



Personal Wellness for Top Peak Performance

As you start a new job, it is more important than ever to pay attention to being healthy! You might be under more stress, have less time to think about taking care of yourself, *and* be exposed to new germs and sicknesses at work.

Being healthy involves many different parts of your life, including eating well, exercising, resting and relaxing, and being careful about sickness. All this may:

- Help keep you from getting sick,
- Help put you in a better mood every day, and
- Give you more energy (so handling your responsibilities at home and at work will be easier).

Eat well for more energy, to feel well, and for greater job success.

Eat many different kinds of foods every day:

- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, some protein foods (meats, beans, fish, eggs, etc.), some dairy products (such as milk, cheese, and yogurt), and carbohydrates (such as “whole-grain” bread, cereal, pasta, and rice).
- Eat more fruits and vegetables. This is one of the best things you can do. Your vegetables can be fresh,

canned, frozen, or dried. Try to eat at least 5 servings a day. This will give you more energy, and it can even help protect you from some diseases such as cancer, stroke and heart disease.

Fresh fruits like apples, bananas, oranges, peaches, pears, or grapes taste good and take almost no time to prepare!

Also, try to eat some vegetables that are dark green, orange or yellow at least every other day.

Eat less fat! Fat is in foods like cooking oils, mayonnaise, butter, margarine, salad dressing, cream, doughnuts, sweet rolls, cheese, and meats. You can still eat these things, but just take small servings. You can also drink low-fat milk. Trim the fat off meats, and eat fried foods just once in awhile. Excess fat can make you gain weight. It can also lead to many other health problems, like heart attacks, diabetes, and even some kinds of cancer.

If you choose drinks with caffeine (like coffee, tea, and some soft drinks), try to limit them to 1 to 2 servings a day. The quick “high” you get from caffeine won’t last long, and you might begin to depend on it.

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Try to eat less sugar and salt. Sugar gives you calories without the nutrients like vitamins and minerals that you need for good health. Cut back on salt by not adding salt to your foods when you eat them. Choose fewer salty snack foods like potato chips.

Eat or drink plenty of dairy products for healthy bones.

Drink lots of water (6 to 8 glasses). Water helps keep your body working smoothly and feeling better! It's calorie-free and *free!*

Pack your lunches and snacks. This will save you money, and if you make healthy choices, it will help you eat healthier every day. It only takes about 5 minutes to pack your lunch. To save time in the morning, you could even make your lunch the night before.

Sandwiches make great lunches.

- A tomato sandwich or cheese taco is safe even if you don't have a refrigerator at work.
- You can make sandwiches with leftover meat from dinner (like chicken, ham, or meat loaf) and vegetables (like tomatoes, lettuce, or cucumbers), but keep these sandwiches cold.

(You may want to buy an insulated lunch bag and a small "stay-cold" pack, so you can bring lunches that need to be kept cold. You only have to buy it once, and it will save you money bringing your lunch in the long run!)

- One way to make a sandwich different is to use flour tortillas instead of bread. Just roll up whatever you want inside the tortilla!

Put whole pieces of fruit in your lunch, or bring them to have as a snack (like apples, bananas, pears, or peaches). They take no time to prepare, are nutritious, and are usually cheaper and healthier than potato chips or candy bars.

Other snack ideas are: carrots, graham crackers with peanut butter, and pretzels.

Get regular exercise.

This takes a little planning and time, but you will see the rewards when you start to feel more energy! Try to move throughout the day. Take the steps instead of the elevator and walk as much as possible.

Everyone needs at least 30 minutes every day of "moderate activity," like walking, gardening, or playing an outdoor game. You don't have to do 30 minutes all at once. You could do a little bit several times a day. like 10 minutes in the morning, 15 at lunchtime, and 10 in the afternoon!

Twenty to 30 minutes of more quick-paced activity (like fast walking, jogging, swimming, or dancing) 3 to 5 times a week even makes your heart stronger!

Make it fun and easy to be active:

- Buy some comfortable walking shoes that make your feet feel good.
- Walk with a friend.
- Make exercise part of what you do each day, at a regular time.
- Spend fun time with your kids. They can ride along on wagons, skates, or bikes while you walk.
- Walking can also be a time to be by yourself, relax, and think about things.
- You might be able to trade child care with your neighbors or friends. If they watch your children while you exercise, you could watch their children another time.

Exercise has many benefits besides making you feel better and have more energy. Regular physical activity:

- Will reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke,
- Will help you lose weight if you need to or it will help you maintain your weight, and
- Will help you become more flexible and move around easier.

Get enough rest.

Get a good night's sleep. Try to set a regular time you try to go to bed each night so that you'll get at least 7 or 8 hours of sleep. Giving yourself enough time to sleep will save you time the next day, because you'll have so much more energy to finish all your tasks!

Relax at other times during the day, even for just a few minutes. If you have older children, explain to them that you need a few minutes of quiet to rest by yourself, so you can be more fun the rest of the day (or evening). If you have young children, try to work out a deal with a friend or neighbor so that they can watch your children for a few minutes while you rest. You could return the favor at a different time of day!

Reduce the stress in your life.

Everything you've already read about (eating well, exercise, and rest) can lower your feelings of stress, but there are many other things you can do:

- Talk about your feelings with someone else. You'll be surprised at how much better and more relaxed you'll feel.
- Take a few minutes for yourself each day before or after your work day.
- Don't expect too much from yourself. There is *no* way to do everything perfectly. Just try to take care of what is most important. Think about one thing at a time, and allow yourself to make mistakes. Remember, you are only human and mistakes happen.
- Try to think about the things that worry you in a more positive way. Sometimes worries can become challenges you can overcome. Believe in yourself and believe that you will be able to make the best out of every situation.
- Spend fun time with your friends and family. You don't have to spend money going to the movies. You could play cards or board games with each other, or go to the park!

Try to keep from getting sick.

Eating well, exercising, getting rest, and reducing stress will all help you to keep from getting sick.

At work, be especially careful. Germs pass easily from one person to on things like papers and folders. *Wash your hands often* with warm water and soap, especially before eating, to avoid sickness and colds. Children can also bring home germs and diseases, so encourage them to wash their hands and faces often. The less germs, the less time you will have to miss work from because of sickness. Healthy children will help *your* attendance record.

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For additional information, ask your county Extension Family and Consumer Educator about other nutrition and wellness fact sheets.

The titles for the series *Workfront-Homefront* were selected based on telephone interviews with Work First participants. Titles include:

Easing Transitions: Balancing Work and Family, FCS-479-1

Parenting for the Busy Parent of Preschoolers, FCS-479-2

Adjusting to Work: Getting Along with Others, FCS-479-3

Decision Making: It’s a Skill, FCS-479-4

Locating and Selecting Child Care, FCS-479-5

Personal Wellness for Top Performance, FCS-479-6

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