



## Make it happy – PLAY

May 2014 Newsletter

**All work and no play?  
No way!**

**Step up to a healthier you**

**Weekends: Time out for  
stress relief**

**e-Thoughts**



Some adults think of play as an indulgence. Once we grow up, we're supposed to be "all business," right? **More...**

Have you heard about the "10,000 steps" initiative? The goal is to help improve fitness. It encourages us all to take 10,000 steps every day. But what does that really mean? **More...**

Ah, weekends! Do you look forward to them? They're actually very important. **More...**

My mother's going to sleepaway camp this summer! How cool is that? Pretty cool, when you consider that my Mom is 94! **More...**

### Getting help

Confidential support, information and resource referrals are available for a variety of concerns — both work and personal. Call for assistance for you, your household members or your adult children under age 26, whether they live at home or not. Call or visit us online today!

## All work and no play? No way!

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Many people think play is just something kids do to keep busy. In fact, play is critical for children's growth and development. And it's also important for adults.

### Play is serious stuff

Play involves being creative and trying new things. It's a time for running, laughing and working off energy. Play also teaches collaboration, sharing and working as a team or group. Even the smallest tots learn many lessons when they play.

### Adults benefit from play too

**Some adults think of play as an indulgence.** Once we grow up, we're supposed to be "all business," right? Wrong.

**Adults need to play too.** Play can include going to the movies, reading, dancing, listening to music, golfing, gardening, daydreaming, spending time with a friend or loved one or doing just about anything else that brings pleasure.

**Play helps us feel relaxed.** When we're relaxed, we're often at our most creative. When we're feeling creative, we're at our best for solving problems, accomplishing tasks, relating to others and learning new things. So play has real value.

### Increase your effectiveness with play

Get more productive and energized by adding a bit of play every day:

- **Get some fresh air.** Bring your sneakers to work so you can exercise at lunch or break time. Is there a nearby basketball court where you can shoot some hoops? Can you bring a baseball and mitt and play catch with a coworker? How about doing stretches or some jumping jacks?
- **Enjoy friendships at work.** Work is better when you have friends there. Have lunch with one or more coworkers. Plan some get-togethers. Your work day can be more enjoyable when you feel connected to others.
- **Look for opportunities to lighten up.** Laughing is one way of being playful. Share a joke or funny story with your coworkers. Help create an upbeat mood and everyone at work will benefit.

Remember, we never outgrow our need for fun, play and pleasure.

## Step up to a healthier you

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Have you heard about the “10,000 steps” initiative? The goal is to help improve fitness. It encourages us all to take 10,000 steps every day. But what does that really mean?

For most people, one mile of walking is about 2,000–2,500 steps (depending on the length of your stride). So 10,000 steps equal about 5 miles.

But the object isn't to take one long walk and then sit the rest of the day. Instead, the goal is to become more active overall. In other words, the goal is get you off your chair.

### Do you have a “seated” lifestyle?

Do you work at a desk or computer? When you come home, do you surf the net for hours? These answers can give you an idea of how many steps you're not taking each day.

### Inactivity can be risky

An inactive lifestyle can contribute to depression, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, sleep problems and other health issues.<sup>1</sup>

### Find out how many steps you're taking

Buy a pedometer, fitness wristband or similar device. It doesn't need to be expensive. Its job is just to count how many steps you take.

Wear or carry your pedometer all day every day for two weeks. Go about your normal day — don't make any exercise changes yet.

<sup>1</sup>[www.americashealthrankings.org](http://www.americashealthrankings.org)

Record the number of steps you've taken at the end of each day. After two weeks, you'll have a good idea of your average activity level.

Note: 10,000 steps may not be a sensible goal for you at this time. Don't be discouraged. Just find out your average number of steps and try to increase by 20% more each week until you meet your goal. Remember: Check with your doctor before starting any new fitness plan. And always add more exercise slowly to avoid injury.

### Ready, set, go...

You'll find there are many simple ways to increase your steps:

- 1. Stand up every 30 minutes.** Set your smartphone or other alarm to go off every half hour. Stretch or walk around for 2–5 minutes.
- 2. Walk while you're on the phone.** Talk time can also be walk time.
- 3. Take the stairs.** Choose the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk a flight or two at first. Add flights as it gets easier.
- 4. Avoid the best parking space.** This can add extra steps when you go to work, the mall or the supermarket.
- 5. Make things less convenient.** Don't put everything you need within easy reach. Arrange your workspace so you have to get up to get a drink of water or use the fax machine.

Happy stepping!



## Weekends: Time out for stress relief

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Ah, weekends! Do you look forward to them? They're actually very important.

First, they're a break from your everyday routine. Second, good use of your weekends can help you de-stress and feel better all week.

### What do you do on weekends?

Experts say many people misuse their leisure time.

- Daniel Gilbert, author of *Stumbling on Happiness*, says many of us forget what makes us feel happy. Instead of remembering past experiences, we tend to repeat our usual behaviors — even the ones that make us feel bad.
- Studies also show that people often turn to stress relievers that don't relieve stress, but increase it.<sup>1</sup> For example, many people eat lots of chocolate when they're upset. They don't think ahead to the guilt they may feel afterward. If they did, they might pick an option that doesn't have a negative outcome.

### 2 + 2 always = 4

How do you feel when you eat or drink too much? Good... or bad? How about when you stay in bed all day? Do you feel rested... or groggy? Why repeat behaviors if they don't produce good results? Now's the time to make choices that are better for you.

<sup>1,2,3</sup>[www.lifehacker.com](http://www.lifehacker.com)

### Work wonders on the weekend

Here are some tips on how to get real benefit from your weekends:

- **Say no to the couch.** The American Psychological Association says those who report the best stress relief use their free time actively. They do things like play sports, listen to music, practice yoga and exercise. The least stress relief comes from things like gambling, eating, smoking, watching TV or playing video games for hours on end.<sup>2</sup>
- **Do something you do well.** Work on your best skill or hobby. It's great mental diversion. Plus, success builds your self-esteem.
- **Try something new.** Break your old routines and open yourself up to new things. Go to a new restaurant, explore an unfamiliar hiking trail or take a different class at the gym. You may meet more people and find unexpected activities you enjoy.
- **Hang out with friends and family.** Studies show that we spend almost two more hours per day socializing on weekends than on weekdays. That extra time with family and friends reduces tension and increases pleasure.<sup>3</sup>

The bottom line? Pay attention to how you spend your weekends. With thought and effort, they can help you chill out from last week... and reboot for the coming week.



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*Our e-Thoughts feature provides close-up views on topics and areas of interest from everyday life.*

My mother's going to sleepaway camp this summer! How cool is that? Pretty cool, when you consider that my Mom is 94!

You see, she joined an organization that takes seniors to camp for a week. The campsite is in a nice country setting. The grounds and buildings are accessible to people who have disabilities. All the meals and activities are geared to older adults.

When I heard about this, I started wondering what other types of camps are out there. I learned there are camps for people with many types of abilities, disabilities and needs.

There are camps for kids and adults with autism, diabetes, ADHD, learning disabilities, hearing or sight impairments, mobility challenges, serious or chronic illnesses and more. There are camps for people of all ages with developmental and emotional issues.

### **Summer camps fill many special needs**

Camp experiences are great. They help build friendships, independence and self-esteem. Three cheers for the people and organizations who make camp possible for those with special needs. Have fun, Mom!

(If you'd like more information on camps for children and adults who have disabilities and special needs, visit **[www.campparents.org](http://www.campparents.org)**, **[www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org)**, **<http://fcsn.org/camps/>** or Google the kind of camp you're looking for.)

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