

Working with EASE**EASE, Inc., your employee assistance program is a free, confidential counseling service which provides:**

- 24 hour a day access to licensed counselors at: (800) 654-9778
- Free individual, couples or family counseling for employees and their dependents
- Information and resources on our website: www.easecap.com

One Drink May Be Too Many

Moderate or “social” drinkers insist that they can consume a cocktail and drive safely—that they know “when to say when.” But new research indicates they may be wrong. Even with blood-alcohol levels well below the legal limit—from just one strong drink—you can still fail to see threats in your field of vision. So, holiday season drivers: a single alcoholic beverage can divert your attention and dull your alertness. After finishing a drink, you may concentrate so intently on your speed when driving, that you neglect to notice road hazards and pedestrians. It’s one more reason to pass up any alcohol before you get behind the wheel.

Bring Your Team Together

The most successful teams lose cohesiveness from time to time, but can be put back on track by trying some of these tips. Express faith in your team members’ ability to make valuable contributions. Praise good work. Ask questions to pick individuals’ brains. Share your expertise—don’t hoard knowledge. Hold back on your proposals for solving problems until everyone has had a chance to contribute to the solution. Learn the art of framing your suggestions by citing teammates’ ideas, concerns and observations. Are you worried about your team? The EAP may have suggestions for team building.

Squeeze the Most Out of Every Gym Workout

After obtaining your doctor’s approval for an exercise program, avoid wasting time, effort and money by following these tips. Vary your routine; variety in both aerobics and weight training provides a challenge to your exercise regime. A gym employee can suggest how to incorporate new equipment and approaches. Machines can be rotated for aerobic exercise, muscle toning and strength building. You can also change your intensity. By going all-out only some of the time while prolonging low-level blood flow to exercise muscles at other times, you will enhance both your cardiovascular health and your stamina. If your goal is strictly weight reduction, then choose the type of aerobic equipment that you enjoy the most and stick with it—at least at first. Once you are comfortable with that machine, branch out and try others. Note the difference between pushing to a safe limit and going overboard, where you experience joint or muscle pain. If anything hurts, stop and seek expert advice.

Eat Breakfast Tomorrow Morning

Is this one of those days where lunchtime is approaching and all you have had to “eat” is your morning cup of coffee? Note how you feel right now. Then tomorrow, eat breakfast and gauge your mood and energy level at this same time. You will notice a positive—possibly dramatic—difference. You’ve heard the adage before: “Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” Think fiber and protein, and avoid sugar and syrups if possible. In addition, breakfast eaters are more successful at keeping their weight balanced.

Wow'em in Your First Month on the Job

Here are some good moves for the first month on the job (and beyond):

- 1) Show them you know how to work hard. Do more than what you're being paid to do.
- 2) Establish goals by asking yourself, "Six months from now, what do I want my boss to think about me?"
- 3) Study the work culture and then act and dress to fit within it.
- 4) Take notes and record the names, titles and responsibilities of others.
- 5) Ask questions and avoid acting like you have all the answers.
- 6) No-no's: too many personal calls, flirting with staff, correcting peers.

Recapture Your Motivation

It's natural to experience short periods of decreased motivation, even if you love your job. It's nothing to get worried about. The human body was not designed to stay in a continual state of "ready-go" or "up." A few emotional maneuvers can help you recapture your sense of excitement. **Shift gears:** On down days, try shifting your focus to other work activities you have been postponing. Something as different as filing stacks of papers or even straightening up your office can give you a sense of renewal. **Change scenery:** Take your work to a different location or environment, if possible. Or, walk around the block near your place of work. **Leap-over:** When the workload is heavy and appears to drag on, you may imagine nothing different will ever come along. Try thinking about the next big goal in your career or personal life to give you more juice.

Memories From the Office Party

Holiday parties are a great way to connect with your coworkers and supervisors on a personal level. While the mood may be festive, it's important to remember that your behavior during office holiday parties is also a reflection of you as an employee. Don't let the lingering memory everyone takes from this year's holiday party be an embarrassing one about you. As a business function, a holiday party can be your opportunity to shine by creating goodwill among your staff members. It can also be an opportunity for you to meet the CEO and other senior executives of your company whom you might not have met before (or not have had opportunities to speak with, perhaps about that one great idea of yours!)

Reaching Out During the Holidays

If reaching out to the poor is an important part of your holiday season, you should know that the most difficult needs for lower income people to meet are not necessarily for food. They are for day-to-day essentials not available at emergency food banks and pantries, especially disposable items that you may use every day, from toothpaste to Q-tips and from diapers to detergent. So if you give gift certificates for these things, or from drugstores for things like prescriptions, vitamins, and other necessities, you can really help a family's finances—not just during the holiday season but throughout the year. Avoid trendy gifts and think practically. Additionally, anything that can relieve parental stress can be enormously helpful to poor families—tutoring children, babysitting, or even running errands.