Spring 2019

Balanced Living

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Welcome to the Spring 2019 issue of BalancedLiving!

It’s already March and Spring is just around the corner. As the weather begins to warm up so can the pressure on your work/life balance. We hope you can use the resources and information in this issue to keep things cool and under control!

To get right to the point check out the article on finding balance on page 4 then continue on to a guide on 5 special food indulgences you can have that won’t break your healthy eating goals. Next, starting on page 6 you can learn about core exercises and the related benefits on your posture. Speaking of relations, page 8 has resources on understanding how your stress levels and overall health are connected. Have kids in the house or do you work with kids? Try using the mindfulness for kids exercise on page 10 to help them cool down in stressful situations. Then finally finish up on page 11 with a delicious recipe for creamy garlic penne pasta, yum!

Remember your Employee Assistance Program is available 24/7 at 1-800-873-7138 to help you with issues in your life that may be going on this spring or anytime of the year.

To your health!

~ The MINES Team
Total Wellbeing is your way to connect the dots between the 8 core dimensions of wellness: Physical, Occupational, Intellectual, Environmental, Financial, Social, Spiritual, and Emotional Wellness. Understanding these dimensions is the first step toward a sense of complete wellbeing. In 2019 we take ideas around wellbeing and tie them into the bigger picture, your community, and the rest of the world. It is important to understand the influence that the world has on our wellbeing and the influence we may have on others. All year we will be looking at ways to strengthen your connection with your community by providing information, insight, and resources to help on a personal level along with ways to give back to the people around you so we can all thrive together!

Enhancing Awareness
In 2019 we will continue to build on the concept of wellbeing awareness. We will be providing resources, stories, and tools to help you see the bigger wellness picture from your community to the rest of the world. Check out our articles in this magazine and head to minesandassociates.com/newsletters to check out our monthly newsletter with even more great wellness information.

Total Wellbeing
World View
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Wellness Webinars
Support from the experts
Join MINES for any of our free monthly webinars. 2019 will cover great new topics ranging from improving your credit, having a stress free summer, turning negatives to positives, and much more! Visit our website to learn more, or register for upcoming events at www.minesandassociates.com/webinar.

Is there a topic you'd like to see us explore? We’d love to hear from you.
Shoot us an e-mail at communications@minesandassociates.com and let us know what you’d like to see.
Finding Balance

By definition, balance often implies that all parts are proportional or of equal strength in order to create stability. In life, finding balance is about learning how to take all of the elements that make up your life and piecing them together so that they work in unison to support your personal goals. When you have achieved this, you’ll spend more time enriching your life with positive experiences and less time trying to overcome obstacles you have laid out for yourself. Below are some tips and questions to get you on the right track and help you find balance in your life.

• Separate your priorities from your wants
• See the big picture and how your actions can affect that outcome
• Combine long-term and short-term planning to organize your goals
• Learn to keep your work and personal lives from conflicting with each other
• Use private time and recreational activities to recharge your emotional batteries
• Cast off negativity and embrace a positive outlook, even in the face of tough times
• Use effective communication techniques with friends, family, and coworkers to strengthen relationships
• Cultivate a strong sense of organization
• Shift gears when needed to keep up with the various roles you play in your life

Are You Finding Balance?

1. Do your friends or family complain about all the time you spend focused on your job? Yes_ No_
2. Do you struggle to focus on the job because of family issues? Yes_ No_
3. Do you bring work home with you at the end of the day? Yes_ No_
4. Do you feel like you’re missing out on work when you take vacation time? Yes_ No_
5. Do you feel overwhelmed or let down by your responsibilities on the job? Yes_ No_

If you answered “Yes” to any of the above questions, you should consider getting help to balance your work and personal lives. Positive changes can have a definite impact on your personality, productivity, and overall sense of wellbeing.
5 Special Splurges That Don’t Break the Calorie Bank

You can splurge from time to time and still lose weight when you choose foods that are lavish but also low-calorie.

1. The meat in a steamed one-pound lobster has fewer than 100 calories. If you don't want to fuss, order a broiled lobster tail. King crab legs are another succulent favorite that can sub for the lobster. Just don't drown your shellfish in butter. Savor seafood’s natural flavors or try a squeeze of lemon or a dash of cocktail sauce.

2. Oysters are high in protein and minerals, and have only about 7 calories each. Adding a mignonette sauce -- a simple preparation of vinegar, shallots, salt, and pepper -- barely adds any more calories. If you don't like oysters raw, try them broiled or baked.

3. A generous 6-ounce filet mignon has about 300 calories. Even a well-trimmed piece of meat will still have some fat, so stick to this small portion and fill out your meal with healthful veggies, such as steamed broccoli.

4. Considered by many to be the ultimate splurge, caviar clocks in between 60 and 75 calories per ounce. Whether it's salmon roe on sushi or black beluga, it's hard to eat more than that without breaking the bank, so your diet is unlikely to suffer from this indulgence.

5. Plump juicy raspberries are one of the most extravagant fruits, yet a cup has only 64 calories and a generous 8 grams of fiber. Dress the berries with a dollop of lightly sweetened Greek yogurt.

These splurges are so calorie-conscious that you could eat them all in one day and still be within strict diet limits.

Don’t forget that with MINES EAP you have access to professional, board certified wellness coaching sessions. Your wellness coach can help you with all sorts of wellness goals including nutrition and exercise. Call MINES at 1-800-873-7138 to get connected to a coach toady!

More information

If you want to choose your own splurges, find the calorie count of just about every food on the Food Composition Database page of the U.S. Department of Agriculture website.
For Better Posture, Strengthen Your Core Muscles

No matter what your activity -- even standing or sitting with good posture -- you use your core muscles. And yet, vital as these muscles are, most of us aren’t sure what the term means.

“A lot of people, when they hear the word ‘core,’ think only in terms of the stomach, the abdominal muscles,” says April Swales, a physical trainer at the Cooper Fitness Center in Dallas. “But when you’re talking about the core, you can’t just isolate one part of the whole system.”

Your core muscles are in your trunk and pelvis. Doing strengthening exercises for this area at least three times a week can help protect you from injuries and improve your balance.

Sit-ups alone won’t work the 29 muscles in the stomach, back, hips, and pelvis that stabilize the spine and make up the “core.” That’s why more and more health clubs offer core fitness classes that use equipment meant to strengthen these oft-ignored muscles. An American Council on Exercise survey found the number of clubs that offer core-conditioning classes more than doubled in one year to reach 64 percent.

Core muscles

The muscle most people identify with the core is the rectus abdominus at the front of the stomach. People with prominent rectus abdominus muscles are said to have “six-pack abs.” Other core muscles in the stomach area include the transverse abdominals, also called “nature’s weight belt,” and the obliques.

Studies have shown that milliseconds before you flex your arm, muscles in the core act to stabilize the body, according to Corey Stroderd, a Southern California physical therapist. “All movement starts from the core,” he says. “It doesn’t matter how strong your arms and legs are if you don’t have a strong core.”

When the core muscles are weak or out of balance, other muscles try to pick up the slack. That can lead to instability, poor posture, and injury, chiefly in the lower back.

The exercises in a core fitness class are familiar, but with a twist. The classes add special equipment that makes it easier to work all the core muscle groups. These tools seek to get the core muscles going by creating an unstable environment. For example, doing a sit-up on a stability ball forces many core muscles to make small contractions to keep you level. Proponents say these constant adjustments in all directions work the core more than straight-line movements, such as a sit-up on the floor.

“In everyday life, we don’t move in a straight line,” Mr. Stroderd says. “We are constantly twisting and bending.”
Watch the gadgets

Not all equipment that claims to help the core muscles works, though. Be wary of gadgets that claim to make an abdominal workout easy or promise a flatter stomach in 30 days, Ms. Swales says. “The bottom line is if you can’t get on the floor and do the exercise properly, then those machines aren’t going to help you.”

In fact, core training likely won’t give you a washboard stomach. Well-defined abdominal muscles show “a low amount of body fat” and not necessarily strength, Mr. Stroderd says.

But core training can do far more for you than give you great abs. A stronger core can advance almost any physical activity -- even those as routine as mopping the floor or picking up a child.

“People come in who suffer from back pain or they can’t perform normal functions, and their quality of life is diminished,” Ms. Swales says. “They really appreciate what core exercise can do for them because they see their body get stronger and move the way it is supposed to move.”

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Understanding the Stress/Health Connection

Stress exists in your mind — but it’s also evident in your stomach, heart, muscles and even your toes. “In fact, stress may affect every cell in your body,” says Ronald Glaser, Ph.D., a researcher at Ohio State University Medical School.

During stressful times, your body produces various chemicals, including cortisol, an immune-suppressing hormone. The more cortisol produced, the weaker your immune cells become, and the more susceptible you are to illness. “A one-day stressor isn’t going to make a big change in your risk of getting a cold, for example,” says Dr. Glaser. “But a chronic stressor that lasts a few weeks could dampen your immune response and create a risk of disease.”

Migraine headaches, sleep disorders, backaches, skin rashes, fatigue, irritability, headache, depression, worry, mood swings, chest pain, anxiety, upset stomach, ulcers, and high blood pressure are common reactions to stress. By gaining a better understanding of the stress/disease connection, you can reduce your stress and, in turn, improve your health and well-being.

Keeping stress in check

No one can avoid all stress — and a certain amount actually is good for you. But it’s best to keep unhealthy levels in check.

The following steps can help you control everyday stress:

- Recognize your stress signals. Once you’re aware of your stressors, you’ll have a better idea of when you’re stressed and can take steps to reduce them.

- Notice when you’re most vulnerable to stress and prepare yourself. Are you most affected in the mornings? On Mondays? In the winter?

- Exercise. Aerobic workouts — walking, cycling, swimming, or running — can release pent-up frustrations while producing endorphins, brain chemicals that counteract stress.

- Eat a healthful diet. A balanced diet can help stabilize your mood.

- Communicate with friends and family. Social ties relieve stress and contribute to a positive attitude.

- Spend time enjoying your hobbies. Doing so allows you to focus on a pleasurable activity instead of your problems.

- Try relaxation techniques. Meditation, creative imagery, visualization, deep-breathing exercises, yoga, and listening to relaxation tapes can help you relax.

- Learn to set limits. Don’t agree to unnecessary, stressful obligations.

- Get enough sleep. Stress interferes with relaxation, making it hard to get a good night’s sleep, which can lead to fatigue and a reduced ability to cope. To get the best sleep possible, try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
• Steer clear of caffeine. Caffeine can add to your anxiety, making you feel even more stressed.

• Avoid alcohol and drugs. Using alcohol or other drugs to relieve stress only masks symptoms and can worsen stress in the long run.

• Learn something new. The excitement of learning something new, such as how to speak a different language or play a musical instrument, can make your worries seem far away.

• Take a breather. Stressful situations can make you breathe more shallowly or hold your breath. When you have to relax fast, belly breathing can be done in seconds. To do it: Concentrate on making your abdomen move out as you inhale through your nose, then in as you exhale. Using imagery as you belly breathe can help you further deepen and slow the pace of your breathing. As you inhale, close your eyes and imagine the air swirling into your nose and down into your lungs. As you exhale, imagine the air swirling back out again.

Combating serious stress

“In combating serious stress, you should first carefully appraise the seriousness of the situation and the adequacy of your coping resources,” says Kenneth B. Matheny, Ph.D., A.B.P.P., director of counseling psychology at Georgia State University in Atlanta. When faced with a highly stressful event in your life — perhaps the death of a loved one, a life-threatening illness or a serious financial loss — the following strategies will help you cope:

• Avoid unnecessary changes in your life. Instead, reserve what energy you do have for dealing with the stressor at hand. If possible, stabilize your work and home environments while working out the primary problem.

• Quiet your mind. In times of stress, the mind makes things seem worse than they are by creating endless versions of impending disaster. Because the body can’t tell the difference between fact and fantasy, it responds with heightened physical response.

• Keep in the present. You can calm both your mind and body by keeping your mind in the present, which is seldom as stressful as an imagined future or regrettable past. To keep your mind in the present, focus your attention on your breathing, a sound or visual pattern, a repetitive movement, or meditation.

• Courageously and aggressively face the stressor. Resist any temptation to ignore the stressor. Instead, carefully appraise the seriousness of the problem without magnifying it out of proportion. In addition, confirm your view of the stressor by talking with others. Make a special effort to speak to family, friends, or co-workers who have dealt with similar experiences.

• Take inventory of your coping responses. Confidence is a valuable ally in combating stress, and it builds on memories of past successes. Review successes you’ve had with other stressful life situations. Recall some of the specific things you did to cope.

• Take action. Commit yourself to a reasonable course of action to deal with the stressor. Action is a powerful stress-reducer. Research shows the body lowers its production of epinephrine, a powerful stress hormone, when a person shifts into action.

• Take time out to relax. At least once or twice a day, take time to decompress by relaxing — perhaps by listening to soothing music, taking a walk, gardening, reading, or exercising.
With MINES Eye we will focus on meditation techniques, basic yoga poses, and mindfulness practices to help you stay in control of your thoughts and expand the capabilities of your mind as well as body.

When children get worked up it can be hard to calm them down. It can be hard for young kids to concentrate or focus when they’re feeling stressed, anxious, scared, or angry. Something what helps is to teach them exercises and “tricks” while they are calm and in a good mood that they can fall back on when they’re having a rough day. But if you want what you teach them to stick, you have to make it something fun and relatable. Take a look at the following exercise for a fun and kid-friendly mindfulness technique sure to make the next tough time a little easier.

**Mindfulness Exercise for Kids: Melting**

When you’re frozen, you can’t move and you can’t think. When you’re frozen, you need to melt! “Melting” is a great mindfulness exercise for kids that will help them manage stress, practice self-control, and get a good stretch at the same time! Melting is a simple exercise that does not require any equipment, just a quiet place with enough room for the kids to stand up and stretch out away from objects or others.

**Step 1: Freezing**

Begin by standing up in a spot and cross your arms and hold your shoulders like when you’re cold. Carefully tuck your chin down and in. Now tighten as many muscles in your body as you can to make a frozen “ice statue.” Feet tense, belly tight, arms stiff, even make a frozen face by closing your eyes and tightly sealing your lips. Feeling frozen yet?

**Step 2: Melting**

Now we can begin to melt, little by little. Begin melting by opening your eyes a bit, letting your face soften, your jaw relax, your mouth and cheeks feel soft as they melt. Let your shoulders melt and go down, arms begin to hang loose. Let your legs melt too as they soften and bend. Try to melt all the way to the floor as you let every part of your body relax and soften until you are just a soft, relaxed puddle on the floor.

**Step 3: Repeat**

Now we are going to do the whole process again but this time everyone gets to choose their own starting frozen statue position. Get creative. Freeze with one leg in the air, or freeze with a funny face. As you begin to melt, make sure to just unfreeze one body part at a time. Begin with one arm, or one leg, slowly melting every part until you are again just a cool, relaxed puddle on the floor.

So the next time you feel frozen in your mind or body try to melt it away!
Creamy Garlic Penne Pasta

Ingredients:

- (1 lb) box penne or 1 (1 lb) box penne rigate, cooked as directed, drained and kept hot
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 3/4 cup chicken broth or 3/4 cup beef broth
- 2 teaspoons parsley flakes
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Melt butter and add garlic in a medium sauce pan.
2. Cook over medium for 1 minute.
3. Add flour and cook 1 minute, stirring constantly.
4. Stir in broth and milk and cook, stirring frequently, until sauce boils and thickens.
5. Add parsley, salt, pepper and cheese.
6. Stir until cheese is melted.
7. Toss hot pasta with sauce and serve immediately.
8. All done, enjoy!

Makes approximately 6 servings

Nutritional analysis (per serving): 363.8 calories; 8.3 g fat (4.4 g sat); 19.3 mg cholesterol; 64.1 g carbohydrates; 0.2 g from sugars; 9.8 g protein; 8.5 g fiber; 230.2 mg sodium.
Helping you keep your balance

Your Employee Assistance Program is here for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

It’s confidential, FREE, and available to you and your family. For information or confidential assistance call 1-800-873-7138