A constant state of tiredness should not be ignored

Can you remember the last time you didn’t feel tired? If you can’t, you may be dealing with something more than just getting through the day after a late night or two.

Lack of sleep and poor-quality sleep have consequences not only for workplace safety but also for the general wellness, performance and productivity of employees across industries and professions. A new Conference Board of Canada survey finds that 27 percent of Canadian workers report being fatigued most days or every day during a typical work week.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety defines fatigue as the state of feeling very tired, weary or sleepy resulting from insufficient sleep, prolonged mental or physical work, or extended periods of stress or anxiety. Boring or repetitive tasks can intensify feelings of fatigue. Fatigue can be described as either acute or chronic.

Acute fatigue results from short-term sleep loss or from short periods of heavy physical or mental work. The effects of acute fatigue are of short duration and usually can be reversed by sleep and relaxation.

Chronic fatigue syndrome is the constant, severe state of tiredness that is not relieved by rest. The symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome are similar to the flu, last longer than six months and interfere with certain activities. Medically speaking, fatigue is not the same thing as tiredness. Tiredness happens to everyone. It is an expected feeling after certain activities or at the end of the day. Usually you know why you are tired and a good night’s sleep solves the problem.

You should not feel continually tired. If you suspect you may have a medical condition that interferes with your sleep, talk with your doctor.

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How to Breathe for Greater Well-Being

Have you ever noticed the way you breathe when you’re anxious and how it differs to the times you’re happy and relaxed? Breathing is such an ordinary experience you might fail to notice its impact on your life. Not only does it keep you alive, it can also be a tool to increase your well-being. Here’s how to maximize your breath and use it to the full.

How stress influences your breath

When you are stressed, you take short, light gulps of air into your body. Inhaling are so shallow they barely inflate your lungs, and not much oxygen reaches your brain.

The result is you shift into fight-or-flight mode. Your immune system stops working fully as you plow energy into readying to meet your opponent or flee.

You’re not meant to be stressed all the time

In modern life, you’re unlikely to be chased by an animal who wants you for his supper. However, your stress-mode setting was designed for such a temporary crisis. Instead, your main stress stems from everyday incidents like getting stuck in traffic or frustration.

Since the trigger for your anxiety appears repeatedly, your stress and shallow breathing continues. You dip back into a relaxed mode for short periods, but your common mindset is anxiety-fueled.

As you aren’t supposed to live in a constant state of stress, you suffer unless you do something to reduce anxiety.

You can’t always avoid traffic or difficult people who annoy you, but you can regain an easy, calm way of breathing.

You can control your breath

When you relax, you take deep, slow breaths. You fully inflate your lungs. As you breathe, you can feel your belly rise and fall and you are comfortable and calm. Your immune system functions optimally and plenty of oxygen flows to your brain.

You breathe deeply on autopilot when you are relaxed, but you can develop a similar breathing pattern purposely when you’re stressed too. Doing so will send a signal to your mind and body that releases you from fight-or-flight.

How to breathe to increase calm

Sit or lie in a comfortable position and inhale deeply through your nose. Feel air travel in your body and fill your lungs. Hold your breath for a second or two and then let go, releasing air slowly via your mouth. Maintain a steady, calming rhythm and you will feel relaxed fast.

Alternatively, inhale to a count of four, hold for seven seconds, and exhale to the count of eight for an instant calming effect.

Your breath keeps you alive, yet, you might take it for granted. While you don’t want to think about it all the time—or you wouldn’t be able to focus on anything else—you can control your breathing pattern when you need to relax. If you notice anxiety rise, take deep breaths and stop stress in its tracks.

Know a Little More About Your Bones

According to the Guinness World Record website, Evel Knievel, who broke 433 bones, holds the world record for the most broken bones in a lifetime. While most people will not break nearly that many bones, on average people suffer two fractures during their lifetime. Yet, there is much more to bones than just injuries and breaks. Learning about your bones can be a fun and informative experience.

Disappearing Bones?

You might be surprised to know that you were born with more bones than you have currently. Babies have 300 bones, but some of those bones fuse throughout your childhood. By adulthood, you have 206 bones.

Along with that, your bones increase in density until you are 30. At that point, your bone density will decrease if you are not getting enough calcium, vitamin D, and exercise. Even just walking or participating in simple exercises helps to maintain your bone density.

Bone Size and Placement

Your femur, also called the thigh bone, is the longest bone in your body. The average adult femur is 48 cm long and nearly 2.4 cm thick. At 28 cm, the stapes in your middle ear is the shortest bone in your body.

If you are looking for the bulk of your bones, focus on the hands and feet. With a combined 106 bones, they contain over half of the bones in your body.

Broken Bones

Fifty percent of broken bones are in the arm. Along with the wrist, which is the most commonly broken bone in the arm, this includes the humerus of the upper arm and both the radius and ulna of the lower arm. Other commonly broken bones include the clavicle (or collarbone) as well as the bones in the ankle and foot.

Some people have misperceptions about broken bones. For example, just because you can walk on your foot does not mean it is not broken. If you continue to walk on a broken foot or toe bone, you could cause greater damage.

Despite fears of rebreaking a bone after it is healed, it is just as strong as before the injury. The previously broken part of the bone is no more or less likely to break than other parts of the bone.

Be sure to share these fun bone facts with others.

President & CEO: Stefan Dreesen
Editor: Kate Van Hoof-Peeren
Sales: Alan Haycroft | Liz Slobodin | Kevin Harvey
TOLL FREE: 1-888-655-4800
Mailing Address: 2010 Winston Park Drive, Suite 200, Oakville, ON L6H 5R7
www.smartworkplace.ca | info@smartworkplace.ca

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Getting back into the game

Remember all those extra curricular activities your mom enrolled you in when you were a kid? Soccer, baseball, hockey, ballet lessons; it seemed like a whirlwind. And whether you loved it or hated it, chances are you stopped doing it once you settled down into home and family life.

According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, participation in sport is higher in men than women, and decreases substantially with increasing age. There could be a few reasons for this, with time, or lack thereof, being the most obvious answer.

During your teenage and young-adult years, sport is simply a part of education and social life. As you grow older, professional and family-based pressures appear. Suddenly, the time to take part in sport diminishes. Spending quality time with a newly formed family quickly eats up your leisure time.

And let’s face it. How interested in sports are you after a long day at work? Sitting on the couch and watching the game is about the closest you feel like getting to sports. Without the endless reserves of energy to draw on like you had when you were a kid, and getting all kinds of aches and pains you didn’t have before, the element of ‘fun’ when playing sports goes right out of the equation.

So how do you get yourself back into the game? Here are a few tips:

Pick a sport or exercise that you think you will enjoy. There’s no point in deciding you’re going to run a marathon if you hate running particularly in the winter. Instead, go for something you will want to do regularly.

Set goals that are achievable so that it will be very difficult to fail. When you start something new or get back into fitness, making progress is vital. For the first four weeks commit to activities that will be easy to get done.

Build exercise into your current daily/weekly schedule. When you bring your kids to their sports or activities, use that as an impetus for you to do your own exercise.

And remember; motivation is not going to strike you like lightning. And motivation is not something that someone else—coach, trainer, doctor, family member—can force on you or create for you. Sometimes you just have to bite the bullet, put those on those sneakers and get moving.
Is your head full of appointments, chores, and worries? You deal with vast amounts of data each day. The information you gather is filtered allowing pressing concerns to rise. However, your mind can feel so full that you can’t think straight. Once one task is complete, another’s ready to surface. Also, several concerns might fight for head space. Decluttering your mind will make you happier and more peaceful.

**Send thoughts packing**
Propel thoughts away that threaten to overload your mind. Picture each thought as a monochrome photograph. Make the picture small and imagine it flying behind you and disappearing. Practice and soon getting rid of excess thoughts will be simple.

**Shrink your critical voice**
Minimize worries by turning down your inner voice. Imagine you can control the sound of concerns with a dial. The further you turn the dial, the smaller the voice will become until it fades.

**Spend time among nature**
Nature has the power to heal. Ocean waves lapping at the shore and the wind through leaves on the trees bring peace of mind. Studies show walking in the woods improves immunity and listening to waterfalls is calming. Sit in the park or take a stroll and let nature clear your head.

**Make lists**
Note tasks in order of merit. Getting the most important jobs out the way first provides mental respite. The act of prioritizing on paper means you don’t need to keep track in your mind. You can focus on necessary chores and stop trying to remember what needs doing.

**Be mindful**
Mindfulness offers a mini vacation for your brain. Rather than processing lots of information, focus on one topic. Whether you concentrate on breathing or picture a pleasant scene, mental pressure will lift as the data you usually sift through reduces.

**Switch off**
Turn off electrical gadgets and disconnect from overstimulation. Go somewhere quiet and meditate to the rhythm of your breathing. Shift your attention to the inside of your body, away from your head. The worries and details in your mind will go.

**Chant in your head**
Vowels like a, e, i, o, and u soothe the mind. Choose a vowel and hum it in your head, letting the imagined sound resonate in your body. Focus where you experience the vibration for a few minutes.

Take a break from everyday mind-clutter. Select a way of calming your mind and let peace stream. As a result, anxiety will leave as your head clears.

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**Facts and myths about dry mouth**

Does your mouth constantly feel parched? It might mean much more than simply being thirsty. Many people don’t realize they may suffer from dry mouth — which is an actual medical condition that may make your mouth feel like a desert. If you’re not familiar, get in the know with these common myths and facts.

**1. Myth:** Having a dry mouth isn’t a big deal, it’s just uncomfortable.

**Fact:** Dry mouth is actually a little known medical condition called Xerostomia that affects up to 1 in 4 adults. It often goes unrecognized but can have serious impacts on quality of life for those who suffer — from bad breath and tooth decay to mouth sores and difficulty sleeping.

**2. Myth:** People experience Dry mouth because they’re getting old.

**Fact:** Dry mouth can be mistaken as a sign of aging, but it can actually be caused by taking multiple medications. Anyone taking two or more medications is at increased risk.

**3. Myth:** Drinking water will cure Dry mouth.

**Fact:** Dry mouth is difficult to self-diagnose, so many sufferers use liquids such as water and mouthwash, which don’t lubricate the mouth. Try chewing sugar-free gum or suck on sugar-free hard candies to stimulate the flow of saliva. However, remember for some people, xylitol, which is often found in sugar-free gum or sugar-free candies, may cause diarrhea or cramps if consumed in large amounts.

**4. Myth:** Dry mouth is a permanent condition.

**Fact:** Depending on the cause, Dry mouth can be temporary or permanent. For example, taking certain medications can cause temporary symptoms, while in other cases salivary glands can be permanently damaged by cancer treatments or injury. Whatever the cause, talk to your healthcare professional as there are solutions sold over-the-counter that can help.

Visit www.dentalhygienecanada.ca for more information.
Take breaks to boost your brain function

We need breaks. And not just as temporary escapes from the pressures of work. Done properly, breaks can reduce mental fatigue, boost brain function and creativity, and actually keep us on-task for longer periods of time. Ironically, the more time we take off, the more we’re able to work.

So how do you take a proper break? Here are a few ways originally published on zapier.com:

**Take in the great outdoors**

Studies show that just spending time in nature can help alleviate mental fatigue by relaxing and restoring the mind. Additionally, increased exposure to sunlight and fresh air helps increase productivity and can even improve your sleep. In one study, researchers found that workers with more exposure to natural light during the day slept an average of 46 minutes more per night. Taking your break outdoors not only helps you be productive while you’re awake, but helps you sleep through the night, giving you a headstart on the next day.

**Exercise your eyes**

Our eyes take the burden of much of our tech-fueled lives. Most of us spend around 6-9 hours a day on a digital device with 28% locking their eyes on one type of screen or another for 10+ hours. Your eyes can begin to feel strain in as little as two hours, which is why taking a vision break during the day is so important. Luckily, there’s a simple exercise that will help reduce your eye fatigue: 20-20-20. Every 20 minutes look away from your computer screen and focus on an item at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. Easy, right?

**Try just doing nothing** - A report published in Science magazine found that simply letting our minds wander by zoning out or daydreaming has similar benefits to meditation. When we stop paying attention to anything, our brain’s Default Mode Network takes over which gives our overworked prefrontal cortex—where complex processes like problem-solving, memory, reason, and logic take place—a well-deserved rest. Not only that, but taking some time to let your mind drift can help you come up with more novel ideas and uncover hidden answers when you’re back at work.

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**Boomers beware – you might be more at risk of flu than you think**

(NC) When we think about people who might be most affected by flu season, most of us picture vulnerable groups such as children or seniors. But these aren’t the only people at risk of the potentially devastating consequences of flu.

If you or a loved one are 50 years of age or older, the risk of contracting the flu is higher than you might think.

As we age, our immune systems weaken naturally, increasing the risk of contracting infections like influenza. The weakening of the immune system can result in higher incidence and severity of infectious diseases like influenza, as well as lower strength and persistence of antibody responses to vaccines.

Adults 50 years and older have medical conditions that are more frequently linked to flu complications, compared to younger adults. Conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease increase the risk of hospitalization and heart attacks when combined with the flu. Every year the flu contributes to an average of 12,200 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths.

Prioritize your health and stay healthy this season with these tips:

**Get vaccinated.** The flu shot is the first and most important step to protecting yourself against the flu.

**Maintain a healthy diet.** Eat a nutritious diet with loads of fruits and vegetables and stay hydrated with fluids. Keep active, as this will help boost your immunity, which is key in staying healthy throughout the flu season.

**Practice good health habits.** Wash and sanitize your hands regularly, wipe down surfaces in your home and workspace, and stay away from those who are sick with the flu.

For more information, talk to your healthcare provider.
Reheating and eating leftover rice not the best idea

Lovers of leftover chicken fried rice, beware! Leftover rice can actually cause food poisoning if stored incorrectly. Uncooked rice contains spores of Bacillus cereus, a bacteria that can cause food poisoning. When cooked rice is left out in room temperature for too long, spores can germinate and multiply bacteria, creating toxins that make you sick.

According to the McGill University Office for Science and Society, To sidestep a nasty bout of illness caused by B. cereus you should aim to eat your food as soon as possible after it is cooked. If you can’t do that, then hot foods should be kept above 60˚C and cold foods, below 5˚C.

Meats and vegetables should be cooked to an internal temperature of 60˚C and kept there for at least 15 seconds. Frozen foods should ideally be thawed in the fridge or as a part of the cooking process.

When dealing with high-risk ingredients (like rice, grains and other starchy foods) it’s best to not keep leftovers at all. But if you do, try not to keep them for more than one day, and never reheat them more than once. Even freezing doesn’t kill bacteria but rather just stops them from multiplying. For example, it’s okay to freeze your leftover curry, but it’s better to make fresh rice when it’s time to eat it again.

Chicory – give a boost to your immune system

Chicory is a woody, herbaceous plant that has many health benefits. It is a Mediterranean plant that is cultivated for its culinary use in preparations such as salads. Chicory is a great source of vitamins and minerals, including zinc, magnesium, manganese, calcium, iron-folic acid, and potassium, as well as vitamin A, B6, C, E, and K. These are the main agents behind all of the health benefits that come from chicory.

Chicory is great for your digestive health as it contains inulin, which is a powerful prebiotic. Prebiotics are compounds in food that induce the growth or activity of beneficial microorganisms such as bacteria. Inulin is not only beneficial for the digestive system, but it has also shown to reduce the levels of LDL cholesterol (also known as bad cholesterol) in the body. This type of cholesterol is one of the main causes of atherosclerosis and high blood pressure as it blocks the flow of blood when it binds to arteries and veins.

Chicory has traditionally been used as a treatment for arthritis, and studies have shown it to have anti-inflammatory properties, which is why it reduces the pain in conditions like osteoarthritis.

Ways to reduce waste

With all the talk about waste reduction in the headlines today, we are learning how important it is that we all do our part, even in some small way, to take care of our planet.

Here are some simple ideas on how you can reduce waste:

**Bring a reusable grocery bag when you shop.**

In Canada, 55 million plastic shopping bags are taken home each week. Store reusable bags in your car and at the office so you have them when needed.

**Pack a litter-free lunch at school and work.**

Only one to three percent of plastics used are recycled. You can help change this. Pack a litter-free lunch for yourself or the kids. Choose reusable plastic or glass lunch containers, pack cloth napkins, and use stainless steel forks or spoons instead of plastic ones. Use a reusable water bottle or reusable container for hot drinks.

**Reduce your food waste.**

Every year, the average household spends $1,456 on food that ends up being thrown away. You can save money and reduce waste with some easy meal and food planning. Make a grocery list to match your meal planning and shop more frequently rather than buying in bulk so you only buy what you need. Store produce and fruits properly. Consider fermenting, preserving and making broths and stocks for later use.

**Donate used clothing and household items.**

The average person throws away 37 kilograms of textiles a year. An easy way to help reduce this waste is to donate your old clothing and textiles to charitable organizations with donation bins or home pick-ups.