

Employee Newsletter



February, 2021

Volume 8, Issue 2

Special points of interest:

- Wellness Committee Meeting: **Monday, February 1, 2021**
- **2021 Health Fair:**
February 23rd: LEC
February 24th: CH
5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
SIGN UP DEADLINE 2/12

Heart Healthy Team—Join with Positivity

February is the ideal month in which to be reminded of our health, especially our heart health. Not only do we celebrate this month with our valentine on the 14th, we are also presented with the opportunity of participation in our annual Health Fair within that similar time frame.

In every case, we should stop our worried motions and center contemplation on the 'center of our core' with an observance of American Heart Month in February. Why should we be reminded of this? Well, every year more than 600,000 Americans die from heart disease. The number one cause of deaths

for most groups! Heart disease affects all ages, genders, and ethnicities. Risk factors include high cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, excessive alcohol use, and lack of exercise.

Do you know how to keep your heart healthy? You can take an active role in reducing your risk for heart disease by eating a healthy diet, engaging in physical activity, and managing your cholesterol and blood pressure. While there's no better time than now, the upcoming screening event is a great chance to start heart-healthy habits! So start by participating in the upcoming Health Fair! Then continue the year by being active, taking control of your health, and visiting with your doctor regularly.

That said, the human heart is responsible for pumping blood throughout your body, supplying oxygen and nutrients and removing toxins and waste. Weighing between 8 and 12 ounces, the heart is a mighty organ divided into four chambers that work together to pump blood in and out. The heart gets oxygenated blood from the lungs and pumps it throughout the rest of the body. It does this by contracting at a rhythmic pace, about 60-80 times per minute, thanks to electrical cells called "pacemakers."

Heart disease occurs when the arteries leading to the heart become clogged. Although heart disease has been around for thousands of years, we do know that many aspects of modern life exacerbate risk factors and make people more prone to heart disease and heart failure. Today, one in four deaths in the U.S. is attributable to heart disease. Heart disease can affect everyone. Taking stock of your prior health risks, activities and diet can help you reduce your risk.

Although we've learned a lot about how the heart works, there are still many unanswered questions about heart health and the cardiovascular system. As far as we know, the best way to protect our heart is to stay active, eat a healthy and balanced diet, and reduce your daily stress by being better than the negativity around you. So take some time this month to learn about heart health risks, find your favorite heart-healthy activities, cook healthy meals with your family, and be positive! —end



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Turn Negative Thinking Around—*The Cleveland Clinic*

Noticing what's right in the world can have a big impact on your life

Does negativity dominate your thinking? If the thoughts in your head about people, situations — and even yourself — are on the harsh side, you're doing yourself a disservice. Here psychologist Scott Bea, PsyD, answers questions about why so many people struggle with negative thinking and explains how to adopt a more positive outlook on life.

What problems does negative thinking create?

Negative thinking makes you feel blue about the world, about yourself, about the future. It contributes to low self-worth. It makes you feel you're not effective in the world.

Psychologists link negative thinking to depression, anxiety, chronic worry and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). But almost all human beings contend with it — even those born with a positive outlook on life.

It's because of the way our brains are constructed. Our amygdala and limbic system are built to notice threats, to protect our survival. In rustic times, it may have been a beautiful day on the savannah, but when we were stalked by a predator, we were trained to notice that danger.

Today, the same parts of our brain are active even when physical threats are minimal. The threats we deal with today are more cognitive — involving finances, whether we're loved, whether we're succeeding at work. They can set our hearts racing. That's why we can panic on a Sunday night just thinking about work.

Can negative thinking become a habit?

Absolutely. We practice worrying, and we get better at it over time. Worry is maintained by what we call ritualized reassurance. We think of all the negative scenarios that can possibly occur, and then all the ways we would survive them, to calm ourselves down.

But reassurance is a drug with a short half-life, like caffeine. If you use caffeine to combat fatigue, the more you use, the more fatigued you become over time. When people say, "The older I get, the more I worry," it's because they've been practicing!

And while we work out thousands of scenarios, the story is still only going to unfold in one way. It's estimated that approximately 94% of the time, what we worry about doesn't happen. What does happen is usually something we've never worried about.

We're also constantly dosed with negative thinking because the media, and often our work environment, primarily portrays negative events. People are often more drawn to what's wrong than to what's right.

Is it possible to change the way you think?

Rather than change the way you think, it is recommended to change the relationship to your thoughts. We have about 50,000 spontaneous thoughts, images and ideas every day. Whether they're positive or negative, they intrude into our awareness. Those that are negative are more likely to capture our awareness, or become "sticky." Further recommendation is learning to watch your thoughts, rather than engaging with them.

When you get distracted by a negative thought of your own making, or one expressed by others, notice something to engage with in the present. What are you seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting, feeling?

Being mindful of our own negativity as it develops helps us program in ourselves a sense of that which is right. We can systematically notice what's going well in the present. We can notice something favorable about each person or event we encounter. Words of admiration or positivity help us notice the rightness of things.



ONLINE LEGAL RESOURCES

Continuum EAP's online resources includes a library of 100+ free fillable legal forms, including:

- Wills/Living Trusts
- Bill of Sale
- Rental Agreements
- Promissory Note

To get started, visit 4continuum.com and click "MEMBER LOGIN" at the top of the page. Use Saline County username and password. Contact HR for login information or give Continuum a call if experiencing difficulty.

*Next Wellness

Committee Meeting:

Monday, February 1, 2021; Courthouse Assembly Room at 8:30 a.m.

*Next Safety Committee

Meeting: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 in the Courthouse Assembly Room, 8:30 a.m.

Negative Thinking—continued from page #2

Does thinking positively change your brain?

Yes, we're learning that when we change habits, we change brain circuitry. It's hard to exchange bad habits or negative, preconceived notions for good ones because they exist deep within the brain.

But when new habits are formed, they tend to stick and become more automatic. We may resist an exercise or wellness program at first, but after a while it becomes automatic. In the same way, we can try to form new habits around how we relate to our thoughts.

That's why, more and more, mindfulness is being used as a tool to treat problems like social anxiety, OCD and depression. Mindfulness helps us accept things as they are, rather than always being in fix-it mode.

What happens as you start to think more positively?

Your thoughts affect the way you regard your life. Positive thinking fosters self-acceptance and self-efficacy.

Maybe you have a gift to give that makes the lives of those around you better. Praising others has such an impact. It creates delight. It makes us all feel better and function better, and makes the world a better place.

Practicing positivity can also guide you to a different way of working within your profession. If you're in a leadership position, for example, you may want to switch from an adversarial role to more of an advocacy role.

Developing positivity can even influence the ways we choose to behave, leading us to feel better and to experience better outcomes in our lives. —end

Make Your Goals Happen—Continuum EAP

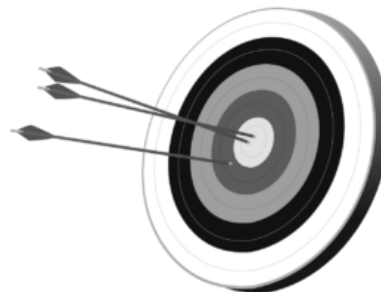
Continue to make your goals happen in 2021!

Those who succeed in accomplishing big goals often practice similar behaviors. Since "like behaviors" often produce "like effects," consider the following:

- ◆ **Put it in writing.** Write down your goal and action steps to accomplish it.
- ◆ **Evaluate changes needed in your life** to facilitate realization of the goal (e.g., creating a new routine that produces massive action).
- ◆ **Create methods to make the goal "top of mind."** You have many goals — important, urgent, big and small. Each competes for your time and attention. So, preventing defocus and distraction is critical to keeping your goal ever present. If focus does not happen, you risk losing the momentum created the day you decided on your goal.
- ◆ **Act on tasks during the time of day when you have the most pep.** Many goal-slayers start early in the morning and practice an early-to-bed, early-to-rise routine (the "5 a.m. Club"). If you're nodding off while working, it's likely that you haven't figured out this step. Getting up early helps curb procrastination and provides precious time early, even on weekends, without interfering with work-life balance or risking burnout. Energy, ideas, answers and motivation are often found in social groups, so hanging out with like-minded goal seekers can be helpful, and those who want to win can keep you focused, but avoid open-ended groups that lack structure and purpose.
- ◆ **Reward yourself** at incremental steps and measurable milestones along the way.

If achieving your goals remains a struggle, a Continuum EAP professional may be able to help you identify and address the barriers standing in your way. —end

GOAL SETTING



January-March, 2021 Continuum EAP Online Webinar Class

The upcoming quarter offers the following Continuum EAP Webinar. Successful completion provides 75 Wellness points. The offering of points is limited to:

"Fixing Your Broken Sleep"

(Return Certificate by 4/9/2021)

February, 2021 Question of the Month

What built-in process does your body have which protects itself from muscle injury or tear, but can be overcome toward relaxation when properly held at bay?

Answer:

- A. Stretch Reflex
- B. Withdrawal Reflex
- C. Pain Reflex
- D. Golgi Tendon Reflex
- E. Crossed Extensor Reflex

Email your answer to:
salinewellness@gmail.com

*25 Wellness Points for a correct answer received prior to the subsequent month's newsletter distribution.

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Ways to be More Flexible—*Lauren Bedosky*

The Many of us spend the bulk of our workout time on the usual pursuits: Fitness and strength. Few of us ever think about the other essential piece of a well-rounded fitness routine: flexibility training.

Flexibility — the ability to move muscles and joints through their complete range of motion — offers many benefits, and can affect how you feel physically and mentally, says Jessica Matthews, an assistant professor of kinesiology and integrative wellness at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, California, and author of “Stretching to Stay Young.”

Tight, tense muscles and joints can limit your movements during exercise and daily living and cause muscle aches and pains over time. With greater range of motion, on the other hand, you may be able to minimize aches and pains, improve posture and make exercise more enjoyable, Matthews says.

Try these five expert-approved tips for upping your flexibility.

1 - HOLD STATIC STRETCHES

Static stretching, a tried-and-true method of increasing flexibility, involves stretching your muscle(s) to the point of mild tension or discomfort and holding it there. But you can't just bob in and out of a stretch after a few seconds — it takes at least 15–30 seconds (ideally 60 seconds) to see any changes in muscle length.

Why? Because that's about how long it takes for your muscle to get used to the stretch, which helps shut off a built-in safety mechanism known as the stretch reflex.

“When your muscles detect a change in length — such as during a stretch — a signal is sent to the nervous system, which triggers a stretch reflex,” Matthews says. The stretch reflex opposes your attempts to lengthen your muscle by causing the muscle to contract or shorten. This may be annoying if you're trying to stretch, but the ultimate goal of the stretch reflex is to protect your muscles against overstretching and injury (like a muscle tear).

However, when you hold a stretch long enough, the stress reflex calms down, which allows your muscle to relax and lengthen.

So, be sure to hold static stretches for about a minute, or a minimum of five slow, controlled breaths.

2 - TARGET ALL MAJOR MUSCLE GROUPS

Just because you can touch your toes doesn't mean you have whole-body flexibility. And just because today was leg day at the gym doesn't mean you should neglect your shoulders, neck and chest during your post-workout stretch.

For your body to feel and function at its best, it's important to stretch all your major muscle groups, Matthews says. Key areas include:

- Neck
- Chest
- Shoulders
- Trunk
- Lower back
- Hips
- Legs
- Ankles

Aim to stretch these areas at least 2–3 times per week.

3 - MIX UP YOUR APPROACH

“While static stretching often comes to mind when [people] think of flexibility training, there are a variety of other effective and enjoyable approaches to improving flexibility and enhancing joint range of motion,” Matthews says. Using a variety of techniques can help keep your flexibility routine fresh.

Other methods you can incorporate into your flexibility routine include:



Dynamic stretching: This is where you move your body through its full range of motion, instead of holding one position for an extended period. Examples of dynamic stretches include cat-cow, quadruped rotation, hinge and reach and leg swing.

Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation: PNF stretching involves contracting and relaxing the target muscle group.

Self-myofascial release: Foam rolling is a classic way to practice self-myofascial release. By rolling target muscles over the foam roller's surface, you can release tension, increase blood

flow, and improve range of motion.

4 - STRETCH WARM MUSCLES

Stretching may be most effective when the target muscles are warm, according to Matthews. So, consider saving your stretch session (especially if you're doing static stretches) for after exercise. Or, warm up your muscles with a hot bath or shower.

5 - LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

“When it comes to flexibility training, or any type of training, there's nothing to be gained by pushing your body to the point of pain,” Matthews says. To safely and effectively improve your flexibility, stretch only to the point where you feel tightness or mild discomfort. Going beyond these limits only increases your injury risk.

And remember: “Your flexibility training routine should be a relaxing and rejuvenating mind-body experience that supports and nourishes your overall health and optimal well-being,” Matthews says. It shouldn't cause you pain or stress. —end



2021 County Employee Health Fair

The 2021 Health Fair (Screenings) are scheduled in accordance with the following:

Screenings will again be held on two (2) separate days at two (2) separate locations.

1. **Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at the LEC from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. *for LEC Staff only***
2. **Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at the Courthouse Assembly Room from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. *for all other staff members***

Health Screen Includes:

- Key Lab Measures for Heart Risk, Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome (Cholesterol, Triglycerides, LDL, HDL, Glucose & more)
- **The above baseline screening is available FREE and ONLY to all Saline County employees.**
- Biometric Measures: Weight, Waist, Blood Pressure, Body Fat % & BMI
- Hemoglobin (A1C), Prostate (PSA), Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) tests available to you at an additional cost of \$30 for A1C, \$45 for Vitamin D, \$20 for PSA and \$15 for the TSH test. (*Bring your payment with you at the time of the screening—made payable to Saline Co.*)

Additional Details:

- Avoid eating or drinking anything other than water for 8-10 hours before your appointment.
- You can take medications (with water) the morning of your health screening.
- Remember to drink plenty of water the day before the screening so you are well hydrated.
- Avoid caffeinated coffee, tea, pop, energy drinks and nicotine before your appointment.

To Sign-Up:

Within the email you received alongside this newsletter, please use the updated link provided for access to the scheduling system in order to sign up. **DEADLINE to register participation is Friday, February 12, 2021.** *—end*

Have a Workplace, Injury-free Year

Approximately 5,000 people die from workplace-related injuries each year in the United States. The “fatal four” (not including automobile accidents) are falls, electrocution, being struck by an object, and getting caught “in between.” These awareness tips can help ensure you don’t become a victim:

RECOGNIZE HAZARDS			CORRECT AN UNSAFE SITUATION WITHOUT DELAY
USE PROPER SAFETY EQUIPMENT			MONITOR LARGE OR HEAVY MOVING OBJECTS
MAINTAIN A SAFE DISTANCE			GET THE PROPER TRAINING
RESPECT BARRICADES			AVOID RUSHING AND DON'T SHORTCUT SAFETY MEASURES



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

**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.*

“Don’t let negative, toxic people rent space in your head. Raise the rent! Then kick them out!” - *Robert Tew*

7-Day Guide to Forming Better Habits For Weight Loss—*Lisa Fields*

Small changes add up to big results over time, especially if you’re looking to lose weight with tweaks to your nutrition and fitness habits. Moreover, making simple changes gradually helps ensure it’s an overall lifestyle change and something that’s sustainable long term — preventing the likelihood you’ll gain the weight right back.

“People should plan to establish habits that they can follow indefinitely,” says Tami Smith, a certified personal trainer based in Williamstown, Massachusetts. “They should ask themselves this question: ‘Is this something that I can see myself adhering to forever?’ If the answer is no, then it’s not a great plan.”

The healthy habits in the chart below are ideal for starting small, although if it’s still intimidating, don’t worry, you can always go at your own pace and implement two a week or even two a month. Find what works best for your lifestyle and build from there.

While it’s a great plan to form better weight-loss in the new year, you can always start (or return to it) anytime. —end

YOUR 7 DAY GUIDE						
TO FORMING BETTER HABITS FOR WEIGHT LOSS						
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
<p><u>NUTRITION:</u> Sip more water</p> <p><u>FITNESS:</u> Take a 10-minute walk, 3 times</p>	<p><u>NUTRITION:</u> Add more fruits and veggies</p> <p><u>FITNESS:</u> Master a bodyweight move</p>	<p><u>NUTRITION:</u> Rethink your snacks</p> <p><u>FITNESS:</u> Keep your intensity low</p>	<p><u>NUTRITION:</u> Keep a food journal</p> <p><u>FITNESS:</u> Do a full-body workout</p>	<p><u>NUTRITION:</u> Prep your grocery list</p> <p><u>FITNESS:</u> Know your heart rate zones</p>	<p><u>NUTRITION:</u> Be prepared for slip-ups</p> <p><u>FITNESS:</u> Start a challenge</p>	<p><u>NUTRITION AND FITNESS:</u> Get enough sleep</p>

Being Positive—*Continuum EAP*

BEING POSITIVE MAY REDUCE MEMORY DECLINE

Positivity or demonstrating an optimistic attitude has always been a valuable workplace trait in employees. Many research studies have examined its benefits on the bottom line, its ability to favorably influence others, and its affirming effects on general health. Now research shows its benefits for helping prevent memory decline as we age. Positivity is learned, and optimism is a teachable skill. A simple online search will show hundreds of tips on how to develop a more optimistic disposition.

Continuum EAP can also help, especially if depression or other life circumstances feel like they are robbing you of your ability to feel positive. —end

