

Healthy Habits

Making it work: Work-life balance tips for moms

Being a mom is a full-time, demanding job. Add in working outside of the home and it becomes even more challenging. It's all about balance.

- **Create rituals/routines.** A schedule lets everyone know when to be where, doing what. The routine should include family time, even if it's simply eating breakfast or dinner together.
- **Share the burden.** Everyone needs to pitch in — mom, dad, and kids. Divide chores. Even younger children can help by setting or clearing the table.
- **Use the commute.** If you drop off kids at school or daycare, use the time to talk, not to run through a “to do” list in your head. If you don't drop your kids off anywhere, ask about their day when you get home, before you tackle home responsibilities.
- **Take care of yourself.** Give yourself time to exercise or enjoy a hobby.
- **Let things go.** Some days the dishes and the laundry will pile up. Don't let it get to you.

Source: *The Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund*, www.onetoughjob.org

Congratulations! You just got a 2% raise.

As part of the 2010 Tax Relief Act, the social security employee payroll tax (FICA) has been reduced by 2% for 2011. More than likely you have already seen its positive effect in your increased take home pay. It's not too late to maximize the benefits of the tax cut and compounding earnings by increasing your retirement plan savings. Consider upping contributions to your 401(k), 401(a), 457 or IRA by 2%. Even an increase of just 1% will allow you to boost retirement savings *and* take advantage of increased take-home pay in 2011.

A 2% contribution increase for someone making \$30,000 and earning a 6% average rate of return is an extra \$50,477* in their pocket after 30 years. Factor in salary increases and employer matches and that number could grow even bigger!

The tax cut is temporary and only lasts through 2011. Take steps to make the most of it now!

**This hypothetical illustration is not a guarantee, is not intended to reflect the performance of a specific investment and is not meant to constitute tax or legal advice. A tax deferred investment will be subject to taxes upon withdrawal.*

Amber Howes
Group Retirement Manager
Burnham & Flower Insurance

Connecting with Community Supported Agriculture

The trend toward local foods in the United States is booming with more than 6,000 farmers markets as of 2010, and more than 12,000 farms reporting some Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) set up to sell their products.

CSA is a way for people to buy local, seasonal foods, usually produce, directly from a farmer. The emphasis: high quality food, often grown using organic methods, and a shared sense of community between farmer and consumer.

Typically, a farm sells a certain number of shares of its crop for a particular season (*although some operate year-round*). The weekly shares are either delivered to a designated community site or to individual homes, or picked up directly from the farm. To find CSA near you, go to www.localharvest.org/csa/

Asparagus tips

When selecting fresh asparagus, look for firm, brightly colored stalks with tightly closed tips.

- Keep fresh asparagus in water in the refrigerator until you use it.
- Keep frozen asparagus in the freezer until you are ready.
- Don't defrost before cooking; if asparagus defrosts, cook it immediately.
- Do not refreeze. Use frozen asparagus within eight months.
- Keep canned asparagus in a cool, dry place.

Source: California Asparagus Commission

Creamy Asparagus Soup

- 1 onion, chopped • 2 Tbsp. butter • 1 lb. fresh asparagus, trimmed and coarsely chopped • 1 cup vegetable broth • 1 dash garlic powder
- 1 dash white pepper • 1 cup 1% milk **Directions:** Microwave onion and butter on high for 2 minutes. Add asparagus, vegetable broth, garlic powder, and white pepper. Microwave, covered, on high for 10 to 12 minutes. Purée in blender. Return mixture to microwave-safe dish, stir in milk, and microwave until heated through. **Serves 4:** 119 calories, 6.6 g fat (4 g saturated fat), 5.1 g protein, 11.5 g carbohydrate, 266 mg sodium

Get Moving

Choosing the right ride

Whether buying a bike for the first time or replacing an old one, the choices can be overwhelming. Where to start? First, pick the type of bike, based on your style of riding.



Road Bike

- **Road Bike** — Lightweight, efficient, and fast, road bikes are perfect for riding any distance on paved roads. They offer light frames and narrow tires. Road bikes are comfortable enough for commuting to work, but agile enough for racing.
- **Mountain Bike** — The weekend-warrior bike. With plenty of gears and wider tires for handling rougher terrain, mountain bikes provide durability as well as high-performance brakes. They are engineered to be sturdy, and often have a more comfortable seat.

• **Hybrid Bike** — As the name suggests, hybrid bikes aim to offer the best of both worlds. They are nimble, versatile, and are built for both pavement and off-road terrain. Hybrids are a good choice for those interested in casual or fitness biking.

Being safe on the roads is just as important as having the right bike. Always wear a helmet, use a bike light, wear highly visible or reflective clothing, and travel with a bike pump and spare inner tube just in case.



Mountain Bike

Working out with co-workers

When exercising with co-workers, you may want to follow the SWEAT rules, according to Sue Jacques, president of Calgary-based Influence Etiquette and Protocol.

- **Sounds:** Keep them to yourself. Try not to grunt, groan, or moan if you're on a group run, playing pick-up ball over the noon hour, or lifting weights at the gym.
- **Waiting:** If you're meeting someone for a class or lunchtime walk, be sure to show up on time.
- **Electronics:** If you're planning to walk together, you shouldn't bring along your MP3 player. If each of you is doing your own thing, listening to tunes is OK, just try not to hum or sing along.
- **Appearance:** Be comfortable with your workout attire, but be sure it's in good taste. Err on the side of being too conservative. And don't glare or stare at what others are wearing.
- **Talking:** You're working out together to get away from the office; try not to conduct a meeting or talk about other co-workers.

Source: *Windsor Star*

Get in shape with gardening

Is going to the gym not your thing? And a walking routine doesn't do it for you either? Try gardening.

Not only will gardening give you a workout, you'll have the satisfaction of digging in the dirt and having bountiful bouquets of flowers or fresh food when you're done.

Gardening exercises a variety of muscle groups. After 30 minutes of non-stop raking, weeding, moving soil, planting, and picking, you've had quite a workout.



Physical Health

Beat arthritis inflammation

Anyone with arthritis knows that the inflammation in and around joints can be painful, but there are ways to manage arthritis pain so life can go on.

Consider dietary changes. Studies show that eating higher amounts of omega-6 fatty acids as compared to omega-3 fatty acids can increase inflammation by making the body produce more enzymes that encourage swelling. Eat fewer snack foods and fried treats made with oils that are high in omega-6 fatty acids. Instead, choose foods such as nuts, produce, and even dark chocolate, all of which can decrease enzyme activity that promotes swollen joints.

Once arthritis-related swelling occurs, you may want to try using cold packs and heat to ease the pain. Cold packs may numb the sore area and reduce swelling. Heat, whether dry from a heating pad or moist from a wash cloth, may relax muscles and increase blood flow to inflamed joints.

- Always use a towel between the hot or cold treatment and the thin skin around joints to guard against injury.
- Be sure skin returns to a normal temperature and color before using heat or cold treatments again.

Source: Arthritis Foundation

Breathe easier

- New draperies, furniture, and cabinetry can emit formaldehyde fumes. After installation, open windows briefly and keep indoor temperatures at or below 80°F and humidity near 45%. Humidity levels can be easily checked with an inexpensive hygrometer (*similar to a thermometer*).
- Wash bedding frequently in water heated to 130°F. Dust mites, which trigger asthma, won't survive.
- Avoid gases released from canned air fresheners. Open windows and use exhaust fans instead.
- Have the fireplace flue and chimney inspected annually. Make sure the flue is completely open when lighting a fire to reduce carbon monoxide exposure.

Source: Colorado State University

Beware of computer vision

People who spend more than two hours on the computer every day may start to experience Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS).

Some of the symptoms to look for: headaches, focusing difficulties, burning eyes, tired eyes, general eye-strain, aching eyes, dry eyes, double vision, blurred vision, light sensitivity, and neck and shoulder pain.

Electronic characters displayed on a computer monitor are made of many, many small dots (*pixels*). Eyes have a hard time focusing on the pixel characters. They are constantly relaxing and then straining to refocus, similar to if you'd raise your arm and pump your fist open and closed 40,000 times during an eight-hour day.

To help reduce the effects of CVS:

- Look away from your computer screen every 10-15 minutes and focus for 5-10 seconds on an object off in the distance or down the hall, or take a short walk.
- Place your monitor directly in front of you, not off to the side. It should be 20 to 26 inches away from you. Also, make sure it's not too high or too low.

Source: Macular Degeneration Support

“Home computers are being called upon to perform many new functions, including the consumption of homework formerly eaten by the dog.”

— Doug Larson

Emotional Health

Creating bonds

The grandparent/grandchild relationship is second only to the parent/child connection in a child's emotional growth. Kids develop appreciation for family legacy and learn healthy views of aging by interacting with grandparents.

Here are tips to keep the grandparent connection strong for children:

- **Check yourself** — Your relationship with your parents sets the tone for the connection your children make with their grandparents.
- **Communicate** — Have a family meeting to discuss the role you want your parents to play in the lives of your children. Many grandparents are fearful of “intruding.” Let grandparents know what they can do to make your parenting role easier.
- **Connect weekly** — Make it a priority to communicate with grandparents at least once per week. Make sure grandparents hear what the grandkids are interested in and acknowledge their accomplishments.
- **Share history** — Grandparents are a great connection to the past for children. Encourage them to share their history with your kids; no one else can take those family stories into the future.
- **Show appreciation** — When grandparents do something special with the kids, make sure they get a note of appreciation.

Source: Susan Bosak, author of *How to Build the Grandma Connection*

*“Perfect love sometimes
does not come until
the first grandchild.”*
— Welsh Proverb

Spending too much time online?

The Internet is a great resource for information and entertainment, but it's easy to get carried away. Here are a few steps to help you cut back if you need to do so.

- **Start by tracking your Internet usage for a few days.** How much time do you really spend? How much time should you spend realistically?
- **Set the stopwatch.** If you tell yourself 30 minutes, or even two hours, you may only go to the Websites you must go to, instead of surfing from one to another to another.
- **Cut back on RSS subscriptions.** You can only read so many blogs. Keep the ones you truly like and delete the rest.
- **Find other hobbies.** Instead of Web surfing, dive into that book you've been meaning to read. Or, call a friend and talk to him or her instead of sending an e-mail.



Fiscal Fitness

Vacationing on a shoestring



Want to take a vacation this summer? Strapped for cash? Consider these money-saving tips:

- **Save on meals.** Eat only one restaurant meal a day. Dine out at lunchtime (*it's cheaper*) or share entrées at dinner. Stay at hotels with in-room refrigerators and microwaves. Take “doggie bags” from restaurants or order take-out food rather than a sit-down meal. Pack foods such as granola bars, fruit, and canned juices for breakfast, or select hotels with a free continental breakfast.
- **Use coupons.** Look for tourist guidebooks with coupons for meals, hotels, and attractions.
- **Shop around.** Compare at least three competing products and service providers, such as car rental companies.
- **Share expenses.** Vacation with family and/or friends. Divide the cost of rent (*for a condo or beach house*) and food.
- **Fly last minute.** Look for airfare deals through Websites such as www.kayak.com or “last minute deal” links on airline Websites.
- **Find free pet care.** Trade pet-sitting services with “pet-friendly” neighbors to eliminate kenneling costs from your vacation budget.
- **Vacation locally.** Stay home and plan “daycations” (*inexpensive, one-day trips*) and “staycations” (*vacations at or near your home*) instead of traveling to distant areas.

Making the grade on credit scores

A credit score is a three-digit number between 300 and 850. The higher the number, the better your credit score.

It's based on your payment history, amounts owed, length of credit history, new credit (*credit inquiries and number of recently opened accounts*), and types of credit you use.

Less than 600 — You will have a very hard time getting a loan.

601-640 — You will be able to get loans, but you will have very high interest rates.

641-680 — Not the best, but far from the worst. You should be able to get decent interest rates but not the most desirable.

681-760 — You should be able to get loans easily. The higher end of this range has a good chance of low interest rates.

761 and up — You should be getting the best possible rates.

To learn more about your credit score, check out www.annualcreditreport.com

“Health is like money; we never have a true idea of its value until we lose it.”

— Josh Billings

May Health Observance:

Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection & Prevention Month[®]

Visit www.melanomamonday.org to take the American Academy of Dermatology's "Suntelligence" survey, as well as to find out how to perform a skin self-exam, download a body mole map, or find free skin cancer screenings in your area.

Facts about ultraviolet (UV) rays

Sunlight consists of two types of harmful rays: ultraviolet A (UV-A) rays and ultraviolet B (UV-B) rays. UV-A rays, which can pass through window glass, penetrate deeper into the thickest layer of the skin, known as the dermis. UV-A rays can suppress the immune system, which interferes with the immune system's ability to protect a person against the development and spread of skin cancer. UV-B rays are the sun's burning rays, which are blocked by window glass and are the primary cause of sunburn.

Source: American Academy of Dermatology



Hands and feet sunburn easily. Be sure to apply sunscreen to the back of your hands and your feet — both top AND bottom.

Filling your toolbox:

Get even more health & wellness information and tools online

Log on to May.HopeHealth.com for videos, resources, and tools that won't just help you, they're fun, too. Or, scan the Quick-Response Code to the right with your smart phone to get there.

Here's what you'll find at May.HopeHealth.com:

- A one-minute video on getting better sleep
- A one-minute video on understanding your credit score
- A free smart phone biking App to get you pedaling

Scan with your smart phone



Need the reader? QRcurious.com

May is also National Bike Month

Bicycling is a great activity for nearly anyone looking to add movement to his or her routine, because it doesn't cause a lot of stress on joints.

Debbie Avitt of Des Moines, Iowa, began biking about five years ago. Now, she rides at least a few days a week, anywhere from 25 to 100 miles at a time. Her next goal: bike to and from work two to three times per week, which would be about 25 miles a ride.

Q: What advice does Debbie have for someone who is thinking about taking up biking?

A: Purchase a bike that is one or two steps above a mid-line price, get fitted for it, and purchase a good pair of biking shorts. Start slow, and learn how to manage your bike on trails before hitting the highway. Helmets are a must. And join a bike club; it will get you moving.

“The bicycle is the most efficient machine ever created: Converting calories into gas, a bicycle gets the equivalent of three thousand miles per gallon.”

— Bill Strickland,
The Quotable Cyclist

HOPEHealthLetter

Portly Pets

According to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, some 89 million dogs and cats in this country are overweight.

Overweight pets are at risk of developing diseases such as arthritis, diabetes, kidney and heart disease, high blood pressure, and different forms of cancer.

If a layer of fat makes it difficult for you to feel your pet's ribs, your dog or cat is likely too heavy.

What to do:

- **Try cutting out high-calorie treats**, especially those with fat and sugar. Sugar can also cause gum disease and cavities in pets, just as it does in people.
- **Make sure your pet gets daily exercise.** Dogs need at least 20 to 30 minutes of sustained aerobic activity. Cats should get at least five to 15 minutes of play (*such as chasing a laser beam or feathered toy*).

Source: Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, www.petobesityprevention.com



“Dogs laugh, but they laugh with their tails. What puts man in a higher state of evolution is that he has got his laugh on the right end.”

— Max Eastman

Medical Editor: William Mayer, MD, MPH

• Managing Editor: Jennifer Cronin

Medical Advisory Board:

- Victor J. Barry, DDS • Renee Belfor, RD
- Patricia C. Buchsel, RN, MSN, FAAN
- Kenneth Holtyn, MS • Reed Humphrey, PhD
- Gary B. Kushner, SPHR, CBP
- Patrick J.M. Murphy, PhD
- Barbara O'Neill, CFP • Lester R. Sauvage, MD
- Wallace Wilkins, PhD

For more information, visit HopeHealth.com

The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your health-care providers, not to replace it.

Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

© 2011 Hope Heart Institute, Seattle, WA

Institute Founder: Lester R. Sauvage, MD

Material may not be used without permission. To view or make comments on this publication, visit HopeHealth.com/comments.asp

For subscription information, or reprint permission, contact:
Hope Health, 350 East Michigan Avenue, Suite 225, Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3853 U.S.A.

Phone: (269) 343-0770 E-mail: info@HopeHealth.com

Website: HopeHealth.com

♻️ Printed with soybean ink. Please recycle.