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**HEALTH & SAFETY
NEWSLETTER**

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March 2020

How to show respect at work

What aspects of your work are most important to you? Over and above a higher salary or more leisure time, it seems we're all just after a little more respect.

We don't always see eye-to-eye with our colleagues and there are many potential areas where we can disagree. But we all deserve to work in a respectful workplace, where employees are considerate towards each other.

In a recent survey of more than 20,000 employees, *Harvard Business Review* found that respect was the number one behaviour that would lead to greater employee engagement and commitment. It was top of most employees' wish list, over and above other issues such as personal and career development.

Despite differences in opinion it's important that everyone at work feels acknowledged – you want to feel like your ideas, feelings and presence are noticed.

5 ways to show respect

1. Listen. Working relationships are founded on basic respect. Give people and meetings your undivided attention. Turn off your mobile phone or any other device that may distract you and focus on the conversation at hand.

2. Mind your language. Remember when your parents insisted on you saying 'please' and 'thank you'? There was a reason for that. They are simple words that many of us don't use enough, along with 'excuse me' and 'I'm sorry'. These small gestures contribute to an overall culture of a respectful workplace.

3. Greet workmates. Acknowledge people at work with a simple 'hello' and use their name. If you have more time, ask about their

weekend or evening and listen fully to their reply. Common courtesy is infectious and can help build positive morale at work.

4. Give credit where it's due. Are others doing a good job? Then let them know, giving them credit for a job well done. Small actions like this contribute to building a culture of generosity and trust.

5. Clean up after yourself. Whether it's dirty cups and plates in the kitchen, or a grubby desk in a hotdesking office, leaving a dirty environment for your colleagues is disrespectful and can lead to conflict. ✕

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March 8 is International Women's Day. This is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. It also marks a call to action for accelerating gender equality. The theme for 2020 is 'An equal world is an enabled world'. Find out how you can get involved by visiting internationalwomensday.com

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The change before 'the change'

For women, work and personal demands often escalate in their 40s. This is also a time of hormone chaos known as perimenopause.

Women might put the creeping anxiety, fatigue and sleepless nights down to stress. After all, women in their 40s can be juggling a demanding job with teenagers, ageing parents, household bills and health concerns.

Then again, these symptoms are also signs of perimenopause.

What's perimenopause?

We've all heard of the menopause. This refers to when a woman has her last period, usually in her early 50s. We also use this term to refer to the symptoms women experience around this time.

We hear much less about the years leading up to menopause, a stage called perimenopause. During her mid to late 40s a woman's sex hormones – oestrogen and progesterone – start to fluctuate more than normal, due to the ovaries running out of eggs and winding down. This can last four to five years and trigger the same symptoms women experience during menopause.

"Your hormone levels are fluctuating wildly during perimenopause," Jean Hailes' endocrinologist Dr Rosie Worsley explained to the ABC.

Dr Worsley points out that during perimenopause you can have both very high and very low levels of oestrogen, which can give you different symptoms. Symptoms of excess oestrogen include breast tenderness, while insufficient oestrogen can trigger hot flushes and night sweats in some women.

What you might notice

Not all women experience symptoms of perimenopause. Around 20 per cent will have no symptoms, 60 per cent will experience mild symptoms, and 20 per cent will have symptoms that interfere with daily life.

Along with hot flushes and breast tenderness, women can experience:

- irregular periods that can be heavier, lighter, shorter or longer than usual
- moodiness, irritability and anxiety
- fatigue
- trouble concentrating
- migraine and headaches
- vaginal dryness and loss of libido

- problems getting to sleep and staying asleep
- itchy and dry skin
- weight gain for no apparent reason (without changes to exercise or diet)

Tough on mental health

Mood changes, including feeling more teary or irritable, are common symptoms of perimenopause and you may also notice increased anxiety. There's also research to show that women are at an increased risk of depression.

"Some studies suggest women are two to four times more prone to depression in perimenopause, and we think one of the major factors is hormone instability," says Dr Worsley.

That's because oestrogen affects mood a lot in some women, and hormones like progesterone have a role too, acting on the brain through a complex number of mechanisms.

Treatment is available

If your symptoms are disrupting your quality of life then see your doctor or a health practitioner experienced in women's health.

What treatment you need depends

“Some studies suggest women are two to four times more prone to depression in perimenopause”

on what symptoms you have, and how much they interfere with your life. If you're experiencing hot flushes, then hormone therapy (menopausal hormone therapy or MHT) may be the most effective treatment. You will need to discuss with your doctor your individual risks and benefits if you're considering MHT.

For other women, a low dose oral contraceptive may help, and it provides birth control too, which MHT doesn't. Other medications may also be suitable, depending on your specific symptoms.

If you'd rather not take medication, there are other steps you can take to support yourself through perimenopause:

- Avoid triggers for hot flushes, including warm temperatures, hot drinks, alcohol, caffeine and spicy foods, and dress in layers so you can remove clothes as you need.
- Keep exercising. If you're feeling particularly tired, then take a gentle walk.
- Eat healthy foods. Fill half your plate with vegetables and include a palm-sized serving of lean protein at mealtimes. Include healthy fats every day, such as olive oil, avocado, seafood, nuts and seeds.
- Limit your alcohol to no more than 10 drinks a week. ✕

Will eating soy reduce hot flushes?

Flushing and sweating can be distressing symptoms of perimenopause, and are caused by falling oestrogen levels. Phytoestrogens in foods may help ease the symptoms of low oestrogen. These are substances that occur naturally in plants that can mimic oestrogen in the body. However, only about one third of women who eat dietary phytoestrogens experience an improvement in their symptoms, because they have the specific gut bacteria that convert the phytoestrogens to a more potent form.

Foods that contain phytoestrogens include:

- Soy products such as whole soybean milk, tofu, miso, tempeh and soy beans
- Oats, rice, barley, quinoa, and rye
- Flaxseed (linseeds), sesame seeds, sunflower seeds and almonds
- Chickpeas, lentils, alfalfa, mung beans

There's no need to worry that eating soy products will increase your risk of breast cancer – the evidence in fact points to the opposite. But supplements containing soy are not recommended – eating whole soy foods is safer.



The link between depression and sleep

For some people the depression may come first, for others it's the sleep problems. Either way, it's very common to have both depression and trouble sleeping.

Sleep is often considered an optional extra for busy people, trying to cram as much as possible into their day. Yet if you're one of the many people who toss and turn at night, the relief of sleep eluding you, then you'll know the agony of insomnia.

While a number of factors can trigger difficulty sleeping, research tells us that if you have depression you are more likely to experience sleep problems. These include problems falling asleep (sleep onset insomnia), difficulty staying asleep (sleep maintenance insomnia), or early morning wakening.

It works the other way, too. If you have troubling sleeping, then you have a ten-fold risk of developing depression compared to those who fall asleep easily.

Sleep is a problem for many

The rates of depression are increasing worldwide and so too are sleep problems. A 2019 report commissioned by the Sleep Health Foundation revealed the extent of sleep problems in Australians. It found almost 60 per cent of people regularly experience at least one sleep symptom (like trouble falling or staying asleep). This is

concerning, given that sleep problems are also linked to depression.

"It's troubling to see just how common it is for people to struggle with their sleep when it's such a vital aspect of good health and happiness," said Professor Robert Adams, lead author of the report and spokesperson for the Sleep Health Foundation.

"Failing to get the quality or quantity of sleep you need affects your mood, safety and health, not to mention your relationships with family and friends," he explains. "It's very important to get it right."

Backed by research.

American studies have confirmed the strong link between sleep and depression. A Michigan study followed 1,000 adults over a three-year period. It found those people with insomnia were four times more likely to develop major depression over the three years, compared to those who slept well. In another study that looked at 300 pairs of twins it found that sleep problems in childhood significantly increased the chance of developing depression later in life. ✕

Get the help you need

It is crucial to seek help early for sleep problems. This can reduce the risk of developing depression. And for those people who already have depression it will improve the effectiveness of treatment for your depression.

Talk to your GP if you are experiencing any difficulty falling or staying asleep. You may need to look at your nightly routine and other things during the day that may help or hinder your sleep. Your doctor can also make an assessment of your mental health and recommend treatment if necessary. Sleep psychologists treat insomnia with a form of talking therapy known as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). This is an extremely effective treatment for sleep problems.



Is addiction controlling your life?

Do you repeatedly do something or take something, even though it's harming your health or interfering with your life? Then you might have an addiction.

When we think of addiction we usually think of drugs or alcohol, but it's possible to be addicted to anything that causes harm.

Common addictions include:

Drugs and alcohol: Not everyone who uses drugs and drinks alcohol will develop an addiction. It is impossible to predict who will develop an addiction and what they will be addicted to. Drug addiction commonly occurs along with anxiety and depression, so it is important to see your GP if you have been using drugs to deal with stress or difficult times.

Commonly used drugs include alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, prescription drugs and amphetamines (including ice). Unfortunately, drug addiction often leads to relationship breakdown and financial struggles.

Gambling: Most gambling problems start with a small bet in the hope of a big win. If you have a gambling addiction, you may spend a significant amount of time betting online, or feel an uncontrollable urge to buy lottery tickets, visit casinos, play slot machines or bet on sports. Gambling addiction often remains hidden from family and friends until serious financial problems are noticed.

Online gaming: Online gaming often starts in teenage years. Family and friends can be overlooked in favour of online gaming

friends. Proper meals and adequate sleep are neglected because gaming takes priority, with hours and hours spent in front of a screen.

Shopping: Many people enjoy purchasing new things, but shopping addiction is when you feel a compulsion to buy things you don't need or spend money that you don't have. A person with a shopping addiction often feels a "buzz" when they make a new purchase, but this is often followed by feelings of regret and guilt. Excessive spending can lead to credit card debt so you can end up in a cycle of buying and returning products.

Symptoms of addiction

- repeating an action even though it interferes with your life
- needing more drugs or escalating the behaviour for the same effect
- withdrawing from family and friends
- stealing or selling things to pay for your addiction
- increasing problems at work, school or home
- secretive behaviour
- losing interest in hobbies
- being angry, violent, moody, sad or depressed
- changes in your appetite or sleep
- feeling sick when trying to cut down or quit. ✕

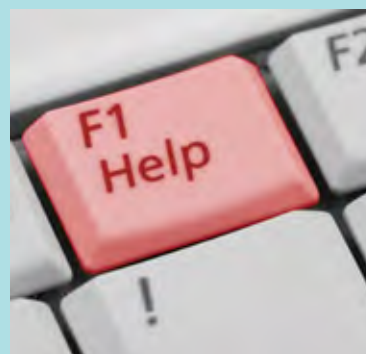
Getting help

If you or a family member is struggling with addiction, remember that support is available and overcoming addiction is easier with professional help.

Talk to your health professional about your concerns and they can help by recommending the right organisation for you.

You can also Google help for addiction and specify your location.

You can also try this online test to see if you have a drug or alcohol problem:
www.directline.org.au/self-assessment



Stay safe with headphones

Does wearing headphones at work help you concentrate or pose a safety risk?

Working in an open plan office can be distracting and noisy. For many people, listening to music through headphones is one way of regaining some lost privacy, helping them focus and concentrate. Headphones have even been described as 'the new office walls', screening out noise but also indicating to others that you are working on a task and don't want to be disturbed.

But there are downsides. There is evidence that listening to music with lyrics, far from helping you focus, can detract from your ability to concentrate. And SafeWork SA report that if music is turned up high it can contribute to fatigue and slower reaction times.

Then there are the safety risks to consider, particularly in manufacturing or warehouse environments which pose different risks to an office situation. When deciding on whether

using personal music players is appropriate in your workplace, SafeWork SA recommend you consider whether headphones:

- Are allowed in your workplace. Check with your safety representative.
- Block out other noises that you need to hear, such as verbal instructions or warnings, or the presence of mobile plant and machinery, such as forklifts.
- Are distracting enough to cause loss of concentration in tasks where this is critical.
- Reduce situational and spatial awareness to the extent that this compromises safety – for instance, you may not be able to hear things splashing on the floor that could be a slip hazard.
- Could potentially be too loud, which can result in hearing damage. ✖



Did you know?

Hearing impairment affects more than 250 million people in the world.

dB(A) or A-weighted decibels are used to measure the loudness of sounds that we hear. A standard office environment is generally less than 65 dB(A), while the acceptable noise exposure standard in the workplace is 85 dB(A) averaged over an 8-hour period.

What does 85 dB(A) sound like? A lawn mower is 90 dB(A) while a front-end loader is 85 dB(A) and heavy traffic about 80 dB(A).

Noise at the workplace that exceeds the exposure standard and is not controlled is a major cause of hearing loss.

If you work in a noisy environment you must wear any personal hearing protection supplied, such as ear muffs or ear plugs, to reduce the risk of hearing loss.

Regular headphones **do not** offer adequate hearing protection.

World Hearing Day is on 4 March. ✖



Ask an expert about ...

Physiotherapist and occupational health consultant Adam Crisp replies:

The deadlift is a strength training movement where a loaded barbell is lifted off the ground to the level of the hips, before being lowered back to the ground. If done correctly, it is an excellent exercise to help strengthen the stabilising muscles around your spine, your posterior chain (glutes, hamstrings and upper back) and even help to

Q What is a deadlift and is it safe?

prevent or manage your lower back pain. However, it is one of the most poorly performed exercises, and one that can easily injure you if not executed correctly.

Is it safe to deadlift?

In short, yes, if you can get your body into a position to do the exercise correctly, and then be able to execute good form. To do this you'll need adequate core strength and stability, upper back and hip mobility and a great hip hinging pattern. Doing the deadlift correctly ensures that the weight is shifted to your powerful posterior chain muscles and core.

Incorrect form, even with light weights, places unnecessary loads through the smaller structures of your spine, which over time can contribute to the development of lower back pain or injury. Obviously, this can get worse as you get stronger and the loads begins to increase.

If you want to incorporate the deadlift into your strength training routine and you are unsure whether you can do so correctly and safely, please consult with a physiotherapist.

To find a physiotherapist near you, Google 'physiotherapist' and include your location. ✖

App of the month

St John First Aid

With first aid every second can count, and a few simple steps can spell the difference between life and death. Most people find it difficult to remember the first aid treatments for

all the various injuries, even with first aid training. This app can solve that problem by guiding you through the steps needed to treat common injuries -- whether it's a sprained ankle, snake or spider bite, cut or burn. Note, this app is Australian, so some of the information on specific insects and snakes may not apply.

Available free from the App Store and Google Play. ✕

Stay active to ward off depression

Whether you want to walk, run, practice yoga or hit the gym, getting active at least a few times a week helps protect you from developing clinical depression, says a new large-scale study published in *Depression and Anxiety*.

The researchers found that people who spent at least three hours a week participating in any activity, whether vigorous or gentle, were less likely to become depressed than sedentary volunteers. The risk fell another 17 per cent with each additional 30 minutes or so of daily activity.

Exercise did not erase the risk of depression for anyone, explained Karmel Choi, who led the researchers from Harvard University and other institutions. But the study found it did buffer the risks, even for people with a high genetic risk for depression. ✕



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News Bites



No jab? No travel

Planning a trip overseas? It's an important time to check whether you and your children are up to date with your vaccinations. These can be routine childhood vaccinations and boosters. The chance of getting vaccine-preventable diseases is often greater when you're travelling overseas. Thailand, Samoa and the Philippines, for example, have experienced increased cases of measles.

Not all countries require the same vaccines, so you should consult your doctor or visit a travel health clinic six to 12 weeks before you leave to find out what you need. Don't wait until the last minute as you may require several doses of a particular vaccine and might also need time for your body to develop full immunity.

For more information visit smartraveller.gov.au ✕

Meat-free favourites not always healthy

They might tempt us with their claims of being plant-based, gluten-free, organic and vegan, but a new report suggests that some meat-free alternatives should come with a health warning.

The report from The George Institute for Global Health, VicHealth and the Heart Foundation found that some popular meat-free products in supermarkets can hide up to half a day's worth of salt in just one serve. Eating too much salt is linked with high blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart attack, stroke and kidney disease.

Meat-free bacon was particularly salt-heavy, followed by falafels and meat-free sausages.

"Our research showed that there are large ranges in the amount of salt between meat alternative products," says Heart Foundation dietitian Sian Armstrong. One falafel product, for example, was found to have one tenth the salt of another, so it is possible to choose a healthier item by picking the lower salt option. Options with less than 120mg of sodium per 100g are the best choices.

For more information, visit unpackthesalt.com.au

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THING YOU CAN DO TODAY

Pay someone a compliment



Do you remember the last time someone paid you a compliment out of the blue? And can you recall how it made you feel? A compliment can brighten your day because it means you've been seen and acknowledged.

"A sincere and personal compliment costs nothing, but the impact on the recipient is huge," says Hans Poortvliet, the driving force behind the annual National Compliment Day in the Netherlands.

"Nothing stimulates more, gives more energy, makes people happier, and as far as business is concerned, increases productivity and commitment faster than sincere appreciation. So why not use it a little bit more?"

Compliments aren't just good for the people receiving them. They give a big boost to those who deliver them too. Going out of your way to say something nice to someone – whether it's thoughtful praise for a job well done, or simply telling them you like something they are wearing – can ramp up your own self confidence.

Accepting a compliment

Many of us are poor at accepting compliments and are quick to brush them off, perhaps because we are so used to dwelling on failures rather than successes. If someone pays you a compliment, keep your response short and sweet: "Thank you, I'm glad you said that." Or "I appreciate your noticing, thanks for letting me know."

World Compliment Day is on 1 March. For more information visit worldcomplimentday.info ✕

EAT SMARTER

Crack an egg a day

It wasn't so long ago that eggs were in the doghouse. We were told their cholesterol-laden yolks would increase our risk of heart disease, and the closest we got to eggs for breakfast was an egg-white omelette.

Times have changed. We now know that most of the cholesterol in our body is made by our liver and doesn't come from the cholesterol we eat. The Heart Foundation says that for most people eggs neither increase nor decrease the risk of heart disease, and recommends including eggs daily as part of a heart healthy diet. Here's why.

Protein power

Eggs provide top quality protein, containing all the essential amino acids (the building blocks of protein) in amounts closely matching our requirements. A serving of two eggs provides about 20 per cent of the recommended daily protein intake for men, 27 per cent for women, and one third that recommended for children.

What's choline?

Eggs are one of the richest sources of choline. This is an essential but mostly unknown micronutrient vital for brain and spinal cord development in pregnancy, and may also prevent cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease in the elderly. A single egg contains about one third of your daily requirement, good news for the 90 per cent of us who don't consume enough.

If you're not yet convinced of their benefits, eggs also contain the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin, important for eye health, various vitamins including A, B and D, omega-3 fatty acids, and the minerals selenium, iron, and iodine. And at just 300 kilojoules (72 calories), why not eat an egg today? ✕



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