

# Saline County Employee Newsletter

## DAILY ACTIVITIES GUARANTEED TO BOOST YOUR BRAINPOWER

by Robyn Whalen

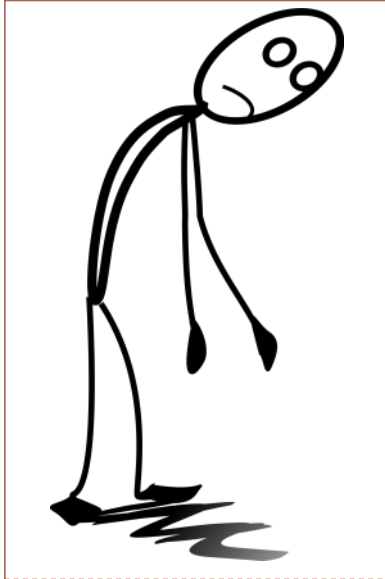
A mind really is a terrible thing to waste. As we get older, our brains begin to age and lose neurons, and, eventually, our brain tissue starts to shrink. Cognitive decline can lead to an increased risk for illnesses such as Alzheimer's and dementia.

While this might sound scary, rest assured that there are plenty of things you can do to keep your mind healthy and sharp for as long as possible. And, as it turns out, this doesn't mean you have to play tedious memory games every day to do so! With some healthy habits and hobbies, you can easily flex your brain muscles and help combat the effects of an aging brain to keep it sharper longer. *(continued page #3)*



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## 4 REASONS YOU'RE SO DARN TIRED

### REASON #1—YOU'RE NOT EXERCISING ENOUGH

Talk about a vicious cycle: When you feel exhausted, you tend to skip working out, or at least don't exercise at the intensity you could. That can make you feel, well, even more tired.

A study by the University of Georgia found regular, low-intensity exercise can help boost energy levels, even when people think it won't.

Lead researcher Tim Puetz says, "Too often we believe that a quick workout will leave us worn out, especially when we're already feeling fatigued. However, we have shown that regular exercise can actually go a long way in increasing feelings of energy, particularly in sedentary individuals. (See Reason #2 below...)

*"Providing opportunities for employees to develop healthier lifestyles and supporting an adoption of habits attitudes contributing to their positive well-being."* - Saline County Wellness Committee

## FALL SAFETY TRAINING EVENT

The Safety Committee has scheduled the Fall Training session to be focused upon **two (2) separate topics:** "Workplace Civility" and "Snacking/Carbinated Beverages". David Kimbrough of Continuum EAP in Lincoln will present the "Workplace Civility" topic, while Vicki Rethmeier will present a nutritional topic covering Soda's and mid-day snacking. Both topics should be highly educational and worth your attendance.

Both of these 85-minute sessions will be held at the Extension Building on Wednesday, September 20th. There will be two (2) opportunities in which to opt attendance as noted on your department's sign-up sheet.

## 4 REASONS YOU'RE SO DARN TIRED

### REASON #2—YOU'RE EXERCISING TOO MUCH

If you exercise regularly, there may be a point of diminishing returns — simply exercising more and more doesn't mean you act like Red Bull is coursing through your veins. In fact, it actually *causes* fatigue.



"Certain styles of exercise take the participant to a state of physical exhaustion on a regular basis, which may do more harm than good," notes functional and integrative medicine practitioner Chris Kesser.

He adds that there's a fine line between training hard and over-training, and when that line is crossed, it pushes the body's stress response too far. That can result in a number of biochemical responses as the body tries to protect itself. One of those is to slow down several processes — creating fatigue as a result.

One solution is to make sure you're building rest days into your mix, so that you can fully recover from your workouts, mentally and physically. (See Reason #3 on page #4...)

# Boost Your Brainpower *continued from page #1*

Try out some of these daily brain-boosting activities to keep your brain healthy and strong:

## **Read a challenging book.**

Reading is one of the best things you can do for your brain. Reading literature that challenges you is even better. You're guaranteed to strengthen your brain by learning new words and building reading comprehension skills. Try joining a book club to get some motivation to start a challenging book. You'll gain a lot of insight from the members of the club and meet some new friends, too!

## **Take a Streaming break.**

The average American adult watches nearly 35 hours of TV a week. That's bad news for your brain since binge watching your favorite TV series requires minimal brain activity. A study found that adults who watched more than three hours of TV per day on average over the next 25 years were more likely to perform poorly on certain cognitive tests, compared to adults who watched little TV each day. Try replacing the time spent watching TV on brain-boosting activities to lower the risk of early cognitive decline.

## **Exercise.**

Regular exercise improves brain function in a variety of ways. It promotes brain cell growth, improves learning ability, and helps sharpen your memory. Basically, the more you move, the better protected you are from early cognitive decline. A person who exercises regularly can lower their risk of dementia and Alzheimer's. Engage in physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week to help combat the effects of an aging brain.

## **Eat well.**

Eating a variety of nutritious foods will boost your memory, concentration, and overall brain function. The foods that you eat have a direct effect on your mood, attitude, and memory. To support brain health, increase your intake of fruits and veggies and keep a balanced diet. Check out this article for some of the best brain-boosting foods!

## **Branch out.**

Spend more time with people who challenge you or think differently than you do. Those who challenge you will help you understand different perspectives or cause you to think critically about certain topics – and these are both great things for your mind! Don't be afraid to branch out from your usual friend group and talk to someone with different hobbies or interests as you. You're never too old to develop a new perspective!

## **Get enough sleep.**

While you're snoozing, your brain is hard at work. Your brain needs enough time to recharge and process information from the day. Without enough sleep, your brain will become over-stimulated, leading to a significant decline in concentration, problem-solving skills, and overall cognitive function. Get at least 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night, and don't forget about the power of a quick catnap when you're feeling drowsy.

## **Reduce stress.**

Chronic stress wreaks havoc on your cognitive and mental health. If you want a healthy brain, you'll want to reduce any high levels of stress in your life. Try meditating once a day or do some stress-relieving exercises. Taking time to de-stress each day will boost your concentration and attentiveness and increase overall mental clarity.

## **Learn something new.**

According to Einstein, if a person spends 15 minutes a day learning something new, in a year he or she will be an expert. Make it a goal to learn something new every day – whether it's a fun fact or a new recipe. Take non-credit courses at a local community college, pick up a new hobby, or learn a new language. Continued adult learning helps slow the brain's aging process and will keep your mind sharper for longer.

Mental exercise is as just as important as a healthy diet and physical activity. Remember that your brain is a muscle – it needs to be exercised to stay strong and powerful. Incorporate some of these brain-boosting activities each day to keep your brain sharp and healthy. *—end*

## 4 REASONS YOU'RE SO DARN TIRED

### REASON #3—YOUR GUT HEALTH IS OUT OF WHACK

There's been a significant amount of research in the past few years about the role of your gastrointestinal system in regulating emotions, energy, immunity and even skin health and chronic disease. All that good and bad bacteria in your digestive tract is central to your health, according to Jo Ann Hattner, RD, and co-author of "Gut Insight: Probiotics and Prebiotics for Health and Well-Being."

When it's out of balance, it can lead to allergies, lowered immune response, poor sleep and other factors that might contribute to exhaustion. Hattner suggests stocking your plate with gut-happy choices like fermented foods and all types of vegetables — and dialing down the processed stuff, especially sugar and refined carbs. (See Reason #4 on page #5...)



## BLUEHEALTH ADVANTAGE PREMIUM WELLNESS PROGRAM



BlueHealth Advantage

It's time again for the 2017 NACO and Blue Cross BlueHealth Advantage Premium Wellness Program. The program begins September 1st and runs until October 31st. This program is designed to help your employees achieve their health goals, live life to the fullest, and earn a special reward for participating.

Better health and well-being can start at [www.nebraskablue.com/fitness](http://www.nebraskablue.com/fitness). The website offers an easy, intuitive experience that launches you on a personal, fun wellness journey. This online tool offers an easy way for your employees to improve their health through nutrition, exercise, and weight management.

The health assessment evaluates various aspects of your current lifestyle and the impact it can have on your health and well-being. Best of all, by participating and completing the health assessment each employee will receive a **\$25.00 Visa gift card!**

Information with specific details of the program and instructions on how to participate were sent electronically along with this September newsletter. If you don't receive the monthly newsletter via email, please ask your department supervisor to supply you with this program information. This voluntary NACO/BCBS program is strictly confidential and there's no cost to participate. -end

## COURTHOUSE PARKING LOT



In anticipation and preparation of additional County Offices soon to relocate to the Courthouse, employees assigned to the Courthouse during the workday should avoid using residential, curb-side parking. Instead, use the new, north parking lot for their vehicles. This will allow better parking access for community members, as well being a good neighbors to adjoining property owners.

## SEPTEMBER WELLNESS QUESTION OF THE MONTH

How many hours of television does the average American adult watch per week?”

- A) 25
- B) 35
- C) 45
- D) 50 or more

BONUS: 25 WELLNESS POINTS for correct answer

*\*Answer to the July Question: “A: one-half”*

Email your name and correct answer to: [salinewellness@gmail.com](mailto:salinewellness@gmail.com)

*\*All answers submitted for the Question of the Month must be received prior to the subsequent month’s newsletter distribution.*

## 4 REASONS YOU’RE SO DARN TIRED REASON #4—YOU’RE NOT SLEEPING AS WELL AS YOU THINK



Even a mild case of sleep apnea can keep you from getting the deep sleep necessary to maintain energy throughout the day, according to Abbas Mansour, MD, director of the Sleep Lab at Baptist Easley Hospital in South Carolina.

“If sleep is fragmented, what you’ll see is daytime sleepiness and trouble maintaining your energy,” he says. “That affects alertness and concentration.

### *Crazy 8 Challenge*

This is 8-category, 8-week challenge, starting Monday, September 4, 2017 through Sunday, October 29, 2017. (\*See page #6...)

There are 8 categories in which you can receive points:

1. Water-1 Point for every 8oz of water drank during that particular day
2. Exercise-5 Points for every 15 Minutes of continual exercise per day (30 min = 10 pts, 45 min = 15pts, 60 min = 20 pts (MAX 20 Points/Day)
3. Sleep-1 Point for every night you sleep 7 or more hours (Max 1 Point/Day)
4. Fruit/Vegetable-1 Point for every serving of Fruits or Vegetables you eat each day
5. Pop-1 Point for every day you do not consume soda-pop, 0 Points if you have one, SUBTRACT 1 point for every pop you have over 1 a Day (MAX 1 Point/Day)
6. Tobacco-1 Point for every day you do not use a tobacco product
7. Healthy Breakfast-1 Point for each day you eat a healthy breakfast
8. Read a Book--1 Point for each day you read a book for at least 1/2 hour a day.

Although you might wake up refreshed, that doesn’t mean you’ve gotten a solid night’s sleep.

Sleep apnea is very common, and underdiagnosed, so it’s worth talking to your doctor about it.”

If you’ve tried other strategies to tackle your energy crisis, a sleep study may be helpful to see if that’s an issue.

In general, feeling exhausted all the time isn’t a normal part of aging or living in a go-go-go society. Addressing stress, getting the right amount of exercise, improving your nutrition and practicing good sleep habits can go a long way toward kicking that caffeine habit to the curb. —end

# Crazy 8 Challenge

Day	Date	Water	Exercise	Sleep	Fruits OR Vegetables	Soda Pop	Tobacco	Healthy Breakfast	Read a Book	TOTAL POINTS
Mon	September 4									
Tues	September 5									
Wed	September 6									
Thurs	September 7									
Fri	September 8									
Sat	September 9									
Sun	September 10									
TOTAL WEEK 1										
Mon	September 11									
Tues	September 12									
Wed	September 13									
Thurs	September 14									
Fri	September 15									
Sat	September 16									
Sun	September 17									
TOTAL WEEK 2										
Mon	September 18									
Tues	September 19									
Wed	September 20									
Thurs	September 21									
Fri	September 22									
Sat	September 23									
Sun	September 24									
TOTAL WEEK 3										
Mon	September 25									
Tues	September 26									
Wed	September 27									
Thurs	September 28									
Fri	September 29									
Sat	September 30									
Sun	October 1									
TOTAL WEEK 4										
Mon	October 2									
Tues	October 3									
Wed	October 4									
Thurs	October 5									
Fri	October 6									
Sat	October 7									
Sun	October 8									
TOTAL WEEK 5										
Mon	October 9									
Tues	October 10									
Wed	October 11									
Thurs	October 12									
Fri	October 13									
Sat	October 14									
Sun	October 15									
TOTAL WEEK 6										
Mon	October 16									
Tues	October 17									
Wed	October 18									
Thurs	October 19									
Fri	October 20									
Sat	October 21									
Sun	October 22									
TOTAL WEEK 7										
Mon	October 23									
Tues	October 24									
Wed	October 25									
Thurs	October 26									
Fri	October 27									
Sat	October 28									
Sun	October 29									
TOTAL WEEK 8										
TOTAL POINTS										

This is 8-category, 8-week challenge, starting Monday, September 4, 2017 through Sunday, October 29, 2017.

**All entries must be returned by 5:00 p.m., Friday, November 3, 2017 to qualify for Wellness Points!**

# Sneaky Ways to Feel Energized All Day Long

by Robyn Whaylen



Imagine feeling energized all day long: no afternoon slump, no heavy eyelids, and no nodding off at your desk. Sounds like a fantasy, right? Well, we believe that feeling energized and productive all day long is totally achievable when you practice healthy habits.

When that feeling of afternoon fatigue settles in, many of us reach for another cup of coffee or hit the vending machine for a sugary, caffeinated beverage. However, sugar and caffeine are only a temporary fix that can lead to a nasty crash later.

If you are looking for some natural ways to feel energized all day long, here are some tricks that will keep you from ordering that extra shot of espresso:

**Get your heart pumping.** A morning workout is a fantastic way to start your day. You'll receive an instant energy boost and increased mental clarity that will lead to a productive day at the office. If a morning workout isn't possible to fit into your daily schedule, sneaking in a workout over your lunch break is also a great way to beat your afternoon slump.

**Grab a piece of dark chocolate.** Feeling drowsy? Nibble on a small piece of dark chocolate. Dark chocolate contains theobromine, a natural stimulant similar to caffeine. This delicious treat will help you feel more alert and serve as an instant pick-me-up when you're feeling sluggish.

**Get some fresh air.** Spending time outdoors is the ultimate energy-booster. Since your workday most likely entails staying indoors most of the day, it's important to set aside some time each day to go outside. Research has shown that spending time outdoors can reduce stress hormones and lower blood pressure. Even a five-minute walk around the office parking lot will give you an instant jolt of energy.

**Eat for energy.** When you eat healthily, food becomes fuel for your body. Be sure to eat a nutritious breakfast and pack a lunch and snack that will increase your energy levels. A lunch packed with whole grains, fresh fruit, veggies, and healthy protein will prevent heavy eyelids after your lunch hour.

**Add some plants.** Adding some lovely plants to your desk area does more than just spruce up your work environment. Studies have shown that plants can boost creativity, increase productivity, and contribute to improved feelings of overall wellbeing. Check out this list of easy-to-care-for and energy-boosting plants to add to your desk.

**Laugh more.** There's a reason for the expression "laughter is the best medicine." Laughing has many proven health benefits including stress relief and an improved immune system. Laughter releases our body's happy chemicals – triggering a natural energy boost as well as an improved mood. Find as many reasons to laugh throughout the day as possible!

**Meditate.** Practicing certain breathing techniques will increase both energy and productivity, while also boosting mental clarity. Take a 5-10 minute break during your workday to practice an energy-boosting meditation session. Not only will you feel refreshed, but you'll also feel less stressed and ready to tackle the rest of the workday. *(Continued next page...)*

JULY—SEPTEMBER  
NIRMA ONLINE  
UNIVERSITY  
“DEALING WITH HEAT  
STRESS”

Exposure to heat can cause illness and death. The most serious heat illness is heat stroke. Other heat illnesses, such as heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash, should also be avoided.

Learn the precautions that can be taken any time temperatures are high and the job involves physical work.

Next Wellness Committee Meeting: Monday, September 25, 2017 in the Assembly Room at the Courthouse, 8:30 a.m.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE

215 S Court Wilber, NE 68465  
Phone: 402-821-2588  
Fax: 402-821-3319 E-mail:  
[salinewellness@gmail.com](mailto:salinewellness@gmail.com)

[co.saline.ne.us/webpages/committees/wellness.html](http://co.saline.ne.us/webpages/committees/wellness.html)

Log onto the Wellness webpage online to review meeting minutes, Wellness newsletters, annual Program document and Fitness Center information.



## FEEL ENERGIZED *CONTINUED FROM PG #7*

**Stay hydrated.** Start hydrating first thing in the morning and continue to drink enough water throughout the day. Even mild dehydration can lead to fatigue and headaches. Keep an insulated water bottle at your desk so that you have easy access to fresh, cold water all day long.

**Go crazy with lemon.** Aromatherapy can do more than just calm you – it can perk you up as well! Lemon oil is considered to be a stimulating scent that increases concentration and alertness. Keep a lemon air freshener at your desk to help combat any sleepiness throughout the day.

**Get enough sleep!** Obviously, we have to remind you just how important your 7-8 hours of beauty rest is each night. Sleep deprivation will leave you feeling drowsy all day no matter how much coffee you drink or how many energizing tricks you try. The best way to ensure you have steady energy all day long is to get enough quality sleep.

The bottom line is that taking care of your body will keep you feeling energized all day long. The proper amount of quality sleep along with some of the tricks listed above will help prevent that dreaded afternoon slump, and keep you alert all day long. Feeling energized will help you stay productive, happy, and positive throughout the workday. Not to mention, you'll save some cash when you no longer need to buy that afternoon latte! *-end*

## 2017 FLU SHOT CLINIC

Plan ahead now for the Saline County employee flu-shot clinic currently scheduled for October 23rd. The clinic will be held from 7 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. at the courthouse, and 3 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. at the law enforcement center. Public Health Solutions will be on-site at both locations to offer this important preventative health service. Protect yourself and each other! *-end*

## FITNESS CENTER NOTICE

As of the 1st of July, the entry code to the Fitness Center had undergone its annual change. Please stop by the HR or Assessor's office in order to re-sign your updated waiver form and receive the updated passcode. Family members residing with you in your home wishing to use the Fitness Center must also supply a separate waiver. If you have any questions or concerns relative to the Fitness Center and/or this procedure, please call 821.2374 or 821.2588. *-end*

*NOTE: Articles found in this newsletter are for informational purposes only and are not intended as medical advice. For further information, please consult a medical or legal professional.*