Start the Day Right

How you start your morning can set the tone for your entire day. Greet the day right with these strategies.

Go to bed earlier. You’ll feel less sluggish in the morning if you start out with a good night’s sleep behind you.

Avoid the snooze button. Get up on time so you won’t start out the day rushed and stressed. If you like time to linger in bed, set your alarm for 20 minutes earlier.

Reflect. Spend time in quiet reflection, read, listen to music, or do some stretching.

Exercise. Starting out the day with movement immediately gets your energy level up and clears your head. Plus, getting your exercise in first thing means you won’t put it off.

Nourish yourself. Avoid sugary breakfast foods full of empty calories. Instead, eat a nourishing morning meal that includes some lean protein and whole grains to fill you up and keep blood sugar levels steady.

Turn off media. Consider skipping online and TV news, especially if they make you feel worried or stressed. Instead, focus on peaceful, positive ways to prepare for the day ahead.

Have a Good Mental Health Day at Work

If you suffer from depression and/or anxiety, you know that their symptoms don’t park themselves at the front door when you arrive at work. They might affect your mood and productivity, with some days being worse than others. Be sure to develop a strategy for yourself so you can manage the symptoms that are making your day a struggle. Reach out to UAlbany EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson for assistance, find a “health buddy” (someone with whom you can share or can create a scenario of mutual support), take rejuvenating short breaks away from the work site, or work with your medical provider to explore reasonable accommodations. Both you and your employer want the same thing: You feeling your best and benefiting from your skills and abilities.

Source: Frontline—Employee Wellness, Productivity & You! Frontline newsletter is courtesy of the New York State Employee Assistance Program.

“Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change.”

~ Brené Brown, PhD
Soft Skills: Maintain a Positive Attitude

Having a positive attitude does not mean you are dismissive of problems and concerns, while others who are pessimistic or downbeat are more mature and realistic in the face of undesirable circumstances. A positive attitude is driven by a belief that successful outcomes and solutions to problems are often influenced by optimism. A person with a positive attitude can still feel the tug to be negative; however, they succumb to it less often. Maintaining a positive attitude is a learned skill, valued by employers, and often mentioned in performance reviews. If your attitude is easily affected by circumstances, try practicing “conscious positivity.” When you don’t quite feel like being positive, be excited for others’ achievements. Have fun playing cards when you are losing. Be friendly to others you don’t know. Motivate others by saying something positive. Avoid letting others’ negativity bring you down. And, ditch the “yeah, but...” With practice, you’ll get the hang of it!

Giving Feedback That Sticks

Advice about giving feedback often centers on reducing the recipient’s defensiveness, not whether the feedback will create change. However, there is a science-based approach for the latter called “Situation – Behavior – Impact (SBI.)” SBI consists of three essential elements: Identifying the situation needing feedback, describing the behavior needing change, and explaining the impact of the behavior in a way that motivates the recipient to make changes in the future. Giving feedback isn’t always easy, but an internet search of the SBI Model can show you how to deliver more effective feedback.

How to Mentor a Coworker

Mentoring is a valuable learning aid that can benefit both mentor and mentee. As a mentor, you can help a coworker or colleague achieve professional goals, gain confidence, and develop skills. In turn, you may gain satisfaction from helping someone else as you develop your own leadership skills. Use these guidelines to establish a mentoring relationship:

- Decide on a method of communication and how often you will connect with each other. You may decide to meet in person weekly or monthly and to follow up between meetings through email or texting.
- Define expectations. Listen actively to your mentee’s needs and goals. Be clear and realistic about what you can and cannot offer and share.
- Create goals. Put objectives for the mentoring relationship in writing and track your mutual progress.
- Make it active. Encourage your mentee to step outside his or her comfort zone to learn new skills and develop leadership and confidence.
- A solid mentoring relationship can lead to greater job satisfaction and career success for you both.

Source: TP Top Performance, from Personal Best®, a registered trademark of Ebix Inc. 2019
Move More, Work Better

Interspersing work with movement or even moving while you work may increase your productivity and energy. One 2014 study performed at a student loan company had employees walk on treadmills as they worked, resulting in an overall increase in work performance, as well as burning more calories. Here are 10 ways to move more today:

1. Schedule a walking meeting either outdoors or in hallways.
2. Get a group together to walk at lunch or during breaks.
3. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, or take the elevator part of the way.
4. Do bicep curls or shoulder presses at your desk with a full water bottle.
5. Do tricep dips on the edge of your desk.
6. Take a stretch break once each hour.
7. March in place or do calf raises or squats while waiting for your document to print or while on a phone call.
8. Walk to converse with a coworker in person instead of calling or sending an instant message.
9. Wear a pedometer or fitness tracker and challenge yourself to take 10,000 steps per day.
10. Vary your work tasks by cleaning your workspace, walking to put or throw things away, or filing and organizing.

Note: Get your supervisor’s OK before exercising at your desk.

Source: TP Top Performance, from Personal Best®, a registered trademark of Ebix Inc. 2019.

Breathe Easy...Quit/Craving Kits Available from EAP

If you are quitting smoking or trying to limit the amount of cigarettes each day, take advantage of the free “Quit/Craving Kit” that is available to support your efforts. Contact UAlbany EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson to request a kit or for more information and referrals. bseckerson@albany.edu 518.442.5483 NOTE: The kits do not contain nicotine replacement therapies (NRT); however, they do contain other helpful items to make cravings subside.

National Drug Take-Back Day

The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day is designed to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of medications. To find a local drop-off site, go to: https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html

“The earth laughs in flowers.”
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Disclaimer: Material presented in this newsletter is intended for educational or informational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your qualified health professional.
EAP Assessment and Referral Service

If you are finding it difficult to be as productive as you used to be, perhaps a stressor in your life is impacting your ability to feel your best at work and/or at home. The UAlbany Employee Assistance Program’s Assessment & Referral Service might be the answer. Take advantage of this free voluntary confidential employee benefit. Confidential support, information, and referrals are available to assist you in finding a way to address your concerns. Help is only a phone call or email away.

If you would like to schedule an appointment for an Assessment & Referral session with EAP Coordinator Brenda Seckerson, CALL 518.442.5483 or EMAIL bseckerson@albany.edu www.albany.edu/eap

Gratitude: Science Backed!

The benefits of practicing gratitude have real science behind them. This principle recognizes that how we think and condition ourselves to think produces expectations and plays a significant role in our self-esteem, perception, decisions, and ability to manage stress. Research supports the benefits of practicing gratitude. In one study, those who wrote about gratitude ten minutes a day were more optimistic and felt better about their lives, exercised more, and had fewer visits to physicians than those who did not. Practicing gratitude is a simple process: You simply reflect regularly on the people and things you are grateful for.

Source: www.health.harvard.edu (Search: “thanks, happier”)