

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a red jacket over a green patterned sweater, carrying a young child on her shoulders. The child is wearing a green jacket and a red beanie, and is reaching up with their right arm. They are both looking upwards with joyful expressions. The background is filled with out-of-focus autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and red.

BALANCE

WELLNESS MAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2018 | VOLUME 4 | NUMBER 1

Mirror vs. Movement

The mirror isn't always
a reflection of what
we're capable of

Self Compassion
Practice in Your Life

Sometimes You Just
Have to Say NO!

Squeeze the Day;
Compression garments

Growing Your
Peace At Work®

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BALANCE
mind body spirit
THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

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*Remind
yourself that
compliments
are a
confirmation
that life loves
you.*

– Keith Macpherson

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Mirror vs. movement

The mirror isn't always a reflection of what we're capable of.



By Christine van der Hoek, thetrainingzone@shaw.ca

We are flooded with images touting the ideal body yet those rarely provide a true insight into the person's health, fitness and body function. The mirror isn't always a reflection of what we're capable of.

Our functions are based on seven fundamental movements. Training and strengthening these movements can improve your ability to perform daily activities around your home and workplace, increase your fun-factor in recreational activities and to reduce the risk for injuries and chronic

disease. Balance, coordination, dexterity, agility and muscle memory recall; all contribute to our ability to function effectively and efficiently. A focus on these fundamental exercises can help you to move with less pain and more joy!

Squat

Considered the most complex of movements, squats are essential for independent living. Sit-to-stand, in/out of the car or bed, on/off the toilet, managing stairs/curbs, picking

something off the ground, and just about every sport. Regardless of age or injury, the ability to squat properly will help keep you safe in just about every movement you do!

With hands on hips and both feet on the ground, have feet slightly wider than hip distance apart. It's important that toes and kneecaps face the same direction. The squat is initiated by the hips moving back (not the knees moving forward) as if to put your buttocks back to sit down. Once the hips have flexed and the buttock

starts to move back, then bend knees (no more than 90 degrees), ensuring your knees don't move forward over the toes. Pushing through your heels, return to a standing position.

Lunge

With a greater balance challenge than a squat, the primary purpose of a lunge is to teach our body to decelerate and stop. It's a great way to improve hip/groin flexibility which in turn, helps with fall prevention. Strengthening these large joints provides better stability for walking and going down stairs!

With a staggered stance, the front foot is flat; the back foot is on the tippy toe so the heel is off the ground. Chest, naval and eyes are forward as you bend the back knee towards the floor. Don't let the front knee move forward over your toes.

Push

Moving an object away from the body, forward or overhead, requires pushing. Getting up off the ground, using a grocery cart/stroller/wheelchair, shoveling snow or lifting something overhead to put on a shelf, are all forms of pushing.

The most effective exercise is the time-tested push-up. Either from the knees or the toes, hands are slightly wider than shoulder width apart with fingers forward. Lower chest towards the floor and push up until arms are fully extended but elbows not locked. Keep your spine neutral and don't let your head hang. Push-ups can be done with hands on the floor or on the wall for beginners.

Pull

Drawing a load towards the body requires pulling. We pull all sorts of things from small items like a fork to a big toboggan through the snow. We pull to close a trunk or hatch, row a boat or reaching for the remote! The easiest way to pull is to use stretch tubing. This can be purchased for a few dollars at a fitness equipment store. Sitting on the floor, wrap the middle of the tubing around the soles of your feet and grasp tubing evenly with both hands. As you pull your elbows back, draw your shoulder blades together. When you straighten

your arms, ensure you don't round the back.

Rowing and pulling exercise are critical to proper posture and effective diaphragm function. Poor posture can lead to gait and breathing changes.

Rotation

Both rotation and counter-rotation (fighting against rotation) are keys to spine health, stability and balance. Twisting the core helps you to golf, throw a ball, brush your hair, paint a fence or start a lawn mower. Counter-rotation helps you carry a heavy suitcase or unevenly loaded grocery bags. It also helps you stand tall on a crazy, windy day!

Anchor tubing to secure object and stand laterally away from it until there is tension on the tubing. With both hands holding the end of the tubing, rotate away from the anchor keeping your body upright. Be sure to turn around and try the other side. To help improve counter-rotation, step a little further away from the anchor and try to hold the tubing at chest level without moving.

Anyone with osteoporosis or other significant spinal conditions should consult a doctor prior to doing any twisting/rotational movements.

Hip hinge

Leaning forward from the hip so that buttocks go back as chest/shoulders lean forward. Sounds complicated but it's not. Often under-rated and ignored, hip hinging is crucial to lower back health. Reaching into a crib or putting golf clubs into a trunk, use this movement. From a standing position with legs long and knees slightly bent, slowly reach towards your toes and return to standing.

Gait

Walking, running and crawling all combine pulling, pushing, lunging, squatting and rotating. When forward flexed, shoulders slouched and a rounded back, it is impossible to have a proper gait. In this posture, feet drag which affects our posture, balance and equilibrium. This can increase the risk for ankle and knee injuries as well as for falling.



Our functions are based on seven fundamental movements. Training and strengthening these movements can improve your ability to perform daily activities around your home and workplace, increase your fun-factor in recreational activities and reduce the risk for injuries and chronic disease. Balance, coordination, dexterity, agility and muscle memory recall; all contribute to our ability to function effectively and efficiently. A focus on these fundamental exercises can help you to move with less pain and more joy!

Forward leaning while walking limits space for diaphragm contraction, reducing oxygen intake so that your muscles get less air than they need for optimal function.

Aiming for tall posture while walking can have a huge impact on your overall health. Practice walking with a load (called a Farmers' Carry), prepares the body for carrying groceries, luggage and your kids!

Focusing on these seven fundamental movements, three to four times per week, 10-15 repetitions each, has the potential to improve your fitness, make you stronger and give you more energy all while reducing your risk for injuries, falls and age related decline in function.

Forget the mirror and focus on movement. It will be life changing.

Posture issues: Squeeze the day; Compression garments



By **Chelsea White, BSc (Kin), C.A.T (c)**

If you are an avid tennis, basketball, or football fan (even hockey, you just can't see it) then you have seen the compression sleeves that athletes wear on their arm and/or legs. You may have wondered: what the heck are they wearing, aren't they hot enough? You may also be familiar with the all so lovely (tongue and cheek here) but helpful beige compression stockings that many wear. For those who are not aware of the benefits of compression, you may find yourself seeking out some fancy new socks.

We should first discuss what is happening within the body and the system that compression garments are affecting; the vascular system, in particular the venous return system.

Here's a short and sweet human physiology lesson. Common knowledge, the heart pumps blood to the lungs to become oxygenated, the blood is then circulated through the body delivering oxygen and nutrients to all your organs and important in this discussion, the muscles. So you may be thinking, 'wouldn't compression hinder circulation?'

Compression garments help improve your circulation, particularly if you are someone who is standing all day for work (or have a condition that affects your circulatory system). Deoxygenated blood is circulated back to the heart via the pressure of the venous return system, muscle contraction and limb movement. So here's the thing, the venous return has a one-way valve, blood can only move in one direction and not backflow. If there is not enough pressure to keep up the flow, pooling can occur. I am sure you can imagine now, if you are standing all day the return flow will be decreased (gravity can be a bummer sometimes) and pooling can occur in the veins. Ladies, you probably have felt the effects of this when you go to put on a pair of full length boots at the end



of the day and it feels like someone shrunk them, the struggle is real. Gents, I am sure you may have become accustomed to that sometimes increasingly notable sock indentation, the sock speed bump.

There are other factors that affect circulation, medical conditions such as diabetes, varicose veins, age, or post-surgical procedures. As we age the circulatory system just isn't the same as it was, it loses some of its elasticity and the ability to maintain pressure changes. Now regular exercise will help improve circulation but this may not be enough for everyone. This is where medical grade compression would be helpful on a daily basis. The compression stockings improve blood flow to the heart by increasing the pressure of the venous return system.

The use of compression socks for medical conditions is well researched and widely supported by the medical community. As for those cool socks and sleeves you see athletes and runners wearing; it is really

anecdotal. There is not enough research evidence to statistically prove their benefit. Here is the theory; the compressive force reduces the amount of vibration within the tissue, decreasing the muscles' energy consumption and increases circulation, thus improved oxygen consumption and metabolic waste removal.

So are compression stockings worth it?

If you have a job where you are standing all day or have medical conditions that result in a decrease in circulation, it is worth discussing the option of medical grade compression with your doctor or nurse practitioner. There are compression socks you can buy at sport stores or pharmacies but they will not have the adequate compression needed for a current medical condition or prevention of certain circulation issues. As for giving compression socks a run for their money, research the best brand and pricing for you and take them for a spin.

Financial literacy: Sometimes you just have to say NO!



By Brian Denysuik, Creditaid www.creditaid.ca

We are talking about lending people money, money that we may or may not have. If you have money saved and want to give it away, go for it! We say “give” as there is never a 100% guarantee that you will get repaid. If a friend needs money to fix their car or your child asks for money for a down payment so they can buy a house, and you don’t have the cash saved, the best answer is NO. In some ways our grandparents had it easier than our generation as they had no access to easy credit. They may have had a mortgage and possibly a car loan but did not have several credit cards plus a line of credit or two. So, they had no choice but to say NO. And guess what? They still had friends and family members who loved them. But we have access to easy credit, meaning it’s just there waiting for us to use it. This simply makes it too easy to get in debt, often resulting in unmanageable debt.

When someone asks you for money, be it a friend or loved one, it is very easy to borrow money for them. But this is NOT your money, you are not lending them only \$10,000 as an example. If you add on the annual interest cost, you are actually lending them far more. Plus, if they do not repay you, you could end up owing \$20,000 with tacked on interest, or worse, not being able to repay the debt at all – resulting in a bankruptcy.

NO is a harsh word. It makes us uncomfortable to say this to someone we care about. Heck, it is even hard to say NO to someone we don’t know like the veterinarian or charity canvasser that knocks on our door.

Here are a few suggestions on how to take the sting out of NO

If a family member or friend asks for money that you would have to borrow,

try saying this to them:

“You know that if I had the money I would gladly give it to you but I don’t. I would need to borrow it and I would need to make the monthly payment which is impossible with my monthly budget.”

If they say (which you know they will), *“Don’t worry, I will pay you back in full or I’ll make the monthly payments.”*

You can reply, *“Yes I know that is your intention but if you weren’t able, my credit rating would be ruined and I know that you would feel awful if this happened. So, it’s best that we don’t get ourselves into a situation where there would be hard feelings between us. I value our friendship/relationship too much for that.”*

If it’s a child asking for money for a down payment it’s best to be honest and tell them that you have no money saved for this purpose. Tell them you should each create a monthly budget with a savings component so that you can both save the money for their down payment. How can they expect you to save if they are not willing to save also? They might be mad at first, but as they get older (and hopefully wiser) they will understand this is the best way to become a responsible home owner.

When you take your pet to the veterinarian and are presented with an ‘estimate’ for the services they are recommending try saying this:

“I understand you want the best care for my pet and so do I. Unfortunately, there is no money in my household budget for an expense this big. What can you do for \$100? Or else say, “I have two other pets at home that also need to be provided for. I just can’t allocate this much of my monthly veterinarian allowance for just Fluffy. Which is the one test you would run first and what is the cost?”

I have seen people use this strategy



NO is a harsh word. It makes us uncomfortable to say this to someone we care about. Heck, it is even hard to say NO to someone we don’t know like the veterinarian or charity canvasser that knocks on our door.

many times and they have never once been challenged further. The reason is because only you know what your monthly expenses are and how much you can truly afford to spend.

When a charity canvasser comes to your door (or a similar situation occurs) it is perfectly polite to tell them, *“I already have two charities that I support which is the maximum for my household budget.”*

Remember that even though you might be a little embarrassed today by saying NO, the embarrassment could be ten-fold in the future if you weren’t able to make your own mortgage payment or your car got re-possessed because your money was going to payments for someone else’s debt. Deep down, your family member or friend does not want you to be put into a worse financial situation. So even though they may be disappointed with you today for not lending them money, your relationship will bounce back much quicker than if you ended up incurring a debt that neither of you can repay.

Brian Denysuik is a local credit counsellor and registered insolvency counsellor at Creditaid who has been in the financial services industry for over 35 years.



Clarity over clutter: Rethink organizing at home and work



By Susan Macaulay, Clarity over Clutter

When you stop, think, and review the various areas of your home or work that have items stored; it can be a revelation that there is a lot.

We live in a culture that very much includes acquiring or having many items for various activities.

It can be a good thing to have many items. Some benefits are:

- it can allow for quicker, and easier ways to complete a project,
- it can provide for the opportunity to participate in an activity,
- it can bring more comfort in our homes, or work space,
- it can be helpful by providing resources for physical fitness improvement.

However, many items can also cause overwhelmingness, frustration and stress that can weigh on your mind, or affect your physical health. It can cause limited use of your home or workspace. Many items can take up space which could be used for items that are needed, or be a roadblock in allowing to complete or enjoy an activity.

Many people have purchased items with the intention of using the item, and in reflection, the item has been stored in the house or workspace for a long period of time, and never used. In some cases, an item has never been unpackaged, or tried.

The marketing of products can be very influential in the power of purchases. It can be the eye catching packaging, the wording on the packaging, the commercial hype of the product, the 'sale' price, the idea of buying in bulk, or the colors and textures.

The use of smell and taste can also be a great influence in purchasing. Think of the display stands with various samples of food. In sampling the food, you may purchase it; but you may also purchase other items as a result of the sampling.

Something that tastes good can also contribute to a release of "feel good" hormones, known as endorphins. As a result, if you're 'feeling good' while shopping, you may be more open to purchasing items that you may not normally purchase.

For some people, the idea of acquiring an item is as far as it goes. The thrill of the hunt is the focus. Bargains, sales, special or limited items can all be part of the acquiring process.

One way to look at items that you may have, or are thinking of purchasing is the fact of time to make space, set up, or use the item.

If for example, you purchase tools for scrapbooking, woodworking, or creating an extensive garden area. Acquiring the tools needed is one thing. Taking a look at the time that is needed to work on the project is another piece to consider.

In each of the above examples, it is an ongoing amount of time that is needed to enjoy the activity, and in some cases maintain the activity. Each of these hobbies can be enjoyable, but having the time to enjoy them is something that one needs to find the time for.

If you work full time, have family needs to take care of, personal health attention, regular household activities, and practice proper eating and exercise; finding time for many other activities may not realistically fit into your current lifestyle.

There is constant messaging that is marketed to us that we can have it all, buy it all, do it all, and still be happy; and have time for other things.

Before purchasing an item, or taking on a new hobby, taking the time to be very realistic in researching the item to purchase, or starting the hobby may give you a clearer understanding of the time involved for it. Along with the



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items for the activity, keep in mind the space needed to store it properly.

Maybe there is something that you would like to try in the future; 'keep the thought and not the stuff related to that activity to the time when you are able to pursue it'. Or try the activity prior to purchasing the items needed. That way you can find out if you really do like it.

We use 20% of our stuff 80% of the time. This also equates to activities we do, and the items we use.

Taking an honest look at what works in your life now, and what is weighing you down, is so helpful in the Rethinking process for how you want your home or workspace to be.

Once you are able to see what works, and what does not; you can then look to edit out, re-home, or give yourself permission to let some activities or items go. This will allow you to be less weighed down, and enjoy what you really like to do.

Rethink.....Redo.....Relax.....

Susan Macaulay of Clarity Over Clutter is a Professional Organizer who works with individuals, and families to create and enjoy a functional home. Susan specializes, as well, working with those who are dealing with Chronic Disorganization and/or Hoarding.

Growing Your Peace At Work[®]: A helpful tool for daily practice



By Marianne Farag, *Sublimity: Pathways to Peace* www.sublimitypathways.com

On a day to day basis, when the demands and pressures of work-life press in, you need something that can help you as a quick fix to get you marching to the beat of a calmer drummer. What to do when you are juggling many balls and feel like you are about to snap at someone or maybe you already did and now feel even more frustrated and out of control? With that in mind, I developed *Growing Your Peace At Work[®]* which is an easy to use tool with a set of guidelines and a checklist to help you manage the quality of your workday. Whether you are experiencing conflict in your interactions, or encountering negative behaviours, or find yourself working with people who are demoralized and cynical, or are having difficulty adjusting to organizational change, or face other obstacles and challenges in your work, *Growing Your Peace At Work[®]* offers you empowering ways to cope and thrive regardless of the environment in which you find yourself.

When you continue to be negatively impacted by the way in which others may interact with you at work, you put your morale, stress level, performance quality, and physical and mental health at risk. Instead of feeling helpless or victimized, you can take charge of your wellbeing by practicing some very straightforward strategies that reinforce that the only person whose thoughts, actions and words you can control are your own!

How to use Growing Your Peace At Work[®]

The way to use the *Growing Your Peace at Work[®]* checklist and guidelines is to review them daily until you feel that you have internalized them and that they are becoming second nature. The best time to review the guidelines and checklist is at the end of each work day. For added

benefit, you can also start your workday by reviewing the guidelines and checklist as a way to reinforce them to yourself, and set the tone for the approach you want to take in order to cultivate your peace of mind in the workplace. Once you get into the daily habit of using *Growing Your Peace at Work[®]*, you can share your feedback on this tool via the on-line, short, anonymous survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2FVD8VR>.

How you will benefit from Growing Your Peace At Work[®]

With daily use of the *Growing Your Peace at Work[®]* tool you will notice the following shifts:

- Improved quality of your interactions with others.
- Less time spent talking about your workplace distress.
- Greater ability to cope with negative behaviour of others at work.
- Reduced frustration levels with workplace challenges/obstacles.
- Less emotional charge around difficult work relationships.
- Greater ability to perform at your best.
- Increased focus on the job.

Daily guidelines and checklist

Principle 1: Presence

Focussing on one activity/task at a time, fully concentrating on it, giving it your undivided attention without distraction or multitasking, and being aware of your physical, mental and emotional states as you undertake an activity/task. This is known as practicing Mindfulness.

1. I did at least one activity today in a Mindful way. E.G. Maintaining complete focus on a conversation/discussion, or maintaining single point attention to eating a snack/your lunch, walking to a meeting.

2. If today you experienced tension, stress, anxiety, conflict, being offended or upset, etc., how did you handle it? Select as many as you attempted:

- a) Practiced Mindful breathing?
- b) Did a short Meditation?
- c) Repeated an Affirmation to myself?
- d) Reminded myself that everything is not always about me?
- e) Decided to hold off on a response until I'd cooled down?
- f) Redirected my focus to the work-related goal/outcome to help shape how I dealt with the situation?
- g) Other? (Specify)

Principle 2: Communication

Listening attentively with the intention of understanding before responding, seeking clarification before assuming or jumping to conclusions. Choosing your words in written and oral communication to convey facts, ideas, instructions without editorializing, inflammatory or disrespectful language. Ensuring that your self-talk and line of thinking is based on fact rather than conjecture, fear, reactions to stress - in other words, having a correct view of self in a given context.

3. I practised seeking clarification in at least one of my interactions today by focussing on making sure I properly understood another's position even if I did not share their point of view. (i.e., Listening attentively to another without interrupting, without jumping in with anxiety or irritation because they don't see things my way.)
4. I practiced self-awareness by noticing when I had a negative or judgmental thought about someone or a situation and replaced it with a thought that focuses on how I can contribute to the achievement of workplace results.

5. If a situation arose today in which someone was being blamed for having said or done or not done something, I focussed on finding out the facts rather than making assumptions and jumping to conclusions.

Principle 3: Collaboration

Recognizing that the sum is greater than the parts and that to be effective at work depends on others in the organization as much as yourself. Whether it's the executives, the different functional area within the organization, support staff, maintenance staff, etc., it is through interdependence and co-operation that you and your organization achieve success.

6. I practiced respect for all who crossed my path. E.G., refraining from demeaning conversations or aggressiveness of tone, jokes or sarcasm at another's expense, or careless remarks.

7. Today I witnessed someone being disrespected, humiliated, or disregarded and I reached out to help them.

8. In regard to anything that went wrong or where quality expectations or deadlines were not met, I focussed on solutions, correcting the situation

without blame or judgement of myself or others.

9. Today I acknowledged the contribution of at least one person who is employed by my organization. E.G., a colleague, someone I report to, someone who reports to me, a member of the maintenance staff.

Principle 4: Self-accountability

Your peace of mind depends on you. The quality of your work day depends on how you choose to interpret and respond to what comes your way each day. Daily self-monitoring without judgment, but rather, in the spirit of continuous improvement and life-long learning and growth, helps you shift to a *Growing Your Peace At Work*® mindset and behaviour as your new norm or default.

10. One behaviour/action I am proud of that I took today to show my commitment to my peace of mind in the workplace relates to the following *Growing Your Peace At Work*® Principles (select as many as apply):

- a) Presence
- b) Collaboration
- c) Communication
- d) Self-Accountability

11. Reflecting back on this day, my thoughts, words or actions were not always conducive to my peace of mind or supportive of peace in the workplace. Select as many as apply from the list below:

- a) I engaged in a line of thinking that was disruptive to my peace of mind.
- b) Words I said to another could have been communicated in a kinder, more neutral way or I could have demonstrated more patience.
- c) A decision, action, or behaviour that I chose was needlessly disruptive to my peace of mind.
- d) A decision, action, or behaviour that I chose created unnecessary friction in my workplace.
- e) A decision which was going to cause uncertainty/distress in the workplace was made more difficult for those on the receiving end through my choice of words and/or strategy.

12. If at any time today you practiced any of the activities listed below, indicate the extent to which they helped you manage your general state of wellbeing at work.

ACTIVITY	EXTENT TO WHICH THESE ACTIVITIES HAVE HELPED YOU					
	1 indicates not at all, and 5 indicates very much; select "Not Applicable" for activities you did not try.					
	Not Applicable	1	2	3	4	5
Yoga						
Meditation/Mindfulness						
Physical Exercise						
Talking through what's causing me worry, stress, anxiety.						
Emotional intelligence techniques.						
Contact with a mentor or coach.						
Positive thinking and attitude.						
Practicing a more effective approach to communication.						
Seeking more clarification and making fewer assumptions.						
Taking responsibility for the quality of my workday.						

Marianne Farag is an Inner-Peace Specialist at Sublimity: Pathways to Peace who works with people seeking to increase their peace of mind and joy in their lives. Marianne holds a Certificate in Applied Counselling from the University of Manitoba and has trained in meditation and Reiki. She can be reached at: info@sublimitypathways.com

Enjoy your food: Cheers (in moderation)!

By Carla D'Andreamatteo, RD, MSc www.thefoodlady.ca



Alcohol and our body. This is always a topic that engages many people. It appears to be far more enticing to hear that a glass of red wine a day might help our health than to hear that an apple a day certainly will help our health. When it comes to this topic it's best to hear the whole story, based on scientific evidence.

Let's begin by understanding what is considered 'safe' or more appropriately, 'low-risk' alcohol consumption. The adage, "everything in moderation" is often applied to foods and beverages viewed as sinful in the Canadian diet. This is a great idea as a guidepost, however the subjective interpretation of moderation can create quite a scary scenario. Time for some clarity.

What does drinking in moderation actually mean?

Very specific guidelines released by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (2011), answers that exact question. They are referred to as Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines:

- **Women** - No more than 2 drinks/day, a maximum of 10 drinks/week (*don't consume more than 3 drinks at one sitting*)
- **Men** - No more than 3 drinks/day, a maximum of 15 drinks/week (*don't consume more than 4 drinks at one sitting*)

Size does matter

The next step is to ensure that we are all on the same page when we talk about a serving size. Unfortunately, for some it will be painful to learn that a serving is not based on the size of the drinking vessel you choose, it is a measurable volume of alcohol regardless of glass size.

BEVERAGE	Alcohol %	One Serving
Beer	5	341ml/12 oz
Wine	12	142 ml/5 oz
Coolers, Cider	5	341 ml/12 oz
Distilled Alcohol	40	43 ml/1.5 oz

Are there health benefits associated with drinking alcohol?

This question is loaded (ugh...not funny, right?!) Keep reading though, it's worth your health.

If there is one thing I have had to accept as a nutrition professional, it is that the answers to these types of questions are always somewhere in the grey area. In other words, there isn't a solid 'yes' or 'no' answer. And the answers we have today may possibly change as research in the area continues to add to the body of knowledge that currently exists.

Here is a breakdown of what scientific evidence has identified with regards to alcohol intake and the effects on the human body.

The evidence is mixed regarding the health benefits of alcohol:

- Some studies have linked 1-2 drinks daily with reduced risk for heart disease, however this was in adults over the age of 60 or possibly 70 years of age
- One drink every other day has been identified as potentially heart beneficial...for those over the age of 45 (men) and post-menopause (women)

The short list of benefits above, are likely why experts in this area state:

"No one should begin drinking or drink more frequently to gain potential health benefits". (Drink Sense. 2018)

This statement is further strengthened by the evidence available regarding the increased health risks associated with alcohol consumption.

Health concerns associated with alcohol consumption:

- Liver disease
- Increasing body weight
- Cancer (mouth, throat, esophagus, colon, liver, and breast cancer in women)
- Pancreatitis



Did you know?

Space out alcoholic drinks at least an hour apart.

Avoid all alcohol consumption during pregnancy and when breastfeeding.

- Menstrual problems
- Sexual impotence
- Vitamin deficiencies
- Heart problems (including high blood pressure)
- Gout
- Any amount of alcohol consumed during pregnancy may cause irreversible fetal damage, miscarriage, premature birth, low infant birth weight

The exciting news is that the components of red wine that have been singled out as possibly beneficial to heart health can be easily obtained through other foods! These foods include grapes, grape juice, and even berries.

My hope is that this article has provided some clarity regarding alcohol and the impact on body health. At the very least, there is some benefit to aging (can't wait to reach 70)! All kidding aside, alcohol consumption is a personal choice that is best made with all the evidence presented. The rest is up to you. Enjoy your food.

Carla D'Andreamatteo owns and operates a nutrition consulting company, The Food Lady, since 1999. Based in Winnipeg, the team of dietitians offers a variety of nutrition services provincially and nationally.



Take it off. What needs pruning on your tree?



By **Sylvia Marusyk**, *Sylvia! MindBody Works* www.stressedtokill.me

For you avid gardeners out there, you understand the necessity of pruning trees and shrubs, taking off the dead wood to get the greatest beauty in your yard or garden. For certain species and in certain climates, there is a right time and a wrong time to remove dead wood from a tree. Often times I have wondered, if the tree could speak, would it be pleased with the pruning or would it be fearful and beg to be left alone. It is truly the best thing for the tree in order for it to live into its potential.

In life we all experience seasons or times when dead wood needs to be removed from our tree of life. Most often we can't fathom pruning it ourselves. The branches may be dead but they're ours, they're familiar, they are safe. They may be ugly parts of our lives, they may be useless, they

may actually be making us sick. But the fear of taking off these parts may keep our tree intact as more and more of it slowly dies off. And then sometimes life does the pruning for us in the form of what we consider to be loss. Later in life we often experience these things as life changing events that lead us to something better.

What needs pruning on your tree? Are there relationships that are harmful, damaging or outright dangerous? Do you have one that needs to be taken off your tree of life? Or perhaps it's the job you do that sucks the life out of you? Can you find your joy and passion there, or does that need trimming? Is it your home? If you live with clutter you may feel psychologically cluttered up and choked. Do you need to remove that from your tree of life? Perhaps it's your self sabotaging negative talk. You

know what I mean, the "you are stupid" or "you are fat" comments. Are you prepared to get rid of that to watch your tree of life thrive?

We are not here to live a life of struggle, sadness, misery, fear. If that's where you are in your life, can you believe that you can change this? Are you ready to take off the dead wood that is holding you back from becoming everything you can be?

Now sometimes removal of a branch isn't required, just a little trimming. Perhaps there is a relationship that doesn't need removal, but needs a little trimming, a little working together to create something more beautiful. Have the courage to love yourself enough to know you deserve this!

Take off the dead wood and watch your life unfold more beautifully than you could have imagined!



Keith's corner:

Self compassion practice in your life



By Keith Macpherson www.keithmacpherson.ca

There is an ancient story about a girl who was born into the lap of wealth and royalty. From an early age this young girl was admired and loved by everyone that she encountered. She had a heart that could melt a winter's day and a smile that infectiously brought instant joy to each person she met.

One day at the age of thirteen years old, this young woman received a gift from an admirer. The gift was wrapped in paper and along with a note that read, "May you also see the wonderful person that you are". Upon unwrapping the gift, the young girl discovered a mirror that reflected back at her all that she was, physically and emotionally. Upon physically seeing herself for the first time in this mirror, the young girl began to weep tears of sadness. She noticed a large gap between her two front teeth and a large mole to the left side of her nose. Up until this point of seeing her own reflection, the young woman had been unaware that these physical attributes were present and held a strong sense of self-esteem. As she became aware of her own reflection in the mirror, her joy vanished, judgement set in, and her impact was felt by all around her.

I recently heard this story from a coaching client and was reminded of the battle that many of us face regarding our own self-worth. Whether it is a physical judgement or a negative belief that we have adopted about ourselves, lack of self-love is a growing epidemic in our culture.

We are the first to remind our students and children that they are good enough and should believe in themselves, however, when it comes to our own self-worth, we tend to beat ourselves up and often neglect to remind ourselves that we are beautiful and already enough.

In my new book, *Making Sense of Mindfulness*, I emphasize that the

foundation of a mindfulness practice is remembering that all things are connected. We can quickly see this foundational truth activated when someone walks into a room and is having a bad day. Without saying anything, we can sense the person's low energy and instantly pick up on their low energy vibrations. Their low energy has an impact on us. The opposite is also true. When someone is having a great day and smiles at us, we can sense that behind their smile is a genuine joy exuding. It becomes impossible for us not to smile back. We are unconscious beings that are deeply connected, even on an energetic vibrational level.

With this in mind, it is important to realize that our students and children are also very unconsciously aware. When we share with our students messages of positivity and encouragement such as, "believe in yourself", they can unconsciously detect if we are speaking from a place of truth within our own selves or just saying the words. If you want to have a lasting, positive impact on those around you, it becomes crucial to practice loving on yourself first so that your words and actions are resonate and true.

In the mindfulness practices that I offer, I encourage us all to take a long, hard look at the way we are thinking about ourselves. I often challenge my coaching clients to confront themselves in the mirror and notice the judgements that arise. I would like to share with you a few tips on how to begin building a positive relationship with yourself. Remember that not only will you benefit from this practice, but everyone around you will be positively impacted. The world is a mirror reflecting back what you are putting out there. May you remember that you are already enough, just the way you are!



Practice accepting compliments that you receive from those around you. So often we tend to reject the positive compliments that come our way because of our own insecurities. Remind yourself that compliments are a confirmation that life loves you.

Tips for cultivating a self-love practice:

1. As you wash your hands during each washroom break, find your eyes in the mirror reflecting back at you and first notice the resistance and possible negative self-talk that comes up within yourself. Once you name that aspect, go deeper and think or speak a positive affirmation to yourself, such as "you are doing a great job today", or "I love you" or "I want to love you". Make this a regular habit!
2. Practice accepting compliments that you receive from those around you. So often we tend to reject the positive compliments that come our way because of our own insecurities. Remind yourself that compliments are a confirmation that life loves you.
3. Finally, write yourself a love letter and mail it to yourself. I suggest writing this letter from your heart and imagine that you are writing it to your best friend.

Keith Macpherson is a motivational speaker, yoga instructor, life coach and recording artist. To connect further with Keith Macpherson and to sign up for his daily inspirational email and other free gifts, visit: <http://www.keithmacpherson.ca>



Wellness in the holiday season

Transitioning from work to holidays



By **Zach Schnitzer, M.Ed. Counselling, The Manitoba Teachers' Society**

During the school year, you give your students everything you have, while somehow leaving time for family, friends, and recreation. The holiday season is a welcomed break from the rigors of the school year. After jumping from completing report cards to making sure students are ready for the holiday concert you are looking forward to some rest and relaxation. Unfortunately, as we all know, the holidays are

often filled with severe stress, as we struggle to manage family gatherings, cooking, activities, and shopping. In addition, for people who have lost loved ones recently or in past holiday seasons, this time of year can be an overwhelming mixture of happiness and grief. It is so important that you take time to maintain your wellness during the holiday season.

Wellness is multidimensional; it

includes not only your physical and emotional needs, but spiritual, social, intellectual, financial, environmental.

Wellness to do's

1. Reflect and prepare:

It is often difficult to transition from work to holidays. So take at least thirty minutes, possibly on your last day of school before you go home, to reflect on your

first term. Write down at least five positive accomplishments, whether it was how you delivered a particular subject or how you connected with a student. Then, note your goals for the Holiday Season. What is the most important part of these two weeks? Connecting with family? Rest? Engaging in hobbies? Make a brief plan to ensure you prioritize this activity.

2. Maintain boundaries:

As much as people want your time this season remember that you also need to decompress. It is okay to say no to certain people and events. Remember that you can't please everyone and you need to recharge. In particular, prioritize making time for people that make you feel good. Find someone to visit who makes you feel supported and with whom you feel safe to talk about your feelings and be your true self. These social activities are rewarding and re-energizing. And remember to take time for you!

3. Have a budget:

One of the major stressors over the holidays is monetary. People are often worried about spending too much money. Make a detailed and realistic budget, noting the people for whom you need to buy gifts, etc. But also don't beat yourself up if you go a little over.

4. Engage your spirit:

Spirituality is an important facet of wellness. You don't have to be religious to be spiritual. In one way, try to take a moment during the holidays to reflect on your values in life. Practice gratitude by listing three things you are grateful for—studies show doing this regularly improves mood and anxiety. You may also want to take this time to try Mindfulness meditation. It is a tremendously helpful practice.

5. Get outside:

Take at least one opportunity to get outside, either by yourself or with loved ones. Winter can be cold but is beautiful. Take a long walk in the park, go skiing or skating, or check out the Assiniboine Park Zoo.

6. Unplug:

Try your best to completely unplug from school. Try to refrain from checking emails and planning the next term. Engage in a hobby or book that you've been putting off. Unplugging doesn't mean just NOT thinking about work, it means actively engaging in relaxation.

7. Exercise:

Physical activity is a huge part of wellness. It improves mood and sleep, and decreases anxiety. If you were overly busy in the school year and didn't exercise, use this as an opportunity to start. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise 3 times per week.

8. Catch up on your sleep:

We are chronically under slept as a society. In the midst of possible late-night gatherings, practice good sleep hygiene, such as avoiding caffeine after 4 pm, engaging in a calming nightly routine, and aiming to go to sleep no later than 11 pm.

9. Eat well:

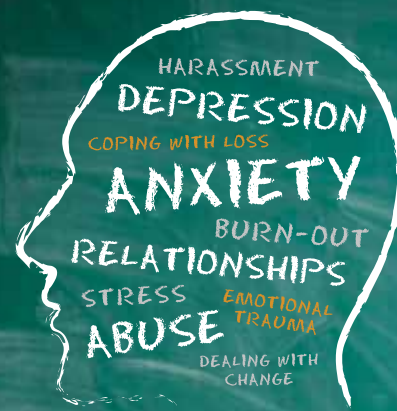
No doubt you will probably have several large and delicious holiday meals. Though tasty these can leave people feeling sluggish. Aim to eat healthy meals on other days. You can also take the holidays to make a few frozen meals that you can easily thaw and serve in the new term.

10. Prepare for return to work:

Yes, you will have to return to work. But this transition doesn't have to be so stressful. At least three days before your return, aim to gradually get back to a regular sleeping schedule. And remember that stress is normal. It may be difficult at first, but after a couple of days in your routine, you'll be back to normal.

Enjoy the holiday season and remember to prioritize wellness!

Zach Schnitzer M.Ed. Counselling, is a Canadian Certified Counsellor through the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. He has a client-centered, collaborative approach, with a specialty in Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Mindfulness, and Emotion-Focused Therapy.



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Yoga practice: The movement of wellness

By Tally Young



When the word wellness comes into our mind, where is the value we place on it happening in our lives? Would it be just our physical wellbeing, like going for a run, swim or maybe a yoga class? Is it how we eat, moving from a heavy meat diet to more earth grown foods and non-meat options? Or is it the spiritual route, moving towards our faith? How does it guide us? Motivate us?

Emotional wellness, it has come into the mainstream periphery and has changed the way we look at mental illness, stress, over scheduling and our ability to handle it all. It encompasses all life's day to day dealings that eliminate our quiet time and use up our resources to make way for more work, entertainment, full schedules and ultimately increases our stress level. Stress is the biggest source of creating disease in an otherwise healthy body.

Emotional wellness is a road less travelled but is gaining speed. So many are feeling the effects of the burden of

being "too busy", and not quite making the connection that it is their need to fill up their day with "mindful" activities that may be the cause of their strain and burden in the long run. These burdens lead to the underlying reasons so many in our world are being diagnosed with mental illness.

As a world community we are making great strides in bringing the topic of both mental illness and the importance of emotional wellness to main stream acceptance. There is still the undertone of shame when it comes to mental illness. We feel like we are not strong enough because our brains can't handle the simple day to day task of thinking clearly and our desire to move out of our comfort zone is like, gone!

As life moves on, a simple and solid way to make sure that you are in it, is to stop, breathe and continue with that simple act for as long as you can. The act of being aware of your busy, is to notice it. When this simple act is put into practice we

shake up our bodie's rhythm and teach ourselves to notice when we need to stop and breathe. I would like to share with you a simple breath meditation that can last as long as you need it to. A practice of 15 minutes per day is beneficial to your blood pressure, digestion, hormonal balance and overall cognitive wellness.

Called "square breathe"

Sit in a tall seat, cushion, couch, bed, whatever is closest and comfortable:

Inhale – count 4

Retain – count 4

Exhale - count 4

Hold – count 4

Fifteen minutes a day is all it takes to feel the body respond and melt the strain of life away. If the time is an issue, start small, before too long you will find it naturally grows longer with the comfort of the benefits you will be feeling. Notice the small stuff melt away and you will become stronger, more focused and creative.

Mornings first!

Live your life like every day is game day!



By Sofia Costantini

I grew up dancing, competing and performing throughout my entire childhood, teens, and into my late 20's. As a young dancer I would wake up early every morning to think about the goals I wanted to accomplish for that day. I reminded myself of the discipline required to stay focused on what I wanted to achieve and made a promise to myself to make it happen. I would pump myself up with positive statements that got me ready for the day and upon finishing my 30-minute stretch I always ended my morning routine with looking in the mirror and saying "You've got this!" I was able to manage my anxiety and adrenaline level in highly stressful situations because I did the proper prep.

This routine pulled me through crazy and difficult times and it brought me a tremendous amount of solace.

When I transitioned from a professional dancer into training students to perform and prepare mentally for competitions and performances somewhere along the way I lost the importance of my personal morning mental prep and it presented itself as irritability, stress, and frustration in my daily routine. What I started to realize was life in general has highly competitive attributes to each day so when I didn't wake up early and positively prepare it left me feeling uneasy and less focused. I looked at my day with dread, boredom, and panic as I had no idea how I would manage to get through my responsibilities with enjoyment and ease. I knew I needed to make a change!

"Game day" to me is anything that requires mental focus in order to achieve the best results by positively preparing for a goal. I started to think, why couldn't every day be treated like game day? Why are we not choosing to live life with the same kind of intensity and mental care we take for



"important days"? My new motto was "Mornings first! Live your life like every day is game day!"

Are you in a pattern of getting up just in time to shower, get dressed, eat, and then run out the door? Do you take time to think about how you would like your day to look? Do you acknowledge you had a bad sleep and know it's already going to be a bad day?

Consider adding the following to your morning routine in order to feel calm and ready for any stressors coming your way.

Morning mental prep

1. Before getting out of bed take 5 - 10 deep breaths – let your belly rise and lower slowly, and think positive thoughts.
2. Listen to your body's cues; let go of any negative energy and tension.
3. Imagine powerful, positive "I AM" statements such as:

I am Happy
I am Positive
I am Motivated
I am Energetic
I am Patient
I am ready for the day

4. Visualize exactly how you want your day to look. Imagine a perfect day. Plant your feet on the ground firmly and get out of bed because you are ready.

5. Keep an open mind and stay in the moment.

Consider consistently working towards this balanced state. This is something I say to myself to stay on track:

"I am committed to being the best version of myself and I will make a conscious effort to be as consistent as I can be. If I stray off the path, I will work towards finding my way back to achieving a balanced state without getting discouraged for faltering."

Take time to enjoy your morning routine. You're worth it!



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