

TheLexLine

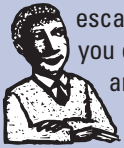
A newsletter from The **Lexington** Group, Inc.
Employee Assistance Program

SUMMER 2008

For Your Information

FAIR FIGHTING

Take a time-out if an argument flares past the point where you can control yourself. Simply state that you must leave because you do not want to escalate things further. Ask that you continue the discussion at another time when you can deal with issues in a less intense way. Specify the time.



TO INCREASE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Control your busy work. It's more important to concentrate on results, not on being busy. Focus on the job at hand. Don't let meaningless tasks like reorganizing your desk or files consume your precious time.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT TIPS

To help lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, try two or three of the good habits below. Your long-term goal should be to do them all:

- Choose lower fat, lower calorie foods more often
- Eat more slowly
- Eat more fruits and vegetables for snacks
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- Drink water instead of soft drinks with sugar
- Use less high-fat cheese, cream, shortening, and butter when cooking
- Limit alcoholic beverages



ENERGY and MOOD

Healthy Ways To Improve Your Mood

Bad moods are an inevitable part of life. What can be particularly frustrating, however, is when we know we're in a bad mood, but seem unable to snap ourselves out of it. Are you aware of the many short-term and long-term, healthy techniques and strategies you can utilize to improve your mood?



If you find yourself feeling down, anxious, grumpy, low in energy, irritable and quick to snap at family, friends or coworkers, try a few of the suggestions below and find what works best for you:

1. Practice deep breathing. Break the grip of a bad mood with controlled, slow and deep breathing. Here's what to do: Sit comfortably at your desk or alone in a quiet room. Close your eyes and inhale slowly and deeply through your nose (for approx. 7 seconds), then exhale slowly through your mouth (for approx. 8 seconds). Focus your attention entirely on your breathing. If you prefer, say (or think the word) "relax" or "calm" or another soothing word as you exhale. Do this for ten repetitions any time you feel particularly anxious or stressed. This technique, known as the "relaxation response," will calm your brain, relax your body and lift your mood.

2. Exercise. When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins, adrenaline, serotonin and dopamine – natural brain chemicals that work together to relieve tension, lift your energy and boost your mood. Researchers report that even a short brisk walk can give you an energy and mood boost. What types of exercise are best? Cardiovascular exercise (such as brisk walking, running, cycling, swimming or other aerobic activity), weight training and yoga have all been shown in studies to reduce tension and anxiety and improve your emotional state.

3. Adjust your diet. When you eat and what you eat affects your blood sugar levels, which in turn affect your energy and mood. Nutritionists recommend the following to help stabilize your blood sugar levels and mood:

- **Eat small meals and snacks every few hours to avoid peaks and valleys in your blood sugar levels.** Eating consistently throughout the day provides your brain with a constant source of fuel to help stabilize your energy and mood.
- **Limit consumption of simple sugars and refined carbohydrates to lessen major blood sugar swings.** Concentrated sources of sugar like soda, candy, fruit juice, jam and syrup can create radical spikes (and drops) in your blood sugar levels, which can leave you feeling irritable and tired.

Continued on back page

IMPROVE YOUR MOOD...

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Additionally, refined white starch foods like white bread, crackers, bagels, muffins, breakfast cereals and white rice can have the same effect on your blood sugar and mood. Limit your consumption of these foods. Instead, include more complex carbohydrates in your diet, such as vegetables, fruit, beans, peas, lentils, whole grains, brown rice and oatmeal.

■ **Include protein with meals and snacks.**

The addition of protein to a meal or snack will help slow the absorption of carbohydrate in the blood and lessen blood sugar and mood swings. Good protein sources include chicken, turkey, seafood and fish, veal, pork tenderloin, tofu, eggs and low-fat yogurt.

■ **Cut down on caffeine.** Although it can provide an initial boost in energy and concentration, too much caffeine is linked to depression, fatigue and mood swings.

4. Let it out. If you're in a bad mood, there could be an obvious problem or emotional reason for it. Try to determine why you're in a bad mood and talk to a family member, friend or counselor about it. Simply talking about your problem will help you start to feel better. Allow yourself to feel your emotions. Remember, bottling up your feelings will only darken your mood, so let your feelings out.

5. Make adequate sleep a priority. Scientists have documented the link between sleep deprivation and a poor mood. According to a survey conducted by the National Sleep Foundation, those who got fewer than six hours of sleep on weekdays were more likely to describe themselves as stressed, sad, angry and pessimistic. Conversely, those getting adequate sleep reported more positive feelings. For a better mood, make the quality and quantity of your sleep a priority. Research suggests that most healthy adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night.

Your EAP is here to help

If you would like more information about how to improve your mood, or help overcoming anxiety or depression, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for CONFIDENTIAL counseling, referrals or information. We're here to help you with most-any personal, family or work-related concern.

Tips For Single Parents

No one faces daily demands greater than a single parent. Excessive demand is a continuing reality and constant problem for single parents. Burnout, or worse, incapacitating breakdown, are very real dangers for single parents who deplete their energy reserves day after day.

Part of the solution is giving up the notion of "having to go it alone." These tips may be useful:

- **Set realistic goals for yourself.** If you can keep the family, a full-time job, and a household running without frequent disasters, you're doing very well.
- **Make sure you have a support system in place, and use it.** Develop a network of relatives, friends, neighbors or groups like Parents Without Partners. Any responsibility, expense or chore that you can share with someone else will give you time to marshal your forces and be better as a parent, at work and in other areas of your life.
- **Train children to take more individual responsibility.** Ask yourself, "What am I routinely doing for my children that they can learn to do for themselves?" Then teach them. Remind children that all family members have to work together as a team.
- **Open new avenues for your children to have relationships with caring and stable adults.** Children need many sources of adult support and guidance. Clubs, scouting, and Big Brothers, all are sources of capable adults.
- **Share child care responsibilities with friends, neighbors or other single parents.** Many single parents take turns watching each other's children for extended periods so each can have some time off. Friends and neighbors can all chip in for a mutual babysitter to create an open, uninterrupted block of time for rest or activity.
- **Make the children's bedtime early enough to save some time for yourself.** Children must go to bed at your established time, but can read or look at books to promote sleepiness.
- **Find local, affordable babysitters who live nearby.** Your local YMCA or city recreation department often offers babysitting classes and certification. Call them for names and phone numbers of reliable sitters who live in your neighborhood to cut down on travel time. If you can afford a helper, consider having a high school student come occasionally to play with younger kids while you help with homework or just have some time to catch up on errands or housework.



The Lexington Group

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Caring and individualized help for personal and family concerns is only a phone call away.

For confidential help 24 hours a day, call The Lexington Group, an international Employee Assistance Program provider at:

United States	1-800-676 HELP (4357)
Canada	1-800-567-4343
England	0-800-169-6706
Mexico	001-888-819-7162
Puerto Rico	1-800-676-4357
TTY	1-800-955-8339
website	www.the-lexington-group.com