offer may be less appreciated.

Emotional Labor and Customer Service Stress

"Emotional labor" refers to the practice of maintaining a positive attitude and friendly demeanor while working under stress, particularly with difficult and irate customers. Burnout risk is naturally high in such jobs, but a few healthy practices can dramatically improve your resilience. Practice each with awareness of its benefits.

- 1) Take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally with enough rest, healthy eating, and regular exercise.
- 2) Practice focusing on the positive aspects of your job, such as helping customers and solving their problems.
- 3) Practice empathy with customers. It improves their demeanor and leads to positive interactions with you.
- 4) Use more positive language during interactions. It reduces tension, and it de-escalates conflict.
- 5) Seek support. Colleagues, supervisors, and your EAP offer opportunities to vent, process events, and blow off steam. This is normal and healthy. It won't feed cynicism; it's just the opposite—it will help you stay positive and motivated in your job.



Try the Pomodoro Technique

The **"Pomodoro Technique"** might be the ticket if you struggle with distractions and remaining focused on projects. Developed by Francesco Cirillo, a business consultant, the approach to managing time requires a kitchen timer and breaking work into short, focused intervals (typically 25 minutes) called "Pomodoros." Separate these with five-minute breaks. After four Pomodoros, take a longer break. The Pomodoro Technique helps you maintain focus and productivity, but it also helps you avoid burnout and mental fatigue from arduous tasks. There's a bonus; you eventually become more efficient at prioritizing tasks and avoiding distractions even when not using the technique.



WellNYS Everyday Monthly Webinar **Fitting in Your Favorite Physical Activity**



Wednesday, May 10, 2023
12:00 noon – 12:30 P.M.

May is National Physical Activity Month. Regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to improve their health. What is your favorite physical activity? When do you fit it into your busy schedule? Join us as we share the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* and how to fit physical activity into your busy day.

Presented by:
Linda Carignan-Everts

To register for this webinar
Go to

<https://meetny.webex.com/weblink/register/r5c9fd512ced0874c92bb355ad1085830>



You will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the session. This session will be recorded and made available on the WellNYS Everyday website.



WellNYS Everyday

WellNYS Everyday is a wellness initiative dedicated to educating, engaging, and empowering New York State employees to choose to eat foods that are healthy for them and to be physically active. This initiative encourages employees to:

- Sign-up to receive the WellNYS Daily To-Do by email every day
- Run or walk your First or Next 5K
- Find out where to be physically active in New York State
- Celebrate your wellness success with “I Did It!”
- Engage in healthy behaviors while in your workplace
- Find a NYS Walking workplaces map
- Learn about Physical Activities in your region.

For more information go to:
oer.ny.gov/wellnys-everyday

WellNYS Everyday is sponsored by NYS Work-Life Services.

WellNYS Daily To-Do

May 2023

Choose an activity you enjoy to keep fit

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

MONTHLY WELLNYS DAILY TO-DO'S

June

Start and end your day with a positive habit.

July

Go outside and enjoy nature in New York State.

August

Eat a variety of fruit and vegetables.

- 1.** The monthly WellNYS Daily To-Do is to choose an activity you enjoy to keep fit. Join us on Wednesday, May 10, at 12:00 noon for the wellness webinar, "Fitting in Your Favorite Physical Activity." Go to <https://meetny.webex.com/weblink/register/r5c9fd512ced0874c92bb355ad1085830> for more information and to register.
- 2.** What is your favorite physical activity? Scheduling a time for physical activity can be a motivator. What time will you choose to be physically active today?
- 3.** Not sure how to start exercising? Try doing simple bodyweight exercise movements like push-ups, sit-ups, or squats. Increase the number of repetitions over time.
- 4.** Finding the right type of exercise can be challenging. Search on-line for at-home workouts and try a couple this week to find what you enjoy most.
- 5.** Release tension in your shoulders or pain in your lower back by joining a guided yoga video after work today. You can counteract the stresses of modern-day life and feel more mindful while getting in more movement.
- 6.** Saturdays are a great day to explore. Choose a favorite outdoor place to visit today. Wear your favorite walking shoes and explore on foot, or explore using your favorite athletic equipment such as a bike, skateboard, frisbee, or kayak.
- 7.** Today is National Ride A Bike Day. New York State features bike trails such as the Mohawk-Hudson trail, the Walkway Over the Hudson trail, and the Great Lakes Seaway Trail. Check out 12 Amazing Bike Trails for Every Level of Cyclist: <https://www.iloveny.com/blog/post/amazing-bike-trails-for-every-level-of-cyclist/>.
- 8.** Studies have shown that Monday is the day when people are most likely to start new healthy behaviors. Try setting a reminder to move on Mondays. For more information visit: <https://www.moveitmonday.org/>.
- 9.** Cardio is great for your endurance, burning calories, and improving cardiovascular health. Try incorporating some cardio such as walking, pickleball, or cycling into your everyday routine.
- 10.** When was the last time you picked up a racquetball racquet or ping pong paddle? Racquet sports can be fun and competitive, and they offer another way to get some exercise.
- 11.** Pilates can be a great way to start your fitness journey because it may improve your balance, reduce back pain, and improve overall strength. Try Pilates today!
- 12.** What are you doing this weekend? Hiking is a fun and easy way to explore the great outdoors. Check out the following website to learn where there are some great hikes in New York State. <https://oer.ny.gov/physical-activities-around-new-york-state-hiking>.
- 13.** Finding what kind of exercise, you enjoy may take some trial and error. Recruit a friend or family member to try out new options until you find one that you enjoy.
- 14.** Dancing is a fun, moderate physical activity. Ask a friend to sign up with you for dance lessons. There are many types of dances to choose from: Waltz, Foxtrot, Quickstep, and the Tango. It's fun to learn something new.
- 15.** What are your fitness goals right now? To find which workouts are best for you, make a list of what you would like to achieve and try an exercise routine that can help you get there.
- 16.** Your favorite movements can involve sitting on the couch as you watch a show. Raise your legs off the floor as high as you can while tightening your abdomen. Do this 100 times for a great leg and core workout.
- 17.** Move in May! Create a list of activities you enjoy, and plan your week based on those activities. Monday could be a walk after work, Tuesday could be go for a bike ride, and so on. Planning can make you more likely to move more throughout the week.
- 18.** Today is the 3.5-mile CDPHP Workforce Team Challenge in Albany. Participants will be running, jogging, and walking through Washington Park. Some may even be tiptoeing through the tulips. If you aren't in Albany, find a local park to tiptoe, run, or walk through.
- 19.** Today is Bike-to-Work Day. Be on the lookout for people on their bikes and remember, cyclists can also share the roads cars that drive on.
- 20.** If you have a yard, look around to see if there is something you can do that involves physical activity such as raking leaves, moving shrubs, de-thatching the grass, or picking up the winter debris. This is great exercise!
- 21.** May is the perfect time for you to start your garden. Grow your garden while you grow your muscles. Gardening tasks can be a workout, and you can even sprinkle in some squats and lunges into your planting routine.
- 22.** Organize a Monday Mile at your workplace! The Monday Mile is a weekly group walk, jog, roll, or ride for 20 minutes to help everyone start the week off moving together. For more information, visit: <https://www.moveitmonday.org/mondaymile/>.
- 23.** Warmer weather calls for team sports! Team sports like tennis, volleyball, or basketball not only can be a fun activity with friends they benefit your cardiovascular health as well. What team sports do you prefer to participate in?
- 24.** Find little ways to move more during your workday, like marching in place while on a conference call or moving your arms and extending your legs while sitting.
- 25.** Today, schedule a date with a friend or family member for the upcoming weekend. Chat and take in the beautiful weather while hiking, kayaking, or canoeing.
- 26.** Basketball, golf, and bowling are physical activities that require skill. Which one are you good at? Which one could you try this weekend?
- 27.** CrossFit is a relatively new type of exercise. If you are looking for a full-body workout that combines cardio, weightlifting, and core training, this workout is for you.
- 28.** As the weather is getting warmer take advantage and head out on a walk any time of the day. Walk around your neighborhood or explore a local park. If it's raining, take a walk through a mall.
- 29.** In observance of Memorial Day consider taking a walk around a local historic memorial or explore the NYS Path Through History site: <https://www.iloveny.com/things-to-do/path-through-history/>.
- 30.** Core strength is important for posture, digestion, and much more. But sometimes getting down on the floor (or back up!) sounds difficult. Try seated or standing core exercise videos to strengthen your muscles in a way that works for you.
- 31.** Did you participate in your favorite physical activity this month? Join us in June as we discover ways to start and end the day with a positive habit.

Number of days completed