

Members Quarterly

Fall 2013 Edition

Ask the Expert

Poor Health Habits are Productivity Thieves

Bad habits = poor output



Marla Ericksen

Q. It's hard enough juggling demands and prioritizing tasks at work. How do we maintain our highest levels of mental, physical and business energy with everything else going on in our lives?

A. A lifestyle adjustment that nurtures the interdependent relationship between mind, body, heart and spirit is what is necessary. This is not as grandiose and out of reach as you might imagine! Getting physical and looking after yourself is at the core of the solution. We all know that exercise is great for your health, but it also positively affects your performance on the job. Bad health habits like smoking and a poor diet coupled with lack of physical activity are literally robbing you of the ability to be efficient, effective and productive both at work and at play. So the short answer is that you need to get active, get healthy and get real!

What You Need To Know

According to numerous studies, people who have active lifestyles are more productive, efficient and creative. They are also happier and more satisfied with their work lives. The relevant research shows that workers who engage in regular physical activity perform better at their jobs as measured in both qualitative and quantitative constructs. When a company's bottom line is important, then quality, quantity and productivity are of paramount importance.

The Mayo Clinic touts that exercise improves your mood, combats chronic disease, assists in weight management, boosts your energy level and promotes better sleep.

Another finding by Nicolaas Pronk, PhD published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine found that when employees get more physical activity "...work performance gets a boost". Physically fit workers usually have greater endurance, are physically stronger and are less likely to feel fatigued.

Another study presented at a past American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) annual meeting states that workers' quality of work, mental performance and time management were better on days when they exercised.

No Wasted Effort

While exercise seems to be the main ingredient for all self-development initiatives, your efforts at adopting a more active lifestyle will benefit more than just your productivity at work. You can reap the benefits of your exercise investment in all aspects of your life. Entrepreneurial direction, mental clarity, emotional stability and a deeper connection to your life's purpose can all be supported and enhanced by the choice to be more physically active.

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Time to Tweak Your Priorities

Overall health needs to be evident in all aspects of your life including physical, mental, emotional, energetic and -spiritual. You cannot affect one of these areas without the impact being felt in the others. If you mistreat your body, you will have less vitality. If you suppress emotions, you will get sick. When you have a negative thought, it ripples through your physical tissues. This is the basis of a holistic approach to wellness. The key concept here is that you have the opportunity to positively benefit and enhance your entire life by embracing some of the ideas presented here. A productive enterprise indeed!

In the media release on a new book "THE ONE THING: The Surprising Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results", author Gary Keller suggests some simple guidelines for creating and sustaining energy. The guidelines are from the book, the commentary is my interpretation of the suggestions.

1. Eat right, exercise and sleep sufficiently for PHYSICAL ENERGY.

The human body is an incredibly sensitive, intelligent entity. Your body is designed to move. Put high quality fuel into it, give it adequate rest and it will take you on a wondrous journey through life with health, vitality and longevity.

2. Set goals, plan and calendar for MENTAL ENERGY.

For optimal recruitment of mental faculties, it is important to have a vision. Plot your course, be persistent and remain flexible en route to achieving the objectives that lead to your vision becoming reality.

3. Time block your one thing for BUSINESS ENERGY.

Focus on one thing at a time. Identify what you want to do and when you want to do it. Stick to your plan and make it happen. Divert all your attention to what you are doing while you are doing it. Our brains were not necessarily designed to multitask.

4. Hug, kiss and laugh with your loved ones for EMOTIONAL ENERGY.

Spend time living, laughing and loving the people who support and share in this journey with you. We are social beings. Your friends and family need you and you need them. Let them know they are respected, loved and important to you. You will be pleasantly surprised at how this benefits you.

5. Meditate and pray for SPIRITUAL ENERGY.

We all have the need for purpose and meaning in our lives. Allow yourself the time to contemplate the reality of your life, the beliefs that you hold, the values that form them and how it all unfolds through your thoughts, speech, behaviour, attitudes and actions. Reflect on the person that you are and the person you want to be. Then, you can aspire to bridge the gap.

Your path to being more productive, creative and satisfied with your work is your own responsibility. The choices that you make will be directly reflected in how life unfolds. Choose to get active and start NOW! After all, now is all there really is.

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